# Reconceptualizing Social Justice in Teacher Education

## Moving to Anti-racist Pedagogy

*Edited by*
Susan Browne
Gaëtane Jean-Marie

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# Prologue

Social justice education has implications for what we teach (curriculum) and how we teach (pedagogy). Despite an increasing number of educators integrating critical analysis of racial justice/injustice into their curricula, many struggle to teach about social justice or anti-racism. Racial discrimination is common in all corners of society, and today's globalization has accelerated cultural integration, but things are not as benign as they seem. There is still less tolerance and acceptance of minoritized groups in the private and public sectors of society. In the United States, systemic and structural racism are highly complex and continue to perpetuate who gets access to resources and opportunities. As such, to eradicate structural inequality one by one, "racial diversity and equality" is a necessary agenda in P-20 educational systems to strive for continuously (Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016).

The collection of chapters in this edited volume addresses myriad issues that seek to deconstruct structural inequalities rooted in policies, processes, and pedagogical practices in P-20 contexts (Andrews et al., 2017). The range of authors offers perspectives that interrogate the evolution of multiculturalism to social justice to antiracism, and its impact on teacher preparation programs, teaching and learning, enhancing in-service and pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills, and disposition, and confronting disparities that linger.

In Part I of the book titled, Laying the Foundation and Shifting Frames in Teacher

Education, the three chapters provide foundational knowledge and new directions in teacher education to dive deeper into anti-racism. In

Chap 1, *A Deep Dive: Reconceptualizing Social Justice in Teacher Education*, Browne, Jean-Marie, Onofre, and Dai examine the evolution of social justice in teacher education that spans from multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and culturally relevant pedagogy to antiracist pedagogy to address social inequities in P-12 schools. The chapter traces the historical roots of integrating social justice in teacher education to current efforts in order to develop and nurture anti-racist teachers.

In Chap. 2, *Envisioning Spaces of Anti-racist Pedagogy in Teacher Education Programs,* King explores some of the hesitancies and barriers to enacting a more structured pedagogy of anti-racism in teacher education programs at the faculty level. Further, she probes the use of strategic empathy (Zembylas, 2012) as a tool to encourage the self-reflection and paradigm shifting necessary to engage pre-service teachers in examining the societal and policy structures that impede the success of CLD students coupled with balancing pre-service teachers' identities and beliefs with targeted goals of anti-racist pedagogy. In this section, in Chap. 3, *Becoming a Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Educator (CRSE): White Pre-Service Teachers, Reflexivity, and the Development of Self,* Cole-Malott and Samuels explore what happens when three White pre-service teachers enact culturally relevant and sustaining education approaches in a Professional Development School (PDS) and how these outcomes shape their own identities and self-development as educators. Specifically, they examine their intentions and the subsequent outcomes of their goals and unpack the challenges, setbacks, and the responsibility of what it means to do this work even when the rewards do not align with the efforts.

In Part II of the book, Disrupting Teaching and Learning for Emancipatory Practices, three chapters examine nuances of what it means to disrupt discursive practices that lead to meaningful teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom space. In Chap. 4, *Diversity-in-Action: From Data to Doing*, Kedley examines social justice and change as experienced by the faculty diversity committee in the College of Education at Rowan University over a five-year period. The chapter serves as a testimony of some of the Diversity-in-Action's (DIA) processes, including the opportunities and challenges faced, and how it moved forward, and where it hopes to go. In Chap. 5, *On 'ceding space': Pushing Back on Idealized Whiteness to Foster Freedom for Students of Color,* Jones, Markoff, and Carter Andrews describe the ways that many White teachers' ontologies and performative emotions (Matias & Zembylas, 2014) undermine efforts at antiracist and emancipatory teaching and learning and perpetuate

education violence against Students of Color. Drawing on the work of Shange (2019), they begin by describing emancipatory and antiracist pedagogy and what it means to enact such pedagogies to counter systemic racism in K-12 schools and examine how ontological proximity to whiteness, white fear, white wokeness, and commitments to white perfectionism operate as forms of violence against Students of Color, and we offer pedagogies and practices that counter this as a way to foster learning environments that are freeing and dismantle systemic racism. In Chap. 6, *Beyond Teaching Racial Content: Antiracist Pedagogy as Implementing Antiracist Practices*, Kishimoto situates the importance of doing antiracist pedagogy in the context of broader social and political forces. With its focus on both individual and systemic changes and awareness of both students' and educators' social positionality, he argues that antiracist pedagogy goes beyond teaching racial content and examines how to implement antiracist practices and build community.

In Part III of the book, Curricula Revitalization for Preparing Today's Pre-Service Teachers, the authors discuss the implications of curricula modifications and amplification to better prepare future educators. In Chap. 7, *The Stories We Teach By: The Use of Storytelling to Support Anti-Racist Pedagogy*, Morettini, Abraham, and Wilson-Hill nuance the dimensions of storytelling for use in the classroom to illustrate ways other educators might take up anti-racist practices that humanize what it means to be an educator in these trying times. They argue that a pedagogy grounded in story modeled vulnerability, attended to students' wellness, and opened up conversations around difficult topics such as racial inequities. This has deepened their commitment to the use of storytelling as a powerful pedagogical practice that models leaning into courageous conversations and delves into the urgent issues facing educators and students; that is, how we engage our students in humanizing and meaningful conversations around race-related topics. In Chap. 8, Outcasting Teacher Education: Abolishing Caste-maintaining Practices in Teacher Education Programs, Allen-Handy implements a critical race theory analysis of current teacher education models and examines how they may promote and solidify caste in urban teacher education and contours an anti-racist framework with implications for teacher education programs. In Chap. 9, A New Paradigm for Preparing Teachers of Black Males, Lyons and Howard disrupt the oversight of Black males in teacher education literature. They do so by calling for challenging teacher educators to radically rethink teacher education when it comes to meeting the needs of Black males and

discussing the influence of effective mentorship and illustrating potential ways to foster sustained classroom engagement.

In the final section, Part IV, Anchoring Field Experience/Clinical Practice: Leveraging School-Family-Community Connections, the authors ground their analyses on what is occurring through field and clinical experience and professional development which draw upon community resources and co-creating curricula with stakeholders to enhance pre-service teachers' preparation and in-service teachers' development that empower them to use their voices to dismantle inequalities and barriers that persist. The collection of chapters centers on addressing diversity and equity through culturally relevant or sustaining pedagogies that are embedded in field-based and clinical experiences for pre-service teachers and professional development for in-service teachers. As one group of authors noted, "Teacher preparation and clinical experiences need re-imagining to empower TCs to enact anti-racist pedagogies and envision their roles as agents of change in classrooms."

In Chap. 10, Growing in Understanding of Ourselves and Each Other: Preparing Teachers for Antiracist Classrooms through Connections to the Field, Waddell, Poos, and Caruthers detail how one urban-serving teacher education program utilized field experiences and the community as the basis for preparing anti-racist educators. They also examine field-based and/or field-connected program components through the themes of two qualitative studies in which program graduates relate their teacher preparation experience to their current work as anti-racist educators in urban schools. They assert that the information and data reported in this chapter can be of use in teacher preparation programs and coursework that are integrally connected to the field. The program components can also inform practices of pre-service programs and teacher professional development. In Chap. 11, Developing Culturally Responsive Antiracist Activism, McIntosh and Nenonene argue that developing specialized programs to respond to the needs of today's increasingly diverse student population and chronicle how their Urban Teacher Academy (UTA) in partnership with local urban school districts, is reimagined centering activist pedagogical practices and clinical experiences that strengthen and empower teacher candidates. They contend that Education Preparation Programs (EPP) have a responsibility to produce graduates who have a knowledge base and skill set that will enable them to create inclusive and supportive spaces for all learners in K-16 education.

In Chap. 12, The Role of Anti-Racist Pedagogy and Practices for Clinical Interns in Professional Development Schools, Brant, Fall, Tulino, Leftwich, Elder, and Woodfield examine through their university's Professional Development Schools (PDS) Network embedded professional development, coursework, and field experiences in PDSs that enact culturally relevant, culturally sustaining, and equity-based pedagogies to help teachers breach the disconnect between the theory and praxis, understand their own biases, disrupt deficit ways of thinking, and design learning experiences to meet the needs of P-12 learners. In Chap. 13, Working Toward Anti-Racist Teacher Preparation: Clinical Experiences in Urban Schools, Rao and Olson, drawing on a study, focus on aspects of clinical experiences that contributed to development of teacher candidates' content knowledge and pedagogical skills, specifically focusing on development of culturally responsive pedagogy. They make salient the importance of intentional field placements, readings, and assignments focused on teaching about systems of oppression and interrupting inequities embedded within education systems.

In considering the contributions of this edited book through the collections of chapters, it is difficult to imagine classrooms since the death of George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, Ahmed Arbery, and others that evoked national and international chants of "Black Lives Matter", "No Justice, No Peace", and "I Can't Breathe" from protestors representing diverse ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds being disaffected by the global response to act. The call to action is also for teacher preparation programs. It is a call to consider how the work devoted to social justice is more explicit and intentional about its commitment to a racially just society. What does it mean for teacher education to seize this moment to confront racism and inequities that continue to perpetuate in society and school? Indeed, this edited book explores and extends themes in contemporary educational research on teacher preparation in terms of the continuum of social justice to antiracist pedagogy to better serve the needs of all learners in P-12 education. The book highlights efforts that are being augmented to prepare teacher candidates and future faculty to address systemic racism in their teaching practices.

Glassboro, NJ Gaëtane Jean-Marie
Glassboro, NJ Yu-Jung Dai

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# Contents

**Part I Laying the Foundation and Shifting Frames in Teacher Education** 1

**1 A Deep Dive: Reconceptualizing Social Justice in Teacher Education** 3
Susan Browne, Gaëtane Jean-Marie, Yvette Onofre, and Yu-Jung Dai

**2 Envisioning Spaces of Anti-racist Pedagogy in Teacher Education Programs** 21
Elena T. King

**3 Becoming a Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Educator (CRSE): White Pre-service Teachers, Reflexivity, and the Development of Self** 39
Donna-Marie Cole-Malott and Shalander "Shelly" Samuels

**Part II Disrupting Teaching and Learning for Emancipatory Practices** 63

**4 Diversity-in-Action: From Data to Doing** 65
Kate Kedley

5 On "Ceding Space": Pushing Back on Idealized Whiteness to Foster Freedom for Students of Color 85
Brittany Jones, Briana Markoff, and Dorinda J. Carter Andrews

6 Beyond Teaching Racial Content: Antiracist Pedagogy as Implementing Antiracist Practices 105
Kyoko Kishimoto

Part III Curricula Revitalization for Preparing Today's Pre-Service Teachers 127

7 The Stories We Teach By: The Use of Storytelling to Support Anti-racist Pedagogy 129
Brie Morettini, Stephanie Abraham, and Zalphia Wilson-Hill

8 OutCasting Teacher Education: Abolishing Caste-Maintaining Practices in Teacher Education Programs 151
Ayana Allen-Handy

9 A New Paradigm for Preparing Teachers of Black Males 171
Tr'Vel Lyons and Tyrone Howard

Part IV Anchoring Field Experience/Clinical Practice: Leveraging School-Family-Community Connections 193

10 Growing in Understanding of Ourselves and Each Other: Preparing Teachers for Anti-racist Classrooms Through Connections to the Field 195
Jennifer Waddell, Loyce Caruthers, and Bradley Poos

11 Developing Culturally Responsive Anti-racist Activists 215
Novea McIntosh and Rochonda L. Nenonene

**12 The Role of Anti-racist Pedagogy and Practices in Professional Development Schools** 231
Cathy Brant, Madji Fall, Daniel Tulino, Stacey Leftwich, Brent Elder, and Casey Woodfield

**13 Working Toward Anti-racist Teacher Preparation: Clinical Experiences in Urban Schools** 253
Arthi B. Rao and Jennifer D. Olson

**Epilogue** 273

**References** 279

**Index** 281

# Notes on Contributors

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**Ayana Allen-Handy,** PhD, is an Associate Professor of Urban Education and the Founding Director of the Justice-oriented Youth (JoY) Education Lab in the School of Education at Drexel University. A former K-12 educator and counselor, Allen-Handy's career has been dedicated to education, and social and racial justice. She received her PhD in Educational Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M University, and her MEd from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, TX, and a BA in Management & Society and Spanish from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests include urban education, sociology of education, Black women and girls lived and educational experiences, and youth and community-led participatory action research.

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**Dorinda J. Carter Andrews** EdD, is a professor and chairperson of the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. Her research is broadly focused on Black education and racial equity and justice in P-20 learning environments. She utilizes critical racial and Black feminist/womanist frameworks and methodologies to examine issues of race, culture, and power in schools. Carter Andrews also works with school districts, universities, municipalities, corporations, and civic organizations on how to develop and maintain culturally responsive, inclusive, and equitable learning and work environments.

**Loyce Caruthers,** PhD, serves as Professor of Educational Leadership, Policy and Foundations at the University of Missouri-Kansas City where she teaches courses in educational administration and qualitative research. Caruthers has served as research advisor to countless doctoral studies. Her research focuses on the social context of urban schools with an emphasis on exploring phenomena related to race, class, language, gender, and other differences that may influence educators' beliefs and perceptions, and ultimately their work in schools.

**Donna-Marie Cole-Malott,** PhD, is Assistant Professor of Professional and Secondary Education at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. She also serves as Co-Director of the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium (PEDC)—an organization dedicated to educator diversity, equity, and culturally relevant education and educational systems, serving the needs of BIPOC learners throughout the Commonwealth. Cole-Malott's research and work focus and intersects in three areas; the lived experiences and literate lives of Black girls and their social and academic identity development; race, equity, and the factors that support equal

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**Yu-Jung Dai,** MBA, PhD, is Student: Special Education. She received her Associate Degree in Business Administration from National Taipei University of Business, her Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education from National Taiwan Sport University and a Master in Business Administration degree from Rowan University. Her research interests focus on the emotional trauma and social isolation that children with serious illnesses and disabilities suffer, as well as how to assist those children build relationships and skills that will help them complete the full circle of healing. For more than five years, she has served in multiple non-profit sports organizations nationally and internationally, such as the Baseball Federation of Asia, Chinese Taipei Baseball Association, Chinese Taipei School Sport Federation, and Asian Kids Sports Association. At Rowan University, Yu-Jung is a Research Assistant at the Dean's Office in the College of Education.

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**Madji Fall,** PhD, is Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Teaching in TESOL at Kean University. Her national and international work sit at the intersection of race, language, identity, and power in transnational and other contexts characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity.

**Tyrone C. Howard,** PhD, is the Pritzker Family Endowed Chair in the School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. He is the director of the UCLA Pritzker Center for Strengthening Children & Families, the UCLA Black Male Institute, and Faculty director of the UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools. Howard's research examines race, culture, and educational equity. His most recent books include *Why Race & Culture Matters in Schools* (2020) and *All Students Must Thrive: Transforming Schools to Combat Toxic Stressors and Cultivate Critical Wellness* (2020).

**Gaëtane Jean-Marie,** PhD, is the dean of the College of Education at Rowan University. Prior to that, she was dean of the College of Education and Richard O. Jacobson Endowed Chair of Leadership in Education, and Interim Director of the Center for Educational Transformation at the University of Northern Iowa. Jean-Marie's research focuses on educational equity and social justice in P-12 schools, women and leadership in P-20 system, and leadership development and preparation in a global context. She has over 90 publications and procured over four million dollars in grants and contracts. She is the editor of *Studies in Educational Administration Series* and serves as chair-elect on Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, executive board member on the Council of Academic Deans from Research Education Institutions (CADREI) and Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities (TECSCU), and former at-large member of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE).

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**Tr'Vel Lyons** is a doctoral candidate at UCLA in the School of Education and Information Studies, an educational consultant, and co-author of *Expanding College Access for Urban Youth: What Schools and Colleges Can*

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**Briana Markoff** is a doctoral student at Michigan State University in the department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Teacher Education. Before arriving at Michigan State, she was a middle school language arts teacher for six years. Her research focuses on policies and practices that normalize whiteness and maintain segregation in suburban public schools.

**Novea McIntosh,** EdD, is an Assistant Professor, Coordinator of the Adolescent to Young Adult program and co-director of the Urban Teacher Academy in the School of Education and Health Sciences at the University of Dayton. She is an Afro-Caribbean scholar practitioner who centers her work on giving voice to the marginalized and underserved in wider parts of the world through her teaching, scholarship, and service to others. She teaches courses in Teacher Education, focusing on educating diverse populations in inclusive settings and assessment literacy. Her mission in education is to prepare culturally responsive assessment literate teacher candidates to teach students across the world and to disseminate research focused on diversity equity, and social justice advocating for minoritized and underrepresented communities. She coaches, presents at conferences and provides professional development to in-service and pre-service teachers in areas of culturally responsive pedagogy, diversity, and assessment both nationally and internationally.

**Brie Morettini,** PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education at Rowan University. She began her career in education as a kindergarten teacher. As a teacher, she had the privilege of teaching young children from a wide variety of backgrounds. Her students spoke many different languages and presented a wide range of skills, interests, and learning preferences. During her time in the classroom, she became an advocate of inclusive educational settings and humanizing, person-centered pedagogies. After a number of years in the classroom, she continued her own education in graduate school, studying teaching, learning, and curriculum. She attended the University of Pennsylvania for her Master's degree and the University of Maryland for her PhD. At Rowan, you can find her teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses with a critical lens. Her teaching philosophy and research

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**Zalphia Wilson-Hill,** EdD, arrived at Rowan University after over 36 years in the public school system as a classroom teacher and as a Professional School Counselor. In her capacity as a Professional School Counselor, she served as the High School Affirmative Action Officer and Sexual Harassment Officer, as well as the Leader of the Crisis Team. Wilson-Hill has presented Professional Development on topics such as Positive Behavioral Intervention Programs to School Psychologist and Counselors (PBiS); How Teacher Perception of Student Ability Affects Achievement; Normal and Abnormal Childhood Behaviors; Adolescent Depression; Adolescent Sexuality; and How to Create a College Culture in Spite of No Child Left Behind. Beyond the school environment, Wilson-Hill has made numerous national presentations that include the Hobson Company (Naviance); the 18th Annual School Psychologist Symposium; The New Jersey Association of College Counselors; Gloucester County Teachers Association; Gloucester County Middle School Counselors Association; Newark Teachers Association; Camden City Convocation of School Administrators and the Camden County Juvenile Justice System. She is currently the Program Coordinator in the Counseling in Educational Settings Program and Senior Lecturer.

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# List of Figures


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fig. 3.1 | Jeremy's conversation map | 52 |
| Fig. 3.2 | Nessa's mapping activity | 53 |
| Fig. 3.3 | Drawing demonstrating student placing self in the shoes of others | 54 |
| Fig. 3.4 | Poetry demonstrating student placing self in the shoes of others | 55 |
| Fig. 4.1 | Two versions of DIA's "living" poster, one from 2018, and the version 2.0 | 78 |
| Fig. 4.2 | An advertisement seeking responses to help plan a Diversity-in-Action space in the College of Education | 79 |
| Fig. 4.3 | A statement condemning violence against Asians and Asian-Americans, and resources to support faculty and students to uphold the anti-racist values of the College of Education | 81 |
| Fig. 6.1 | Diversity and equity pedagogies (DEP) continuum | 107 |
| Fig. 6.2 | Antiracist pedagogy as an organizing project | 117 |
| Fig. 6.3 | Antiracist praxis framework. (Clifford et al. [2022]. The authors acknowledge that the antiracist praxis framework's importance of working on all four quadrants is similar to the Indigenous Medicine Wheel.) | 119 |
| Fig. 11.1 | Urban Teacher Academy instructional model | 219 |

# List of Tables


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Table 4.1 | The dates, topics/titles, and facilitators of the DIA's $C^4$ pop-up series of talks | 76 |
| Table 11.1 | Reimagining the Urban Teacher Academy curriculum | 223 |
| Table 12.1 | NAPDS Original/Revised Essential 1 | 234 |
| Table 12.2 | PIRs and school contexts | 237 |

PART I

# Laying the Foundation and Shifting Frames in Teacher Education


CHAPTER 1

# A Deep Dive: Reconceptualizing Social Justice in Teacher Education

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The evolution of social justice in teacher education spans from multicultural education, critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy to anti-racist pedagogy to address social inequities in P-12 schools. Further, at the core of creating equitable schools is how teachers and school leaders are

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developed in preparation programs. For the purpose of this chapter, we focus on teacher education programs given the persistent challenges of diversifying the profession and systemic inequities that continue to permeate P-12 schools. The chapter traces the historical roots of integrating social justice in teacher education to current efforts in order to develop and nurture anti-racist teachers.

Over the last 50 years, American education has witnessed the teaching profession become a predominantly White profession. Ahmad and Boser (2014) provide historical context that has roots in an era of integration that emerged following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. During this time, African American school closures along with bussing to White schools resulted in African American teachers losing their positions to White teachers.

> In the decade following *Brown*, many African American teachers were pushed out of the profession through demotions, rings, and forced resignations—so much so that by 1970, more than 38,000 African American educators lost their jobs (p. 4).

As the national landscape continued to change and more opportunities became accessible, there became clear evidence of fewer African American teachers.

The 1980s offered serious conversations around the cultural mismatch between students and teachers and the implications of this chasm, for example in the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986). Today, concerns around the nation's overwhelmingly White and female teacher workforce continue to persist. According to Taie and Goldring (2020), in 2017–2018 the country saw 79% of teachers as non-Hispanic White with student populations representing identities that were 48% White, 27% Hispanic, and 15% Black. It should be noted that although White students represent the highest percentage, they are in fact now the minority in public school enrollment particularly in the Western and Southern regions of the nation (Frankenberg et al., 2019). Shifting trends indicate that the growing diversity among students is anticipated to reach 55% in U.S. public schools by 2024 (Kena et al., 2015). These projections are concerning when taking into account that students of color continue to struggle with receiving a quality education. The ongoing rise in diversity related to race, ethnicity, language, gender, culture, and disability in

P-12 classrooms points to an escalating crisis around diversifying the teaching profession.

Arguably, diversifying the teaching workforce has major and far-reaching implications (Little & Bartlett, 2010; Villegas & Irvine, 2010) such as providing visible role models of color in P-12 schools, increasing achievement for students of color in P-12 schools, and addressing teacher shortages in hard-to-fill urban settings. Gershenson et al. (2017) report that Black students with the same race teachers in third through fifth grades are nearly 40% less likely to drop out of school and these same students having at least one Black teacher between the same grades had a nearly 20% increase in their aspiration to attend a four-year college pointing further to the implications of diversifying the teaching profession in American education.

Among the challenges facing teacher education programs is the continued need to provide a dynamic range of knowledge that enables future teachers to "learn in and from practice" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Picower (2021) posits that transforming teacher education must be about the disruption of reading and writing to reframe ideologies in ways that work to be inherently anti-racist. These critical pedagogical perspectives are rooted in theory and language seeking to transform standard academic boundaries. Early precursors can be found in the writings of Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. Du Bois. In his seminal biographical and socio-political work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois describes the legacy of slavery as central to African American problems in the twentieth century. *The Miseducation of the Negro* (Wodson, 2006), calls out American education for its focus on control as opposed to liberatory processes. The work of Paulo Freire (1970) has been a significant example of theory and practice for liberation throughout the world. Such understandings offer a theoretical space and language for teacher education to engage in transformative education.

## Literature Review

### *Teacher Education Programs: Integrating Social Justice in PCK*

It has been long held by a broad range of scholars (Cochran et al., 1993; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005) that teacher education at its core functions to equip teacher candidates with professional content knowledge (PCK). Shulman (1987) provides seven knowledge bases that constitute PCK:

> (1) content knowledge, (2) general pedagogical knowledge, (3) curriculum knowledge, (4) pedagogical content knowledge, (5) knowledge of learners and their characteristics, (6) knowledge of educational contexts, and (7) knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values and their philosophical and historical grounds (p. 8).

An examination of PCK in the field of education reveals its omission of the importance of equity and social justice related to a teaching knowledge base. Early critiques (Giroux & Simon, 1984) call for a pedagogical discourse recognizing that what happens in classrooms is informed by institutional contexts and specific versions of what knowledge is of the most value. These critiques asserted that pedagogy is about the works that students and teachers engage in together and exists from some particular political vision. Giroux and Simon (1984) further assert that education framed by critical pedagogy raises questions around how it can work toward human freedom. From this perspective, teacher education examines the ways "institutionally legitimated knowledge organizes and disorganizes experience, and educators must know how to ask whose experience and whose interests are supported by different possible forms of education" (p. 228). In doing so, teacher education takes seriously the socially and historically constructed distinctions that give meaning to the lives of learners.

Early work from Cochran-Smith (1991) calls it essential for teacher education curriculum to provide critical perspectives that enable candidates to see their role and responsibility as more than teaching a "generic" skill set. From the start of their education, pre-service teachers need to see themselves as engaged in work involving systems of power and privilege and the impact these understandings can have on their decision making. Nieto (2000) provides a social justice perspective for teacher education that calls for programs to make this focus pervasive. She asserts:

> A concern for social justice means looking critically at why and how our schools are unjust for some students. It means analyzing school policies and practices—the curriculum, textbooks and materials, instructional strategies, tracking, recruitment and hiring of staff, and parent involvement strategies—that devalue the identities of some students while overvaluing others (p. 183).

Nieto argues that teacher education programs, "(a) take a stand on social justice and diversity, (b) make social justice ubiquitous in teacher education, and (c) promote teaching as a life-long journey of transformation" (pp. 182–183). She makes note of the fact that although it is important to prepare teachers in the ways mentioned, teachers alone cannot make the desired change in schools without the required institutional change.

Drawing on research from teacher education, pedagogy, schools, and communities, Cochran-Smith (2009) offers a theory of teacher education for social justice. This grounding serves as a response to criticism that social justice education is unclear and disconnected from theory (Cochran-Smith et al., 2005; Crowe, 2008; Zeichner, 2006). Cochran-Smith (2009) responds to this by explaining that social justice education is not solely about methods, but about teacher preparation "that acknowledges the social and political contexts in which teaching, learning, schooling and ideas about justice have been located historically and the tensions among competing goals" (p. 3). In her extensive review of the literature related to theories of justice and such theories in teacher education, Cochran-Smith furthers the discussion with the idea that a theory for social justice in teacher education is situated around equity in classrooms and challenging dominant ideologies; it recognizes and respects "social/racial/cultural groups"; and it acknowledges the myriad tensions inherent in this work. Katsarou et al. (2010) take the position that working for social justice in education is an act of necessity and solidarity. They provided a working definition of social justice that is always evolving, yet deeply tied to action and reflection geared toward change while open to opportunities to grapple with its meaning in one's practice. They use the term social justice education to speak to:

> the day-to-day processes and actions utilized in classrooms and communities centered in critical analysis, action, and reflection (praxis) amongst all educational stakeholders (students, families, teachers, administrators, community organizations, community members) with the goal of creating tangible change in their communities, cities, states, nation, and the larger world. (p. 138).

Advancing the action and reflective nature of praxis (Freire, 1993) in work toward educational change, Nataša Pantić and Florian (2015)

connect theories of inclusive pedagogy and teacher agency to promote social justice in teacher education. Together these theories allow for:

> (1) nurturing commitment to social justice as part of teachers' sense of purpose; (2) developing competencies in inclusive pedagogical approaches, including working with others; (3) developing relational agency for transforming the conditions of teachers' workplaces; and (4) a capacity to reflect on their own practices and environments when seeking to support the learning of all students. (p. 333)

Capturing this phenomenon, Dyches and Boyd (2017) developed social justice pedagogical and content knowledge (SJPACK) as a framework that builds on the idea that instruction is inherently political and never neutral. Thereby content knowledge by its nature is situated in personal ideologies. SJPACK serves as a teaching goal in which potential exists for content, pedagogy, and teaching for social justice to operate in unison in teacher preparation programs.

### *From Essentializing to Intersectionality to Ground Social Justice in Teacher Education*

Using intersectionality as a framework to nuance Dyches and Boyd's conceptualization of SJPACK, Pugach et al. (2019) synthesis of the literature on teacher education research in which authors use social justice as the basis of the study identified a pattern in which there was an overemphasis of a single group identity to address injustice (i.e., essentializing). This is similar to previous work by Hancock (2007) who also analyzed historical research on social justice. Both Hancock (2007) and Pugach et al. (2019) focus on providing critique on similar characterizations to all group members studied despite the various individual identity markers that may exist. In contrast, Pugach et al. (2019) made distinctions of a small number of studies that took into account the reality of identity complexity. Further, he noted that even fewer studies examined intersectionality indicating a significant lack of guidance for pre-service teachers in interrogating identity complexity related to issues of social justice.

This omission or absence of intersectionality in the research on social justice in teacher education limits deeper examination that considers the identity complexity of individuals who are studied. Pugach et al. (2019) suggest three scaffolds to support shifting current trends in social justice research to include: (1) providing a rationale for foregrounding a

particular identity, (2) explaining the choice to deliberately discuss an identity holistically, and (3) availing self to the literature on intersectionality. Diving deeper into intersectionality, Haddix (2015) further asserts that "the goals of teacher education must evolve beyond the teaching of strategies and methods toward a process for beginning teachers' critical interrogation of their social locations and the ways they engage with the realities of teaching and learning" (p. 63). For example, Haddix describes the experience of preparing English literacy pre-service teachers for coordinating and facilitating a community writing project involving middle and high school students. The project pushed back against deficit ideologies regarding students and communities of color as pre-service teachers critically interrogated their own social locations and drew upon community cultural knowledge connected to intersectionality.

*Furthering the Work of Social Justice Dispositions in Teacher Education*

According to Bondy et al. (2017), fostering social justice dispositions is integral to supporting pre-service teachers in assuming a teaching stance that embraces "social justice praxis" and the persistent pursuit of equity in education for all. The aim is to cultivate dispositions of (a) radical openness (Hooks, 2004), (b) humility (Kumashiro, 2015), and (c) self-vigilance (Applebaum, 2010). These dispositions are integral to pre-service teachers' engagement with theories of social justice and equity-focused educational practices. The idea of cultivating professional dispositions that reflect working toward equity can be linked to major international organizations such as the International Conference on Urban Education (ICE), national organizations such as the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), the National Writing Project (NWP), the Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education (UNITE), and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the American Education Research Association (AERA). Some of the university based programs engaged in justice-oriented work include: Center X at the University of California, Newark Teacher Project at Montclair State University, Urban Education and Social Justice program at the University of San Francisco, and Center for Access Success and Equity at Rowan University.

*Historical Evolution of Multicultural Education to Social Justice*

Social justice emanates from the multicultural education research that was at the center of integrating schooling and pedagogical practices to be

more inclusive and diverse to serve the needs of underrepresented learners (Banks, 2004; Nieto, 2009). First, multicultural education has evolved over the years but with a lack of clarity among educators about what exactly it is. There are many competing definitions for multicultural education. Theorist such as Gorski (2000) posits that "multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education that holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education" (p. 3). However, as asserted by Nieto (2009), "What we now call multicultural education in the United States began in earnest in the early 1970s with names still familiar in the field such as James Banks et al. (2004), and which includes other prominent scholars" (e.g., Bennett, 2007; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sleeter, 2006). Nieto (2017) further explained, "its immediate predecessors were the intergroup relations movement (Banks, 2005; Taba et al., 1946), ethnic studies (Banks, 1973), and multiethnic education" (Banks et al., 1976).

Multicultural education is grounded in the idea of educational equity and social justice for all students and is committed to helping learners from all backgrounds locally and globally to achieve their full potential. It recognizes the need to use school as a learning environment to plant the seeds of social transformation and to eradicate the -isms and injustices. Nieto (2017) asserted that "multicultural education as a separate field began in earnest in the early 1970s as a result of increased attention by African American and other scholars to the education of African American and other students of color who had long been poorly served by public schools" (p. 1). Therefore, multicultural education was birthed with the intention to help change students of color's educational experiences and outcomes who had historically encountered inequities and inequality in education.

However, many teachers who teach students who come from backgrounds that are culturally, linguistically, and economically different from their own do not believe that every student can learn (Ndemanu, 2018). Further, Mildred and Zuniga (2004) discussed multicultural education resistance from both pre-service and faculty. They further explained using social work education literature that some students for instance have appeared to be resistant with, "strong emotional reactions to learning about issues of difference, privilege, oppression, and discrimination suggest that some students react to learning about these issues with shame, shock, guilt, defensiveness, fear, anger, and sadness" (Millstein, 1997;

Garcia & Van Soest, 1997). Despite much resistance toward multicultural education and the changes in the term and definition, the focus has always been on improving the educational outcomes for marginalized students. Multicultural education has seen some progress since its inception while some socio-political context still remains the same. As the population of people in the United States and globally continues to grow, multicultural communities and schools will continue to grow. Multicultural education is here to stay forever. Multicultural education has endured so much, but there is still so much more work to be done with hope for equal and equitable education for all students of all backgrounds to impact radical change locally and globally.

In order to achieve equity for all students, multicultural education challenged the tainted discourse that spoke of communities of color and specifically students of color from a deficit lens. These disparaging discourses described children as "culturally deprived" and their families as living in a "culture of poverty" (Nieto, 2017, p. 2). In the process of challenging the dominant narrative about minoritized groups, inequities and inequalities within institutional policies, practices, and procedures were exposed which affected students and teachers of color. For these reasons, multicultural education began to take a more socio-political approach with the influence of the Civil Rights movement focusing on educational equality and justice for all. Consequently, by the early 1970s, activists and scholars were challenging educational inequalities that permeated P-12 schooling (Nieto, 2017). As a result, there was a need to promote and teach for social justice to create equitable experience for all students. This explicit adaptation of social justice into the discourse of multicultural education sought to bring greater attention to educational disparities.

Similar to multicultural education, social justice education examines systems of power and privilege that perpetuate the -isms, oppression, and discrimination that reproduce inequality and inequities for students of color. According to Hackman (2005), the goal of social justice is the:

> "full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs," while, "the process for attaining the goal of social justice … should be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change" (p. 4).

To be most effective, "social justice education requires an examination of systems of power and oppression combined with a prolonged emphasis on social change and student agency in and outside of the classroom" (Hackman, 2005, pp. 103–104). The shift from multicultural education to social justice education provides a space for students of color to critically assess systems of oppression to dismantle -isms that recreate marginalization for members of oppressed communities.

Social justice education does not only critically examine differences in marginalized groups but focuses specifically on systems of power and privilege that continue to perpetuate social inequities and inequalities, as well as challenge students to use their critical thinking to investigate oppression on all levels in hopes for social change. Clearly, this "definition goes well beyond the celebration of diversity, the use of dialogue groups in the classroom, or even the existence of democratic processes regarding class goals and procedures" (Hackman, 2005, pp. 103–104). Pope et al. (2009) explained that social justice education echoes critical multicultural education's emphasis on bridging social justice theory and critical pedagogy in P-12 contexts and evolved in reaction to approaches to multicultural education that focus more on cultural diversity than systemic change (McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Dover, 2013, p. 5).

### *Critical Pedagogy: Developing Learners for Democracy and Social Change*

The emergence of critical pedagogy dates as far back to the early 1970s through the work of Paulo Freire in the book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in which he deconstructs the concept of banking education (i.e., didactic learning heralding the teacher as the purveyor of all knowledge) and has also been examined by Henry Giroux in his book (1988), *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* in which he unmasks the dominant school's culture attempts to escape its neutrality, history, assumptions, and practices that continue to annihilate the lived experiences of underserved students. Critical pedagogy is rooted in praxis which Freire defines as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 33). This is salient because the work of teacher educators is to develop learners who will develop critical knowledge and skills to impact society; therefore, rethinking schooling practices is a shift from rote learning that have permeated public schools since its inception. As asserted by Giroux (1988), critical pedagogy is deeply concerned with radical

transformation of society and conceptions of democracy that are essential in creating informed citizens who will enact change for the betterment of all. Building on this is Breuing (2011) who argues that "in order to work for social change and justice, individuals must engage in praxis that includes theory, action, and reflection" (p. 4). As such, the role of teachers is to teach critical literacy and prepare active citizens for democracy (Breuing, 2011; Freire, 1996; Giroux, 1988).

Other critical theorists such as Bell Hooks (2004) in *Teaching to Transgress* and Maxine Green (1993) posit that teaching is fundamental to rethinking democratic participation, liberation (i.e., education as the practice of freedom), and there is a need for a "deepening consciousness of inequalities, contradictions, and neglect and a curriculum that can provoke people to reach past themselves and be recognized." In Breuing's (2011) study on post-secondary classroom practices, a teacher must self-identify as a critical pedagogue to thoughtfully engage and address critical educational issues. This "necessitates that critical pedagogues must continue to widen their understanding of the justice-oriented character of critical praxis and begin to express this goal more explicitly within their classroom practices" (p. 14).

Critical pedagogy, on the one hand, pays attention to the impact of social macroscopic levels (such as political, economic, and cultural structure) on the content, process, and results of education (Apple, 2013). On the other hand, it contends that the perception and consciousness of learners must also be paid attention to as recipients of learning (Freire, 2020). That is, although the function of school is affected by political, economic, and cultural forces outside the school, the school and teachers can also obtain considerable autonomy under the tension and conflict of the above-mentioned factors, and guide learners to continue to awaken critical consciousness. Through that collective consciousness, the societal status quo is challenged to achieve democratic ideals. In short, critical pedagogy attempts to take into account the two levels of "structure" and "subject" and progresses toward "practice" and "liberation."

In teacher education programs, critical pedagogy is a mechanism to address social justice issues and teachers are central to meeting the intellectual and cultural needs of learners. Often, critical pedagogy is within select courses but not interwoven in all teacher education coursework or program. Specifically, its content rests within social foundations discipline in which pre-service students may take one course, if any. Students (i.e., future educators) often remain ignorant about institutionalized

indifference and neglect toward Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in schools and are subject to perpetuating abhorrent schooling practices that inform the lived experiences of BIPOC students such as not opening spaces for their voice in the classroom community space. For example, this practice shapes how they navigate within and outside school and becomes the barometer for how they may live their lives (e.g., unseen and unheard).

### *Supporting Diverse Learners in Schools: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*

While critical pedagogy is salient to social justice work, there has been growing concern that its overarching focus on democracy does not fully address cultural dimensions of individuals from marginalized communities (Ladson-Billings, 1994). From a critical perspective lens, for whom does democracy work? Historically, marginalized people and communities have not fully benefited from "justice for all" economically, socially, politically, and educationally. To the latter, critical pedagogy's emphasis on democracy illuminates the discursive beliefs and ideologies many teachers hold. According to Bartolomé (2004), educators tend to see the social order as a fair and just one; they lack the political and ideological clarity to denounce discriminatory school and social conditions and practices. Schools need teachers who will "better instruct, protect, and advocate for their students" (p. 119).

Therefore, this has given rise to culturally relevant pedagogy in which Ladson-Billings (1994) argues that little has been done to make pedagogy a key subject of inquiry in the middle of conversations about improving education, teacher education, equality, and diversity. Ladson-Billings' goal for culturally relevant pedagogy is focused on engaging critically in the cultural landscapes of classrooms and teacher education programs. As such, teaching should be centered on the home and community cultures of students of color who have historically not achieved success in schools. In doing so, culturally relevant pedagogy increases the capacity to better connect and draw upon students' experiences as part of the curriculum taught in schools.

Further, culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on responding to students' social and cultural context and integrating students' cultural context. Specifically, cultural context is about student behavior, interaction patterns, expectations, and values (Christ & Sharma, 2018). Cultural

context also includes experiences, knowledge, events, role models, and issues from students and the community (Pang, 2001). The curriculum is both content-specific and also pedagogically draws upon the experiences and backgrounds of the student and teacher.

Over the years, critique about the limitation of culturally relevant pedagogy has emerged questioning whether it goes far enough in which the introduction of culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017) has surfaced as a more relevant framework to examine social justice issues in schools. Given the continued social and educational inequality inclusive of the increased demographic shifts globally, Paris and Alim (2017) posit that the more pressing question merits deeper analysis: what is the purpose of schooling in pluralistic societies? through a culturally sustaining theoretical lens. Culturally sustaining pedagogy is a powerful next generation establishment of culturally relevant pedagogy because it supports the value of multiethnic and multilingual communities present and future (Paris, 2012) and is a mechanism for sustaining the cultural ways of being of communities of color (Alim et al., 2020).

*Conclusion: Beyond Critical and Cultural Relevant Pedagogy to Anti-racist Pedagogy*

In order to actualize responding to students' social and cultural context through culturally sustaining pedagogical practices (Paris & Alim, 2017), there is a need to build a critical mass of teachers engaged in working toward these asset pedagogies through teacher education programs for pre-service and professional development for in-service teachers. Given U.S. demographic shifts, teachers will inevitably face students from more diverse backgrounds and ethnicities in a digital, diversified, and globalized society (Mordechay & Orfield, 2017; Christ & Sharma, 2018; Hugh-Pennie et al., 2021). In fact, there should be no differences in ethnic culture in the basic abilities of individual ethnic groups. However, it is easy to misunderstand or underestimate students' behavioral performance and learning ability if their home culture differs from the dominant culture of the school and teachers' lack of cultural awareness (Li, 2013). Often, this perspective is rooted in deep seeded racial biases against marginalized groups in which racist paradigms permeate school's values, systems, and practices. Critical to working against these racial biases is an awareness and understanding of structural issues that are needed through an anti-racist pedagogy (Kendi, 2019, Kishimoto, 2018).

Educational scholars such as Kishimoto (2018), Kendi (2019), and Lawrence and Tatum (1997) posit that a more comprehensive approach to pedagogical practices need to take into consideration research focus on race and racism in the classroom, teaching, research, and teacher education programs. According to Kishimoto (2018), anti-racist pedagogy is an intentional and strategic organizing effort in which we incorporate anti-racist approaches into our teaching as well as apply anti-racist values into our various spheres of influence. Reframing and reconceiving race relations in society entail examining social issues through an anti-racist lens. Therefore, social systems that are illegitimate can be dismantled to usher in a society that is based on embracing diverse cultural values and necessitate a shift in schooling practices. Teacher education programs are critical to building anti-racist teachers whose knowledge base and pedagogical practices reflect anti-racism as an active and ongoing process. Anti-racism requires a commitment to self-examination and self-awareness and focuses on the impact and outcomes of pedagogy and curriculum in order to deepen the work of social justice in teacher education.

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CHAPTER 2

# Envisioning Spaces of Anti-racist Pedagogy in Teacher Education Programs

*Elena T. King*

## Introduction: Setting the Context

I began my teaching career as an English as a Second Language teacher in 2005. During my second week on the job, my co-teacher and I were monitoring the cafeteria when she leaned over and whispered to me, "[Y]ou know, it's the Latino kids who are ruining this school." I did not respond.

This comment was made to me ten years after Ladson-Billings (1995) printed her seminal article on culturally relevant pedagogy—the article that I had pored over in graduate school as I earned my license in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Ladson-Billings began her article by stating:

> Teacher education programs throughout the nation have coupled their efforts at reform with revised programs committed to social justice and

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> equity. Thus, their focus has become the preparation of prospective teachers in ways that support equitable and just educational experiences for all students. (p. 466)

I begin with this quotation because of the importance of the idea of teaching for equity. However, I feel that after 26 years, we have not lived up to Ladson-Billings's convictions. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2021b) continues to tell the narrative of United States schools in demographic data. In the most recent statistics of public-school teachers, roughly 79% were White, 9% were Hispanic, 7% were Black, 2% were Asian, 2% were of two or more races, and 1% were American Indian/Alaska Native; additionally, those who were Pacific Islander made up less than 1% of public-school teachers.

Not surprisingly, the data for college and university faculty (with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islanders which in this statistic combine the categories) mirrored the public-school teacher demographics with 75% White, 12% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% Black, and 6% Latino (NCES, 2021a). While the data for public-school children indicated that of the 50.7 million students in prekindergarten through grade 12 in fall 2018, roughly only 47% were White, 27% were Hispanic, 15% were Black, 5% were Asian students, and 2% were American Indian/Alaska Native/Pacific Islander (NCES, 2021c).

Why do we harp on these statistics and repeat them over and over in articles and chapters? It is not that White teachers are unable to support diverse student populations; I myself am a White, monolingual, cisgender female teacher, and I feel that I have been a great support to my students. However, all teachers, but White teachers in particular, need to continue to reexamine their privilege and their personal belief frameworks as they continue the hard and important work of teaching, particularly in an era when the former president of the United States publicly denounced Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a detriment to the country, and over half of U.S. states are prohibiting, in some form of legislation, the teaching of CRT in public schools (Ononye & Walker, 2021).

Within this chapter, I propose the use of integrating strategic empathy (Zembylas, 2012) in teacher education programs as a means to support pre- and in-service teachers as they seek to make sense of, and ultimately to enact change in, education. I examine one way of moving forward by working with fields adjacent to education that will ultimately support

educators in enacting an anti-racist pedagogy. In the interest of transparency, I will begin with my positionality statement.

### *Positionality*

I am writing this chapter from several identities: a mother of a young, White boy whose privilege is already apparent; a professor preparing teachers for their work with language diversity students; a contributing member of a body of work on teachers' identities in the classroom; and a citizen of a country where I wish to see everyone treated equitably. I also write cautiously from the perspective of the prejudice that I personally experienced when I was younger as a Jewish student in a school system where my sister and I were the only non-Christians. I write from the genocide of my ancestors. I write in response to the co-teacher who told me that the Latino students were ruining the school. Finally, I write with the understanding that, while I feel that at times, my experiences with religious prejudice have shaped my social positioning, I ultimately choose "White" on the box that defines us in society's eyes.

## Critical Race Theory in Education

In the 1970s, Derrick Bell expanded on the writing of critical theorists including Gramsci's work on cultural hegemony, or the manipulation by a dominant group to force their beliefs on subordinate groups in such a way as to enact power over them, to include race in the matrix of domination and subordination (Bates, 1975). Critical Race Theory (CRT) was first used within the confines of critical legal studies to highlight racial inequity in the law and to look at issues of ownership through a racial lens (Bell, 1994). Although Bell was the first to use the term CRT, DuBois (1903/2014) and Woodson (1933/2012) wrote, nearly a century earlier, through a lens that critically looked at issues of society through race. Both wrote about the long-lasting and far-reaching damage done to a population by ignoring their race's contributions to society and erasing them from the curriculum in school. DuBois wrote that the more control over the curriculum that one has, the more control over the population. Currently CRT is used in education to expose the power and privilege enacted by the "normalization" of White values and the undermining of other races' beliefs, customs, and languages.

It is through CRT that we can view the inconsistencies in schooling such as intersections of race, expectations and discipline (Pesta, 2018), the segregation that has occurred through neighborhood schooling and the rise of charter schools (Mickelson et al., 2015), the education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006), and the hiring of a nearly all White teaching force (Hanford, 2020). By viewing school through a lens of CRT, we see the way those creating policy have used race to provide advantages to White, middle-class students to the detriment of their Black and Brown peers.

One example of using the CRT lens is when examining *Brown v. Board of Education* which we typically view as a positive moment in history that ended segregation in public schools. However, in the period after segregation, "many African American schools were simply closed and … more than 38,000 African American educators lost their jobs" (Ahmad & Boser, 2014, p. 4). Through a lens of CRT, we see priorly ignored consequences of integration in which those making policy made no room for Black teachers. In a recent interview, George Mason University professor, Jenice View, explained that prior to integration, "Black teachers of all disciplines understood what they were trying to do. … And every single disciplinary area, every single content area, was going to be a tool for dismantling institutional racism" (Terada, 2021, para. 22). When Black teachers were no longer in a position of power, this work largely stopped, leaving gaps in access to social capital for Black students.

While many in academia use CRT and other critical theories as a lens to view their research and have since the 1970s, the public was inundated with the phrase during the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement and countermovement. As our highly polarized nation explored the notion of CRT, it became a rallying cry for those supporting change and equity and a curse to those who wanted to maintain the status quo and deny the existence of racism in America.

CRT came under attack by politicians who, in nearly half of U.S. states, are currently drafting or have enacted legislation prohibiting the teaching of CRT in K-12 public schools (Ononye & Walker, 2021). For those of us who seek to teach through a CRT lens, this is precisely the systemic racism that we are speaking out against. While many of these bills do not mention CRT, specifically, they use wording that forbids teaching systemic racism, history that is deemed divisive, or history that could lead to (White) students feeling discomfort (Ononye & Walker, 2021). Deliberately, these bills are given names that include words such as *nondiscrimination* and *equity*; however, this type of legislation is a direct attack on those very

ideas and an attack on those of us in higher education who are seeking to protect the teaching of anti-racist education.

## What Are We Doing? Colleges and Universities Cautiously Rise to the Challenge

Many colleges and universities are at least talking about, anti-racist pedagogy. A simple Google search elicits web pages dedicated to anti-racist teaching on campuses with information on faculty reading groups (Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning, 2021) and articles, TED talks, and podcasts all supporting anti-racist pedagogy (UNC Chapel Hill, 2021; Wheaton College, 2021; Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, 2021). This is by no means an exhaustive list of the anti-racism resource pages affiliated with colleges and universities. My point in highlighting these pages is to emphasize that we have access to the research: the tools, the readings, the podcasts, and the articles—easy access. However, we still do not understand how these resources are being used by faculty.

Adjacent to these webpages are the Diversity Offices which often create or maintain them. While the inclusion of these offices may be a move in the right direction, some see the appointment of diversity officers on campuses as largely symbolic, giving this position limited power to enact changes (Parker, 2020). Kandaswamy (2007) cautions, that:

> universities are frequently hostile to the presence of students of color on their campuses [while] simultaneously espousing the virtues of teaching racial tolerance or including 'diverse' experiences in their curriculum reflecting the convergence of colorblindness and multiculturalism as the dominant discourses of racism within university settings. (p. 6)

Kandaswamy contends that colorblindness "asserts that any consideration of race is itself racist" (p. 6) and even multiculturalism is problematic in its emphasis on the "heightened visibility of difference without a critical analysis of power" (p. 6). Again, steps to support anti-racist education are being taken, but cautiously, while those who attack CRT are taking more direct and aggressive action through legislation.

### *De-centering Whiteness*

Discussions of race should not be just another topic on the syllabus. An article, a website, a lesson on White privilege is not going to make overarching changes in education and society as a whole. Trying to instill anti-racist pedagogy through a college course is not simple and must start with faculty critically examining their own curricula which is often met with resistance. As Jayakumar and Adamian (2017) explained:

> White college students are often protected from confronting their own racial biases and assumptions … primarily due to the centering of whiteness in curricula and instruction, the predominance of whites on higher education campuses, and the absence of challenges to white students' dispositions in regard to race and racism. (p. 916)

As White faculty and students struggle to identify their own experiences with race, Critical Whiteness theories are often used to help them recognize how their own White identities have shaped how they see the world (Lensmire & Snaza, 2010). Critical Whiteness theories shed light on how Whiteness has been centered in our cultural narrative and encourage a dismantling of the notion of a singular, centered White experience, to allow space for centering People of Color (Jupp et al., 2016).

White identity plays another role in how teachers perceive their ability to work with students of color. In my own work, I have seen teachers make great strides toward anti-racist education, only to center Whiteness by teaching through the lens of their own school experiences (King et al., 2020). Similarly, Phillips et al. (2019) described White faculty as seeking validation from their Black colleagues, in a way centering the conversation again on their Whiteness. Phillips et al. explained that "this need for affirmation for doing 'good work' can put undue pressure on a colleague of color to constantly affirm allyship" (p. 27). In order to center Blackness and other minority groups, there must first be a de-centering of Whiteness, or in psychoanalytic terms a way to "attend to both sides of a conflict … a precursor to empathy" (Schmidt, 2018, p. 313), and reaching empathy takes time.

### *Teaching Through White Guilt*

As teacher educators we also find ourselves in the highly complex situation of having to educate in multiple realms. We first must ensure that our colleagues have the knowledge and resources to teach pre- and in-service teachers through a CRT lens which is difficult enough. We then have the added pressures of supporting our pre- and in-service teachers through their reflective transitions to a place where they can teach their own students using anti-racist pedagogy—all while teaching within the limits of the restrictive laws of each state. It becomes clear why we tend to spin our wheels at the surface level of a multicultural education approach. It is inherently easier to show a new teacher how to teach her students to read several countries' versions of *Cinderella* showcasing other cultures through the familiar fairytale, or in February during Black History Month to highlight the strength of Rosa Parks as she refused to give up her seat on that Alabama bus.

This type of surface level or "foods and festivals" approach to culturally diverse teaching has been folded into the dominant narrative of U.S. schools as creating equity (Hammond, 2015). However, simply superimposing culture on the traditional curriculum has proven ineffective and does not uphold the tenets of anti-racist pedagogy (Hammond, 2015). As teachers dutifully teach the word "boycott" and "silent protest," they neglect to answer the questions that students of color often ask: *Why did they do this to us?*

The obvious answer to the question is racism, but until last year, based on the dictionary definition, many could divorce themselves of the notion of being a racist. Prompted by the emails from a Missouri woman named Kennedy Mitchum, the Merriam-Webster online dictionary added a second definition to the word racism. The Associate Press (2020) reported that:

> Prior to Mitchum's emails, racism was defined as 'a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race'.

With this definition, many could exclude themselves from the term by pointing to their inclusivity and public acknowledgments that no race is superior. However, the second definition now reads, "the systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), finally acknowledging the systemic

nature of racism. What I find most interesting, though, is that Merriam-Webster also included the following:

> The lexicographer's role is to explain how words are (or have been) actually used, not how some may feel that they should be used, and they say nothing about the intrinsic nature of the thing named by a word, much less the significance it may have for individuals. When discussing concepts like racism, therefore, it is prudent to recognize that quoting from a dictionary is unlikely to either mollify or persuade the person with whom one is arguing.

I find the words on Merriam-Webster both simplistic and profound. We cannot rely on denotations because in its very nature, it is the connotation of the word racism that evokes emotion, and how we use language matters.

It is precisely the connotation of racism that teacher educators are interested in. What does racism mean to us, to our students, to our students' students? For White students and teachers, racism can evoke White guilt, or the recognition of how White privilege leads to the systemic racism and discrimination against culturally and linguistically diverse groups (Swim & Miller, 1999). White guilt is often used as a pedagogical tool and has been demonstrated to have a positive effect in shifting perspectives on racism and prejudice against minority groups (Estrada & Matthews, 2016; Swim & Miller, 1999). Studies indicate that higher levels of White guilt correlated to heightened awareness of White privilege and minority discrimination (Iyer et al., 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999). Estrada and Matthews's (2016) study revealed that when White college students were led to places of feeling guilty for actions such as "not speaking out against a racist joke," they may be encouraged to find places in their lives to enact change (p. 320).

However, there is a balance to be struck, and Estrada and Matthews (2016) also clarify the implications of pushing too far to the point of White shame, explaining that, "a student's sudden realization of having condoned racist jokes might bring to focus a perceived deficiency in assertiveness and other dispositional traits … which can have counterproductive effects on student engagement and motivation" (p. 320). Estrada and Matthews (2016) continue to explain that "to temper a student's self-blame, an instructor might highlight the larger structural forces at play that ultimately orchestrate *everyone's* participation in a racist society" (p. 320). These studies point to the benefit of utilizing pedagogies that encourage explorations of White guilt to foster change in understandings

and beliefs about systemic racism. However, the use of a White guilt framework continues to center Whiteness in the conversation.

Others caution the reliance on either guilt or shame for positive change and encourage group-sympathy as an alternative which Iyer et al. (2003) described as "a more general predictor of support for different affirmative action policies" (p. 117). Iyer et al. question the ethical nature of utilizing frameworks of guilt specifically at the K-12 level and, as I have mentioned before, nearly half of U.S. states also feel the need to ban any teaching that could cause discomfort based on race (Ononye & Walker, 2021). This begs the question, should we encourage our K-12 pre- and in-service teachers to teach through a lens of White guilt and encourage their students to engage in conversations of White guilt? Is exploring White guilt simply perpetuating the centering of Whiteness? With current legislation banning CRT, are our pre- and in-service teachers even allowed to teach in a way that would create feelings of White guilt? These questions are not easily answered, but by combining anti-racist pedagogy with strategic empathy teacher educators may be able to more readily support students.

## Moving Forward: Strategic Empathy and Anti-racist Pedagogy

For those of us who will continue to do this work, one option is to marry anti-racist pedagogy with a pedagogy of strategic empathy (Zembylas, 2012). Zembylas (2012) draws on his prior work on the *pedagogy of discomfort,* to suggest that by providing pre- and in-service teachers spaces to discuss their ever-fluctuating ideas, they are given time to adjust their discomfort to develop a self, which includes, learning from, and celebrating their diverse students (Zembylas, 2010). A pedagogy of strategic empathy asks educators "to examine under what circumstances discomforting learning may help teachers and students to engage in new affective relations with others" (Zembylas, 2012, p. 120) in order to live in a place of empathy that "recognizes the troubled knowledge one carries with him or her and accepts that this individual, just like anyone, possesses the same rights" (p. 121). Ultimately, we need to listen to each other's stories and honor them in order to perpetuate change.

Similarly, in his group therapy work with South African Whiteness groups, Schmidt (2018) explained the purpose of the sessions were "to bring unconscious, socially transmitted beliefs and values into a collective

space … [to] explore racialized experiences, biased beliefs, and unconscious attitudes and feelings that harm individuals and society" (p. 319). Many times, these spaces are deliberately racially or culturally separated at first to allow groups to reflect in homogenous spaces on long-held socially transmitted beliefs.

As with any shifts of belief, Zembylas (2012) cautions that without spending time to acknowledge the emotional implications of the groups involved any attempts at discussing inequities in history can backfire. Zembylas (2012) explains that

> Pedagogies informed by critical theory have treated race and racism less as a complex affective experience than as a set of social and political issues to be addressed through systematic analysis. While critical theory in education has not entirely ignored emotions, attention to them has been insufficient. (p. 118)

It is through anti-racist pedagogy that we can do both: analyze systems of oppression and address emotions while consistently acknowledging how race interacts with both, specifically in the United States education system. Hammond (2015) writes that creating a safe space for students and taking the time to create a connection with students is not "just some touchy-feely performance. Rapport is based on neuroscience" (p. 78). Hammond further states that "our brains respond to negative experiences up to three times more than positive experiences" (p. 113) meaning that how we interact with our students directly affects their ability to learn. She challenges teachers to understand students through a socio-political context, recognizing implicit bias and structural racialization as influences on student learning (Hammond, 2015). Leung and López-McKnight (2020) explain that teachers must "provide affirmation to what students say and bring to the space, particularly students of Color, to validate their experience and knowledge … [to] take the time for small interactions that humanize students" (p. 20), and this must be done at the college level by university professors as well.

Prior to making space for students, "it is necessary to offer a 'brave space' for [pre- and in-service teachers] to deeply self-reflect, to participate in dialogue, to deconstruct their own biases, to put their beliefs into disequilibrium, to reconcile tensions, etc." (Medina, 2020, p. 121). When "brave spaces" are deliberately created, there can be self-reported shifts in beliefs. For example, pre-service teachers reported positive shifts in their

perceptions of immigrant students and immigration in general through working directly with immigrant students, reading ethnographies of personal stories, and watching documentaries about immigration (Kolano & King, 2015). By more deliberately crafting observation experiences and debriefing in the public school with the university instructor, pre-service teachers are given a more immediate "brave space" allowing for a deeper understanding of the teaching profession (Fitchett et al., 2018; Kolano & King, 2015).

While these experiences have merit, I want to take a moment to highlight the Whiteness of the teaching force again. Many of these conversations that are intent on mediating new beliefs through anti-racist pedagogy and CRT are happening with White pre-service teachers and being led by White faculty. In an essay to White teachers, Love (2019) writes of proposed requirements for pre-service teachers such as taking minority history classes, spending time in urban schools as part of fieldworks, and working specifically with Black and Brown students, but the crux of her argument centers again on this issue of humanity. Love (2019) writes,

> But, at the end of the day, White teachers need to want to address how they contribute to structural racism. They need to join the fight for education justice, racial justice, housing justice, immigration justice, food justice, queer and trans justice, labor justice, and, above all, the fight for humanity. (para. 12)

Her voice is echoed by Kendi (2019) who described the moment the American public learned of the human genome project. Kendi wrote:

> When scientists finished drawing the map of 'our miraculous genetic code,' when they stepped back and looked at the map, one of the 'great truths' they saw was 'that in genetic terms, all humans, regardless of race, are more than 99.9 percent the same'. (p. 52)

This realization should have ended the "supposition that the biology of certain races yields superior behavioral traits, like intelligence" (Kendi, 2019, p. 53). It should have amplified the idea that, "The most important fact of life on the Earth is our common humanity" (Kendi, 2019, p. 52); however, for many, it did not.

Research in psychology may shed light on why the science of biology did not unite us. People are often more swayed to act on issues when

presented a personal story than factual evidence. This is known as the identifiable victim effect, an increase in empathy toward a situation when a personal story is shared (Jenni & Loewenstein, 1997). Personal experiences evoke an emotional response which, in turn, can increase a desire to enact change. Again, in my own work on teacher perceptions of immigration, pre-service teachers highlighted the documentaries *Which Way Home*, and *The New Americans* as giving them a new understanding of how difficult the immigration process is. Although we spent the entire semester discussing the history of immigration with detailed explanations of the systemic barriers, it took seeing personal stories to elicit empathy for immigrant experiences (Kolano & King, 2015). In essence, identifiable victim effect explains that humans often respond with more empathy to individual stories, making lived experiences more powerful than facts. As teacher educators, we can then encourage our students to see the patterns within these individual stories and open the door to discourse on difficult topics, such as systemic racism.

Discourse is a process that we cannot take lightly, and as educators we must ask ourselves what is our role in shifting paradigms and how can we use the science of empathy? Using emotional histories as a starting point, teacher educators can utilize *pedagogies of strategic empathy* to scaffold anti-racist education, to develop, "a mode of teaching and learning from troubled knowledge—a mode that produces a new ethical relationality and emotional culture in the classroom" (Zembylas, 2012, p. 123) which may be more complex than what many of us are currently doing.

Kishimoto (2018) explains that "anti-racist pedagogy is not about simply incorporating racial content into courses, curriculum, and discipline. It is also about how one teaches, even in courses where race is not the subject matter" (p. 540). For many, this is a new way of seeing the world, that at first, may seem divisive, uncomfortable or morally ambiguous, and this work begins with "faculty awareness and self-reflection of their social position … not just in their teaching, but also in their discipline, research, and departmental, university, and community work" (Kishimoto, 2018, p. 540). When anti-racist pedagogy is enacted, it extends from the classroom into the greater societal structure of the university.

## *Continuing the Work*

Enacting anti-racist pedagogy begins with five strategies as a starting point: (1) embrace critical pedagogy, (2) co-construct knowledge with our

students, (3) recognize White privilege, (4) resist ally performance or performative allyship—meaning doing anti-racist work for the perceptions of doing the work rather than the intention of making real change, and (5) take greater risks in the classroom (Phillips et al., 2019). Many of us in teacher education embrace these strategies daily but may have difficulty moving beyond the embrace. By relying more heavily on personal narratives, documentaries, ethnographies, and biographies, specifically of People of Color, as learning tools in teacher education, we can use these personal stories to highlight patterns and begin to co-construct knowledge around racism.

Additionally, teacher education programs can begin making more space for anti-racist conversations by utilizing already built-in fieldwork hours. Most pre-service teachers typically take a series of fieldwork hours beginning early in their teacher education program. Often, these fieldworks are observational in nature with pre-service teachers left with either a checklist of what to observe or a vague journal assignment (Fitchett et al., 2018). I suggest shifting the focus of fieldwork hours from simply observing to include time for Offices of Diversity to lead theory into practice discussions on anti-racist education. As discussed earlier in this chapter, simply a one-off lecture on diversity often leads to student silence, feelings of shame, or proclamations of "learning nothing new" (Kandaswamy, 2007). Teacher education programs should take the time to infuse consistent hours of observation with consistent hours of anti-racist work, led by qualified faculty instilling a pedagogy of strategic empathy. Most importantly, these hours should include multiple personal stories of People of Color through biographies, documentaries, and speakers, allowing pre- and in-service teachers to make shifts in their beliefs.

Additionally, I propose collaboration with clinical psychologists or therapists to envision how we can support work in seeking equity through healing group therapy (Schmidt, 2018). As Zembylas (2012) and Hammond (2015) stressed anti-racist work is more than conveying political ideas; it involves affective change. As teacher educators, we are skilled in creating safe spaces, but group therapy involves participants "sit[ting] with ambiguity and expand[ing] their understanding of a healing group experience as not just a calm, feel good event" (Asay et al., 2020, para. 6) which may be beyond the purview of teacher educators. Schmidt (2018) explained that his group "aimed to bring unconscious, socially transmitted beliefs and values into a collective space … [in which to] explore racialized experiences, biased beliefs, and unconscious attitudes and feelings that

harm individuals and society" (p. 319). I argue that this work should not be done in the college classroom but in a new space, both physically and emotionally, in which to explore these beliefs. Using the classroom, a place typically reserved for academic work, brings with it its own narrative of grading, right and wrong answers, and understanding the assignment. Perhaps, moving this work to the realm of therapy is a more appropriate context to truly hear and reflect on the experiences of others.

## Conclusion

As I have been writing this chapter, I have also begun a conversation with my own teacher education program and director of diversity to consider using early fieldworks and intentional spaces to engage in this critical analysis of what teachers are doing, what we want to do, and how to engage this through the lens of CRT and specifically anti-racist pedagogy. Although many of us in teacher education are already teaching from a perspective of critical theory and infusing our courses with elements of identity work, we are choosing to do more with intentionality. We are choosing to challenge our colleagues to move beyond neutrality and support the work of anti-racist educators. We have to commit to pushing for humanity to win by dismantling and reassigning power. We must continue the work that our colleagues began decades ago. We need to know that our words and actions have power, and that the Latino kids are not "ruining the school."

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CHAPTER 3

# Becoming a Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Educator (CRSE): White Pre-service Teachers, Reflexivity, and the Development of Self

*Donna-Marie Cole-Malott and Shalander "Shelly" Samuels*

*Teaching is not for the weak or the faint-hearted; courage and imagination are needed to move from myth to reality.* (Ayers, 2015)

## Introduction

The teaching force in the United States is made up of over 79% white women (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021), and diverse representation across race and gender groups is minimal and disproportionate to the representation of the student demographic within the country. This

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means that the vast majority of students across the United States will go through school (PreK–20) never encountering a Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) educator. As a response to this disparity, what we find across the U.S. is a push for the diversification of the teacher educator workforce (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Carter Andrews et al., 2019, Jones et al., 2019) without consideration of the importance of ensuring that all educators—white educators in particular—are culturally relevant and sustaining. While an array of data affirms that BIPOC students need to see BIPOC educators due to academic and social outcomes (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Griffin & Tackie, 2017), there is a dearth of data centering on the responsibility of white educators in being culturally relevant and sustaining when educating white students. This chapter addresses that concern as well as considers what this work looks like when these ideas are enacted with BIPOC students.

The purpose of this chapter is to share the experiences of three white pre-service teachers (who we will interchangeably refer to as *interns* and *participants*) who took on the challenge of educating white students in culturally relevant and sustaining ways during their time at a Professional Development School (PDS) in a rural/suburban Northeastern town in the United States (all names used in this study are pseudonyms to protect the identity of our participants). This study is unique in that it centers on white teachers enacting a culturally relevant and sustaining curriculum with predominantly white students while highlighting the challenges and possibilities they faced in doing this work. This chapter is as much about the results/outcomes as it is about the process of *becoming* (Ibrahim, 2004) a culturally relevant and sustaining educator, as it is concerned with understanding what it takes to commit oneself to equity and culturally relevant and sustaining education (CRSE). This chapter also explores both the external and internal impact of this work on the development of the educator. We wanted to understand the process of achieving one's personal goals as related to becoming a CRSE.

As Black women researchers collecting data for this case study and consulting with our interns over the course of a year, we understood and felt the emotional responsibility of this work, and we knew it was important for white educators to step into a space of responsibility when teaching students who looked like them. Dillard (2021) posited that

> Our work as Black women teachers has been and continues to be about attending to the spirit of those whom we teach, and at the same time, about

> "talking back," resisting and creating the education we wished we had ourselves. But undergirding this labor, we must (re)member who we are and *whose we* are in order to create more humane conditions in school and university communities. (pp. 3–4)

It is this very idea that kept us committed to supporting our interns through their journey into the profession. In the sphere of spirituality and responsibility, we recognized the enormity of the challenge each participant was undertaking, and we knew that this work would be different from anything they or we had done prior to our study.

For this inquiry, we asked: *What are the challenges white pre-service teachers face when enacting a culturally relevant and sustaining curriculum with predominantly white students at a PDS site, and what are the implications and impact on their development as educators?* In this chapter, we explore the phenomenon of teacher identity development when engaged in CRSE. While a longer-term study would have yielded us a better understanding of the implications for the students taught by our interns, this paper is more about our interns and the process of becoming a culturally relevant and sustaining educator. Ibrahim (2004) describes *becoming* as a process of building "accumulative memory" (p. 81) that is important to the way that individuals interact with the world around them. Becoming is a dynamic process rather than a fixed location, and it exist in a multiplicity of ways. This concept allowed us to capture the nuances of identity development and to be sensitive to the idea that *being* culturally relevant and sustaining is not a destination but rather a journey toward what Ibrahim (2004) calls a state of continuous becoming.

## Problem: The Case for CRSE

Nationally, there has been a renewed focus on the importance of educator diversity (Mason et al., 2021). Both new and old data continue to highlight the importance of BIPOC educators educating BIPOC students (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Milner & Howard, 2004). The data irrefutably show that academic and social outcomes of these students soar when they are educated by individuals who look like them (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Milner, 2006). We acknowledge that there is much work to be done in this area, and much of our research is concentrated there as well. However, we rarely focus on the importance of creating a pipeline of future educators who are culturally relevant and sustaining in both theory

and practice, and the fact is that we should not leave white teachers out of this conversation. Since white teachers are largely responsible for educating most of the children in the United States, there is an expectation that they take their role seriously and understand the enormity of their influence and impact. As we continually engage with the data around educator diversity, we highlight the idiom "to whom much is given, much will be required" *(Holy Bible, King James Version,* 1976*, Luke 12:48)*. This concept demands that white educators begin to see their teaching as a moral imperative rather than a neutral, passive endeavor.

The year 2022 marks 60 years since the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which established the norm with which we are all too familiar—white teachers (mainly white women) as the main educators of all students nationally. Data have indicated that white educators' rise to prominence in schools across our nation corresponded with a significant decline in BIPOC student success, the widening of the achievement gap, punitive disciplinary practices against BIPOC students, and a decrease in affirming curricula and practices in schools (Allen et al., 2013; Douglas et al., 2008; Mallett, 2016). Over the last 60 years, it is has become clear that one of the main ways to combat the systemic injustices and inequities brought on by desegregation is to equip white educators with the skills to become culturally relevant and sustaining educators.

While it will be a challenge to overcome the dominant ideologies and paradigms of the last few centuries, we are in a prime position to do so at this very moment. As Black women teachers, researchers, and leaders, we find ourselves in a position to impact the students we teach, supervise, support, mentor, and engage with. According to Dillard (2021), "We are Black on purpose for a purpose" (p. 2). We take this charge quite seriously and understand that our purpose is to create equitable, anti-racist systems and to dismantle structures that hinder the success of all students. In our work, we encourage and support white educators to step into a space of courage and responsibility while ensuring that their white students are prepared to challenge and resist the dominant white supremacist ideals to which we have all been exposed.

## Theoretical Framework: Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education (CRSE)

There are numerous frameworks for culturally responsive educational approaches that are central to our focus and to the interns in our study. These include Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education

(Cole-Malott, D. et al., 2021), Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Taylor et al., 2009), Culturally Congruent Teaching (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012); each of these frameworks, while interconnected, denotes a slightly different component. The terms "culturally responsive pedagogy" and "culturally relevant teaching" are frequently used interchangeably. Culturally relevant pedagogy employs a teaching method that connects students' lives and cultural traditions to classroom experience (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995) asserted that culturally relevant teaching practices explicitly incorporated the voices of those who are "muted or oppressed" and emphasized the importance of such pedagogy to help reform schools. A primary reason for developing culturally responsive pedagogy is to respond to school "environments characterized by student alienation and hostility" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 112). For this reason, we use the Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education (CRSE) framework to answer our research questions.

The CRSE model is founded on three theoretical constructs that emphasize the significance of cultural dynamics inside and across school boundaries, holistic student success and engagement, student feelings of belonging, and historical and contemporary structural injustices (Cole-Malott, D. et al., 2021). More precisely, the following theories underpin this chapter: (1) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), (2) Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP), and (3) Critical Race Theory (CRT). Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) asserted the following CRP constructs: (1) students should attain academic success; (2) teachers must be culturally competent; and (3) educational exchanges between teachers and students should incorporate critical consciousness. Additionally, CRP is "a method of teaching that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by imparting knowledge, skills, and attitudes through the use of cultural referents" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 20). The second theory that frames this study is CSP. Paris (2012) suggests "Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (p. 93). Through a CSP lens, stakeholders who are devoted to educational equity are challenged to be cognizant of "the changing and evolving needs of dynamic systems" (p. 76). The third theoretical framework, CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), provides a prism through which to view the ways that institutionalized and systemic racism contribute to educational inequality.

CRSE is slightly different from these other frames because it explicitly supports resisting and dismantling institutionalized racism, whiteness as an ideological stance, and the examination of CRT across diverse groups, situations, and identities (Laughter & Han, 2019). To that aim, the CRSE framework outlines important ideas that educators must understand and implement while simultaneously establishing an equitable infrastructure that supports the languages and cultures of children and communities. CRSE also holds that this work is never complete but always in a process of growth, development, and transformation. We believe that one can become a culturally relevant and sustaining educator by understanding that becoming is a process and not a destination. This requires ongoing interrogation of the changing demographics of our students, the changing needs of our schools, and our own role in that very process. This happens through continuous educator reflexivity.

While this chapter is part of an effort to promote equity and CRSE, it also focuses on how different social groups interact with systems of dominance and subordination to either benefit or disadvantage different, interrelated social groups. Our goal is to highlight the ways in which our three participants utilized a CRSE framework in their teaching in order to make their teaching "justice-centered." The CRSE paradigm emphasizes the importance of a thorough and intentional approach to educational reform that ensures all students have equitable access to high-quality, anti-racist, and anti-white-supremacist ideologies in schools.

## Modes of Inquiry

For this study, we employed an ethnographic case study approach to understand the development of three teachers over the course of the school year. A case study enabled us, the researchers, to interpret the real world from the informants' perspective (Dobbert, 1982). By listening to the individuals, observing, and forming assumptions, this ethnographic case study enabled us to gain better insight (Spradley, 1979). Each method was essential to our understanding of our participants and the students they were serving.

Our data collection included participant observations, interviews, and artifactual collection (i.e., mapping; Behar, 2012; Emerson et al., 2011; Kawulich, 2005; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). We selected these methods because they are consistent with those used in ethnographic research and

since they provided us with in-depth and nuanced understandings of our participants. The site that our data was collected was a high school—Grove High in a large college town in the Northeast. The 9–12 student population at our site were accustomed to the presence of higher education faculty, teaching assistants, consultants, and administration. Many of the parents of these learners were faculty members from the local university. Grove High is located in a middle-class town and is classified as a highly resourced school. All of these factors and others, shape the outcomes and of this research and the academic and social outcomes of our participants.

### *Participant Observation*

The use of participant observation was essential to this study because it provided deeper insights into the social worlds of the participants. Also, participant observations allowed insight on community membership, a kind of insider-outsider positionality (Emerson et al., 2011). The participant observations took place in the classrooms as the participants engaged with lessons, students, and mentors. As Powell (2006) noted:

Participation has often been defined through activities such as interviews, informal conversations, and limited interactions with those involved in a study. This is particularly true of ethnographies of education, in part due to the limited nature of participatory opportunities in school settings. (p. 34)

### *Artifactual Collection*

Dillard (2011) discussed the importance of artifacts in research with Black people. She posits that [artifacts]

> tell a deeper story of the culture and history of the people who created it…They are containers of memory that are embodied that engage, body, mind, and spirit. In other words, like memory, you can hear, touch, see, smell, taste, and feel them in and with the body. (p. 41)

We utilized artifactual methods because it granted us the opportunity to analyze images, texts, and other meaningful objects that could tell a story exceeding what could be verbally expressed. Below, we will share

some of the artifacts we collected, including pictures and texts written by the participants. Other examples of artifacts include maps, student work, unit plans, lesson plans, and video and audio recordings. We used these artifacts to further understand the relationship between what we were learning from our teacher participants and their perception of themselves, their teaching, and the impact on their students.

### *Interviews*

For our study, we conducted a one-on-one interview with each participant pertaining to their practice during the school year. To effectively complete the interviews, we built rapport with the participants highlighted in this study; as Spradley (1979) has noted, the development of rapport with participants is an essential part of ethnographic work. We relied on Spradley's approach to ask clear, explicit questions that would elicit detailed responses from the participants.

## *Becoming Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Educators: Participants' Perspectives*

In our data analysis, we engaged data from both the interns who participated in our research and also their students. Analyzing student work allowed us to talk with the interns about their own expectations and goals for the students they were teaching. We collected data from multiple sources because we wanted a more nuanced understanding of both teacher and student experience within their classrooms. While we collected a wide range of data, in this study, we have mainly focused on the data that centered our interns. Below, we share more detailed information about our three participants and the important efforts they were making toward becoming culturally relevant and sustaining educators.

### *Participants*

We selected the three individuals in our study out of the 14 PDS interns because they were focused specifically on CRSE and expressed explicit interest in incorporating such practices into their teaching. Each of our three participants—Nicole (Nikki) Brown, Jeremy Grey, and Vanessa (Nessa) Davis (pseudonyms)—identified as white.

*Nikki*

Nicole Brown prefers to be called Nikki. She is an undergraduate student at a large university in the Northeast completing her final year in the College of Education. At the end of her time as an intern with the PDS program, Nikki will be transitioning to a full-time teaching position with Teach for America (TFA). Becoming a culturally relevant and sustaining educator is important to Nikki because she will be a teacher at a TFA site in Mississippi. While Nikki does not know what to expect at her site, she knows that most of her students will be Black, economically disadvantaged, and significantly behind in learning and that she has to be prepared to help them bridge the achievement gap.

Nikki contends that she is passionate about teaching, committed to equity in education, and eager to support students of color in her teaching. She has enthusiasm for her content focus and brings great energy to the work and her teaching. While Grove High is a predominantly white school in an upper-middle-class community, Nikki felt it was necessary to focus on becoming a CRSE educator. When she received the news that she would be teaching in Mississippi, we were midway through the semester; at that time, she became even more intentional about developing her teaching units on critical topics that would broaden perspectives and encourage critical thinking. While the new job assignment created an urgency for Nikki, she had been committed to engaging in critical work since deciding to become a teacher. She told us that it was her desire to build critical consciousness in her classroom and expose her students to topics and issues with which they were unfamiliar. In the following excerpt from our interview, she described a unit that she had developed:

> I created a timeline activity in which we put students in groups based on regions of interest and have them research genocides that had occurred in that area, and the furthest one back in history was Trail of Tears, the Native American diaspora, and whenever Europeans came here to the US. The most recent genocide was Darfur, which is still happening, and then a bunch in between. I think in the English classroom there is that microcosm at work and functioning in everything that we study. But there is a greater world with whatever we're studying and participating in, and that it's important to have this big picture of how across cultures and across time periods this idea of genocide and people being persecuted for things that they can't even help is a really dark area of human nature. And studying that big picture can not only make you feel something like you do when you read, but also kind of drives you to action for social justice and what not.

This interview with Nikki serves as an example of the work that she is engaged in and the way in which she is constructing meaning for herself and her students. Moreover, it represents her reason for trying to enact what she considers to be a culturally relevant curriculum. Nikki is confident, eager, and willing to take risks without the doubt and insecurities that are faced by her peers. When asked about her commitment to this population and if she believes that her work with a culturally relevant curriculum will translate to Mississippi, she expressed optimism that it would.

During Nikki's unit on the holocaust, we were able to visit Nikki's class to experience the ways in which she engaged her students and approached her materials. She brought impressive focus and effort to developing her unit, and the research she did to identify a wide array of genocides and the history behind them demonstrated her commitment to critical thinking and content. We were witness to her students' interest regarding each genocide and the critical discussions that ensued after learning of each atrocity. Unexpectedly to Nikki, her cooperating teacher did not support her unit and felt her extensive coverage of multiple genocides beyond the Jewish Holocaust was unnecessarily extending the unit and detracting from other curricular requirements. It was challenging to see her question herself and her efforts; clearly, the opinion of her mentor teacher had an impact on Nikki and her identity as an educator. Nikki was angry, frustrated, and sad. She had expected her mentor teacher to be proud of her, but she learned that there is not always a reward for wanting to engage in critical and controversial topics. She discovered that CRSE work is not always celebrated and that if she strongly believed in exposing her students to critical perspectives, she would have to do it without reward or recognition.

*Jeremy*

Our second participant was Jeremy Grey. As one of two male interns in the secondary PDS program, Jeremy is the intern that—according to him—doesn't fit in. He classifies himself as an outcast among his peers. With tattooed arms and his skateboard in tow, he believes that he is not what they want at Grove High. A few months before our study, he shared with us that he was approached by school administration about his casual attire, tattooed arms, and skateboarding in the school parking lot. He saw this reprimand as indicative of their conservative position, and this concerned him.

He was upset and angry, and he told us that he felt so different, so much like an outsider at this school, that he struggled to move beyond that incident. He felt that his tattoos and his inability to conform made him a target of administration. As a white male, he felt a sense of persecution because he did not fit into the norms of that school community. Amanda, one of the other consultants, noted that

> Jeremy had a couple "run-ins" where he was seen as unprofessional and unserious as a teacher. The principal saw him skateboarding and strumming his guitar one morning in the parking lot and asked him to put those things away. He also had issues with covering up his tattoos. So, he already has a perception working against him. (A. Brown, personal communication, March, 2014)

We believe it was this experience that compelled him to question the notion of *difference* in his teaching. It was around this time that he began to work on his case study, where he looked at a specific student in one of his classes and focused on him as a person of interest in his own work. He decided that he would focus on Jason, a Black student who was adopted by a professor from a local university and his wife. In his case study, Jeremy reflects,

> Jason Campbell sticks out in the halls of local high school. He is one of a small minority of non-white students and I recall thinking from the beginning of the year that "this kid is cool," not because he is Black but because he was and is his own person, a maverick of sorts. A furry hat with earflaps in the middle of September? Jason answered with a shrug and a "why not. Mr. Grey?" Jason was adopted at the age of seven from Haiti. His father is an engineering professor at the local university and his mother runs a local adoption agency in the community. He and his sister were both adopted by this family and have been in the local school district for the entirety of their lives in the United States. When asked about his family who remain in Haiti, Jason was unable to give any specifics because "no one here has contact with them anymore." This information was delivered with a deadpan affect, suggesting that he is not particularly stuck on the idea that he is adopted, that he is emotionally distant from his birth family. Weeks prior to our conversation about his adoption, I had mentioned off-handedly to Jason after class that there was a small but vibrant and supportive Haitian community in the local area (as reported to me by a PDS consultant) and that if he ever wanted to talk to anyone from that community then I could put him in contact with them. He seemed entirely nonplussed by this information, receiving it with

> a simple "uh…okay." He never brought it up again, and this was made all the more sensible by his own admission that he did not have contact with Haiti. Perhaps one's birth culture does not need to be one's personal culture.

Jeremy then decided he would begin to use his time to focus on the idea of meaning-making through dialogue and the ways in which students are able to construct meaning through conversations, drawing on the work of Bakhtin (1981, 2010) in order to confront difficult societal issues. He noted,

> The big isms that we tackled so far sort of unintentionally were classism and sexism; a lot of that discussion came out of discussions about gender and class from their own discussions. This is in the advanced classes. This came from their book discussions about *The Outsiders* and about *Speak*. With *The Outsiders*, a lot of the discussions kept coming back to the idea of why do these rich kids keep beating up these poor kids, why do they do this, why does this exist? That when students, again, were dealing with those ideas of social stratification and considering how this one group has elevated themselves above this other group, then recognizing that *The Outsiders* is narrated from this perspective of a kid in this lower class…And considering the differences between them and assigning significance and meaning that Pony Boy asserts but then also having students consider for themselves which side do I agree with, should sides even exist, and where does this structure come from?

Jeremy's students consequently engaged in dialogue about the complexity of these issues, revealing how conversations/dialogue can push us to consider the many ways a text like *Speak* and *The Outsiders* could be understood and interrogated. He was also able to construct a conversation map to analyze how students interacted with each other and who was engaged in meaning-making. His student, Jason, was in this class, and he wondered what sense Jason was making of the book, but Jason was often closed off and quiet during certain discussions.

Jeremy made specific choices about how he would explore the idea of a critical curriculum and how he would enact such a curriculum, but he was not always sure if it worked or if students were getting what he intended. When we asked about this, he explained, "I'm always looking for those aha moments; you know, when students realize something for the first time. That's what drives me." For Jeremy, those moments were not assessable, measurable, or explicit in nature; they just happened and teachers

would be able to feel it. But these moments did not seem to happen with all students, at least not with Jason.

What we found interesting about Jeremy and his focus on the concept of *outsider* was that in reality he was searching for an idea that would offer him comfort regarding his own identity as an outsider at Grove High. This concept was as much about him as it was about his students. It appeared to us that he was struggling with a sense of belonging and that he needed to find a way to reconcile his rejection from that community with his own white male identity. One way that he did this was by reading a text that he felt would serve a student like Jason without considering that this text was more about him and his irreconcilable rejection from a community where he felt he should belong.

DiAngelo (2018) problematized this idea of belonging for white people by drawing on her own experience. She posited,

> This belonging is a deep and ever-present feeling that has always been with me. Belonging has settled deep into my consciousness, it shapes my daily thoughts and concerns, what I reach for in life, and what I expect to find. This experience of belonging is so natural that I do not have to think about it. The rare moments in which I don't belong racially come as a surprise—a surprise that I can either enjoy for its novelty or easily avoid if I find it unsettling. (p. 53)

In our discussions and engagement with Jeremy, we always felt that his intentions were commendable but not enough. We knew that in order for Jeremy to have the impact he so longed to have on Jason and other students, he needed to know who he was as an educator, and he needed to truly understand the insidious ways that white supremacy had damaged his own understanding of and relationship to his social world. DiAngelo (2018) noted that "much of white supremacy's power is drawn from its invisibility, the taken-for-granted aspects that underwrite all other political and social contracts" (p. 29). This is what we believe Jeremy was experiencing. Below is a conversation map (see Fig. 3.1) that Jeremy constructed reflecting how students engaged in his course around the difficult conversations that emerged from the two texts that he taught.

*Nessa*

Vanessa Davis, or Nessa, was our third participant. She has faced many personal and professional obstacles from the beginning of the school year.

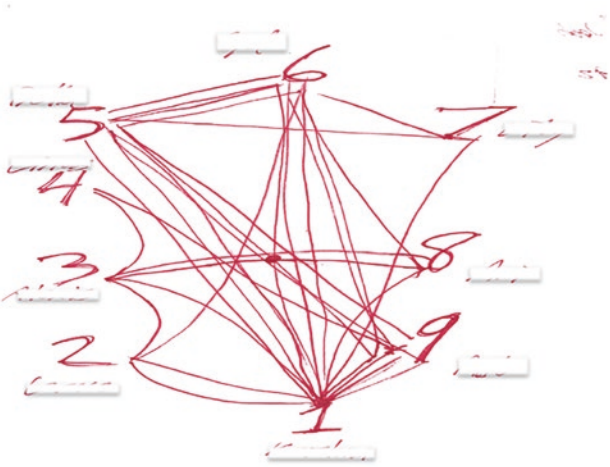


**Fig. 3.1** Jeremy's conversation map

Nessa began her year with many ideas, but unlike Nikki, she struggled to find ways to execute those ideas. She was often frustrated, angry, and on the verge of tears. When asked to express her thoughts on her progress, she used her mapping activity (Fig. 3.2) to explain: "There are roads connecting many of these 'spaces' on which I have drawn hearts. In one direction, the hearts are smaller and less robust, while the hearts going the opposite direction are bigger and bolder. This is to show the 'journey' of my teaching and my 'growth' as a teacher." We believe Nessa's map is reflective of what we mentioned earlier about the process of becoming as a continuous state of ongoing growth and development.

From the beginning of the academic year, Nessa knew she wanted to enact CRSE practices. She shared a few questions with us that were at the heart of her inquiry, which included, "What causes others to remain silent or indifferent to the suffering of others? What are the consequences of racism, sexism, and stereotypes in society? And what prompts action or inaction when a group's rights are being infringed upon?" She wanted to know if empathy could be taught/fostered in her English classroom so that she could address these questions. She used a few texts to explore these ideas—*Night* by Eli Wiesel (2004), *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers (2004), and the film *Sophie's Choice* (1999). She wanted to know if it was possible for her students to place themselves in the shoes of others, if they


**Fig. 3.2** Nessa's mapping activity

could see themselves facing the struggles others had faced, and how they would handle those difficult situations.

The questions Nessa posed about empathy and her interest in ensuring that her white students had the ability to empathize with others was extremely important to her. She spent much of her time lamenting that her students were not always understanding all she was trying to get across and also that some parents had asked for their children to be removed from her class until she completed the teaching of the two books she selected. She could not fully rationalize why her good intentions were met with either indifference or intolerance. The map she drew is representative of the love she has for teaching, her students, and also the community. However, she did not always feel that this love was reciprocated. She

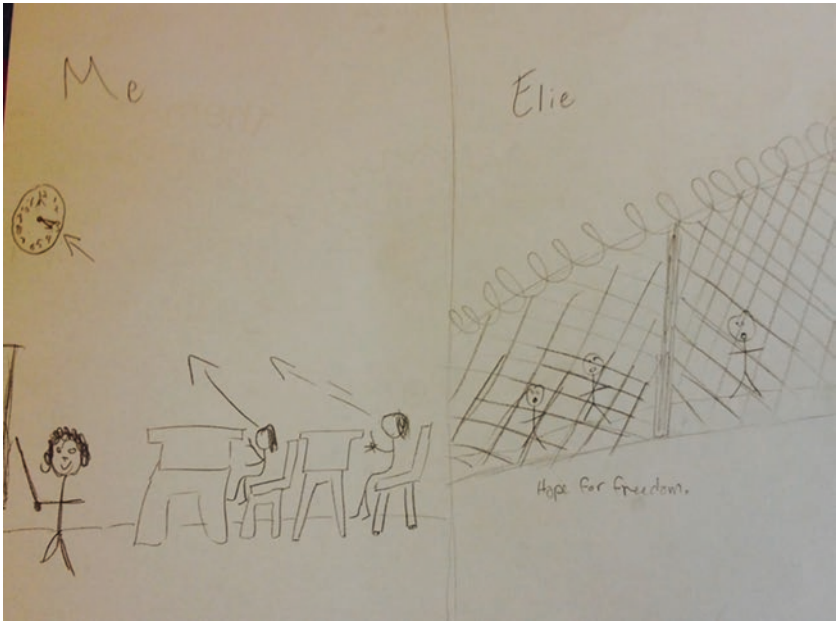


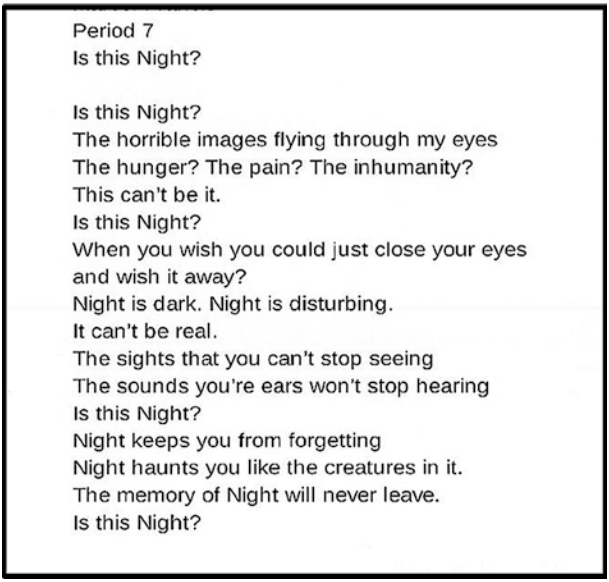

**Fig. 3.3** Drawing demonstrating student placing self in the shoes of others

believed that a unit as simple as one on empathy would have been well received at her school, but she quickly learned that empathy can be selective and is not always extended to all people and all conditions.

In addition to her map, Nessa also captured the voices of her students in a variety of ways that further demonstrated the ways in which they were processing and making sense of her unit focus of empathy. Below Figs. 3.3 and 3.4 also provide the reader insight into the ways that complex course content that centers CRSE are approached, processed, and engaged with by learners.

## Findings

During our work and time with our three interns, three significant findings emerged. Each holds significant implications for other white educators who find themselves willing to engage in CRSE practices. These findings confirm the idea that white educators must be self-reflexive in their work


Period 7
Is this Night?

Is this Night?
The horrible images flying through my eyes
The hunger? The pain? The inhumanity?
This can't be it.
Is this Night?
When you wish you could just close your eyes
and wish it away?
Night is dark. Night is disturbing.
It can't be real.
The sights that you can't stop seeing
The sounds you're ears won't stop hearing
Is this Night?
Night keeps you from forgetting
Night haunts you like the creatures in it.
The memory of Night will never leave.
Is this Night?

**Fig. 3.4** Poetry demonstrating student placing self in the shoes of others

toward becoming CRSE educators. The process of enacting CRSE practices can be isolating and lonely, and there is no immediate reward for this work. Below, we outline what informs each of these findings.

### *White Educators Must Be Self-Reflexive in Their Work Toward Becoming CRSE Educators*

During our time with Nikki, Jeremy, and Nessa, we realized that they each had a genuine commitment to CRSE. This was clearly demonstrated through their practice, engagement, and research. We found them to be genuine in their desire to have an impact on their students and on the profession as a whole. However, we also assessed that the vast majority of their focus was on others and never on self. DiAngelo (2018) says of this, "white people find it very difficult to think about whiteness as a specific state of being that could have an impact on one's life and perceptions" (p. 25). We found that this limited the participants' ability to make authentic connections with their students. Additionally, we found that this negatively impacted their own sense of self as educators. Since each of them

struggled to achieve their goals, they would highlight the factors, obstacles, and individuals that stood in their way, never realizing that they were partly the source of their own limitations.

One idea that emerged from this finding is the awareness that if white educators intend to engage the work of CRSE, they must engage in self-reflexivity. This concept marries well to the idea of becoming, recognizing that while we will never truly achieve expertise in CRSE, reflexivity is a process through which we are always moving toward that goal. This work begins when we ask question such as "how do my own identity, beliefs, practices, assumptions, and behaviors impact and shape outcomes with my students, my teaching, and my engagement with others?" DiAngelo (2018) has noted that "Racism is a structure, not an event" (p. 28). Just as racism is not an event, neither is the work to dismantle it and reclaim equitable CRSE spaces; rather, this work is a process of ongoing excavation, interrogation, and growth.

We believe reflexivity is important in this process and found that the path to CRSE is through constant and continuous reflexivity. In *Pennsylvania Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education Competencies* (Cole-Malott, D. et al. 2021), we describe reflexivity as

> A process of questioning your unexamined assumptions about a wide range of ideas. It demands the interrogation of implicit bias and actively countering those biases when and where they are identified. Reflexivity asks you to step away from your thinking and to determine how your actions, beliefs, and practices shape outcomes as an educator. Reflexivity is actionable; it demands that you take action with what you know.

It is our assessment that if Jeremy, Nessa, Nikki, and other white educators intend to remain committed to becoming critical culturally relevant and sustaining educators they must engage in this process.

### *The Process of Enacting CRSE Practices Can Be Isolating and Lonely*

Our participants began their units with great excitement and enthusiasm. They knew that their own goals and desires to become CRSE educators were important, but they were not prepared for the lack of support or recognition they received in doing this work. Nikki hoped for affirmation from her mentor teacher, and that never came. Nessa hoped that her unit

on empathy would somehow elicit empathy from others, and that also never materialized. Finally, Jeremy strove to be seen for who he was as an educator, and that never occurred. During our time with each of our participants, we found ourselves thinking about the concept of visibility when one engages in critical CRSE work, and we knew as Black women educators (because of our own experiences) that this work is done because it is the most important and necessary work for all young people, our collective futures, and ourselves. We know and understand that the labor involved in this work may never be elevated by those around us, but this work is bigger than any individual or institution—and this is what we hoped to convey to our participants.

Dillard (2021) reminded us that "educators must be well enough to (re)member who they are from the inside out as a central part of the ability to engage in meaningful ways with what culturally relevant and sustaining practices require" (p. 82). Consequently, while the process may have been lonely and isolating for our participants, it is important for them and other white educators engaged in this work to remember their reason why they are committed to the work. Their authentic reason is what will drive the work and their very commitment to it, even when no one is looking.

### *There Is No Immediate Reward for This Work*

When an educator makes a commitment to CRSE work, it is important for them to understand that they are not only investing in their students, but they are also making an investment in themselves. Our participants were often disappointed when they were not celebrated for their choices, recognized for their hard work, or elevated for their efforts. They quickly realized that the choices they had made were met with indifference by their superiors and individuals who they respected.

Therefore, another important finding in our study revealed that there is significant emotional labor involved in the work toward cultural competence. During our meeting with participants, there were tears, anger, frustration, and unsettling feelings of isolation. There is relevant research that speaks to the practical aspects of what it means to teach. Many of the texts that these educators use in teacher preparation programs rely heavily on strategies for effective teaching. Wong et al. (2005) is a great example of such texts. However, there is research and engagement that focuses on the human element of this work. Bell hooks speaks of the importance of "love" (Biana, 2021; Hooks, 1994) in the work of all teachers; Bettina

Love (Dunn & Love, 2020; Love, 2019) speaks of "joy" in the education of Black children; Paulo Freire (Freire, 2021) speaks of critical consciousness; and Cynthia Dillard (Dillard, 2021; Dillard & Okpalaoka, 2013) writes about spirituality. These ideas are not always formally engaged, but our findings reveal that these are important ideals that must be confronted in teacher preparation programs, especially programs that have a focus on preparing CRSE educators. Ayers (2015) posits that

> The rewards of teaching are neither ostentatious or obvious—they are often internal, invisible, and of the moment. But paradoxically, they can be deeper, more lasting…The reward of teaching is knowing that your life makes a difference. (p. 24)

We found that our participants did not yet understand this very idea. They were hopeful that their rewards would be immediate and obvious, and not having any clear indication created internal conflict and uncertainty among our participants.

Each of our interns was well intentioned when they strove to be culturally relevant and sustaining in their theory and practice. They believed that they were doing the right thing by taking on this challenge; however, they were not prepared to face the reality that typically only long-term rewards result from this work. Additionally, the reward is as much for the educators as for their students. Therefore, in order to face the isolation and lack of validation that they will inevitably encounter, CRSE interns need to be equipped with the tools that will allow them to remain committed to and mentally able to support themselves and their students.

## Conclusion

As Black women researchers, teachers, and individuals committed to equity, CRSE, and education systems, we felt a great sense of commitment to our participants as they were on their journey. In our role as consultants at the time, we supported each of our interns by providing research, an outlet for discussing difficult and challenging ideas, and to serve as thought partners as they navigated their way toward becoming culturally relevant and sustaining educators. Furthermore, as Dillard (2021) notes,

> Our work as teachers was not solely about learning and embracing the tenets of culturally relevant sustained teaching, attending professional develop-

> ment on culturally sustained teaching, or marshalling other culturally based curriculum frameworks. It was about reclaiming our own spirits and remembering the humanity and cultural traditions of Black women and people as a precursor to carrying out the deeper cultural and spiritual work of teaching that these frameworks require (p. 140)

We believe that this was also our goal. Our own commitment to CRSE served as a calling. This allowed us to support Nikki, Jeremy, and Nessa in ways that served each of them. We journeyed with them toward becoming culturally relevant and sustaining, and we also understood that this work requires a long-term commitment and ongoing support since the lives and futures of young people are at stake.

For white educators who aim to rise to the occasion toward becoming CRSE, this is a goal that we contend should be an aspiration for all; however, white educators must remember that this work is as much about who they are as it is about the students they intend to teach. In order to thrive on this journey, educators must be reflexive each step of the way, and they must remind themselves of their purpose and the reason for their commitment to this work.

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PART II

# Disrupting Teaching and Learning for Emancipatory Practices

CHAPTER 4

# Diversity-in-Action: From Data to Doing

*Kate E. Kedley*

*At the beginning of the pandemic in the Spring 2020 semester, Ling, an associate professor at Rowan University with origins in China, came to our College of Education diversity group meeting with a disturbing story about her husband, who was also from China. Ling's husband, Wei, was shopping at a grocery store near Rowan University's campus. In precaution of the COVID-19 virus, Wei was wearing a mask over his face. A man approached Wei and began to interrogate him: "Are you a surgeon? Are you a surgeon?" Wei paused and answered, "No. Why?" The man became agitated and belligerent, "If you are not a surgeon, then why are you wearing a mask? Go back to your country!" Wei replied, "I am a US citizen" The man continued: "No, you are not! You don't belong here!" Wei's husband began to explain that at the start of a pandemic, wearing a mask was responsible and good for everyone. The man was still angry, and cut off Wei several times, and continued to yell. Wei walked away to report the incident to a security guard.*

While the chapter was compiled by the author, it was conceptualized through the actions of the Diversity-in-Action committee, and thus is written using the third person plural, in order to indicate most accurately

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our communal process. This path can serve as an example for other College of Education diversity, equity, and inclusion committees who are interested in social justice and anti-racist work and action. In this chapter, we examine social justice and change as experienced by the faculty diversity committee in the College of Education at Rowan University over a 5-year period. Initially, this diversity committee was formed in order to meet university and teacher educator accreditation requirements. In these years, the committee served a mostly administrative purpose—the analysis of data, the writing of reports, and the discussion of curriculum.

However, members of the committee felt constrained by this role. The 15 or so members of the committee were prompted to rethink our place in the College of Education by troubling and tragic events on campus and in the larger community and region, including the murder of George Floyd, responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts on book censorship locally, nationally, and even globally. Thus, the diversity committee intentionally shifted toward a focus on action and change in the College of Education and beyond.

As a group, we desired to move away from analyzing student data and "checking off" an accreditation box and to move toward taking responsibility for our racist educational structures and acting against them. We desired to contribute to forces for change, in solidarity with other individuals and groups, and as a resource for anti-racism and social justice in the College of Education at Rowan University and the South Jersey regional community. This work serves as a testimony of some of our processes, including the opportunities and challenges we faced, and how we moved forward, and where we hope to go.

## The Time and Place of *Diversity-in-Action (DIA)* at Rowan University

Our faculty-led group—called "Diversity-in-Action," or DIA for short—is located in the College of Education at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University is a public research university that has experienced rapid growth in the last decades. This growth was significantly prompted in 1992 by a $100 million dollar donation from Henry M. Rowan, Jr. (Roberts, 2015) to the institution that was then called Glassboro State University. Since that time, the campus has extended from the main campus in Glassboro to the acquisition of two regional medical

schools (in Stratford and Camden, New Jersey) and two community colleges (Burlington County and South Jersey).

As of 2022, Rowan University is classified as an R2 (high research activity) university. Across the multiple campuses, there is a total enrollment of just under 20,000 students. There is also a renewed (within the last decade) focus at Rowan University to garner a reputation as a place that is committed to the appreciation and support of diverse communities. This has been illustrated both institutionally and practically by the implementation of an Office of Social Justice, Inclusion, and Conflict Resolution (SJICR). The SJICR provides programming and educational opportunities for students, staff, faculty, and the community. In 2019, the university announced a new Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) that provides services and programming to the university in order to "expose students to educational opportunities that promote growth, development and appreciation of diverse perspectives through coursework, experiences, and programing" (Rowan University, n.d.). Recently, this new division at Rowan has offered programming that includes a focus on the *1619 Project* (Hannah-Jones, 2019) and a new Rowan University based Center for the Study of Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights (Rowan University, n.d.).

The history of Rowan University as a teaching institution for future teachers and educators is paramount to the College of Education's identity and is included as a main part of the vision of the Diversity-in-Action group. Rowan University was originally founded in 1923 as a "normal" school, or a post-high school institution to train teachers. Eventually the institution transitioned to a 4-year university with multiple colleges, but the identity of the university as originally a teaching institution is certainly central to its reputation, including the choice of a school mascot: a Prof, short for Professors, and represented by an owl. The College of Education and Rowan University as an institution will celebrate its reputation in training teachers for a 100th centennial anniversary during 2023.

Parallel to other campus initiatives at Rowan University, the College of Education specifically focuses on access, success, and equity. The vision and tagline specifying this, posted visibly throughout the College and on the College's website, are:

> The College of Education will be a leading force in preparing and supporting reflective practitioners who use education to transform our global society. *Access, Success, and Equity…Turning Research into Practice*

## *Diversity-in-Action (DIA)* Current Context at Rowan University

The Diversity-in-Action faculty-led group within the College of Education at Rowan University is the most recent iteration of already existing faculty groups that focused on diversity and equality initiatives within the college. Initially, the faculty-led group was founded as part of a requirement to meet national teacher-educator certification through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The group was open to faculty throughout the college and served as part of the service component of a faculty member's position; graduate students, staff, and non-tenure track faculty were also welcome to join or participate. In the first years of this committee, the group was successful in completing a number of initiatives by hosting conferences and panels and founding a similar but parallel group for undergraduate and graduate students. There were generally between 12 and 15 members. However, there was a concern that a significant amount of time and energy was spent analyzing data, writing reports, and discussing how to move forward without the ability to act or move forward in practice.

In 2017, Donald J. Trump took office as the President of the United States, and many social justice issues were forced to the forefront of conversations across campuses and institutions (if they already weren't), especially surrounding immigration, LGBTQ rights, sexism, and racism (see Anbinder, 2019; Fitzsimons, 2020). Simultaneously, events transpired on the campus and in the local community that drew our attention and firmed our desire to take action. Three specific events occurred that prompted the group to re-evaluate our role on campus and in the community.

### *Event That Disrupted Diversity Committee #1*

In October 2019, five Glassboro, New Jersey (municipal, but not campus) police officers ordered two Black students from Rowan University to exit their cars and held them at gunpoint (Walsh, 2018). This occurred in a university parking lot and was witnessed by students moving between classes. The Glassboro police officers were investigating a shoplifting incident nearby (but not on campus), when a "concerned citizen" approached them and told them that a Black male with a gun had driven away from the shoplifting scene in a Dodge Charger. The two Black students driving a similar car were pulled over minutes later on campus, handcuffed, and

held for about 35 min, during the middle of the day and while classes were in session, while hundreds of other students and the university community looked on and circulated. No gun was found in the car, and the students were eventually released with no charges. There was much concern and outcry about these events on campus, indicated by social media and protests, and it resulted in continuing conversations about institutional racism and violence toward students of color, especially toward Black students on campus. In 2021, the Glassboro police officers were found to have not violated the students' rights in this incident (Walsh, 2021).

### *Event That Disrupted Diversity Committee #2*

The second incident involving Rowan University in the Fall 2018 semester occurred just a few weeks after the two Black students were held at gunpoint by police. The second incident was also reported nationally in publications from *Sports Illustrated* (Chavez, 2018) to *The New York Times* (Minsberg, 2018). Late in the Fall 2018 semester, the Rowan University cross-country teams were reportedly told they were "distracting" to the football team during the practices, which were held simultaneously. The "distracting" comment was specifically directed toward the women's cross-country team, who often practiced in sports bras. The cross-country and the football team utilized the same campus area; the football team practiced on the football field, while the cross-country teams practiced in the same facility by utilizing the oval track and the spaces outside of the football field. After the interaction, the cross-country teams were asked to either move facilities or change practice times, in order to avoid conflict with the football team. There was a sense the cross-country teams were asked not because of scheduling or space conflicts, but because of the "distracting" presence of the women's cross-country team in sports bras.

### *Event That Disrupted Diversity Committee #3*

The final and tragic series of events was related to mental health and suicide on Rowan University's campus. This is a sad trend which is also representative of a larger crisis nationwide on university campuses; suicide is actually the second leading cause of death among college students (Kella, 2021). *The New York Times* reported on a high number of student suicides and other deaths in the Rowan University campus community (Tully & Gold, 2019). This resulted in campus-wide discussions on wellness and

mental health support at all levels of Rowan University, including in the College of Education. Given Rowan University's rapid growth in recent decades, there were concerns voiced about whether or not mental health support and education were keeping up with that growth.

These three events on campus, among other instances nationwide, disrupted the Diversity-in-Action's focus on data and discussion. In the midst of other tragic events based in racist, sexist, classist, nativist, and homophobic structures throughout the country, our faculty-led diversity group began to engage in questions about how to move beyond talking toward action in order to contest and disrupt these structures. We felt we frequently had stalled discussions more than we responded quickly and firmly to these events. We felt constrained by a logistical role that made our primary purpose one of analyzing data, writing reports, and discussing curriculum.

Our objective was to overcome the real and perceived barriers we encountered when we responded to the events on campus. Ideally, we would move toward being an action-oriented group and not one simply existing in order to meet an accreditation requirement.

This chapter serves as a statement of evidence of our processes, our actions, our ideas, and our desire to have a responsible impact on challenging racist and sexist structures. Our goals have been to move away from analyzing student data and "checking off" an accreditation box to taking responsibility for our racist educational structures, and to become a force for change and a resource for anti-racism and social justice in the College of Education community at Rowan University. The three events elaborated on above that disrupted our complacency, along with the knowledge that higher educational structures (including institutions such as Rowan) were built upon and are sustained by racism, prompted us to move in a direction focused on praxis.

## First Steps: From Faculty Diversity Committee to Diversity-in-Action

*In October of 2019, a group of 12 members sat around tables in a conference room at our regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Diversity Committee. An assessment coordinator for the College of Education was in attendance to walk us through thick packets of data on enrollment, class objectives, and course descriptions. We were given the task of looking through the data and*

*matching it with the diversity and equity requirement for teacher education accreditation as a college. At the end of the meeting, we let out a collective sigh and sat in silence. Someone tentatively noted that it seemed strange to be crunching numbers when we wanted to respond to campus and national issues more directly. Another member followed up with a desire to model what a "teacher-activist" looks like for our own pre-service teachers.*

Beginning in the Fall 2019, and after the three events above that prompted us to think about change, we intentionally shifted our focus to action and resource curating. We met with the College of Education's Dean in order to clarify our mission and vision and thought about ways to reintroduce the group to the College of Education given our new ideas. First, we rejected our "committee" label, deeming it too stale, institutional, and passive, and changed our name to Diversity-in-Action. We made a Tik-Tok style video that was played to the College of Education at a college-wide meeting. This short video explained our new mission and asked for others who were interested to join or support us. We offered the rationale behind the shift in name to Diversity-in-Action, noting that the name change would serve as a reminder to our members and to our broader College of Education colleagues that our mission was praxis, and that all were welcome to hold us to that standard. Praxis as defined by Freire (1993) is to engage in knowledge production and action in tandem. Praxis entails (a) recognizing oppression and its causes, (b) understanding oppression as a situation which can be transformed, and (c) acting in solidarity to transform it. Praxis is not possible if dialogue and action are not in tandem, and as the critical pedagogy frameworks suggests, a multiplicity of voices must influence working toward praxis.

Thus, we did not want to act without first understanding complex topics, issues, and events, as that would be irresponsible and even violent. However, we also could not stop at simply learning and talking, yet then doing nothing. The idea was to learn and act together—to keep up with what students, staff, and faculty experience in Rowan spaces, and how they are marginalized officially and unofficially—in a sort of double front against racist and sexist instances and the structures that produce and maintain them on Rowan University's campus and beyond.

Secondly, we desired to be in a position that would allow us to move quicker than official university structures and policies were permitting us. We had, in the past, tried to publish statements on social media in response to events on campus. We had also tried to create documents and posters to print in response to our perspective as a diversity committee. Both of

these proved difficult to accomplish, as they were in conflict with official policy about approval of social media posts, and the purchase, cost, and printing of Rowan materials. Thus, we brainstormed ways to be more flexible in our role as a "committee" and more adept at "acting" and speaking out against injustices. We explored campus requirements and policies in our capacity as faculty members and decided how and when we would find ways to challenge, disrupt, or avoid requirements that kept us silent and from acting. In these first few months, during our identity-shift to Diversity-in-Action, we also received a small financial budget from the Dean's Office in the College of Education in order to help us move toward our mission. The utilization of this budget is in flux, as we haven't determined the most concrete ways to move funding toward praxis. However, we perpetually look for ways.

In the next section, I share three initiatives that we, as a group, have worked to implement in the College of Education at Rowan University over the last 3 years since our shift to Diversity-in-Action, and the complications and successes of each.

## *Diversity in Action* in Action #1—C⁴: Coffee, Critical Conversations, and Community

*Kate, an assistant professor and faculty member of Diversity-in-Action, received an email from a student who was not on Kate's class roster but was a year from student teaching and then graduating in the pre-service teacher program at Rowan University. The student had seen diversity activities advertised around campus, including a poster produced by Diversity-in-Action, and sought out Kate because Kate is an out queer professor in the College of Education. This wasn't the first time Kate (or other LGBTQ+ identified professors in the college) had received emails of this type. Kate also frequently received emails from students letting them know Kate was the first out and queer teacher or professor they had ever had. This undergraduate student shared with Kate that they were a closeted member of the LGBTQ community and feared that they would never be able to be an "out" teacher in South Jersey, and thus were rethinking their entire career choices and education.*

Kate brought this conversation to the Diversity-in-Action group, and with other faculty, spoke formally and informally about how to respond to this issue. The amount of LGBTQ+ identified professors in

Diversity-in-Action alone indicated that there was certainly space for open and queer-identified people in the field of education. However, if any Rowan University pre-service teacher still sensed that in K-12 schools they would not be welcome, we understood there was an issue and that pre-service teachers needed support and guidance in moving forward. Diversity-in-Action wanted to find a way to reach out to this student, other students, and regional schools in order to support LGBTQ+ identified teachers and educators. We wanted to act quickly, responsibly, and visibly in a way that would show our support and advocacy for queer teachers in K-12 and higher educational settings.

The result was that we organized an impromptu pop-up panel of LGBTQ+ identified K-12 educators that was held in the College of Education's largest space, the James Hall Atrium. A pop-up event is a temporary and spontaneous event, often in a unique place with a lot of foot traffic, and the James Hall Atrium met that requirement. We advertised briefly on social media and with flyers and then showed up at the appointed time with signs and rainbow flags advertising the pop-up. We had reached out to and asked two LGBTQ-identified teachers in New Jersey public schools to be an active part of the pop-up and participate in a question and answer session with the Rowan University community. However, other people who arrived were also welcome to actively participate as they desired. We intentionally scheduled the pop-up for a time between classes when students would be passing through and could stay or participate without drawing a lot of attention to themselves. We also intentionally held the pop-up in a hallway and open space (the James Hall Atrium) so that no one had to enter or exit in front of a group of people in case they were afraid of "outing" themselves in front of others. More than 60 students, staff, faculty, and community members ended up attending, staying, participating, and asking questions for the panel of LGBTQ+ identified educators. Questions included how to "come out" at school and to co-workers, parents, and students; how to best respect pronouns of students and others; and how to address gendered bathrooms and locker rooms in K-12 school settings.

The success (in terms of participation, excitement, and feedback across the college) and timing of this event—which stemmed directly from a student's initiative in speaking out with concerns—led Diversity-in-Action to think more about how we could respond in public ways with resources, connection, and advocacy for students and pre-service teachers. We had led events and activities at college-wide meetings, hosted film showings,

and now this recent pop-up was well-received. There seemed to be a desire and a space for these conversations. How could Diversity-in-Action respond flexibly and quickly but also have the structures in place that would ensure our response was impactful and responsible? How could we respond to the changing needs and interests of Rowan's teaching and educator community?

This initial pop-up led us to plan and hold more pop-up style events, where people could come and go as they pleased, and the structure was flexible. We decided that an appointed faculty member or student would guide the conversation; however, if something happened locally or regionally that we needed to address, we could easily shift into that subject. The objective was to keep our educational community in constant and perpetual conversation about critical events. We could share ideas and expertise, learn about current events and responses to them, and push ourselves and our community to disrupt racist, sexist, classist, nationalist, and homophobic structures within educational spaces.

We labeled these talks $C^4$ (C to the fourth), to mean "Coffee, Critical Conversations, and Community." Like the initial pop-up, we planned these $C^4$ pop-ups for a time when people were milling about the James Hall Atrium during passing times. We appointed a Diversity-in-Action member or two to bring some guiding questions on a relevant and critical topic, had fresh coffee available, and hoped people would see us in these conversations-in-progress, drop in, and participate. Ideally, the conversations would create a culture in the College of Education and beyond where difficult conversations were encouraged. Teachers would see that part of a "teacher-identity" was engaging in these hard conversations and then looking for ways to challenge and disrupt the inequities and injustices as they were uncovered and explored.

After only a few months of $C^4$s, the world and Rowan University was met with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social distancing. Like many educational institutions across the country and the world, this meant moving many activities to online spaces. We shifted quickly to online $C^4$s. To generate awareness and to encourage faculty participation in terms of topics and participation, we sent the College of Education faculty a Google form seeking input:

> The Rowan University College of Education's faculty diversity group (Diversity in Action, or DIA), headed by Dr. Susan Browne (LLSE) is offering online EDUChats (a panel-like and interactive discussion) on topics of

> social justice and online education. Please answer the following (brief!) questions to help guide our planning. We hope to be inclusive of issues and topics relevant to our students, staff, and faculty!

After going over the collected forms, we quickly set up an online C[4] schedule. This allowed faculty and the college community to have critical conversations even though we were not together physically.

Interest from outside the Diversity-in-Action committee has varied over the months, especially throughout the pandemic and the subsequent shift online—15–20 participants in attendance is an average. Beyond just the momentary meet up, the sessions seem to generate interest, connections, and reaching out to others relative to the topic beyond the session itself. Table 4.1 shows which topics were generated by the survey and added to the agenda, the facilitator of the topic, and the date the session was held.

## *Diversity in Action* in Action #2: Clarifying and Providing Resources to Support *DIA*'s Vision

We noticed collectively that resources and information about social justice issues for pre-service Rowan University teachers seemed either unavailable or difficult to access. Students were frequently surprised that there was a free food distribution site on campus, hadn't heard about protests on campus, or didn't know of support groups through other diversity initiatives. Many of our pre-service teachers commute to campus, or are in practicums off campus, and don't interact with many other spaces at Rowan University. Thus, they often miss information that would be otherwise easily accessible. As teachers and educators, we felt we needed to make our goals and our stances visible and create access to already existing structures and statements.

Our first step in this direction was built on revising a poster the committee had worked on before the shift to "Diversity-in-Action." When we worked on the initial poster in 2018, we knew it would generate a lot of discussion, both in terms of praise and critique, and we welcomed the feedback. The text of the original poster from 2018 was:

This Rowan Prof works to meet the learning and life needs of all students and:

**Table 4.1** The dates, topics/titles, and facilitators of the DIA's C[4] pop-up series of talks

| *Date* | *Topic/title* | *Facilitator* |
|---|---|---|
| Dec 2019 | Open topic—held in the James Hall Atrium and topics brought by attendees | All DIA members |
| Feb 2020 | Open topic—held in the James Hall Atrium and topics brought by attendees | All DIA members |
| **Adjusted and moved online because of the COVID-19 pandemic** | | |
| Oct 2020 | Maintaining emotional wellness: is there an app for that? | Dr. Kara Ieva |
| Nov 2020 | What does a purposeful space to discuss racial justice look like? | Dr. Raquel Wright-Mair |
| Dec 2020 | What do bananas, climate change & your T-shirt have in common? | Dr. Kate Kedley |
| Mar 2021 | Designing an inclusive syllabus | Dr. Brent Elder |
| May 2021 | Creating inclusive language policies | Dr. Kate Seltzer |
| Dec 2021 | How can a college of education respond to Backlash against critical race theory? | Dr. Kate Seltzer<br>Dr. Midge Madden |

1. Knows racism exists/works against implicit bias directed toward students of color/values movements for racial justice.
2. Opposes English-only policies/normalizes multilingualism/asserts that no human being is illegal.
3. Rejects religious intolerance/recognizes all belief systems/values an individual's right to traditions.
4. Values relationship equality/affirms sexual and gender identity in its varied expressions/believes that love is love.
5. Realizes that feminism is intersectional/knows that feminism is dynamic/understands feminist work as perpetual.
6. Endorses accessibility and affordability in higher public education.

We added to the bottom of the poster an additional line noting, "This is a living document that is open to suggestions, comments, and critique. To be involved in future discussions and printed versions, please email" the College of Education diversity committee.

We were pleased because people did, in fact, send critical and dynamic feedback via email and social media about the poster. As it was published on social media, a number of other institutions across the country saw it

on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and asked if they could use our poster as a guide in making their own posters. However, we also received constructive criticism about how to better state our goals in order to be clearer in our quest for justice; this was the idea in the first place: we didn't want the statement to be permanent. We wanted to perpetually interrogate our own stance. For example, the Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education in the College of Education at Rowan University met as a department. They discussed making the poster more accessible to readers and more representative and inclusive of all learners, as is their area of expertise and research. They offered extensive feedback, including the addition of two new tenets:

Helps all students access content by planning for all learning preferences/realizes a spectrum of human experience

Dismantles policies, attitudes, and physical barriers that deny meaningful access/rejects ableism practices that segregate and marginalize

Figure 4.1 shows both versions of the poster (the original and the 2.0). Many of the doors and walls through the College of Education have these posters hung on them, and we are in continued conversation with the community about how the 3.0 version will look.

Our second step in changing the physical space in the College of Education was building an actual permanent space that students passing through the building, heading to and from class, visiting the Reading Clinic or the pre-school, or attending professors' office hours, would encounter every day. This space, we envisioned, would be a one-stop place with information about groups on campus, free meals, professors to connect with based on interest or issue, and resources to help students learn about everything from anti-racist curriculum to learning about the communities they teach in. We also hoped that the space would not simply be a kiosk or a bulletin board, but a place with couches, posters, technology, and books, where students could sit and visit, study, meet with instructors, and hold relevant events, both informal and formal. We additionally planned to have professors "host" it at certain times during the week, at a time when the professor would be there to chat informally with students about whatever topics they felt were relevant.

The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed the planning and implementation of this space. However, we have secured furniture, a space, and funding for other items to be included. We are planning a small food pantry in connection with the larger food pantry on campus, with snacks and

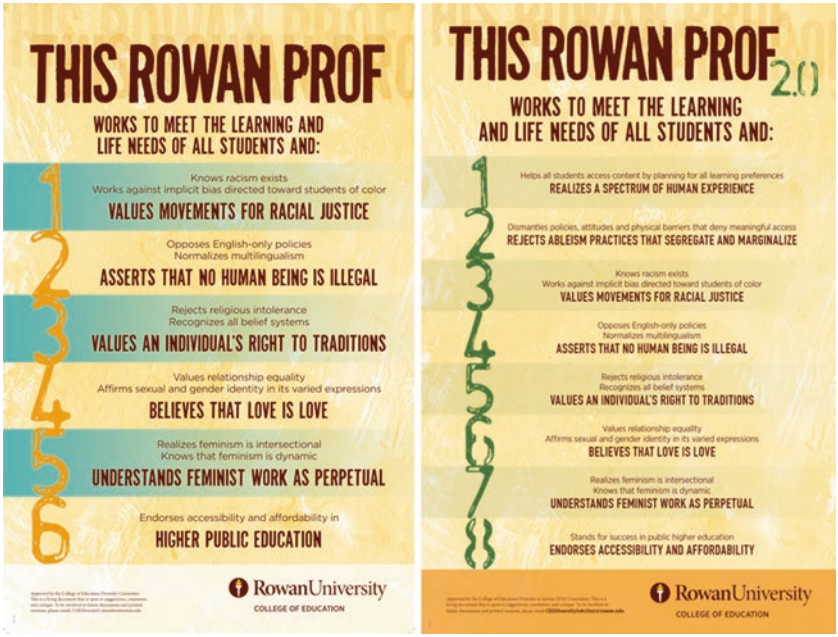


**Fig. 4.1** Two versions of DIA's "living" poster, one from 2018, and the version 2.0

pop-up lunches. There will be information for teachers and students about clubs, events, and support and advocacy on campus.

As we move forward, we continue to see input from students on this ongoing project. Figure 4.2 is an example of a pamphlet and flier we created, accessible with a QR code, that allowed the College of Education community to participate in its planning.

The third instance in terms of clarifying our stance and space is a statement Diversity-in-Action made condemning violence against Asians and Asian-Americans. This statement came in response to rising rates of violence against Asian-Americans, as illustrated by statistics and by the anecdote shared by Diversity-in-Action member Ling at the onset of this chapter.

In March 2021, a man killed eight people in a spa near Atlanta, Georgia, six of whom were Asian or Asian-American women, and violence against people of Asian descent in the United States has increased significantly in

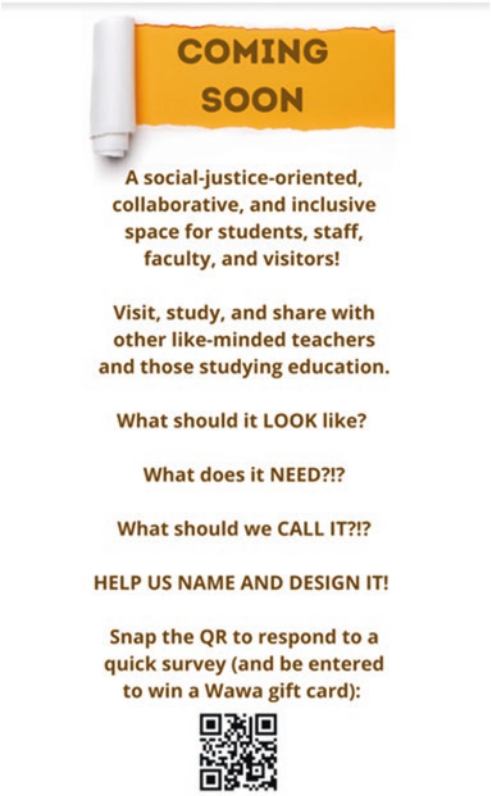


**Fig. 4.2** An advertisement seeking responses to help plan a Diversity-in-Action space in the College of Education

recent years (Venkatraman, 2021). We anticipated that teachers and students would have questions and want to read more about preparing for conversations with others, including with family members and K-12 students. We quickly convened a Zoom meeting, drafted a statement, clarified our stances, and debated on how to best circulate this note. The statement also included links with resources, background information, and groups focusing on support for Asian and Pacific Islander communities. By making our stance clear, we hoped that others in the community may be empowered to speak up and against racists acts: *The DIA Committee unequivocally condemns this and other acts of violence that represent patterns of intensifying racism toward Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders in this country, and continues a history of white supremacy and*

*gender-based violence*. Figure 4.3 is the entire statement including links to resources.

## *Diversity in Action* in Action #3: Perpetual Learning to Inform our Actions

Our final initiative in moving from a data-oriented committee to a Diversity-in-Action group has been to seek opportunities to prompt learning and intellectual discussion beyond the group itself. We know that time and access always seem to be a factor in participating, reading, debating, critiquing, and learning. Thus, we discussed ways we could provide multiple opportunities for the College of Education community to participate in critical conversations. This would allow more people to challenge their thinking into a more social-justice oriented space, regardless of their schedule or already existing expertise.

In order to do this, we sought out the newly formed Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Rowan University. This Division offers a "Foundations Certificate" for faculty and staff, which is awarded after completing seven modules over the course of a year. The topics range from "implicit bias" to "systems of power and privilege." Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these workshops were held in person. The sessions were lively and interactive, with real-life scenarios, debate, and discussions. However, Diversity-in-Action felt as if not many members of the College of Education were attending. Some mentioned scheduling conflicts, and others indicated that they didn't "know" enough to go to these workshops. Still others weren't comfortable attending with people across campus they might not know well. Others thought the workshops would be more relevant if they were geared toward an educator perspective, specifically. Thus, we reached out to the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and asked if they could bring the workshops directly to our college space, with the support of the Diversity-in-Action group. By hosting these workshops "in-house," over 15 more members of the College of Education have been able to participate in furthering their education and understanding on issues of diversity and equity.

Finally, in another effort at perpetual education surrounding social justice, the Diversity-in-Action group has also been active in organizing book readings, speakers, and film showings for the College of Education community. We have utilized our new budget to order copies of selected books

March 19, 2021

Dear College of Education Colleagues,

The CED Diversity in Action (DIA) Committee stands in solidarity with Asian and Asian American students, faculty, and staff as we mourn the deaths of eight people, including six women of Asian descent, who were murdered in Atlanta this week. We say their names and mourn with their families and communities: Daoyou Feng, Hyun J. Grant, Suncha Kim, Paul Andre Michels, Soon C. Park, Xiaojie Tan, Delaina Ashley Yaun, and Yong A. Yue.

The DIA Committee unequivocally condemns this and other acts of violence that represent patterns of intensifying racism towards Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders in this country, and continues a history of white supremacy and gender-based violence.

These events bring to the forefront the historical underpinnings of racial division and xenophobia in our nation. In this time of sadness and outrage, let us stand in solidarity with those in the Asian American community, ready to speak out against hatred and violence, and committed to advancing the core values that guide our vision and mission.

As we are a committee whose mission is to *act* in ways that promote and support movement toward social justice and equity, we offer a few resources for those of you who, like us, wish to learn from and teach about these events and this history. We encourage you to look into these organizations, actions, and teaching resources and to (re)commit to the values that uphold our College.

Sincerely,

DIA

1. A national statement and ways of taking action from the National Asian Pacific - American Women's Forum
2. Stop Asian Hate: Connie Wun on Atlanta Spa Killings, Gender Violence & Spike in Anti-Asian Attacks
3. Teaching resources from the organization Learning for Justice:
    - How to Respond to Coronavirus Racism
    - After Atlanta: Teaching about Asian American Identity and History
    - Min Jee's Lunch

**Fig. 4.3** A statement condemning violence against Asians and Asian-Americans, and resources to support faculty and students to uphold the anti-racist values of the College of Education

for all interested readers and invited the authors of these books to speak with us in virtual spaces. In our most recent book club, about 20 participants from the College of Education volunteered to participate, and received copies of *Reading, Writing, and Racism: Disrupting Whiteness in Teacher Education and in the Classroom* by Bree Picower, published in 2021. The group met three times at different points in the book to discuss the book, and its relevance in K-12 and higher classrooms, and at Rowan University. Author Bree Picower attended the final meeting, spoke with the faculty, and participated in the activities. Other selected texts in the last few years included *The Yellow House: A Memoir*, by Sarah M. Broom, and the film *Quest*, directed by Rowan University associate professor in the Department of Radio, TV, Film, Jonathan Olshefski. Director Olshefski also attended one of the film showings we hosted and took questions and comments from viewers.

## *Diversity in Action* Moving Forward

Our Diversity-in-Action group over the years has perpetually questioned our role in a College of Education dedicated to success, access, and equity. Are we (as a group) here to keep things the same and support the status quo? Are we here to report on events and issues after the fact? Ultimately, we decided that no, we wanted a more active role; we wanted to actively participate in creating more inclusive spaces, having a broader impact, and representing a more dynamic College of Education at Rowan University. We don't have a desire to "return to normal" after the pandemic; in fact, we believe that normal was not and is not good enough. We believe that the status quo has been violent and dangerous for many students, staff, and faculty, and has excluded many others from the spaces we occupy. We have learned that sometimes this requires us to do things on the margins, and not get caught up in institutional policy and practice, and to look for new and creative ways of "acting" and praxis. Ultimately, by simply moving forward, we have created a space for this type of group and these types of activities.

At the forefront of Diversity-in-Action is shaping the identity of a preservice teacher in mainstream educational and institutional settings. How can we ensure teachers are supported and that they also learn to support their future students in terms of race, gender, class, and sexuality? What happens when school policies and practices are in conflict with that support they want to give? How can teachers' identities be provoked to build

a more conscientious and politically aware teaching force at Rowan, in the South Jersey region, and beyond?

We have not always been successful in our endeavors through Diversity-in-Action, but neither have we failed. We have learned, however, about a need to be perpetually ready to shift, speak up, challenge, ask for, demand, provide, accept, and work.

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CHAPTER 5

# On "Ceding Space": Pushing Back on Idealized Whiteness to Foster Freedom for Students of Color

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## Emancipatory and Antiracist Pedagogy and Teaching

Emancipatory pedagogy and teaching and antiracist pedagogy and teaching are rooted in two different paradigms of thought but are connected through a fundamental understanding of what it means to teach and learn in sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts where interlocking systems of oppression are operating alongside white supremacist ideals and logics. At its core, emancipatory pedagogy views education as a medium for developing critical consciousness, democratic engagement in society, and as a practice of freedom; hence, education is a process of liberation—from defining and seeing oneself through heteronormative and

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oppressive gazes while working to live one's full humanity. This type of pedagogy aims to foster humanization, heightened critical consciousness, and establish a problem-posing (Freire, 2021) education system. Early Black scholars such as George W. Ellis (1917), Anna Julia Cooper (1930), and W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) believed that emancipatory pedagogy in education could be used as a weapon to fight racist social, political, and economic structures that perpetuated Black peoples' oppression. Further, emancipatory pedagogy underscored the constant struggle for freedom for Black people while also equipping students to be change agents for transformative change. Educators such as Cooper, Woodson, and others enacted a liberatory pedagogy that not only resisted white supremacist propaganda in schools but also affirmed Black joy, wholeness, and thriving.

The process of emancipation consists of demystifying the workings of power because it is only when we know how power works and how it works upon us that we can begin to liberate ourselves and others from it—partly through our reading of the world around us (Freire, 2021). For white teachers, understanding the workings of power can be difficult to unearth, given their racial identification and socialization in a world that is immersed in a system of racial privilege and power from which they benefit. Early scholars (Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 2000; Shor, 1987) define emancipatory pedagogy as deeply rooted in the idea that education is central to creating a just and democratic society. Emancipatory teaching is predicated on negotiating and transforming relationships between educators and students, integrating students' epistemologies into instruction, and deconstructing institutional structures for schooling and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state (McLaren, 2000). Historically, Black educators have enacted emancipatory pedagogies and practices in community schools that served Black children and affirmed their ways of knowing and being. An emancipatory pedagogical approach is critical for teachers to enact in the classroom in order to help students interrogate and consider their participation in transforming systems and structures that work to marginalize and disenfranchise some while advantaging others. Some scholars define emancipatory pedagogy and teaching as having three aims: humanization, critical consciousness-raising, and the establishment of a problem-posing education system.

More contemporary writers, such as Noah de Lissovoy (2010), have introduced ideas that complement the early conceptualizations of emancipatory pedagogy by Black scholars and other critical scholars. De Lissovoy challenges scholars to rethink education and emancipation to consider a renewed emancipatory pedagogy that recognizes an essential equality between students and teachers and a liberatory agency that uncovers and builds on students' effectiveness as beings against domination. Further, he posits an understanding of emancipation as the discovery and affirmation of the persistent integrity and survival of beings in struggle. For teachers and students to be in an authentic relationship in a system of domination (like the current educational system), the transformative act for teachers is to create relationships with students *outside* of that logic. Thus, emancipatory teaching "speaks to human beings, against the official idiom and curriculum that do not believe or know they are there and that see them as only the occasion for assessment, management, or 'interaction'" (p. 210). Similar to the tradition of early Black scholars, de Lissovoy advances the idea that teachers' pedagogy and practice should model for students how to resist domination and equip them with the tools to do so. As de Lissovoy argues, the teacher and student work to find each other through a set of difficulties produced not only by schooling but also by common understanding of what it is to be, to learn, and to know.

Antiracist pedagogy takes a different approach to teaching and learning by emphasizing "race, racism, power, and structural oppression in a capitalist society" (Kailin, 1999, p. 82). Julie Kailin's (1999) approach to this concept in teacher education prompts teachers to examine the historical roots of institutional racism in the United States in addition to the ways that curricula and schools as institutions support racism. Antiracist pedagogy is a pedagogical perspective that "names and confronts white supremacy, not white people per se" (p. 82) and has as a goal to understand the problem of racism, deconstruct it, and actively work against it through teaching and learning. In her 2002 book, Kailin provides an analysis of capitalism's role in maintaining racial inequality. Further, antiracist pedagogy is an orientation toward teaching and learning that is concerned with the differential experiences of historical inequalities and sociopolitical marginalization for People of Color (Upadhyay et al., 2021), particularly under capitalism. While Kailin (2002) is not the first to talk about

antiracism in education, her book provides an analysis of capitalism's role in maintaining racial inequality. This is an important concept for white teachers (and all teachers) to understand and locate in their pedagogy and practice as they work to teach Students of Color and in Communities of Color where people have been historically and persistently oppressed by racial capitalism. Dei (1996) describes antiracist pedagogy as "an action oriented strategy for institutional [and] systemic change to address racism and the interlocking systems of oppression" (p. 25, as cited in Upadhyay et al., 2021). An evolving discourse on antiracist practice has underscored what it means to teach in ways that move teachers to "become agents of antiracist change" (Kailin, 2002, p. 122).

Kailin and other white scholars are not the first to pioneer antiracist pedagogy and teaching. We agree with many Black scholars that antiracist pedagogy and teaching was pioneered by Black educators in the nineteenth century; their pedagogical practices were fundamentally antiracist and are more akin to what Givens calls a fugitive pedagogy (Givens, 2021). This antiracist and emancipatory pedagogy and practice centered solidarity and collectivity alongside resistance against white domination. We posit that on its own, novel, more contemporary conceptions of antiracist pedagogy and teaching cannot fully attend to the academic and personal needs of Black and Brown youth in K-12 schools. Further, white teachers' uptake of emancipatory teaching can easily fall into white saviorism if one is not careful about their constructions of freedom and their role in it for Students of Color. From a fugitivity perspective, white teachers' pedagogy and practice become abolitionist-oriented to provide the necessary conditions for Students of Color to experience joy, wholeness, and freedom from domination in schooling. Further, this perspective counters viewing whiteness as the benchmark for goodness, smartness, and success and centers the ways that communities of color conceptualize these ideas as starting points for Students of Color learning and achievement.

## Whiteness as Goodness, Smartness, and Success

Leonardo and Broderick (2011) argued that "Whiteness is nothing but false and oppressive means that it exists only as a tool for oppression" (p. 2225). Despite, or perhaps because of this, the project of U.S. schooling is oriented toward reproducing the ideology of whiteness. We can see this in the ways that schools and teachers take up other exclusionary ideologies, such as *goodness* (Moon, 1998) or *innocence* (Annamma, 2015),

*smartness* (Kolano, 2016; Leonardo and Broderick, 2011; Staiger, 2004) and *success* (Montoya et al., 2016), all of which intersect with whiteness (Annamma, 2015; Leonardo and Broderick, 2011, p. 2228). Because for some to be good, others must be bad; for some to be innocent, others must be guilty; for some to be smart, others must be "not-so-smart"; and for some to be successful, others must be failures, all of these are ideologies of exclusion, and they all gesture toward the only group that has been consistently historically constructed and represented as good, innocent, smart, and successful: white people. Leonardo and Broderick (2011) went on to argue that "To the extent that both racial and intellectual supremacy are taught, they are pedagogical. This is the great promise of this work—that of pedagogical possibility for the disruption of oppressive ideological systems such as smartness [and whiteness]" (p. 2227). In order for pedagogies to be truly antiracist and emancipatory, they must be oriented toward the abolition of these ideologies. However, all too often, we see classrooms and teachers reproducing them instead.

While not all white people ascribe to the ideology of whiteness, it might be particularly difficult for teachers from white middle-class backgrounds to imagine other ways of knowing and being that do not aspire to whiteness. Research shows that many teachers, especially white teachers, view their Students of Color through a deficit lens (Carter Andrews et al., 2019a; Pyscher & Lozenski, 2014; Sleeter, 2017). This may be a result of the "white spatial imaginary" which "portrays the properly gendered prosperous suburban home as the privileged moral geography of the nation" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 13), reinforcing the link between whiteness and goodness, smartness, etc. Teachers want success for their students. If they are not deeply critical of received notions of success, which are already aligned with whiteness, they may reproduce the ideology of whiteness by pushing their students to be good, smart, and successful in ways that counter their and their community's conceptions of these ideas.

Harris (1995) describes whiteness as a form of property, granting material and symbolic advantage to those who possess it and oppressing those who do not. Leonardo and Broderick argue that smartness is also a form of property, constructed against those who are not-so-smart, which often includes disabled people. They added that "This property only has value as a commodity if there are others who continue to be denied access to its possession" (p. 2221). When teachers educate their students toward a desire for the property of whiteness and smartness, they are pushing them to "become suboppressors in an oppressive system, and rather than

challenge it, they [will be] content with sharing in its spoils" (p. 2224); this practice does not further antiracist goals in schooling. Encouraging students to aspire to whiteness, even when coded as aspiring to goodness, smartness, and success, reinforces these ideologies because by their definitions, in order for some to access them, others must be kept out. Even teachers with antiracist commitments might be pushing their students to win the racial capitalist race, rather than stepping back and questioning the whole game. For example, Graham (2020) found that, at a no-excuses charter school designed to support traditional measures of success, such as test scores and college acceptance, classroom management practices that emphasized teacher control and student conformity discouraged students from developing the critical skills necessary to understand or combat inequality. "Rather than leading kids in wrestling with complex challenges or coming up with solutions, they emphasize understanding and complying with existing rules and structures" (p. 673). When schools teach kids that being a scholar or a leader means full compliance with white-normed models of "good" behavior, white-normed measures of intelligence such as standardized testing, and acceptance to elite, predominantly white colleges (many of which were founded on profits from slavery, or even kept enslaved workers (Mustaffa, 2017)), schools are teaching students to idealize and aspire to whiteness—and evading the responsibility of teaching students to understand, critique, and resist white supremacy.

When schools and teachers idealize whiteness, they push Students of Color to aspire to something they can never fully achieve, no matter how good, smart, or successful they are. The United States is not a meritocracy, and the property of whiteness is not equal opportunity. Students of Color are keenly aware of this, as Carter Andrews et al. (2019b) argued in an examination of the school experiences of adolescent Black girls. The researchers found that Black girls and young women "work tirelessly to negotiate the expectations of them, but those goalposts constantly move" (p. 2545). These expectations included "acting like a lady," following dress codes that were not enforced for White girls or any boys, and disproving "the myth of Black anti-intellectualism." All of this proved "impossible," however, because "normative notions of girlhood and femininity are constructed along Eurocentric and patriarchal lines" (p. 2554), so no matter how ladylike they behaved, what they wore, or how well they performed in their classes, these Black girls would never achieve the unspoken ideal upon which all of their schools' expectations were founded: whiteness.

Dumas (2014) described the doubled suffering this impossible setup causes among marginalized students: "First, the drudgery and futility of the school experience itself, and second, through the loss of hope for oneself individually, and for the group, collectively, in terms of improved social recognition and economic stability" (p. 8). When teachers set Students of Color up to aspire to whiteness, the kids know they are being set up to fail, and this may damage their relationships with their teachers and school community. Dumas argues that this is especially relevant to Black students who, by the logic of whiteness ideology, are denied the possibility of citizenship, or even humanity (Dumas, 2016). Promoting whiteness, even through the apparently race-neutral ideologies of *smartness*, *goodness*, and *success,* is not only discouraging but actually dehumanizing, for students who are always already excluded from whiteness.

## White Performative Emotions Undermining Antiracist and Emancipatory Pedagogies

Leonardo (2002) reminds us that whiteness and white people are not synonymous; however, white people hold advantages from whiteness "because it benefits and privileges them" (p. 32) when they choose to profit off of power created and protected by oppressive systems. These benefits are not limited to the privileges received within the larger systems, but on individual levels, these advantages are manifested through white performative emotions that can lead to harm of the historicized Other (Jones, 2022). Where whiteness possesses power, white emotionality is concerned with "feeling" power (Boler, 1999). Particularly in school systems, white teachers have to work intentionally to not be (consciously or unconsciously) concerned with feeling power in their approach to and interactions with Students of Color. An example of white emotions "feeling" power within society is the sympathy given to Kyle Rittenhouse who hysterically cried during his trial begging for mercy, which resulted in the Jury finding him not guilty of all charges (Campaomor, 2021). In contrast, despite George Floyd's incessant cries out to his mother when a police officer had his knee on his neck, he was labeled a criminal and murdered (Collins, 2020). In these two examples, white tears and white performative emotions carried so much power that they overshadowed the fact that Rittenhouse murdered two people and injured another. George Floyd's Black tears meant little to nothing as he didn't even live to stand trial.

An example of white emotions "feeling" power in schools is white teachers who intentionally choose to evade topics that discuss race and racism so that they do not feel guilty teaching about the violence of white supremacy against People of Color to their Students of Color (Thandeka, 2009). Disguised within this performative emotion is the need for the teacher to hold on to power. If the teacher discusses race and racism then they will have to acknowledge that white power, both historically and presently, is often obtained due to harms of the historicized Other (Bartz & Kritsonis, 2019). This realization is in direct opposition to the notions of white perfectionism found within schools that positions whiteness as "good" (Moon, 1998), as "the standard to which all other behaviors are judged" (Lynch, 2018, p. 22), and the standard to which all behaviors should aspire.

Given this understanding of whiteness "feeling" power, we (the authors) wonder in what ways do white teachers' emotions (e.g., white guilt, white fear, white wokeness) as performance (Giroux, 1997) undermine antiracist and emancipatory pedagogies? We focus specifically on the ways white fear and white wokeness hinder white teachers from implementing antiracist and emancipatory pedagogies authentically, as we consider these emotions tools that work to operate as violence against Students of Color. As Matias and Mackey (2016) noted, emotions are a state of being, and the very essence of whiteness "feeling" power limits, if not inhibits altogether, one from engaging with antiracist pedagogies.

## White Fear

The first emotion with which we engage is white teachers "feeling" fear in their classrooms. White fear within schools manifests in a variety of ways. For some teachers, white fear impacts the disciplinary practices of Students of Color. Baggett and Andrzejewski (2020) maintained that three types of white fear (material fear, embodied fear, and rhetorical fear) work together to over-discipline Black students and other Students of Color. The authors defined material fear as the loss of tangible items and concrete resources. Embodied fear is characterized as the violent stereotypes of Black people as perpetuated by white supremacy that positions Black people as inferior to whites. Lastly, rhetorical fear is described as the fear white people possess of being labeled as a racist or bigot.

A contemporary term known as "the Karen" describes white women who weaponize their privilege by conceptualizing fictitious complaints

that situate People of Color as dangerous (Wellington, 2021). When white teachers perform as "Karens," by over disciplining their Students of Color, they are embodying an emotive white fear narrative that perceives People of Color as "inferior, less civilized, less human, and more animal than whites" (Lensmire, 2010, p. 166). This fear, though illusory, becomes a justification for white teachers to impose harsh discipline policies on their Students of Color. Frankenberg (1993) argued that the fear white people experience of People of Color merges an inversion of reality with a notion that non-white people are in a perpetual state of pursuing white power, oftentimes through violence. Some white teachers believe their Students of Color are "pursuing power" in the classroom when their students exhibit behaviors that defy white perfection (Carter Andrews et al., 2019b) such as "talking back," or even talking "loudly." In response to this performative fear of losing control or power in their classrooms, white teachers might inflict harmful discipline policies against their Students of Color (Baggett and Andrzejewski, 2020; Carter Andrews et al., 2019b; Morris, 2007). White fear performing as a catalyst to enact harmful disciplinary practices prevents teachers from employing emancipatory practices because it perpetuates low expectations of their Students of Color. Assuming their students' behavior is "bad" or "not normal" because it may be different from how whiteness claims students should behave (Carter Andrews et al., 2019b; Morris & Perry, 2017) prohibits teachers from holding high expectations of their students—a key component of emancipatory pedagogies (Cooper, 1930; Ellis, 1917, Du Bois, 1935).

For other teachers, white fear manifests through rhetorical fear or the fear that someone will label them a racist. Tatum (1997) asserted that white people would rather express that they live in a colorblind society where a discussion of race and its harmful effects do not exist because "they hold a belief that talking about race makes things worse—that it promotes racism and/or is racist within itself" (p. 182). Research on white teachers demonstrates that they would rather avoid (Segall & Garrett, 2013) or "reroute" (Garrett, 2011) their lessons from engaging with issues of race for fear of implicating themselves in broader social problems. An example of this is illustrated in Garrett's (2011) study where white teachers rerouted their lessons from a discussion of racism to other "isms" (e.g., sexism, classism, capitalism), because they felt more comfortable discussing other social problems and because it distanced themselves from racist acts implemented by racist people. Key components of antiracist pedagogies include acknowledging that racial injustices exist and, in turn,

challenging those systems of inequalities (Kailin, 2002; Pollock, 2008). When white teachers actively choose to prevaricate discussions of race in their classrooms, it becomes impossible to enact antiracist pedagogies because the teacher fails to acknowledge that we live in a racist society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Subsequently, an evasion of discussing race also inhibits teachers from enacting emancipatory pedagogies, because students' critical consciousness to dismantle oppressive systems cannot be cultivated if the oppressive systems are never taught and critiqued.

This rhetorical fear can also impact white teachers' pedagogies when they choose to implement colorblind pedagogies (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). For fear of being labeled racist, white teachers might profess "I don't see color, I just see children." This notion is rooted in white ideologies of teacher professionalism that proclaims all students *should be treated equally*, but when white teachers profess to not see color, what they are doing is performing in fear of being labeled "bad," "racist," or "unprofessional" (Choi, 2008). Colorblind pedagogies prevent the implementation of antiracist pedagogies because colorblind pedagogies fail to acknowledge students' "lived experiences shaped along racial lines" (Pollock, 2008, p. 15). Maintaining power through *fairness* and treating everyone *equally* benefits white teachers by portraying them as "good," but this portrayal of whiteness as "good" and performative fear of being "bad" results in the marginalization of the lived racial disparities experienced by their Students of Color.

In addition to white teachers' fear of being identified as racist, Boucher (2020) wrote that "White teachers fear losing the status of white supremacy, but they also fear their neighbors if they stand against it; that is the trap of whiteness" (p. 243). For white teachers in this conundrum, even if they wanted to employ antiracist pedagogies in their classrooms, they may feel trepidation to do so for fear that their white peers might abandon them, or white parents might report them. Even more, Boucher (2020) maintained white teachers' fear of being ostracized by their white peers and their fear of losing access to the power of white supremacy outweighs standing in solidarity with their Students of Color. To avoid unacceptance by their white peers, many white teachers disengage from teaching about race and racism. Again, both antiracist and emancipatory pedagogies necessitate the acknowledgment of race, but for white teachers to truly embody antiracist practices, they also must be willing to surrender the privileges afforded to them by being white (Leonardo, 2002). This means that white teachers have to be willing to be ostracized and they have to be

willing to experience discomfort if they want to authentically implement antiracist practices and stand in solidarity with their Students of Color. If white teachers fear losing the power associated with whiteness, then enacting antiracist and emancipatory pedagogies becomes unattainable. White teachers who can cede space—as Shange offers as a pedagogical stance—can create learning environments that decenter whiteness, minimize their power, and enable students to be agentive in their own learning.

## White Wokeness

Where white fear prevents white teachers from engaging in discussions of race, white wokeness sits on the other end of the performative emotion continuum. Before the 2014 police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, the popular term "woke" or the phrase "stay woke" was limited to people well versed in African American Vernacular English (AAVE). During the Ferguson protests, "stay woke" became a national, even international, cautionary term of the #BlackLivesMatter movement where activists urged everyone to be on the watch for police brutality (Romano, 2020). In 2016, Childish Gambino's hit record *Redbone* expanded the meaning of "staying woke" to a general term of being aware of anything which one may consider unjust. Today, "woke" is a widely used term to signal that one understands something.

White people, including teachers, have appropriated the term "woke" to signal their nuanced understandings of the harms of race and racism in America. When we reference white teachers being woke, we are referring to those teachers who think that because of something they have done, such as attending a protest or rally, or because of their proximity to People of Color, perhaps having a Black friend or family member, they are exempt from exhibiting any racist behavior. Boyce (2021) described being white and woke as the "affect and accompanying behaviors associated with becoming convinced that one has done one's part in making the world a better place" (p. 161). In this sense, to be white and woke is harmful to Students of Color because it undermines antiracist pedagogies, which recognize the racialized lived experiences of People of Color. When white teachers claim to be woke, it creates a false equivalence between white teachers and their Students of Color. In her study of white teachers who self-proclaimed themselves to be woke, Jones (2020) found that these teachers performed as "being woke" to demonstrate to their students that they can understand and relate to the oppressive experiences that their

Students of Color had endured. Claiming to understand their students' experiences because they are woke, similar to colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), undermines the violence that their Students of Color have experienced.

To be woke and white is to also maintain power through contentment—a contentment that assumes when one is woke, they have reached the zenith of becoming an antiracist (Boyce, 2021). This ideology of white wokeness as an apogee undermines antiracist pedagogies because it posits that antiracist work has an endpoint. These teachers believe they do not have to implement antiracist pedagogies into their classrooms because their wokeness, alone, is antiracist enough. Embodying antiracist pedagogies is an ongoing and lifelong process to which teachers must commit themselves (Pollock, 2008). For white teachers, this ongoing process includes constantly interrogating their biases, actively learning about different forms of racism that exist in both public and private life, and utilizing their privilege to dismantle racism (Kishimoto, 2018). As Blow (2021) noted in his critique of white wokeness, when white people cling to being woke as the pinnacle of antiracism, they are abandoning the activist roots from which it was created.

## Antiracist and Emancipatory Pedagogies and Practices in Action

The performative nature of white fear and white wokeness function in opposition to our understandings of antiracist and emancipatory pedagogies. Matias et al. (2014) maintained that one cannot truly be antiracist if teachers do not work "to engage in a genuine process of antiracism that acknowledges the emotional complexities of whiteness, which undergird teachers' dispositions" (p. 323). The authors asserted that before white teachers can implement antiracist pedagogies, emancipatory pedagogies, or any other social justice-oriented pedagogies, they must free themselves of their "repressed raced emotions" (p. 332). Here, we offer a few examples of antiracist and emancipatory pedagogies and practices in action as examples of pushing back on idealized whiteness to foster freedom for Students of Color.

In her multi-year ethnography of a social justice-oriented school in San Francisco, *Progressive Dystopia,* Shange (2019) encountered teachers whose "repressed raced emotions" prevented them from effectively

implementing the school's antiracist mission. One white female teacher became enraged in a staff meeting about students lingering in the hallways, proclaiming "This is not your [the students'] school, this is our [the teachers'] school … I'm not going to provide therapy in the hallway. I'm not going to think about your trauma. Get in your classroom—that is your only choice" (p. 78). Shange argued that this teacher showed "an active denial of Black suffering" (p. 96) and "an imperial view of the school space" (p. 79) but remained unaware of her own "repressed race emotions" because they were unfolding within the context of what was assumed to be an antiracist space. Shange went on to describe how centering the needs of Black students could help educators imagine a school setting that is *not* normed to whiteness, idealizing whiteness, or pushing students to aspire to whiteness. In the same study, another, non-Black male Teacher of Color interrupts a Black female teacher's class to reprimand the teacher because her class is, according to him, too loud. The Black female teacher, reflecting back on that moment, "rereads" her students' loudness

> as not only "being a kid," but also being in one's body. She pushes the responsibility back on Robeson as an institution, not to transform the loud kids into quiet ones, but to "offer space"—cede space, give room(s), release authority, subvert settlement—for us all to be loud together. For Zahra, the risk of policing loud student behavior is losing young people's interest in "social justice"—their experiences in hallways and classrooms provide a hint of what a revolutionary future could look, sound, and feel like, and she wants it to be 'a community.' (p. 106).

Shange imagined with this Black female teacher a school that truly centered the wholeness, joy, and possibility of revolutionary futurity of Black children.

Sabzalian (2019) also offered a vision of schooling that does not idealize whiteness but instead is designed to "recognize and affirm sovereignty and self-determination" of Indigenous students and their communities (p. 215). Similar to Shange's vision of a school that would "cede space … release authority, subvert settlement," Sabzalian, while acknowledging that schools are by nature colonial institutions built on stolen land, nevertheless envisioned that white models of authority and control could be replaced by "a relational practice of care, commitment, courage, and connectedness" (p. 216). One example that Sabzalian gives comes from a class

on Indigenous art, taught by white teachers, in which "students and teachers experienced respect and responsibility in action. They did so, not by paying homage to some timeless notion of Indigeneity, but through actual interactions with Indigenous peoples and nations" (p. 189). The class partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to design and paint a mural in a historic Forest Service bunkhouse. "Because the proposed mural design involved Native artistic elements, the tribal liaison told teachers they would need to run the design by tribal representatives for approval" (p. 188). The mural designs that the class originally proposed included stereotypical images and symbols and were not approved by the tribal representatives.

The white teachers initially struggled with their emotional response to being told no. "The hard part of the process," one white teacher reported, expressing disappointment, "was that we wanted it to honor Native American people, but we didn't want it to just be a 'bland nature scene'" (p. 189). The teacher's idea of what it means to "honor" Native people came into conflict with how tribal representatives wanted their tribe to be represented—which was not at all. Sabzalian argued that this process of being refused by the tribe was generative for the white teachers and students, who learned, through their disappointment, a concrete lesson in tribal sovereignty. One teacher reported:

> I think it is better though. I learned a lot doing the murals because a lot of things we wanted to create didn't get included. It was good for me to recognize that *my idea of what I wanted didn't even matter* … Now I don't think I would try to do a Native American art project and we're not Native American. (p. 191, emphasis added)

This is an example of ceding space—white teachers giving over their idea of what they wanted, releasing their authority, and moving through their disappointment toward a recognition of Native sovereignty and self-determination. Sabzalian challenges us to create "a democratic education that takes seriously tribal sovereignty" (p. 192), which by definition would require educators and institutions to cede space—including land, power, and control—to the desires and aspirations of Native communities. Sabzalian writes that "The tensions, uncertainty, and possibilities that might surface if schools took seriously tribal sovereignty are unforeseen, but we should struggle for such processes anyway" (p. 195). Part of

ceding space is relinquishing control, living with uncertainty, and pushing for a better world that has never existed and is therefore unknown.

A final example of antiracist pedagogy and practice that we would like to offer up comes from Alyssa Hadley Dunn's (2022) latest book *Teaching on Days After*. In this text, Dunn offers multiple examples of teachers ceding space to the desires of their students after traumatic racial events in their communities and the larger society. One specific example is from a Chicago (Illinois) Public Schools middle school teacher, Quinn, who shifted her lesson plans in the aftermath of the trial of Jason Van Dyke, the Chicago police offer who murdered 17-year-old Laquan McDonald in 2014. In her seventh-grade classroom, Quinn opted for several student-led discussions of the trial and the larger topic of racial (in)justice. While she had already planned an English Language Arts unit on Black Lives Matter, Quinn made adjustments based on the outcome of the trial and the direction that conversations were taking among her students. Her revised essential question for the unit was: How can we respond to injustice in our community? Quinn had students "use a variety of texts (podcasts, videos, novels, news articles) to gain understanding of injustice in their community, and how they can respond to it. They will be able to participate in, execute, and facilitate productive conversations about topics that may be emotional or controversial" (p. 165). Students were able to write original realistic fiction stories about (in)justice and activism. Dunn describes the care that went into this teacher's planning to ensure "students' criticality and discussion skills were well supported." (p. 165). This 11-week unit catered to students' need to combine the personal, political, and intellectual in ways that cultivated their critical consciousness-raising and agency in their own fights against racial (in)justice. Further, Quinn put aside her own potential need to control the flow of the classroom and evolution of students' ideas about police brutality and violence against Black bodies in order to provide a classroom space that actively allowed students to examine race and racism at institutional and systemic levels.

## Concluding Thoughts

While this chapter has detailed the ways that white teachers' ontologies and performative emotions can and do undermine efforts at antiracist and emancipatory teaching and learning in K-12 schools, we are teacher educators who remain committed to preparing and supporting teachers to enact pedagogies and practices that advance racially and socially just

outcomes for all students, particularly those who have been most marginalized by educational systems. While we provide some examples of antiracist teaching here that help readers understand the significance of ceding space, there exists a healthy body of research for teachers and teacher educators to draw from for improved teacher preparation and K-12 practice. The work of ceding space and resisting idealized whiteness in the K-12 classroom requires critical self-reflection about one's positions of power and the commitment to empowering Students of Color to be agents of their own learning. Ceding space without engaging additional forms of culturally sustaining and responsive practices that counter racism will not foster learning environments that amplify the brilliance of Students of Color. Efforts to build and sustain socially just educational environments for all students requires abolishing systemic racism in schools and classrooms; it is our best action for fostering freedom for Students of Color.

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CHAPTER 6

# Beyond Teaching Racial Content: Antiracist Pedagogy as Implementing Antiracist Practices

*Kyoko Kishimoto*

> The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy (hooks, 1994, p. 12).

The COVID-19 pandemic and its disproportionate impact on communities of color revealed to the larger public the systemic racism in healthcare, housing, employment, education, and other intersecting institutions. The uprising following the killing of George Floyd forced mainstream society to acknowledge systemic racism in the criminal justice system. Kendi's *How to be an antiracist* (2019), and these social events pushed race, antiracism, and systemic racism into mainstream discussions. During the summer of 2020, interest in diversity trainings increased (McGregor, 2020),

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corporations started making antiracism statements and eliminating blatantly racist names and logos, and books on race and racism entered *The New York Times* best-seller lists. Application of antiracist pedagogy in different educational levels, courses, and disciplines exploded in journal articles and books. University libraries and Teaching and Learning Centers have begun to create resource websites for antiracist pedagogy.

While the discussion of antiracism and systemic racism by mainstream society was a positive shift, the possibility existed of this being a temporary trend and getting retrenched and coopted by those who want to maintain the unequal status quo. Sure enough, the backlash against discussion of race and systemic racism was swift as voter suppression policies and bans against teaching critical race theory (CRT) were passed in multiple states. In this social and political context, why *do* antiracist pedagogy? Why *antiracist* pedagogy when there are other pedagogies? When political forces try to obscure and make racism invisible, antiracist pedagogy intentionally exposes and highlights it. When everything, including education, is made political, implementing antiracist pedagogy becomes a necessary and strategic action to prevent the perpetuation of racism because merely trying not to be racist is not enough.

## Pedagogies and Impact of Social and Political Contexts

Many pedagogies exist that incorporate diversity or discussions of race and other forms of oppression in the curriculum: select examples, discussed later in this chapter, are multicultural education, cultural proficiency (cultural competency, cultural fluency), culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed pedagogy, social justice education, decolonizing pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, and antiracist pedagogy. Their goals vary from increasing knowledge and developing critical analytical skills to impacting social change. Defining each pedagogy and its history is beyond the scope of this chapter. More important is understanding the larger social and political context in education and how these pedagogies are implemented.

In an attempt to visually understand how pedagogies that incorporate diversity or discussions of race and other forms of oppression in the curriculum relate or compare to one another, I have created a Diversity and Equity Pedagogies Continuum (DEP Continuum, Fig. 6.1), which I will describe in detail throughout the remainder of this chapter. The placement of the pedagogy is based on implementation rather than their intent

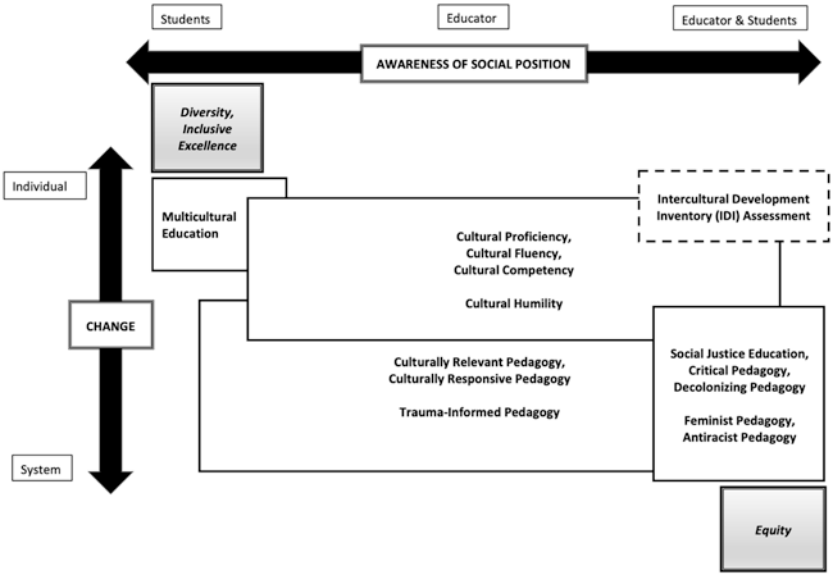


**Fig. 6.1** Diversity and equity pedagogies (DEP) continuum

or goal, which can be highjacked by social forces that attempt to water down discussions of racism and prevent systemic change. It is important to note that not all existing pedagogies are listed in the DEP Continuum—it includes only select pedagogies, with particular attention to the ones antiracist pedagogy is often conflated with. Also, the pedagogy's placement in the DEP Continuum is not meant to be definitive or hierarchical—it can shift vertically or horizontally on the "Individual/System Change" and "Social Position" continuums based on how the educator implements it.

The vertical axis on the DEP Continuum indicates whether the approach or pedagogy focuses on individual change or systemic change. The horizontal axis looks at whether the approach or pedagogy focuses on the students', educator's, or both educator's and students' awareness of their social position.[1] Values of institutions are included in the gray boxes.

[1] Awareness of social position is not simply about whether an individual knows how they are racialized in U.S. society. Awareness occurs when the individual acknowledges the role they play in a racist society, starts to take responsibility, and commits to social change.

On the upper left-hand corner, we see "Diversity and Inclusive Excellence." Multiculturalism, diversity, inclusion, and inclusive excellence have been buzzwords because an institution can increase diversity without challenging systemic racism and therefore maintain the status quo. The focus on equal opportunity and inclusion is done on the dominant group's terms without sharing decision-making power (McNair et al., 2020, p. 5). The lack of race or racism in the term makes it popular. Because it is seen as less confrontational and, as Ahmed notes, "associated with commercial and professional success," "diversity can be a way of doing advantage, or becoming more advantaged, rather than challenging disadvantage" (2012, p. 78). Individuals (particularly students) may be expected to change (e.g., in diversity courses), but the goal is not systemic or institutional change. On the lower right-hand corner, we see "Equity." More recently, the phrase "diversity, equity, and inclusion" is being used in higher education institutions. With an equity[2] lens, the institution acknowledges that racial disparities are caused by systemic racism. It tries to interrupt the policies and rules within the institution so that people of color and other marginalized groups can be empowered and have more successful outcomes. All members of the institution are expected to become aware of their social positions, and systemic change is the goal.

The different pedagogies and approaches are in boxes with solid outlines. These pedagogies overlap with one another and are not mutually exclusive from each other. Where the pedagogy is situated in the DEP Continuum depends on how the teacher or professor implements the pedagogy. Even within a particular pedagogy, there is a wide range in terms of whether the teacher or professor focuses on individual or systemic change, or whether they focus on only students, faculty, or both faculty and students, increasing their awareness of their social positions. Society and politics also influence what happens in the classroom and the implementation of pedagogies (and therefore the placement on the DEP Continuum).

[2] Equality and equity should not be conflated. Equality is providing equal opportunity and treating everybody the same. But applying this color-blind approach when racial disparities exist benefits only the dominant group. Equity is acknowledging that racial disparities exist because of systemic racism and empowering groups of color by operationalizing "parity in representation and outcomes for racially minoritized groups" (Bensimon, 2007; Bensimon & Malcom, 2012, as cited in McNair et al., 2020, p. 55).

**Multicultural education**[3] exposes students to cultural diversity with "the major goal … to help students develop decision-making skills so that they can become effective change agents in contemporary society" (Banks, 1997, p. 1). However, in the context of the 1980s backlash against gains made by civil rights and other social movements, multiculturalism in the U.S. has come to mean celebrating diversity without talking about race (Gordon & Newfield, 1996). In that social climate, multicultural education's goal of "helping students to acquire the competencies and commitments to participate in effective civic action in order to create equitable national societies" (Banks, 1997, p. 29) has been diluted and misinterpreted to exposing (especially white) students to superficial cultural differences without talking about race. Hammond (2017) highlights how multicultural education focuses on "celebrating diversity" and promoting "social harmony" through building sympathy in individuals rather than encouraging systemic change. Hence, multicultural education is located on the upper left-hand corner, closer to "Diversity and Inclusive Excellence."

**Cultural proficiency, cultural fluency, and cultural competency** are concepts that came out of the healthcare industry and are prominently implemented in disciplines such as social work (Danso, 2018) and nursing (Shen, 2015). These approaches focus on how the practitioner can become culturally competent so they can provide efficient and effective services to diverse clients. While these approaches may acknowledge systemic issues, the focus is on individual change of the practitioner and increasing their cultural competency. For some practitioners, this also involves increasing awareness of their own racial identity, taking responsibility for the power they hold in society, and making a commitment to social change. Therefore, cultural proficiency, cultural fluency, and cultural competency are placed on the DEP Continuum where individual change and educator's social position meet.

The **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI**) assessment, developed by Hammer et al. (2003), is placed in a box with dotted outlines. IDI is not a pedagogy or an approach, but an assessment of **cultural competency**. Multiple assessment models exist, but the IDI assessment was included here due to its popularity among corporations and educational institutions. The 50-item questionnaire helps an individual understand

[3] For the history, goals, trends, research, and application of multicultural education, see Banks and Banks (2004).

their intercultural competency level by revealing the gap between one's own understanding of their cultural competency level and the assessment results. An IDI-qualified administrator then helps the individual interpret their score so they can work on unlearning their biases. This assessment is about individual change, and it can be done by anybody, whether they are educators or students. However, as an assessment tool for individuals, IDI is not about systemic change and is placed in the upper right-hand corner.

Critics of **cultural competency** cite its lack of attention to power analysis and call for a cultural competency that also addresses power differences and social justice (St. Onge, 2012) or **cultural humility** instead (Danso, 2018). Cultural humility "entails a lifelong process of commitment to self-reflection and analysis, to redressing power imbalances in the physician–patient relationship, and to developing mutually beneficial, nonpaternalistic advocacy partnerships with individuals and communities" (Danso, 2018, pp. 421–422). While agreeing that cultural competency needs to address systemic racism and other forms of oppression, Danso argues against replacing it with cultural humility, as an existing framework (i.e., anti-oppressive practice) already addresses those issues. However, even though pressure may exist to analyze systemic oppression, using the words culture or anti-oppression rather than antiracism have impacts. Ladhani and Sitter (2020) analyze the decline in antiracist practice after Canadian social work education's shift from antiracism to anti-oppressive practice. The shift is attributed to the backlash against antiracist education in the mid to late 1990s based on critiques such as its narrow focus on race (Collins et al., 2000 and Heron, 2004 as cited in Ladhani & Sitter, 2020, p. 57). This backlash has led to impacts such as "the lack of explicit visibility of anti-racism within social work education and institutional policy" (Jeffery, 2005 as cited in Ladhani & Sitter, 2020, p. 58). It has also led to the use of "diversity management and competency language" that "construct a positive institutional image" (McMohan, 2007 and Yee & Wagner, 2013 as cited in Ladhani & Sitter, 2020, p. 58). In response to the watering down of discussions of systemic racism, Ladhani and Sitter advocate for the revival of antiracism in social work.

According to Hammond (2017), culturally responsive teaching is different from multicultural education and social justice education because of its focus on the "cognitive development of under-served students." **Culturally relevant theory**, developed by Ladson-Billings, is a theoretical model that "not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical

perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (1995, p. 469). Contrary to multicultural education that "serve to exoticize diverse students as 'other'" (p. 483), in culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers encourage students' "academic success and cultural competence" and help them "recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities" (p. 476).

Building on Ladson-Billings, Gay focused on instruction and defined **culturally responsive teaching** as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (2002, p. 106). According to Gay, there are five essential elements to culturally responsive teaching: "developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, demonstrating caring and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically and diverse students, and responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction" (p. 106).[4] She critiques the trends in the school curriculum which avoid discussions of racism and power (p. 108). Hammond (2015) uses brain theory to explain how culturally responsive teaching can be implemented effectively. **Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP)** requires that the teacher has cultural competence to improve the learning capacity and resilience of students. By focusing on the emotional and cognitive aspects of the students' learning, the goal of CRP is to increase the independent learning of students who are educationally marginalized (Hammond, 2015). The majority of the CRP has been implemented in primary and secondary education but is increasingly being applied in higher education. More recently, **culturally sustaining pedagogy** calls for not just drawing from students' languages, cultures, and identities but "seek[ing] to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 1).

In the DEP Continuum, CRP holds a very wide range on the "Individual/System Change" and "Social Position" continuums. Some CRP practitioners mainly focus on student inclusivity or increasing the learning capacity of the students. However, the pedagogical practices that are attempts to empower students can be done without the faculty being aware of their social position or the curriculum being about celebrating cultures rather than critiquing power relations (Sleeter, 2012, p. 568).

[4] For more details on culturally responsive teaching, see Gay (2010).

Therefore, some CRP practitioners can be positioned on the upper left-hand corner. Other CRP practitioners—those who recognize the need to develop white students' ability to acknowledge and address racism, are more reflective of their own social positions, are aware of the impact of racism and institutional racism, and are interested in enacting systemic change—are positioned closer to the bottom right-hand corner, overlapping with social justice education.

According to Sleeter (2012), the rise of neoliberalism, standardized tests, and other trends in education have led to the marginalization of culturally responsive pedagogy, seen in the "persistent faulty and simplistic conception" of CRP, "too little research connecting its use with student achievement," and "elite and white fear of losing national and global hegemony" (p. 568). This has led to the simplification of CRP to "cultural celebration, trivialization, essentializing culture, and substituting cultural for political analysis of inequalities" (p. 568).

Not using the term antiracist in the pedagogy can have unintended negative consequences. Galloway et al. (2019) interviewed educators in the Pacific Northwest who were teaching in high schools that had made a commitment to practicing culturally responsive pedagogy. In the interviews, these educators defined culturally responsive pedagogy as individual teaching practices, such as being inclusive, building relationships, and bringing students' cultures and voices into the curriculum. They, however, did not refer to analysis of race, power, structural racism, or inequities until they were asked for the definition of antiracist pedagogy. Therefore, Galloway et al. argue that not mentioning race within culturally responsive pedagogy is creating unintended impacts of reinforcing the status quo by allowing some teachers to avoid discussions of race and racism.

**Trauma-informed pedagogy** is based on trauma-informed care developed by Harris and Fallot (2001), expanded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2014), and adapted into higher education by Carello and Butler (2015) (Marquart & Báez, 2021, pp. 63–64). Trauma-informed pedagogy has six principles[5] and its goal is to support student success by "teach[ing] self-determination and resiliency" (O'Connor et al., 2014, as cited in Blitz et al., 2020, p. 114). This

[5] According to Marquart and Báez (2021), the six principles include "physical, emotional, social, and academic respect; trustworthiness and transparency; support and connection; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice, and choice; cultural, historical, and gender contexts; and resilience, growth, and change" (p. 64).

process could also increase students' awareness of their social positionality. Faculty can also increase awareness of their social positionality as "[t]rauma-informed approaches emphasize strengths-based and systems-focused interventions (Blitz et al., 2013) that can challenge stereotyping and deficit thinking while directing supportive responses that teach prosocial behavior and build resiliency" (Blitz et al., 2020, p. 118). Depending on the educator, trauma-informed pedagogy could also be more than individual change. Through "[e]xpanded dialogue on the impact of structural racism and the structural components of poverty," trauma-informed pedagogy "can breakdown [sic.] stereotypes and promote engagement in social justice actions that can lead to meaningful systemic change" (p. 119). Like CRP, trauma-informed pedagogy can be located in a wide range in the DEP Continuum, depending on how the educator implements it.

Since the fall of 2020, many states in the United States have been banning the teaching of critical race theory (CRT),[6] which is mischaracterized as making white students feel uncomfortable about their heritage. DiAngelo (2018) describes white fragility as the discomfort and defensive responses by white people who are not prepared to talk about race. Manifestations of white people's discomfort and "fight or flight" response to talking about racism may be explained by "applying clinical understandings of trauma—in particular, neurophysiological responses to perceived threats—to the manifestations of white fragility" (Roubos, 2016, abstract). DiAngelo and Roubos are working to find ways for white people to constructively address race and racism, but their ideas can be appropriated. To conflate "white trauma" with white fragility will be to highjack trauma-informed pedagogy, centering whiteness again and further marginalizing people of color and discussions of racism. Anti-CRT groups who insist discussions of racism are an attack on whiteness are weaponizing white discomfort to claim white victimhood or "white trauma." Rather than hiding behind the soft languages of multiculturalism or color-blindness, attacks on critical race theory are more aggressive, portraying whiteness as a victimized identity and preventing discussions of racism for the comfort of white students through public policies (Flaherty, 2022). However, as Carello and Butler state, "The goal of TIEP [trauma-informed educational practice] is to remove possible barriers to learning, not to remove traumatic, sensitive, or difficult material from the curriculum" (2015, p. 265).

[6] For the definition of critical race theory, see Delgado and Stefancic (2012). For applications of critical race theory in education, see Taylor et al. (2009).

The various social justice pedagogies located on the lower right-hand corner focus on increasing the social awareness of both faculty and students and impacting systemic change. These pedagogies focus on developing students' critical analytical skills to interrupt inequities in society. They are different from one another as they are influenced by different theories. **Social Justice education** focuses on helping students understand the political and social context that they live in and develop their critical consciousness so that they can "recognize and interrupt inequitable patterns and practices in society" (Hammond, 2017). **Decolonizing pedagogy** is informed by indigenous knowledges. It focuses on accounting for, and dismantling, the impact of settler colonialism. Grande (2004) conceptualizes Red pedagogy as "construct[ing] a self-determined space for American Indian intellectualism" and also "providing American Indian students the social and intellectual space to reimagine what it means to be Indian in contemporary U.S. society" (p. 118). The goal is to decolonize and reindigenize education and other forms of systems.[7] **Critical pedagogy**, influenced by critical theory, focuses on the analysis of class and helps students become aware of the hierarchies within society and challenge inequalities (Darder et al., 2008). It exposes the hidden curriculum, such as Eurocentrism embedded in the curriculum, and the goal is to develop critical consciousness of the students (Darder et al., 2008).

**Feminist pedagogy** is influenced by various feminist theories.[8] It focuses on developing students' critical analytical skills so they can analyze, identify, and challenge sexism and other forms of oppression.[9] Feminist pedagogy, for some educators, is activism that happens in the classroom but also in the university and the broader community. **Feminist pedagogy** and **antiracist pedagogy** are located in the lower right-hand corner of "Equity" because of their focus on activism and organizing to facilitate explicitly stated goal of interrupting inequality. Organizing is making changes in our spheres of influences by incorporating antiracist values, not just within our teaching, but in our research, in our university work, and in our community work (Kishimoto, 2018). Examples of that could be doing research in a way that is ethical and accountable to the community

[7] For more sources, see Decolonizing Pedagogy (n.d.). For decolonizing research, see Smith (1999) and Denzin et al. (2008).

[8] For examples of feminist theories, see McCann and Kim (2003).

[9] For examples of applications of feminist pedagogy in higher education, see Light et al. (2015).

that the researcher is working with. It is applying power analysis in decision-making processes within an institution or organization, making sure that the process is transparent, democratic, and the power and decision-making shared. When looking at policies and rules, understand their impact—that race-neutral language can perpetuate existing inequalities and disparities. Organizing is incorporating these antiracist values and practices in all spheres of our lives and influences. These pedagogies are a much broader systemic change effort that extends beyond the classroom.

## What Is Antiracist Pedagogy?

**Antiracist pedagogy**, influenced by critical race theory, focuses on how race and racism are embedded in institutions and systems in the U.S. Critical race theory, a movement that came out of Legal Studies, recognizes the intersectionality and the voices of people of color and focuses on how "race and racism are part of the normal operation of society, racism persists because there are those who benefit from it ('interest convergence'), and race is a social construct through the process of racialization" (Kishimoto, 2018, p. 541; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, pp. 7–10). Antiracist pedagogy strategically and intentionally focuses on race and racism as an entry point to the analysis of oppression. Antiracist pedagogy not only raises students' awareness of their social positions in society but also requires faculty to become aware of their social position and think about their roles and responsibilities in a racialized society.[10] Like other pedagogies, antiracist pedagogy is concerned with developing critical analytical skills so students can identify race and racism and challenge them in our society. And like feminist pedagogy that focuses on activism, antiracist pedagogy is about organizing that takes place within and beyond the classroom (Kishimoto, 2018).

[10] For example, I am an Asian American woman teaching Ethnic Studies courses. Being racialized as a woman of color or being a professor of ethnic studies, however, does not automatically mean that I am practicing antiracist pedagogy. I experience racism and sexism as a woman of color, but I also must acknowledge the power that I hold as a professor so that I do not perpetuate inequality in the classroom. I need to understand my role in a racialized society, so I do not internalize the Model Minority Myth, which serves to reinforce anti-Blackness and pit Asian Americans against other people of color. I must take responsibility for the ways in which I am complicit in the oppression of others and commit to making changes for a more equitable society.

If feminist pedagogy and antiracist pedagogy share similarities, especially in terms of activism and organizing for social and systemic change, why not implement feminist pedagogy and focus on intersectionality? Antiracist pedagogy is sometimes seen as being single-focused and in opposition to intersectionality. On the contrary, antiracist pedagogy requires one to have an intersectional lens when analyzing oppression but intentionally focuses on race and racism as an entry point. In clarifying the role of race and gender in understanding the experiences of African American women, Crenshaw (1989, 1991, 2016) developed the idea of intersectionality. However, the concept of intersectionality has been appropriated by some to flatten differences or to focus on other identities to evade discussions of race (Luft, 2009). According to Luft, analysis of macro-level and non-interactive mediums, such as systems, policies, or texts, usually requires an intersectional lens (p. 109). However, in micro-level and interactive contexts, like in the classroom, workplaces, workshops, and consciousness-raising groups (p. 102, p. 109), Luft advocates for the selective and "strategic use of antiracist singularity," in which "a strategically singular approach" is taken for "antiracist consciousness-raising" (p. 101). Referring to the contemporary era when colorblindness is strongly being promoted, Luft argues that "race must be centrally and singularly figured simply in order to (re)introduce it to conscious discourse" (p. 103). As with the analysis of culturally responsive pedagogy, it is politically important to use the term antiracist in the pedagogy.

Figure 6.2 shows how antiracist pedagogy begins with the faculty becoming aware of their social position. If we are asking students to do it in our classrooms, we must do it as well. More importantly, if the faculty is not aware of their social positionality and power they hold in society and in the classroom, it could negatively impact their teaching. A more comprehensive overview of antiracist pedagogy has been written elsewhere—briefly, there are three components to antiracist pedagogy: (1) incorporating topics of race and inequality into course content; (2) teaching from an antiracist approach, for example, through decentering authority and creating community in the classroom; and (3) antiracist organizing within the campus and linking our efforts to the surrounding community (Kishimoto, 2018).

First is incorporating racial content in our courses, whatever the discipline. This is possible in any class, even in biology, math, engineering, or computer science. For example, in biology, we can help students distinguish biological from social constructs and teach that using biology to

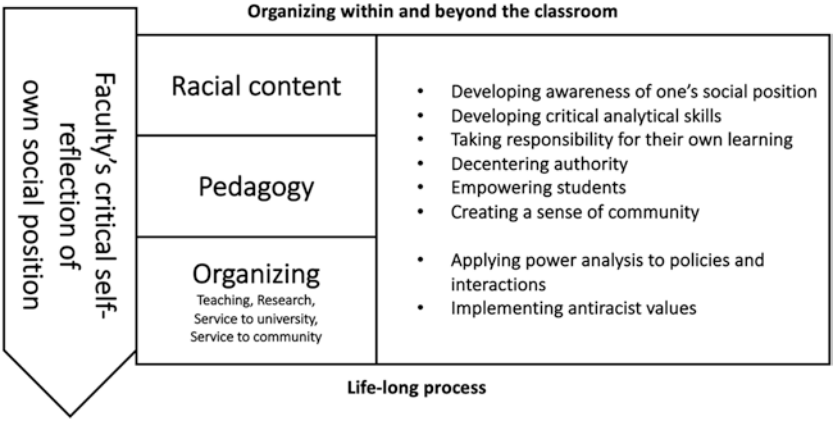


**Fig. 6.2** Antiracist pedagogy as an organizing project

analyze social constructs like race is incorrect. We can also develop activities that enable students to uncover how systemic racism has been prevalent within each of our own disciplines. Analysis of the publication and knowledge production processes will expose how people of color's work is used but not cited and how dominant groups are privileged and maintain the status quo. In addition, we can reveal how paradigms in our disciplines relate to race relations, ideologies, and power dynamics of the broader society. Further, we can discuss how to begin addressing power differentials, especially in scholars' practices of doing research on marginalized communities.

The second component of antiracist pedagogy is teaching from an antiracist approach. In other words, even in classes that are not about race, faculty can incorporate antiracist pedagogy in our courses because it is about how we teach (Kishimoto, 2018; Harbin et al., 2019). In the classroom, both students and faculty need to develop awareness of their social positions through learning about the racial identity formation stages, acknowledging our privileges or internalized racism, and talking with others in similar stages and backgrounds to process and deal with the frustrations, guilt, anger, or sense of empowerment that come with recognizing our place and role in this racialized society. Students find it helpful to know that faculty are also self-reflecting on their roles in, and relationship to, racism. Antiracist pedagogy helps students develop critical analytical

skills to understand how race and racism are embedded in institutions, policies, and our society so they can effectively challenge them. Professors share the learning process with the students by decentering authority,[11] but we cannot do this without faculty acknowledging their privileges and positional power in the classroom. Through this, students are encouraged to have an active role in, and take responsibility for, their learning process. The goal is to empower students so that they know how to make systemic change. Rather than promoting individualism and competition, antiracist pedagogy promotes a sense of community in the classroom by students and faculty sharing their struggles, students helping and challenging one another, and students doing collaborative work. Building a classroom community is not an easy process as it goes against traditional ways of teaching and being a student. It requires that we build trust through getting to know each other, which can be hindered by the power differential, racial dynamics, and the varied educational experiences of students. Even with much preparation and experience, we mispronounce student names, a heated discussion may blow up in the classroom that may catch us off guard, and the chemistry of the classroom just doesn't work. Making our goals transparent, and along with our students, admitting our mistakes, acknowledging our social positions, and being vulnerable is how we can begin to address this shift from traditional ways of teaching.

The third component of antiracist pedagogy is organizing (Kishimoto, 2018). It is not just about making changes in our classrooms, but also about applying power analysis, antiracist values and practices, and making changes in all spheres of our influence—in our teaching, research, department, university, discipline, etc. Antiracist pedagogy is about intentional and strategic organizing within and beyond the classroom. Taking one antiracist pedagogy course does not make us experts, and there is no prescribed antiracist pedagogical model that we can simply apply to all courses. Rather, implementing antiracist pedagogy is a life-long process.

The Antiracist Praxis Framework (Fig. 6.3) illustrates four quadrants of how the ongoing self-reflection of our social positionality and our antiracism work and organizing is a life-long process. Critical self-reflection

[11] Decentering authority is experienced differently for white faculty and faculty of color (Kishimoto, 2018, p. 543 & pp. 548–549). White faculty have the privilege of letting go some of their power—although that does not mean they can hide their white identity and privilege—while faculty of color have to take more risk as their power is already being challenged due to their marginalized racial identity.

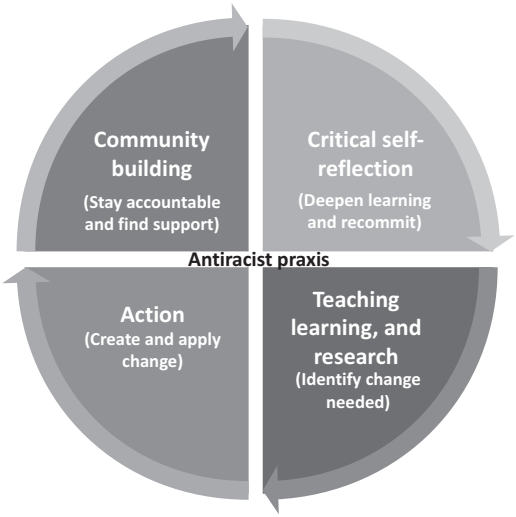


**Fig. 6.3** Antiracist praxis framework (Clifford et al. [2022]. The authors acknowledge that the antiracist praxis framework's importance of working on all four quadrants is similar to the Indigenous Medicine Wheel.)

requires that faculty deepen our understanding of our social positionality and our learning and commitment to antiracist goals. In our teaching, faculty need to analyze how we construct our syllabus, design class activities and assignments, how we engage students, and identify where we are perpetuating racism and other forms of oppression. We then need to make the changes and apply them in our teaching. Because this is challenging work, we need a community of educators committed to antiracism that can support us and keep us accountable. This cycle of working through the four quadrants continues as we revise and make additional changes in our classrooms and as we expand the application of antiracist practices in our other spheres of influence. Kumashiro (2003) critiques the repetition of certain practices in the classroom, especially "[e]ducators' desire to repeatedly implement what they believe is the effective approach to challenging oppression [which] hinders many articulations of anti-oppressive pedagogy" (pp. 52–53). While it is easy and comfortable for us to repeat a practice that we think is anti-oppressive or to stay in one quadrant, the cycle of antiracist praxis reminds us that continuously moving through each quadrant and (re)working on all four quadrants is necessary.

As faculty, we are taught to be competitive and to be narrowly focused experts in our field. For faculty who hold marginalized identities, it is riskier to show our vulnerability. However, antiracist pedagogy requires us to

have humility as we continue to learn from our students, our colleagues, and community members. We learn from the many mistakes that we make. Fear of imperfection, making mistakes, conflicts, etc., should not stop us from beginning the antiracism journey. In fact, being in fear and waiting for perfection only benefits and continues white supremacy (Okun, 2021). As the group with more power, white people have specific roles and responsibilities to challenge racism within our society, but people of color also have different roles and responsibilities. Self-reflecting on our own social position and working for social change is a responsibility of everyone. It is not about blaming others or avoiding responsibility. Each of us needs to become aware of the role we have in racism and realize that "[t]he task of resisting our own oppression does not relieve us of the responsibility of acknowledging our complicity in the oppression of others" (Tatum, 2003, p. 27). For educators, we can make important contributions to society by implementing antiracist pedagogy as an organizing strategy.

## Why Antiracist Pedagogy?

Because antiracist pedagogy clearly challenges the unequal status quo, we must be mindful of the political, social, and economic climate of backlash against the mainstreaming of words such as systemic racism and antiracism. Education is both a site of assimilation and a site of liberation (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994) and the battleground where the ideological clash of broader society manifests itself. The various pedagogies analyzed in this chapter were influenced by different theories and approaches. Some have similar goals, but their implementations vary due to their original intent being watered down and highjacked by the political, social, and economic context of the time; or because of the (mis)interpretations of the pedagogy. As with other pedagogies, antiracist pedagogy faces the danger of cooptation and pressure to soften its language and critique of systemic racism.

The demographic of the United States is changing with an increase in students of color, especially in K-12, who are going to be entering higher education. However, higher education is increasingly corporatized and commodified, becoming a business needing to make a profit to survive (Mohanty, 2003). Higher education institutions are increasingly catering to businesses and developing skills employers want from graduating students. Faculty and staff are becoming service providers for students who are purchasing products (i.e., grades and diplomas). Values such as diversity, inclusion, and inclusive excellence are increasingly being used in

higher education and corporations, and many organizations are now offering diversity training. However, these trainings have become more about managing diversity and race and less about making meaningful changes within their institutions (Ahmed, 2012, pp. 52–53; Mohanty, 2003, pp. 210–212). Multiculturalism has switched the discussion of race with culture without analysis of power, and colorblindness claims that any mention of race is racist (Kandaswamy, 2007, p. 7). Diversity has been welcomed over antiracism as the less threatening word (Ahmed, 2012). Especially under pressure from neoliberal multiculturalism, institutions have felt the pressure to soften their language (Case and Ngo, 2017).

The multiplicity of pedagogies may make educators wonder which one to adopt. The purpose of the DEP Continuum (Fig. 6.1) is to understand the larger context we live in and how the pedagogies are implemented. Whatever pedagogy we adopt, if the educator is striving for systemic change, they need to increase awareness of their own as well as students' social positions and impact individual as well as systemic change. Depending on whichever pedagogy educators are implementing, some pedagogies share similar goals of challenging oppression and making social change. As education and pedagogies are impacted by social and political contexts, naming "antiracist" in the pedagogy and clarifying the goal of pedagogy for social change are important so educators do not misinterpret or simplify the pedagogical praxis—or worse, add to the problem of racism while thinking they are teaching it away. Transparency is an antiracist value, and educators need to be clear, intentional, and strategic about which pedagogy they are implementing in their classes to resist backlashes that try to dilute and weaken the pedagogical goals. Naming race and implementing antiracist pedagogy is more dangerous for faculty of color and others who hold marginalized identities, but this is why it is important for everybody—especially white faculty—to do antiracism work, so that faculty of color are not isolated in this project.

Educators need critical analytical skills to understand and resist the social and political backlash that tries to shut down critiques of systemic racism and discussions about the history of racism, white privilege, and white supremacy. Within this context where "there is no such thing as an apolitical classroom" (Teel, 2014, p. 6), educators want to ensure that education is for liberation and not for perpetuating oppression. Just as committing to antiracism work is a political commitment (not an identity), implementing antiracist pedagogy is a political act—of incorporating antiracist practices to challenge systemic racism and create a more equitable society.

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PART III

# Curricula Revitalization for Preparing Today's Pre-Service Teachers

CHAPTER 7

# The Stories We Teach By: The Use of Storytelling to Support Anti-racist Pedagogy

*Brie Morettini, Stephanie Abraham, and Zalphia Wilson-Hill*

> *"The engaged voice must never be fixed and absolute but always changing, always evolving in dialogue with a world beyond itself,"* (Hooks, 1994, p. 8).

Research on teacher identity suggests that the stories we live by influence *who* we are and *how* we are in the classroom (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Clandinin & Connelly, 1999; Day et al., 2005).

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Complimentary research suggests the autobiographical nature of teachers' work (Cole & Knowles, 2000). To that point, "making sense of prior and current life experiences in the context of the person as it influences the 'professional' is the essence of professional development" (p. 15). Thus, we situate storytelling as a powerful pedagogical practice for both teacher educators and classroom educators to deepen their efforts of enactment of anti-racist pedagogy. In this chapter, we nuance the dimensions of storytelling pedagogy and share the ways in which three transdisciplinary faculty used such dimensions to maintain criticality in our classrooms as our university pivoted to remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Later in the chapter, we describe the nature of our collaboration; however, there is a need to contextualize our efforts because of the widespread social unrest that came into sharp focus. As we embarked on our transdisciplinary collaboration into a pedagogy of storytelling, two major world events heavily shaped our trajectory. First, we were navigating teaching in the midst of a global pandemic; and second, racial movements, sparked by the murder of George Floyd, unfolded around us. As we pivoted to remote instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we felt morally and ethically compelled to address the social and racial injustices that were for so long silenced and even normalized.

Given this, we asked ourselves how stories could simultaneously humanize our pedagogy with our students while also centering and deconstructing racism. We turned to the sharing of our personal experiences, the crafting of letters to students, the reading of children's literature, and the use of memoirs as ways to address both of these issues. We found that a pedagogy grounded in story modeled vulnerability, attended to students' wellness, and opened up conversations around difficult topics such as racial inequities.

Here, we deepen our commitment to the use of storytelling as a powerful pedagogical practice that models leaning into courageous conversations and delves into the urgent issues facing educators and students; that is, how we engage our students in humanizing and meaningful conversations around race-related topics. To that end, we use our year-long work as critical friends to nuance and advance storytelling as a pedagogy of teacher education by identifying three functions of storytelling: (1) modeling vulnerability; (2) attending to students' wellness; and (3) opening up conversations on difficult topics. Given our shared commitment to social justice and anti-racist teaching, we focus on the following question to both guide and deepen our polyvocal pedagogical understandings: *How*

*can storytelling support more humanizing and anti-racist practices in teacher education?*

Our own storytelling, therefore, brought us to a generative space where storytelling emerged as a critical teacher pedagogy to deepen our own learning about how we teach to enact anti-racist and humanizing practices. Forms of storytelling we pedagogically drew on can be categorized in one of two ways: stories we told about ourselves and stories we told about others. Specific examples of ways we shared stories about ourselves were the sharing of personal experiences and in letters written to students. Stories we told about others' experiences were shared through specific children's literature and memoir. These forms of story appeared in our classes with preservice teachers and school counselors and also in our meetings as critical friends and in professional development sessions, we offered to colleagues. Before delving more deeply into these forms of story, we contextualize our efforts by providing some context of our journey together as Teaching Fellows and the ways we came to know each other and ourselves more deeply through storytelling.

## Context of Our Journey

In the spring of 2020, the Governor of New Jersey ordered all public and private schools to close due to a global pandemic that would come to be known as COVID-19. As a public university, this state-ordered shutdown halted the pattern and continuity of what students, faculty, and the community expected from a system of higher education. In our case, this affected over 23,000 students across three campuses. With no end in sight, fear, confusion, disbelief, and uncertainty plagued students and faculty alike.

Rowan University, nestled in Glassboro, New Jersey, about 20 miles from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, began in 1923 as a college to prepare students to become first-rate teachers. The College of Education proudly boasts its ability to transform schools, develop leaders, and lead the way in social justice initiatives. Within this backdrop, three transdisciplinary faculty members with diverse interests, training, and teaching modalities were selected, based on nominations from Department Chairs, and The College of Education Dean, with the support of the Provost, to be named College of Education Teaching Fellows. The criteria for selection, also echoed by those who made the nominations, consisted of, "teaching experience, currency, mindset, unwavering student-centeredness, and consistent innovativeness in teaching practices."

### *Teaching Fellows*

We were selected as Teaching Fellows in December of 2020 to commence our work in the following academic year (fall 2021–spring 2022); our charge was to develop targeted professional development opportunities for other faculty members based on our own teaching expertise. The time spent collaboratively planning gave us opportunities to discuss and share our practices, which ultimately led us to weave storytelling in order to focus on the current social unrest or awareness of social justice issues surrounding race, police brutality, and inequities in health care, as well as our own educational system. A global pandemic required that we shift our practice from face-to-face instruction to virtually serving the needs of students and faculty who depended on an institution to create an environment that perpetuated learning and growth while still preparing students to be knowledgeable and confident in their respective practices.

Hence, two teacher educators, and one counselor educator, were selected to create innovative teaching practices as the university underwent a transformation from a dynamic, physical space occupied by students to a virtual teaching platform that required and demanded new ways of teaching, learning, and engaging students. As Teaching Fellows, we formed a teaching community that engaged us in the discussion of our teaching practices around race, teaching, technology, and assessments in our unique subject areas.

As Teaching Fellows, the university gave each of us a course release and a stipend to carry out our charge. We were given the independence to create, develop, and present professional development to our peers, collaborate with the College of Education Fall Forum, and meet with faculty members on a one-on-one basis to help them understand the ambiguity that our students faced and how using storytelling could create space for empathy, understanding, and compassion, which would connect us even closer to our students and the goals and objectives of the College of Education. The systemic creation and support of the College of Education Teaching Fellows increased our capacity to address academic *and* social issues as well as create an environment and culture which engaged students on a humanistic platform in each of our classrooms.

It is important to remember the context surrounding us at the genesis of our work: sheltering in place, social movements around us, and the pivot to remote instruction. Storytelling, unbeknownst to us, came into our lives as a way to make sense of these troubling times and everything

unfolding around us. We used storytelling as a way to connect with our students despite the remote nature of our interactions with them and used storytelling to help us make sense of the social injustices unfolding around us. When we came together in our journey as Teaching Fellows, we all discussed how we used storytelling to adjust our remote practices in relational ways.

We met multiple times during the planning phase of our work to discuss innovative ways to maintain criticality and a social justice stance in our remote teaching. As a way to get to know each other better, we not only shared stories about our current experience of teaching remotely during a pandemic but also distant stories embedded in our personal histories of centering social justice in the university classroom. In our discussions, we all shared how the power of story was one way that brought us and others into spaces where we could facilitate conversations around race, language, disability, power, and privilege. Therefore, we set out to examine the forms and functions of storytelling as a way to model humanizing and anti-racist practices during crisis and pain.

## Theoretical Frames

All stories construe reality and are performative in nature as we seek to show more positive aspects of ourselves. Through our collaborative work as critical friends, we found new courage to share our vulnerabilities with students and colleagues through stories. We draw on theoretical grounding for the development of storytelling as a way to take up anti-racist practice through two frameworks: sensemaking and relational teacher education.

Sensemaking (Rom & Eyal, 2019) offers theoretical grounding for our work as it acknowledges the ways educators use elements of their contexts to render meaning from their experiences. Sensemaking, therefore, can be broadly understood as the narrative or mental map(s) that people create in order to draw meaning from their experiences and to use untenable situations as prompts to action (Powell & Colyas, 2008; Weick, 1995). In this way, sensemaking refers to how individuals "notice, select, and interpret ideas in their environment, but also how they enact them so as to be rendered meaningful" (Rom & Eyal, 2019, p. 63). We turn to sensemaking as a theoretical frame because it acknowledges how individuals and teachers, in particular, "rely on sensemaking to navigate organization dynamics and to address professional issues" (Rom & Eyal, 2019, p. 63).

One of the most profound ways we, as teacher and counselor educators, make sense of our professional work is through the framework of relational teacher education (Kitchen, 2002, 2005a, 2005b). Relational teacher education, as the name suggests, is a perspective that maintains we both live our lives and know ourselves in relation to others. Relational teacher education comprises seven dimensions: understanding one's own personal practical knowledge; improving one's practice; understanding the landscape of one's profession; respecting and empathizing with preservice teachers; conveying such respect and empathy; helping preservice teachers face problems; and receptivity to growing in relationship (2005a, 2005b). We extend these concepts to the work of counselor education, given the inherent relational nature of the field. It is through relationships with others, such as our students, that we make sense of our work and deepen our own understanding of ourselves-in-practice (Fletcher, 2020).

At the heart of building relationships with students is storytelling. Storytelling, through narrative, is the vehicle through which we open ourselves up to others, share our experiences, and admit our vulnerabilities. Indeed, storytelling is the connective tissue of relational knowing with others and with ourselves. Through stories, we show our students what we do when we do not have the answers and when we sojourn *with* students into difficult topics.

## How We Come to Know Ourselves

While we did know each other prior to our collaboration as Teaching Fellows, we felt it was important to share with each other our stories of what matters to us as educators and why. Below, we share the personal narratives that we also shared with each other during one of our first planning meetings as one example of possible forms and functions of storytelling. We share our narratives in first person, in keeping with the importance of storytelling.

### *Stephanie's Story*

*I began my career in education as an educational interpreter for two Deaf second graders. Soon, I finished my initial teaching degree, and I taught ESL, first, and fifth grades in Georgia. Many of my students were second and third-generation immigrants, mostly from families who had moved from Mexico to Georgia to work in the poultry industry. Another group of my students were*

*African American, whose families had been living in the area for the past couple of hundred years. As I began graduate school, I realized that the pedagogy I had learned in my undergraduate teaching training was lacking. It was devoid of any relevance or connection to my students' lives.*

*After reading about critical and culturally relevant pedagogies, I began to embrace the idea that my students' lives and languages should be reflected in the books that we read, in the stories that we told, and in the content that we learned. Those beliefs have stayed with me, and they are evident in the classes I currently teach to both preservice and in-service teachers. For this chapter, the examples I draw from come from one course, Literacy Pedagogy I, which is a required course for undergraduate, preservice educators seeking their initial certification in elementary education at Rowan University.*

### *Brie's Story*

*I began my career as a kindergarten teacher in a school with a high-immigrant population. As I started teaching, I began to feel a disjuncture between how I was prepared to teach and how I needed to teach in order to meet the needs of my diverse student population. In fact, as I look back on my teacher preparation program, I realize I was not prepared at all for working effectively with emergent bilingual students and their families. And, while I knew I had a lot to learn in terms of pedagogical strategies, I knew I wanted my students to feel a sense of belonging in my classroom; therefore, I set out to build positive relationships with my students and their families. Over time, I saw how building relationships is actually the most effective and authentic strategy to support students' learning. Building relationships with students has been a significant aspect of my practice as an educator, both when I was a classroom teacher and now as a teacher educator, because of the emotional support relationships offer students. In turn, the relationships I build with students enhance my teaching practice by prompting more equitable and socially just learning environments.*

*I maintain that at the heart of good teaching is the ability to give students a sense of belonging in the learning environment. My philosophy of teaching is grounded in rich literature on care and belonging. I maintain that if students do not feel a sense of belonging in a particular learning space, they will not take the necessary intellectual risks or devote the intellectual effort necessary to grow and learn in meaningful ways. In my experience, which is simply my own and based on a limited set of experiential data, the key to creating a sense of belonging for students is to acknowledge their humanity, to listen to them—really listen to them—and to accommodate their needs.*

### *Zalphia's Story*

*I entered college before there was an official title for "First Generation." These are students who are the first in their families to attend school beyond high school. Although I did not have the cultural capital to understand financial aid resources for navigating college culture, choosing teaching as a career was easy for me because the happiest days of my life were spent in a school building.*

*Coming from a home without any paper, pencils, books, or magazines, it was in a racially segregated, musty brick school building that I learned to hold crayons, color, sing, read, learn poetry, and dissect a frog. But within those walls were adults who knew my name and saw beyond my current skills to my potential. I wanted to do that for students who looked like me—students who needed someone to know their name and see their potential.*

*Not until I was studying toward my doctorate did I realize that the deficits I faced in school and in college were now my greatest assets and strengths. I had the lens to nurture, motivate, and develop future Professional School Counselors who would make school days for students the happiest of their lives by nurturing and facilitating a more cooperative and participatory environment* (Bartunek et al., 2000; Brunner, 1998; Kezar 2000).

*The students that I taught, counseled, and mentored during my 36 years were from middle to high socio-economic status. In these schools, I was given "wings" to create a classroom environment of safety and support for students. Later, earning a degree in Counseling Education further gave me engagement with students and the opportunity to nurture and help teachers, parents, and administrators grasp their role in shaping and molding students' development.*

*Now, as a Counselor Educator at a university, I base my theoretical framework on Nel Noddings's Ethic of Care, a model of ethical caring in education that challenges the present-day hierarchy of schools, content of curriculum, courses taught, and size of classes* (Nodding, 1998). *Based on my ethic of care approach, it is imperative that I "guide students in a well-informed exploration of meaning" (p. 221) on a daily basis regardless of their academic challenges, which were exacerbated by the global pandemic. In addition to Noddings, I draw on the work of Maria Montessori, who consistently reminded parents and educators that learning is in the doing. Hence the culture of my graduate education program is experiential where students actively participate in the planning, execution, and assessment of their own growth and development.*

*I see myself as a feminist leader, theorist, and teacher. The self-reflective nature of recognizing values, beliefs, ideas, and experiences is a cornerstone of who I am in the classroom* (Court, 2007; Thurber & Zimmerman, 2002). *I am able to build strong relationships with my students so that when issues arise, collaboration and discussion help me to bring new meaning to the situation* (Huffman et al., 2003). *This mirrors directly with storytelling as a powerful tool.*

*I am now aware that the ability to communicate, collaborate, and develop consensus are my strongest attributes* (Pawar & Eastman, 1997). *Feminine attributes of nurture, care, support, empathy, shared values, diversity, and equality indeed define my teaching* (Court, 2007)*, which was incorporated in my work as a College of Education Teaching Fellow.*

### *Common Threads*

After we shared our stories with each other, a common thread became apparent: the experience of teaching marginalized students and, in Zalphia's case, of *being* a marginalized student. Indeed, as we reflected on our individual stories, we came to appreciate the power of humanizing pedagogies. What would it have taken to learn more about the experiences of our marginalized students? How could we have developed pedagogies to serve all our students better? Of course, one of the answers to this question lies first in the need to know more deeply about students' lives, which could be achieved through storytelling. Next, we map out how we brought the power of story into learning spaces for our students.

## The Stories We Tell

We drew on our own stories and the common thread around the need for more humanizing pedagogies as we were tasked with providing Professional Development opportunities to our colleagues by virtue of our roles as College of Education Teaching Fellows. Knowing that one, screentime saturation was a real issue during the ongoing pandemic; and two, we wanted to find ways to help colleagues take up humanizing, anti-racist pedagogies, we decided that we would break away from the traditional model of professional development and instead offer what we called bite-sized professional development sessions focused around storytelling. We wanted to keep our sessions on the shorter side to make them more accessible, and we couldn't recall any of our colleagues wishing they could see

another PowerPoint presentation to help their teaching practice. Further, that transactional approach did not appeal to us as educators or as humans enduring the trying times of the global and racial pandemics.

## *How We Tell Our Stories*

Based on our collective understandings, we developed a series of bite-sized Professional Development sessions that were offered monthly and virtually. The overarching purpose of the sessions was to offer our colleagues an accessible way to take up more humanizing and anti-racist practices in their work. Therefore, during these sessions, we shared stories focused on how we handled race-related experiences in our personal and professional lives.

### *Personal Experience Stories*

One particularly powerful session was when we told stories about our own encounters with race and racism in our classrooms. Below is a shortened excerpt from a story Stephanie commonly shared in the college classroom and also shared during a bite-sized PD session:

> When I was teaching fifth grade, my students were mostly Mexican Americans, children of first generation immigrants, African American children and Asian American. One day, during recess, Rashaad, one of my African American students, came to me with big tears in his eyes. I asked what was wrong, and he told me in big gulps that Quinn, another African American student, had called him the N-word.
>
> Taken aback, I wondered what to do. This is a memorable point of encounter for me. I was in graduate school at the time, and I was just beginning to learn about critical and culturally responsive pedagogies, and I knew that I shouldn't run to the teachers of color to resolve this "problem" for me. So, I remained calm, and I assured Rashaad that I would deal with it when we got back to the classroom. With time to think, I decided that I would call both Rashaad's and Quinn's parents to let them know what happened. Then, I would talk with Quinn about what had motivated him to use this word. After that, I would move forward with solutions.
>
> When I called the children's parents, they were overwhelmingly understanding, as if they expected this to happen at some point in their children's lives. I felt both surprised and relieved. Surprised because I thought their parents would be angry with me, but they weren't. Relieved because they

> seemed to understand the problem of the N-word far better than I did. When I sat down with Quinn and Rashaad and asked why he had called Rashaad this word, he nonchalantly threw up his hands and shoulders with a response, "What? It means he's my friend." Rashaad looked over at him and replied that it does not mean that. "It's a very bad word," he had said.
>
> I decided that I would not "write up" Quinn for this. Instead, I asked the children, their parents, and the principal to meet to talk about what happened. The end result was that Quinn did not know the history of this word, and he really thought he was calling Rashaad his friend, and Rashaad did know the history of the word, and he did not think it meant friend.

In our Professional Development session, Stephanie explained that she uses this story often to facilitate the discussion about the N-word with mostly White preservice teachers, in turn showing a nuanced, but not necessarily perfect, response. Her response considered the context of the word being used in the Black community and how teachers might respond when they hear the word used at school.

In this same Professional Development session, Zalphia shared stories of discussing race with her daughter. She explains that she had lived in a neighborhood that was 98% White. As an African-American family, Zalphia's family had always felt embraced and comfortable. Her children had school friends and were invited to birthday parties and overnight sleepovers. So, when her five-year-old daughter, sitting at the dinner table, swinging her legs, asked her, "Do we know anyone who is white?" her throat started to close. Was someone teasing her? Did someone make fun of her hair? Her skin color? Zalphia was thinking and feeling all of these questions. But on the outside, she calmly asked her a simple question: "Why?" Her daughter's response was very matter of fact: "Katie, my best friend, said that she was white" and, through the eyes of a five-year-old, she responded back to her redheaded, freckled-face best friend, "You're not white, you're a peach!"

Zalphia shares that from that moment on, she understood how children see—and should see—differences and similarities between people and their relationship to them. So, peach versus White was not about treating someone differently, it was about understanding differences. Zalphia explained that she transferred this non-judgmental, accepting inquiry method within her classroom in order to welcome, hear, empathize, and ultimately, create a learning environment that leans into students' stories.

*Letters to Students*

During the spring of 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, Stephanie's normally face-to-face class, Literacy Pedagogy I, was moved online. She expected to continue her classroom discussions via Zoom with lively input from her preservice teachers. However, this isn't what happened. Staring at a black screen, where students had chosen to mute themselves and turn off their cameras, she was looking for a way to re-engage them. At the same time, she was taking a course in writing creative non-fiction and reading *Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Life and Love from Dear Sugar,* written by Cheryl Strayed. The book is a compilation of an advice column hosted by Strayed, or Dear Sugar, composed in a series of letters seeking advice from Strayed, followed by her response.

Inspired by this, and after the week's readings on racism in the classroom, she asked her students in Literacy Pedagogy I to pose a question on the discussion board to her or to the classroom that they still had about race, racism, or anything related to it in the classroom. While the questions varied, repeatedly the students asked how to talk about race with students, especially young ones, in an appropriate way. As an example, one student posed this question:

> What is the right way to do it (teach about race and racism) especially if you have a student of color in the room, since you do not want them to feel targeted or uncomfortable in any way?

This is what Stephanie wrote back:

> Thanks for this great question. First some stories, then some resources. The other day, I was watching Georgia and Ginny on Netflix, binge-watching, I confess. Ginny is an African American high school student. (White mom/Black dad). During her high school English class, her high school teacher, who is a total jackass, reads from a piece of literature, *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf, that had one of many iterations of the n-word in it. He states that it was a different time and context, and we wouldn't use the word now unless in a "rap" song, then he says that he won't read the word aloud because it would be offensive. Followed up with, "Right, Ginny?" Of course, she feels singled out because she is singled out, and she leaves the classroom upset.
>
> In another real event in the US, a pre-service teacher, who was African American, decides to read a text to a group of fourth-graders. It was the supposed letter written by a colonist who was also an enslaver, William

> Lynch, which has long been determined to be a *hoax*. You can find the letter and read it if you like. It is obviously racist and very offensive. The children also had to act out being a "slave." Of course, the children would be upset, and it has resulted in numerous lawsuits.

There are many more of what not to do in the classroom that you can find *here*.

> So, what to do? Here's one reason that I try to expose you to high-quality children's literature, written by people of color, who have taken up race, other forms of oppression, and racism in multifaceted ways that are appropriate for young children.
>
> In last week's module, you had a link to the *New Kid*, a graphic novel that discusses current issues of race, school segregation, in a real, even at times humorous way. It is very appropriate for upper elementary and middle school. In the picture book, *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Mat*ch, you see a complex construction of a Latina, Peruvian heritage, who has freckles and red hair, but speaks Spanish as her first language. It is very appropriate for all elementary ages.
>
> Here you will find links to a variety of books that are meant to prompt discussions about racism and other forms of oppression in the class, but in ways that are appropriate for young children.
>
> In general, you should never have children act out being enslaved, nor should anyone say any iterations of the n-word in class, as it should be hurtful to anyone, not just someone who is Black. Also, please don't turn to your students of color as the experts on race and racism, listen to their experiences, yes, but just like everyone else, race and racism have not been discussed enough in anyone's homes or lives, for one person to be a sole expert or speak on the behalf on entire "race" or "culture" isn't possible.

While Stephanie had answered the question about how to talk about race in the classroom many times, this was the first time she had written a response in the format of a letter to her students. She found that the delay created through letter writing gave her time to craft a more nuanced answer, add additional resources for her students, and connect to popular culture that hopefully made the topic more relevant to them.

### *How We Tell Others' Stories*

In our work as Teaching Fellows, we identified other forms of story that we had drawn on in our teaching practice: children's literature and

memoir. We talked about how powerful it is to share the stories of others to teach difficult topics. Here, we share how we drew on particular stories through children's literature and memoir in our practice.

*Children's Literature*

Throughout our time as educators, both in K-12 and at the university level, we have used children's literature as a vehicle into discussions on so-called difficult topics, such as racism, classism, ableism, or linguicism. It is worth mentioning that such topics are only difficult because their marginalization has been normalized; for so many students and their families, racism, classism, ableism, linguicism, and more are harsh realities that are dealt with on a consistent basis. To be a social justice-oriented educator, we needed to center these realities in what we do and model for our preservice teachers effective and meaningful ways to do so, too.

Children's literature remains a very effective tool for centering the lives of many children who have been historically left out of books and schooling. In Stephanie's course, Literacy Pedagogy I, children's literature is used in three main ways. One, it is incorporated each week along with the required readings. To reduce cost and increase accessibility to the readings, she provides a link to a read-aloud of the text or to an excerpt on Google Books or Amazon. Also, she partnered with the children's librarian at the university to order multiple copies of the texts used in class to be available in the university's library. Two, the students complete a collaborative genre study, Stephanie was careful that the books the students chose were from authors of color and construed nuanced portrayals of the Black and Brown human experience. Third, the final assignment for this course was a literacy lesson plan focused around a piece of children's literature that was included in their genre study.

Based on these preservice teachers' responses to the discussion questions regarding using diverse children's literature in the classroom, students overwhelmingly claimed that they saw the need for diverse texts and affirmed their commitment to their use in their future classrooms. Notably, while every student used a "diverse" text in their final lessons, explicit steps or questions regarding anti-racism were limited. Finally, since this course did not have a field component, so there was no opportunity to observe the students using the texts with children.

Like Stephanie, Brie draws on children's literature in her Working with Families and Communities course to teach overlooked topics about children's lives. In Brie's course, she uses children's literature for dual

purposes: one, to introduce preservice teachers to literature with more diverse representations of children; and, two, to model for preservice teachers how to use children's literature to actively develop anti-racist practices. An example of this is when Brie uses *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña to illustrate some experiences of a child living in an urban environment. In the story, a young boy named CJ rides the city bus with his grandmother. On their journey, they encounter a blind man with a seeing-eye dog, a guitar player, and some older boys. CJ asks his grandmother inquisitive questions about these people during the ride. At the last stop on Market Street, CJ and his grandmother disembark and CJ notices the "crumbling sidewalks and broken-down doors, graffiti-tagged windows and boarded-up stores" (de la Peña, 2015, p. 21). CJ remarks that his grandmother can find beauty "where he never even thought to look" (2015, p. 23).

At the end of the story, we find CJ and his grandmother helping at a soup kitchen. CJ sees familiar faces and tells his grandmother he is glad they came. After reading this story to her class, Brie discusses the themes of empathy, gratitude, and finding the beauty around us. This book becomes an example for how to perceive urban environments from an asset-based perspective, which is one of the goals of *Working with Families and Communities*. Since we maintain that diverse representations of children in literature are important in classroom instruction, Brie hopes that the preservice teachers will leave her class session with concrete ideas for using more diverse children's literature in very tangible and effective ways.

*Reading Memoir*

As a College of Education Teaching Fellow, I used memoirs to enhance the learning opportunities of my students. In doing so, I discovered Dr. Charles Dew, scholar, researcher, and historian, from Williams College in Massachusetts, and I had the perfect opportunity to invite him to Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. His journey of writing his memoir and sharing his own story about racist practice and racial etiquette engaged my students in a Multicultural Counseling class. Humanizing his family, educational experiences, friendships, and ultimately, his awakening into the realm of social justice, gave witness to my students the inherent value of their own storytelling.

As the Dean of the College of Education supported and gave a platform for the Innovative Teaching Fellows, she also supported and created space for other programs within the College of Education. Specifically, the

Center for Access, Success and Equity (CASE) which gave space for the Innovative Teaching Fellows to invite Dr. Dew to "tell his story" to the entire College of Education community through the Annual Fall Forum Professional Development Seminar. The stipend that the College of Education Dean provided the Fellows was used to purchase several copies of Dr. Dew's memoir, *The Making of a Racist* (Dew, 2016). These books were distributed to colleagues within the College of Education and gave them the opportunity to read in advance and prepare for open dialogue with Dr. Dew. This laid the foundation for increased participation at the forum and necessitated break-out sessions for further discussion with Dr. Dew. Further validating the power of storytelling.

*Leveraging Technology in Humanizing Ways*

At the time of writing this chapter, there was a daily deluge of social unrest in our country, and our college-aged students were witnessing students, like themselves, asking questions, just like Zalphia's daughter. Therefore, regardless of the subject of the class, it became imperative that we leave moments open to have students share their stories and their lived experiences and perspectives. Zalphia shares that such moments helped her listen, empathize, and show care to a young graduate student from Guatemala explaining what it was like to live in a multi-generational household and to be expected to attend class on Zoom without adequate space. The learning gleaned from such moments suggests the importance of informal storytelling as a form of humanizing interaction.

Further, Zalphia noted that the stories that marginalized students shared helped others relate and find meaning in their own stories. Stories helped students lean into the trying times we were all navigating related to the health and race pandemics. Although we were teaching using a remote format, the space between us became so small, so insignificant, as we shared stories on a regular basis through notes, dialogue, Zoom sessions, and even through phone calls.

Zalphia also found that as counselors in training, part of the process is to teach how to listen to others by using the eyes, words, feelings, and observing body language. Through storytelling, these skills became even stronger as her students were more engaged, showed more empathy, and asked intentional questions for understanding. Using a remote format allowed Zalphia to use multiple modalities, which included podcasts such as *The Act of Listening* (Zomorodi, 2015). This is relevant because it

embraced storytelling and helped students create a brave space for the telling of their stories.

Part of the process of continuing the storytelling beyond the classroom involves regular correspondence outside of the classroom. Through this process of storytelling through writing, Zalphia sends each student a note at the beginning of the semester, the middle of the semester, and the end of the semester. She takes parts of their stories and incorporates them into the notes that she sends them. Increasingly, they respond by adding more depth and meaning to their stories over time.

During the pivot to remote instruction, we embraced the use of technology to enhance our storytelling and anti-racist pedagogy. For example, Zalphia's class listened to the Ted Talk, the N-word by Dr. Pryor (2016) from Smith College on the social context of this word, especially in light of the social unrest that was evident in our country. Zalphia and her students used Dr. Pryor's story to explore the etymology of this word from a historical, social, and emotional perspective. This, in turn, allowed Zalphia and her students to share their own stories, incorporating lived experiences in a way that humanized the thoughts, feelings, and emotions that this word conveyed to each of us. Based on how Zalphia leveraged technology, she identifies five essential components of storytelling:

1. Reflection
2. Feeling
3. Creating the words and visuals through language
4. Vulnerability
5. Listening to the voices and perspectives of others

Zalphia weaves these components into her teaching in two profound ways. First, all students are assigned a "story" or memoir that explores a life experience different from their own. Examples of memoirs used include, but are not limited to: *Breaking Night, Educated, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, The Kite Runner,* and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.* Each of these memoirs gives confidence and meaning to the stories we were telling one another without shame or fear. Indeed, these memoirs prompt students to lean into vulnerability to humanize their practice. Then, with three to four of their peers, the students formed a book club to discuss the memoirs.

Secondly, students designed and created children's books based on an assigned chapter in the multicultural education textbook (Sue et al., 2019)

based on a culture other than their own. The student-created books showed vivid illustrations, video format, music added, or in the case of one student; a rap song. Again, by telling the stories of another culture, Zalphia's students enhanced their own storytelling by creating original literature (Nicholson & Pearson, 2003).

Zalphia's students also provided narrative responses about their experiences reading these stories as they continued on their professional journey as school counselors. Below are excerpts from students' narrative responses, which capture how they lean into humanizing our pedagogies:

> What an amazing year it has been. I just wanted to thank you for everything you have taught me this year. When I walk into the classroom ready for our class to begin I am graced with a cheerful smile welcoming me into another day full of intentional knowledge. Out of my 6 years in college it is with ease that I say you have been my dearest, most favored, and respected professor. Your commitment to your students is incredible and shows through how special you make our time during class. The tenderness you showed me…With all the knowledge and tools you have given me I will strive to be a woman of simplicity, someone who will show integrity and aim for unity. (Student Response, 2021)

Another student wrote:

> As we usually tell you one thing we learned at the end of class, I would still like to contribute to the exit ticket: There was so much great information shared in class tonight, but one thing I learned is that we are currently living through a historical moment in the story of our country, and we must channel outrage into an actionable agenda to bring about change. (Student Response, 2021)

These student responses are examples of the impact that humanizing pedagogies through storytelling can have on educational professionals. The responses also indicate the use of storytelling as a way to prompt antiracist pedagogies and perspectives.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we shared our own practices of storytelling to enact antiracist and humanizing practices in the college classroom as our university pivoted to remote instruction during the midst of the global health and

racial pandemics. Our goal is to nuance the ways in which storytelling can be used by others through illustrating how we developed and shared various forms and functions of story in our teaching. We organized our storytelling examples in two broad categories: the sharing of our own stories and the sharing of others' stories. It is important to remember that the two different categories are both humanizing and anti-racist in practice, but the categories demand our vulnerability in different ways.

For example, in sharing our own stories with our students through anecdotes and letters, we model our own vulnerabilities and sensemaking of difficult events and marginalized topics such as race and racism. This requires vulnerability in the way that it shows our students our blind spots and biases; we situate ourselves as learners alongside them in making sense of difficult topics. We show students that it is okay to not have all the answers when it comes to difficult topics. In sharing the experiences of others through children's literature and memoir, we model concrete ways to open up conversations on difficult topics in the classroom. Since the sharing of others' experiences might require less vulnerability, incorporating memoir and children's literature could serve as important beginning steps in practicing anti-racist practices through diverse representations in literature.

In addition to furthering our anti-racist practices, we found that the storytelling practices we illustrated in this chapter also support students' overall wellness in the ways storytelling allowed for open exchanges about challenges and vulnerabilities. Believing that *who* we are influences *how* we are in the classroom requires us to continuously acknowledge and validate the autobiographical nature of teaching (Cole & Knowles, 2000). By sharing our own stories and the stories of others, we assert that who we are matters in the classroom; what we have experienced, how we feel, and how we struggle and grow shape us not just as teachers but as human beings in our efforts to teach other human beings. Indeed, storytelling functions as a way for us to be seen and heard, and it creates ways for our marginalized students to be seen and heard. Storytelling, then, creates a sense of belongingness and sensemaking in a classroom space, both of which are critical to the advancement of humanizing and anti-racist pedagogies.

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CHAPTER 8

# OutCasting Teacher Education: Abolishing Caste-Maintaining Practices in Teacher Education Programs

*Ayana Allen-Handy*

A world without caste would set everyone free-Isabel Wilkerson

The residue of the American race-based caste system (the ranking of human value based on one's ancestry and immutable traits, maintaining a racial hierarchy that favors the dominant White caste) (Wilkerson, 2020) is steadfast in practically every system and institution in this nation. Separate, yet interconnected, and even still unequal are the education, healthcare, economic, housing, criminal justice, and legal systems that perpetually reinforce the status quo and White supremacy. Moreover, regurgitating the established social order of yesteryears which emerged long before the onset of 1619, when stolen Africans became enslaved—mere property—after arriving on the shores of what would one day

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become the United States of America (Hannah-Jones, 2021). And, lest we forget, the decimation of the ancestral lands and peoples of our Indigenous sisters and brothers (Tuck et al., 2014). What remains is a country born up out of thievery, unimaginable violence and terrors thrust upon the original stewards of the land, and the one's that toiled its soils to produce great generational wealth for the thieves and their descendants. A shared history, often glossed over and white-washed, that within a contemporary context trembles at the invisible boogie man of critical race theory (CRT), social justice, "wokeness," and Black lives mattering. In this vein, we witness in real time, almost daily, why and how this American caste system perseveres, yet also provides an important lens through which to critically examine our current realities (Wilkerson, 2020).

Various scholars in disciplines ranging from law (Bell, 2004; Crenshaw, 1995), history (Anderson, 2016), sociology (Allen & Farley, 1986), health care (Washington, 2006), economics (Rothestein, 2017), criminal justice (Alexander, 2010), and education (Kiel, 2015; Ogbu, 1979) have theorized the lasting impacts of "the American way"—the American caste system, and the role of both dejure and defacto laws to maintain it. Bell (2004) posited that U.S. institutions and policies such as *Plessy v Ferguson* did not only exclude or segregate, rather they sought to subordinate and stratify Americans—particularly targeting African Americans based on "their color, and without regard to their accomplishments, were presumed to be inferior to any white person" (p. 13). In fact, as he put it, segregation was the name, but domination was the game, and intimidation was the means of enforcement. Similarly, Rothstein (2017) in his critical examination of the legacy of Jim Crow stated,

> We have created a caste system in this country, with African Americans kept exploited and geographically separate by racially explicit government policies. Although most of these policies are now off the books, they have never been remedied and their effects endure. (p. xvii)

Amidst the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and the national reckoning for racial justice after the death of George Floyd, the policies that Rothstein speaks of are exacerbated, and the dual pandemics proved to be clear signifiers that the American caste system yet remained as Black and Brown communities experienced disproportional loss of life because of them. In the same vein, there were sweeping calls for organizations and institutions to critically reflect on the ways in which their policies, programs, and

practices had perpetuated racism and anti-blackness (Dumas, 2016). In this moment of the movement of Black lives mattering, organizations such as Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, schools, and other institutions were called to account. Even to the extent that we witnessed Aunt Jemima removed from Quaker Oats pancake boxes and bottles of syrup (Kesslen, 2020), and Mars' Uncle Ben removed from boxes of rice (Booker, 2020), with both companies having to come to grips with their centuries-long perpetuation of racial stereotypes and Black caricatures and the need for them to make a conscious move toward racial justice. Likewise, predominantly White institutions (PWIs), with reputations that had long marginalized Black students, faculty, and staff, were now screaming "Black Lives Matter" and proclaiming themselves to be anti-racist by establishing anti-racism taskforces and seemingly diversifying their Boards of Trustees at expeditious rates.

In the same year, Isabel Wilkerson (2020) released the award-winning book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent*, which so poignantly highlighted the depths of our perils that for me, with every turn of the page, came a new revelation of just how crystallized and how preeminent race-based caste is in American society today. While reading the book, I became inspired to more deeply understand and interrogate the legacy and implications of caste. Drawing from my personal and professional experiences as a former elementary school teacher, an education scholar, and a teacher educator, I yearned to examine caste within our education system and teacher education more specifically. Wilkerson (2020) contends: "a world without caste would set everyone free" (p. 388). In this same spirit, what would teacher education without caste, or what I call *OutCaste Teacher Education,* do or be for everyone, for individuals and our collectives of students, teachers, and teacher educators?

In this paper, I probe the following questions: (a) ***How is the American race-based caste system maintained through teacher education and our education system more broadly? and (b) How might outcasting teacher education through anti-racist and justice-oriented programs and curriculum help us reconceptualize social justice in teacher education?*** I reflect on the current sociopolitical context and provide an overview of the American race-based caste system, its legacy in our education system, and the ways in which teacher education programs may in fact promote and solidify caste through their enduring policies, programs, practices, and teacher educators (Allen et al., 2017). Anchored by the theoretical framings of critical race theory (CRT), critical Whiteness studies (CWS), and

the emerging critical caste theory (CCT), I contour an anti-racist portrait of teacher preparation, yet I seek not to do so in a manner that reduces anti-racism to a "meaningless slogan that is evacuated of all critical content" (Gillborn, 2005, p. 4). Rather, I seek to provide genuine insights from my examination of previous research and extant literature for us to imagine what *OutCasting Teacher Education* could be.

## Reflections on the Dual Pandemics of 2020: My Impetus for Examining Caste in Teacher Education

In the Summer of 2020, the band-aid of the alleged U.S. "post-racial" society was ripped off as the world witnessed the brutal death of George Floyd at the knee of then Minneapolis police officer Derrick Chauvin (Radebe, 2021). A clarion call to attention for a weary nation engulfed in the throngs of a global pandemic and the lingering shadow of death and despair. Each person relegated to her/his/their own home with the occasional masked-escape to the grocery store, then immediately back to "locked-down quarantine." However, with the proverbial ripping off of the band-aid, the nation broke out of its confines to fill the streets of city after city in fierce protest against racial injustice and state-sanctioned violence. What was it about the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery that had awakened an apathetic nation, in turn igniting the flame to a fire whose embers truly have never burned out? How and why could these incidents bring about such a national reckoning, a nation already seething from the perils of the pandemic, the racially oppressive policies of the Trump administration, and the resurgence of White supremacist movements?

In the days following the onset of national protests, I received many calls from White colleagues in deep despair, some even crying crocodile tears, and stating: "This is not who we are"; "I'm so sorry you have to raise your son in a country like this"; "I had no idea that this is what it is like to be Black in America"; "I am not racist; I don't see you as a color." To any person of color and particularly persons who are ascendants[1] of enslaved Africans in America, the naivety and tone deafness further illuminated how many White Americans, liberals and teacher educators lacked a

[1] Dillard and Bell (2011) highlight Asante's (1988) use of ascendant instead of descendent to describe the upward and forward movement of peoples throughout the African diaspora and the African continent. A stance that resonates with me.

deep historical understanding of race and racism in this country. Albeit alarming, these conversations and interactions I thought to be even more so dangerous. Here was the professoriate of teacher educators tasked to educate future generations of teachers (teachers who would face a Blacker and Browner student body than ever before), revealing the grave disconnect between "their America" and mine.

During a school-wide discussion on the current state of affairs, we were offered the opportunity to share our unfiltered feelings and thoughts on racial justice. In my inner voice, I promised myself I wasn't going to speak and that my silence was going to resound louder than my words. However, I couldn't hold still amidst ignorant comment after comment—a colleague who shared how he often used the "n-word" in his youth but now doesn't see color, and another colleague who shared that "racism only exists because we are always talking about race." From the depths of my heart and the pangs of my Black ancestral roots, I shared with my School of Education colleagues some version of the following—although not verbatim:

> *I'm dumbfounded and traumatized by the things I'm hearing in this discussion. And what has struck me more than anything is that my Black son will be starting kindergarten in a few years, and I'm literally terrified that he might have a teacher that was trained by one of my colleagues in this Zoom room—that my son's future teacher might have come through our teacher education program and encountered one of you as their professor.*

Keeping in mind his future school is a mere one block from our School of Education, I was even more aware that this could downright become a reality. Now, in retrospect, this was a generalization that did not pertain to all of my colleagues, yet the several that I believed it did pertain to, frightened me and further illuminated for me how caste could be pervasive in teacher education. Thus, I began this journey to explore the American race-based caste system.

## Revisiting the American Race-Based Caste System

Patel (2017) so powerfully depicts the permanence of caste in the U.S., contending that this country "was formed and maintains a settler colony structure, in which theft of land, erasure of indigeneity, and the attempt to collapse blackness into chattel are ongoing yet incomplete projects" (p. 2).

Although institutions such as slavery, the Black Codes, and Jim Crow appear to have died off, they are reborn, ever morphing to meet the needs and conditions of the time (Anderson, 2017). Ours is a nation that for centuries has always acquiesced to the prevailing social order and caste system as a default, particularly since caste is embedded into the DNA of so many American social systems and institutions. According to Kiel (2015),

> A caste system uses a network of laws, policies, customs, and institutions collectively operating to ensure that certain groups remain in a predetermined status within society. A fundamental component of any caste system is a classification mechanism through which individuals in different categories can be separated and treated differently. (p. 613)

We today bear witness thereof, as access to voting rights, health care, quality education, the books one can read in school, affordable housing, healthy food, and clean drinking water are most significantly determined by one's race (Ladson-Billings, 2006), keeping Blacks in a state of subordination.

Herein rests the case of the long-standing legacy of a race-based caste system in America. Generations of scholars have examined just how and why is it that one's biologically determined race could be so squarely pegged into the round hole of social construction, yet and still, the two go hand in hand and have thus endured. Just as a leopard cannot change its spots or a zebra its stripes, we are forever bound to our racial inheritance and heritage (Brooks, 1946). However, race has been socially construed to place Blacks in a subordinate racial caste, while maintaining White privilege "through the rules and rhetoric change" and the dominant group's power, access to resources, and unbridled potential for social advancement and wealth accumulation. Wilkerson (2020) shares how race and caste work in tandem:

> Caste and race are neither synonymous nor mutually exclusive. They can and do coexist in the same culture and serve to reinforce each other. Race, in the United States, is the visible agent of the unseen force of caste. Caste is the bones, race the skin. Race is what we can see, the physical traits that have been given arbitrary meaning and become shorthand for who a person is. Caste is the powerful infrastructure that holds each group in its place. (p. 19)

Wilkerson's (2020) analogy of caste as the bones and infrastructure underneath the skin can be likened to a caste being placed over a broken bone or limb with its purposes to harden and hold the structure in place so that it can return to its original form. So too does caste remain unbreakable and fixed, always devoted to ever returning to its original social order. Furthermore, "what race and its precursor, racism, do extraordinarily well is to confuse and distract from the underlying structural and more powerful caste" (p. 71).

The U.S. caste system is unique and distinguishable from other caste systems such as Nazi Germany and India (Wilkerson, 2020). In the U.S., caste has always been motivated by a history of oppression that restricted Blacks' access to all types of opportunities (education, land and home ownership, voting rights, etc.) in order to reduce their "potency as a competitive factor in the pursuit of status goals" (Brooks, 1946, p. 211), rendering Blacks at the bottom of the caste system even though it was Black-opportunities-not-Black-people that were inferior (Kendi, 2016). The seemingly permanent remnants of caste in America, previously established during the "new origin story" of 1619 (Hannah-Jones, 2021), proliferated for 400 years, reemerging during the era of Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, War on Drugs, and so on. Indeed, contained within the official founding documents of the American experiment which unabashedly defined the enslaved as 3/5 a person, and such a racist myth is the very foundation of American democracy (Alexander, 2010). Anderson (2016) contended that caste has in the past and even today shown up as White rage. While others have downplayed its potency through seemingly harmless monikers such as White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018), which further situates Whites as victims, yet and still Anderson's (2016) deep investigation into White rage amplifies many of the tenets instilled in the American race-based caste system:

> White rage is not about visible violence, but rather it works its way through the courts, the legislatures, and a range of government bureaucracies. It wreaks havoc subtly, almost imperceptibly. Too imperceptibly, certainly, for a nation consistently drawn to the spectacular-to what it can see. It's not the Klan. White rage doesn't have to wear sheets, burn crosses, or take to the streets. Working the halls of power, it can achieve its ends far more effectively, far more destructive. (p. 3)

The consequences of caste are deep and far reaching. Caste is the very source of inequalities that destabilize and becloud our nation (Wilkerson, 2020). The residuals of caste are baked into many of our social systems and institutions, and the next part of this discussion will focus on the legacy of caste in the education system specifically.

## Caste in Education

In Ladson-Billings' (1998) article "What Is Critical Race Theory and What Is It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education," she framed the need for a CRT analysis of educational inequities. In a similar vein, I pose the same question in reference to how and why caste may provide an important critical perspective for more fully understanding race-based inequities and injustices in education. So, I ask: ***What is caste and what is it doing in a nice field like education?***

The discussion of caste education is not a new occurrence. In fact, scholars have examined the connections between race, American caste, and education for centuries. In particular, W.E.B. Du Bois' scathing analysis of public schooling most convincingly amplifies the critical role of education in maintaining and perpetuating the caste society (Pierce, 2017). Schools have, moreover, served as the very conduits of and for caste formation (Allen et al., 2015). Pierce (2017) provides a stunning theoretical frame to more fully understand Du Bois' biopolitical caste analysis of schooling. He states that "mapping Du Bois's analysis of caste education helps us understand how schooling has participated in the 'aberration' of democracy in a racial capitalist society based on the production of racial divisions among the working populations and the preservation of White supremacy" (p. 28S). With the fangs of caste so deeply entrenched in the interiors of U.S. society, according to Du Bois, the ultimate imperative would be to abolish caste education, thus liberating Blacks from unequal and violent social control (Pierce, 2017). This abolitionary approach to education sings in harmony with hooks' (1994) view that education is the practice of freedom (Specia & Osman, 2015), and Love's (2019) thesis that abolitionist teaching is imperative to education justice.

Similarly, Ogbu (1979) presented a typology of minority groups into three types which he categorized as autonomous, caste (pariah), and immigrant minorities. He, thus, defined Black Americans as the lowest caste and drew stark connections between their caste-positionality to what he deemed "caste minorities" and education. He shares:

> My major concern is the claim that formal education is intended to equalize black and white status…this claim arises from a lack of understanding of the real relationship among education, opportunity structures, and the systems of social mobility in the United States. Although an individual's level of education may enable him or her to raise his or her social status, it is the nature of opportunity for future adult roles and the noneducational factors in obtaining these roles that shape the education system (ideology and practices) to a large extent, not the other way around. Thus, in a society with a dual system of social mobility, the same level of education does not necessarily possess equal value in both systems of social mobility. (p. 27)

Throughout the last several decades, scholars (DuBois, 1903; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) have examined the impact of racial caste in education, and in actuality, the field is not lacking in terms of critical, relevant, and highly applicable theorizations of it; and the long-standing impacts on African Americans. From Blacks being forbidden to read during slavery, subpar freedman schools, legal segregation, zero tolerance mandates, re-segregation of schools, the school-to-prison pipeline, and underfunded urban schools, we see a clear portrait of just how much of an education debt this country has accrued (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Ladson-Billings' (2006) argument that the historical, economical, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that have oppressed and marginalized the racially minoritized have created this education debt that rings loud and true. While Anderson (1988) posited that education served as a form of resistance during some of the most tumultuous times for African Americans, this thesis proved to be tested by formidable caste allegiances; and at the most deleterious level, even *Brown v Board of Education* was driven by the convergence of interests rather than with the sole and explicit purpose to elevate the Black race (Bell, 1980).

Most recently, scholars continue to probe the ways in which caste endures, and how education perpetuates our racial stratification. For example, Kiel (2015) argues that the American education system does more to maintain the nation's historical racial hierarchy than to disrupt it—"there is caste here, and the structure of American education helps make it so" (p. 613). Furthermore, he argues that failure to critically analyze our education system from the belief that we in fact have a caste-maintaining educational system will ensure that disparities persist for almost ever. He, thus, calls for action to consider crucial questions that might begin to undermine the root causes of structural educational inequality in addition to the work of treating its symptoms:

> When societies are highly stratified, education can justify and maintain that stratification, ensuring that caste divisions remain effective. Conversely critics of caste-based societies may also look to education as a means of empowering individuals or altering institutions in order to break down existing barriers. The same tool, therefore, holds the potential to deliver two vastly different outcomes-preservation of a caste system, or destruction of it. (p. 615)

In this same vein, Horsford (2017) analyzes our race and class divides and the legacy of inequality in education policies within an era of Education Reform such as No Child Left Behind and the Obama administration's Race to the Top. She asserts that education researchers must remain deliberately vigilant in our analysis of race, ensuring that such analyses pay credence to racial classification and racial caste in American schools. Most recently Rajamani (2020) has attempted to integrate CRT and Social Reproduction Theory to theorize a critical caste theory (CCT) of education. A critical caste theory posits that education research should be committed to de-casting and decolonizing education. Moreover, CCT layers intersections of class and gender oppression to more fully understand how caste remains in our education system. It is a call for the de-structuring of the caste system in order to establish equality as it relates to African Americans in a U.S. race-based caste system. Although there is a burgeoning body of scholarship examining the impact of caste in the education system, less is known about how caste is reflected within teacher education specifically.

## How Is Caste Upheld in Teacher Education?

Teacher education has existed behind the façade that it is a race-neutral applied field; however, various scholars have worked to disrupt this false narrative (Brown, 2014; Evans-Winters & Twyman Hoff, 2011; Sleeter, 2017). What could truly be wrong with the discipline tasked with preparing teachers for their careers as educators, one of the most respected and highly esteemed professions? Such a color-blind ideology has been critical to maintaining a caste structure in teacher education—perpetuating institutionalized racism and White privilege (Cross, 2005; Milner & Laughter, 2015; O'Brien, 2009)—thus leading to overwhelming inequities in schools. Furthermore, the predominantly White female teaching force, taught by predominantly White teacher educators, is increasingly

incongruent with the demographic diversity of the nation's school-age children (Kena et al., 2015). Yet and still, teacher education programs (TEP) in turn have not themselves made sweeping shifts in policies, teacher educators' diversity and critical development, nor programming and curriculum centered on anti-racism and social justice to best prepare teacher candidates for the complexities that they will face in diverse classrooms (Allen et al., 2017; Carter Andrews, 2021).

As the structures of caste remain steadfast, White teacher educators and teacher candidates, "as members of the dominant group, often take their whiteness and the societal racial arrangements for granted" (Kailin, 1999, p. 83). Whiteness, thus, becomes an innate property right under the law with all of the advantages thereof (Harris, 1993). Many teacher candidates are not taught to problematize the socio-historical context of schooling, critically reflect on their own racial and critically conscious identities (Howard, 2003; Sleeter, 2017), engage in anti-racist teaching (Kailin, 1999; Kinloch & Dixon, 2017; Tatum, 2002), nor do they often receive pre-service training in culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and sustaining pedagogies (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). When such critical knowledge and skills are offered, they usually are condensed into an isolated elective course or field experience, however significantly disconnected from the overall design and implementation of experiences within a given teacher education program (Milner, 2008), and usually resulting in teacher candidates and teacher educators themselves upholding notions of White supremacy. Furthermore, the governing bodies of teacher certification and the accreditation of TEPs have questionable commitments to anti-racism and social justice, often masked under more digestible terms such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI; Allen et al., 2017) and upheld by their claims of neutrality (Sleeter, 2017).

What has pushed the field forward in terms of understanding the undercurrents of racism in TEPs is scholars that have applied critical race theories of analysis to teacher education (Howard & Navarro, 2016). CRT is not an abstraction, but "a way to make intelligible the lived dimensions of race" (Leonardo, 2013, p. 24). It is also the most visible framework for critically studying and researching the permanence of race, the ways in which racism has been built and maintained in our social systems (Bonilla-Silva, 2005), and the endemic nature of racism in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Leonardo, 2018; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Sleeter (2017) asserts that CRT highlights how interest convergence appears and operates in TEPs through (a) the racial composition of

the teacher education faculty, (b) the content of multicultural teacher education courses, and (c) the relationship between teacher education programs and the university.

Matias et al. (2014) posit that CRT coupled with critical Whiteness studies (CWS) provides an important frame of analysis of the White imagination and the ways in which teacher candidates learn and understand the complexities of race. Their findings imply that without the added layer of CWS analyses, teacher candidates may claim to support anti-racism, but remain complicit in maintaining hegemonic Whiteness, rendering the caste structure intact. Likewise, Kinloch and Dixon (2017) found that CRT and CWS are imperatives for examining the politics of cultivating teachers' anti-racist practices. Their findings indicated that creating "spaces in which teachers can story—or exchange, critique and reflect on—feelings of marginalization and racism, and other oppressions is central to creating and enacting liberatory forms of urban teacher education" (p. 342). As the previous literature has shared, TEPs face prolonged resistance to learning about race and lack a commitment to equity pedagogies and anti-racist teacher education (Shim, 2018). These aforementioned theoretical findings reveal that teacher education can uphold and reinforce the structures of White supremacy even while striving to become anti-racist institutions. Ultimately, this results in the maintenance of the American race-based caste system in teacher education and trickling down into our schools and classrooms. So, what can be done to abolish caste in teacher education? The next section discusses the promises of what I call *OutCasting Teacher Education*.

## OutCasting Teacher Education

Over the years, teacher education has benefited greatly from critical theories and culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining practices that help to uncover and address perpetuating inequities in education (Carter Andrews, 2021). However, with this plethora of tools in the metaphorical TEP toolbox, we still have not seen overwhelming transformative change in TEPs, and thus our education system; our children deserve better! Within a university structure that upholds life-long positions of tenure, teacher educators that are void of critical perspectives and justice-orientations take up spaces where others could. For example, in 2021, I became the first Black woman to be tenured in the School of Education's history at my institution and I am the only Black woman currently on the

tenure track. Needless to say, in the city of Philadelphia where 46% of students in the school district are Black, our faculty diversity is severely subpar. The more I think about these issues and concerns, the more I am drawn to the radical possibilities of abolishing caste in TEPs: *OutCasting Teacher Education*.

Traditionally, an outcast has been defined as a person who has been rejected by society or a social group—and in the U.S., Black Americans have and continue to occupy the space of the outcasts. In this discussion, I shift the meaning of outcast to depict a way to (re)imagine teacher education, free from the poisonous tentacles of a race-based caste education system in America. And also, partly because one of my favorite recording artists is OutKast, I find the term *OutCasting Teacher Education* to, in a way, take back the pejorative reference of the original word to remix and re-appropriate its meaning. By OutCasting Teacher Education, (1) I believe that we can make explicit the ways in which caste-maintaining practices and racism work in tandem to uphold the status quo and White supremacy in TEPs and (2) we can OutCaste Teacher Education by rejecting program components that further marginalize Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and lack an anti-black, anti-racist, and social justice commitment. By rejecting "the way things have always been done," we can assert our teacher educator activism and justice-orientations (Sleeter, 2017), anchoring our dispositions in the fact that as teacher educators we know we will inadvertently impact future generations of PK-12 students, just simply based on the fact that we are directly implicated in the development of this nations' future teachers.

Even as the field attempts to move toward a more anti-racist teacher education (Kinloch & Dixon, 2017), there is a dearth of theorization around the remnants of caste specifically and how caste might be operationalized in teacher preparation. I argue that the American race-based caste system is maintained through the hidden structures and bones upheld by colleges and schools of education who reside under the auspices of IHEs. Just as Wilkerson (2020) likened caste to the hidden bones under the epidermis, I concur that it is this caste-maintaining "hidden" structure in TEPs which are made visible by the lack of racial diversity in TEP leadership, faculty, and teacher candidates, as well as white-washed curriculum and coursework. In a 2017 article, colleagues and I (Allen et al., 2017) examined how could culturally relevant pedagogy be mapped into TEPs to bring about greater distributive justice in our education system (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). This framework seemed relevant for me to

think more deeply about how caste might be upheld in teacher education along the same four pillars that we examined in that paper: (a) teacher education governance and accountability, (b) teacher education policies and programs, (c) curriculum and instruction, and (d) teacher educators. My learnings through the review of existing literature on caste in education and caste in teacher education, shared here, attests to the fact that remnants of the original caste system's social order are prevalent today in all four of these areas. The legacy of caste is maintained through these TEP elements, and it is without question and well cited that we have a race problem in teacher education (Matias & Mackey, 2015). Alas there is hope! There are several contemporary scholars who have offered up various innovative theoretical and pedagogical ways for us to learn a new, which I have personally found to be inspiring and relevant to my work, as well as promising for OutCasting Teacher Education: humanizing research (Paris & Winn, 2013), abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019), radical healing (Ginwright, 2015), excavation of the self (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021), cultivating genius (Muhammad, 2020), pedagogy of discomfort (Ohito, 2016), and reality pedagogy (Emdin, 2016). The more that we can integrate transformative practices such as these in our TEPs, the more fully we will begin to see the pillars of caste in TEPs fall.

## Charting a Path to Freedom from Caste

In closing, caste keeps us chained to the fallacy of racial supremacy with race, serving as the instigator to enact and maintain the structure of caste, and with caste acting like a chameleon, the seemingly invisible shape shifting perpetrator of our inability to fully realize liberty and justice for all. In the present day, caste shows up in various ways. It shows up as overt acts of racism and violence such as in the heartbreaking case of Ahmaud Arbery, hunted down like an animal by a bunch of cowardly White supremacist thugs, then victim shamed for having apparent "dirty toenails" (Impelli, 2022). Caste also shows up in the invisible loins of a justice system that protects and defends the neighbors' walls rather than holds police officers accountable for brutally murdering Breonna Taylor while asleep in her own home. Caste shows up in the subtleties of everyday microaggressions and microinsults that BIPOC individuals encounter in myriad situations (Allen et al., 2013; Sue, 2010). Caste shows up when 76% of Americans surveyed believe that a Black woman should not be solely considered for an open Supreme Court seat (Harper, 2022), while legislative Republicans,

American casteists themselves proclaimed that Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson had in some "reverse racism" way benefited from affirmative action, rather than from her God given gifts, talents, merit, and hard work. Caste shows up in present day politics and Grand Old Party (GOP) propaganda particularly in our schools-including the all-out assault on CRT, the passing of "anti-woke" bills, the banning of "divisive" (i.e., BIPOC) books, mandated report your "woke teacher" hotlines, anti-trans laws such as the Florida "don't say gay" law, and at the most deleterious and fundamentals of democracy level—the elimination of voting rights and access to the vote. The proverb "there is nothing new under the sun" is quite fitting in the battle to maintain caste.

As each new day dawns, what does all of this mean for TEPs who are bound to soon experience, if they have not already, the trickle-up effect of this GOP national wave to yet again and again crystallize the original socially ordered race-based caste system? Particularly when their conniving momentum to do so is through the conduits of our classrooms and education system. We are compelled to reflect upon what Kiel thus warns—that education is the tool that holds the potential to deliver two vastly different outcomes—preservation of a caste system, or destruction of it. As the field of teaching and learning, TEPs are situated at the intersection of oxymoron because there is so much that we in actuality have to *un*learn. We have to unlearn that which we have ourselves been taught and receive messages therein daily—that our race divides are the natural order of things, justifiably placing the White race at the top and others along and at the bottom of the totem pole. It is imperative that our TEPs make it fully known throughout each vestibule of their program: governance, certification, policies, curriculum, and teacher educators and candidates that socially constructed race, racism, and the legacy of the American race-based caste system have direct implications for our education system. We have to unapologetically make CRT, CWS, and CCT non-negotiable foundations upon which our TEPs are built and evolve.

Using Wilkerson's (2020) analogy of likening caste to the structure of a home, we must ask ourselves: do we need to pull a Bernadine Harris from *Waiting to Exhale* on our current TEPs? Or simply do some form of renovation? Well, I vote for Bernadine! We might in fact have to burn it all down and rebuild from the pile of ashes. If caste is the hidden structure—the bones of our TEPs—then we must not keep the bones in tact as is the case when doing a traditional home renovation when the original structure remains and is revised and remedied. In this case, the remedy is the

cure: *OutCasting Teacher Education*. Herein, I believe we will also be able to move closer toward abolishing racism and restoring not only teacher education, but also our education system and the experiences of marginalized students in our schools. Ultimately, we should relentlessly strive for what Love (2019) so eloquently illuminates through the elements of abolitionist teaching: "mattering, surviving, resisting, thriving, healing, imagining, freedom, love and joy" (p. 2). That sounds to me like moving closer toward a world without caste—a world where everyone is indeed free!

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CHAPTER 9

# A New Paradigm for Preparing Teachers of Black Males

*Tr'Vel Lyons and Tyrone Howard*

## Introduction

Teacher educators have an important role in the development and support of more diverse, inclusive, caring, and humane schools. Why? Because they prepare teachers for the demanding and intricate role of teaching young people. The role of preparing tomorrow's educators with the knowledge, skills, resources, and dispositions to shape, teach, and molding learners is not a task to be taken lightly. Educating all students is always the charge for educators; but to be clear, having a particular focus on students who face various disadvantages historically and contemporarily is always a focus as well.

One of the more misunderstood, marginalized, and underserved populations has been Black students, and Black boys and young men, in

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particular (Allen, 2010; Gordon, 2012; Toldson, 2008; Fergus & Noguera, 2010; Ferguson, 2003; Howard, 2008, 2014). Black male students often experience schools and society in a distinctly different manner from their counterparts from other racial groups. The intersection of race, gender, identity, and class for Black males manifests into both opportunities and challenges that are transferred into the field of education creating opportunities for novice educators to identify effective pedagogical strategies for them (Carey, 2019). More recently, the challenges for Black males are ever-present in society and schools. The deaths over the last several years of Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and George Floyd have all raised the ugly spectacle of the limited value placed on Black life (Dumas, 2016). Within the context of schools, the type of "spirit murder" that Bettina Love (2019) refers to happens all too often, and Black boys and young men are often in the crosshairs, and frequently schools plant the seeds of discontent. Intangible acts of violence, ostensibly less tragic than physical murders, slowly erode and destroy the spirit of Black children. Spirit murders, Love (2016) posits, result in the "denial of inclusion, protection, safety, nurturance, and acceptance because of fixed, yet fluid and moldable structures of racism" (p. 2). Often, callous neglect, apathy, angst, and disdain for Black boys that exist societally manifest in classroom interactions and schools across the U.S. (Duncan, 2002; Howard & Flennaugh, 2011; Howard, 2014). The educational plight of Black males continues to garner national attention from both educational researchers and policymakers (Allen, 2010; Baldridge et al., 2011).

The Black male underachievement "phenomenon" has followed a similar trend: research is conducted, theories are suggested, and strategies are recommended for the reversal of stagnant academic outcomes (i.e., low graduation rates and standardized test scores) and little changes. In spite of various efforts, the problem of Black male marginalization persists, and more transformative approaches are needed. Teacher educators can and need to play a pivotal role in disrupting these trends. The preparation of teachers to work with Black males must be given serious thought, be informed by data, and be centered in an anti-deficit framing that sees the possibilities and promise of Black boys and young men. The challenge with this issue is that Black boys are often labeled as "problems" as early as preschool, and the labels only get worse and remain longer the older they get (Brown, 2012; Bryan, 2021; Howard, 2013; Nasir et al., 2019).

In this chapter, we call on the field of teacher education and teacher educators to make a more pointed and intentional focus on the manner in which teachers are prepared to teach Black boys and young men. We do this through a three-pronged framework:

- Examining and understanding the complexity of Black male identity;
- Recognizing and calling out acts of anti-Black racism that undermine Black males' promise and potential in schools; and
- Situating teacher learning in a framework that problematizes and forefronts the salience of race in creating humanizing pedagogies for Black boys and young men.

This chapter will call for a reimagining of how teacher education can and must play a role in enhancing the experiences and outcomes of Black males in schools.

## Understanding the Complexity of Black Male Identity

The uniqueness that many Black males encounter is informed by living in an age of the killing of unarmed Black men and teenagers, which can create identity tensions about how many Black male students see themselves and how these young men should traverse through schools and society that see them through a lens of pathology. The numerous identities of Black male students (i.e., race, gender, class, and sexual preference) have intersected in often complex and harmful ways. Within the US, these intersections have profoundly influenced the manner in which Black males experience schools and society. Research on student achievement elucidates that Black males are particularly more likely to experience racial discrimination and institutional racism in schools that result in ghastly academic and social consequences (Byrd & Carter Andrews, 2016). Some of the more storied academic consequences include underrepresentation in advanced placement/honor courses and gifted education; overrepresentation in both special education and exclusionary discipline; and lower high school graduation and college entrance rates than their peers (de Brey et al., 2019). Nationally, males are twice as likely to be classified as special education, and Black students are disproportionately diagnosed with emotional disturbance (ED) and are twice as likely to receive educable mental retardation (EMR) classification than white students (Grindal et al., 2019).

Conversely, they are half as likely to be nominated for gifted education (Johnson & Larwin, 2020). The national suspension rate for Black males is 17%, the highest amongst male groups in any race (de Brey et al., 2019). Decades ago, McFadden et al. (1992) found that racial/ethnic discrimination in discipline also persisted without any evidence of notably higher rates of students misbehaving. Suspension numbers show far too many Black (and Brown) students in urban schools getting suspended—more often and for more subjective offenses than White students—irrespective of poverty and other demographic factors (Skiba, 2002; Wallace et al., 2008). Although that is not to say that poverty is no longer a barrier for Black students, the poverty rate is the highest for Black students and they are the most likely to attend a high-poverty school. At the time of writing—early 2022—the extremely contagious COVID-19 Omicron variant has significantly altered, once again, the quality of consistent, in-person schooling, particularly for Black students. The lack of Internet is now a learning barrier for Black students: 90% of students reported having Internet compared to 96% and 98% for White and Asian students respectively. Of the students who had access to their online classes, 11% of Black students could only do so through a smartphone, whereas only 2% of Asian students and 3% of white students encountered that barrier to learning (NCES, 2020). In 2018, Black males aged 18–24 entered college at a rate of 33% in 2018—an 8% increase from 18 years prior (NCES, 2020). Moreover, academic disenfranchisement leads to disproportionate unemployment rates (Billue, 2014). These discrepancies only highlight and widen the opportunity and resource gap experienced by Black males. The academic consequences of the marginalization and inequitable resources are apparent and disheartening. The social consequences, though appearing subtler, are no less pernicious. And in light of them both, it is imperative to recognize that many of the barriers to education for Black males are beyond the realm of their control, yet many of them continue to find ways to achieve academically (Flennaugh, 2014; Harper & Davis, 2014; Noguera, 2008).

Many of the barriers to inclusive education for Black males ultimately result from classifications and diagnoses that rely heavily on the perceptions of teachers and administrators. Any preconceived perceptions of Black males (especially adolescents) as disruptive or aggressive have the potential to exacerbate any classroom misunderstandings, be they literal or cultural (Milner, 2018). Watts and Erevelles (2004) postulate that students' race, class, gender, and/or disability classification may be used to

preemptively label Black and Brown students as deviant and resistant to school culture. Moreover, the authors note that the conditions of high-poverty U.S. public schools decenter the experience of students of color, compelling them to feel more vulnerable and unsafe in schools. An anti-racist and anti-deficit approach to teaching—unabashedly teaching about race could enable youth to build healthier relationships in schools and develop noteworthy defenses against racism and its impact on students' trajectory.

Ensuring that teacher education is social justice-oriented and intentional about preparing teachers to teach Black males in a way that is knowledgeable, nurturing, and equitable. Losen and Orfield (2002) found that academic experiences and outcomes are significantly affected by social consequences that are undoubtedly tied to social misconceptions about Black males, predetermined (low) expectations, and other race-based factors (Andrews, 2016). In order to combat the exclusion of Black males in education, teacher education must be housed in radically positive socialization, which is set to redesign perceptions of and relations to students. As Andrews (2016) states, teacher education must prioritize the construction of a counternarrative that will "reject the hegemonic discourse of Black maleness that is rooted in a history of racist policy and practice that has disproportionately affected Black males in school and society" (p.55). Importantly, the new approach to teacher education should work to examine Black male identity through a raced, classed, and gendered lens.

To avoid the essentialization of Black males in teacher education, there is a need for exploring and understanding the variability that exists within the group. More pointedly, Reynolds-Vassar and Howard (2021) talk about examining the intersectionality of Black male identities and the danger of creating the singular depiction of who Black males are and how they see the world around them. They state that:

> The diversity of experiences that influence the *individual* identity Black males develop in the United States would find that while obvious social identities such as race and gender are prominent as…equally captivating are the ways that religion, sexual orientation, political persuasion, gender expression, ethnic origins, age, and geographical location also paint an intricate picture of how Black males define themselves and ultimately live their lives (p.236).

Any effort to address the educational experiences and outcomes of Black males must recognize the complexity and diversity of Black male identity. Like all other subgroups, Black males are not a monolith and must be seen and taught in such a fashion (Allen, 2010; McCready, 2004; Terry et al., 2013). The raced, classed, and gendered lens, as Reynolds-Vassar and Howard (2021) speak about, anchors our notions of how teacher educators can better support the understanding and education of Black male identity. Reynolds Vassar and Howard (2022) postulate that failure to explore the complexities of the Black male identity may result in researchers and teachers alike maintaining shortsighted examinations and stereotypical depictions of Black males that will ultimately mark numerous forums, conferences, and calls to action futile. The authors illuminate the pressing need for research on the influence of race, class, and gender on the Black male identity development but furthermore beckon researchers to produce unique insights that work to address a more robust scope of students' self-concept and interaction with the world, for example, religion, political inclinations, age, sexual orientation, and exhibition of masculinity (Nasir et al., 2009). Employing intersectionality as a framework is not without limitations. Black males are subject to a multitude of race-based challenges due to their Blackness and racial minoritization; however, they indeed benefit from privilege in the exhibition of their maleness in a patriarchal society. But even this maleness works to otherize and oppress Black males. Harper and Harris (2010) suggest that so much of the Black male identity stems from a unitary notion of masculinity—one that is both antiquated and traditional—and contributes to the exclusion of Black males with varying presentations of masculinity. In "The will to change," bell hooks (2004) urged men to reclaim feminism and noted how patriarchy prevents them from "knowing themselves, being in touch with their feelings, and from loving" (p. 27). Howard and Reynolds (2013) also argue that through intersectionality, a feminist framework, researchers may better understand the prevalent "hyper-masculine and heteronormative ideologies and practices" that influence Black males in school and larger communities (p. 239). McCready (2004) argues that harassment that students encounter due to their sexual orientation or gender nonconformity rarely exists in a vacuum, instead, it exacerbates "marginalization emanating from multiple dimensions of his identity notions" (p. 139). Amechi (2016) along with several scholars (Bonner and Bailey 2006; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Kimbrough & Harper, 2006) contend that performing well academically has historically been considered

unaligned with what was considered "cool" and/or acceptable forms of masculinity for Black males. Students professed to be too prideful to ask for help taking advantage of academic and social support on their respective campuses. Davis and Jordan (1994) found that Black males grappling with gender roles often perceived many schooling activities as feminine and irrelevant to their development as men. Alienation and divestment in the classroom merely result in less time in the classroom for Black males due to an increase in discipline and exclusionary practices. Carter et al. (2017) reported a link between a teacher riddled with discipline issues and a decrease in the academic and curricular focus given to students; he contends that many teachers are frankly ill-equipped to maintain classroom order and learning while enduring stressful school conditions. The investigation of Black male identity development and its influence on students' learning attitudes and sense of belonging is central to preparing teachers to positively engage with Black males (Howard, 2014). Teachers that lead with genuine attempts to understand the influence of gender/gender nonconformity and variant exhibitions of masculinity position themselves to develop learning settings that are significantly more conducive to the academic success and personal development of Black men. We believe that in order to adequately respond to the needs of Black males, teacher educators must examine the complexities of Black male identity. As Warren (2021) argues, improving the educational experience of Black students begins centering the possibility—in lieu of honing in on limitations and shortcomings—and resisting racist interpretations of Blackness. Moreover, the current state of affairs calls out for a radical transformation of the dynamics between Black boys and young men and their schools, the people in them, and the policies that create the conditions in which they are expected to learn and thrive. In doing so, teachers must also be vigilant in calling out acts of anti-Black racism that work to undermine the promise and potential in schools.

## Calling out Anti-black Racism

A wealth of scholarly literature exists on the pervasive nature of anti-Black racism and its adverse impact on the educational and everyday experiences of Black people (Dumas, 2016). Warren et al. (2022) characterize anti-Blackness as an omnipresent force—a deep loathing and disregard for Black life that undeniably shapes the way Black males and their families are seen and understood. The more notable consequences of anti-Blackness

result in overt acts of racism and prejudice, for example, hyper-surveillance, the murder of innocent Black children by police officers with impunity, and longstanding disproportionate incarceration rates (Tillet, 2012). However, anti-Blackness is the most vicious due to its dehumanizing nature. Wilderson (2010) contends that at the heart of anti-Blackness is a condition to see Black people as animalistic, rendering the comprehension of their humanity impossible. The view of the Black body as inhuman is then used to justify violence—both systemic and physical—and the revocation of citizenship privilege. Ultimately, the very existence of Blackness becomes a marker of difference and a problem that needs to be solved, or at best, an illness that requires a palliative (Baldwin, 1962; Howard, 2013). Identifying school (de)segregation education policy as a most prominent example, Dumas (2016) substantiates the claim that anti-Blackness has a causal relationship to education conditions that prove to be deleterious for Black students. He states, "differences in academic achievement; frequency and severity of school discipline; rate of neighborhood school closures; fundraising capacity of PTAs; access to arts, music, and unstructured playtime…are all sites of antiblackness" (p.17). Wilderson (2010) suggests that it is imperative that teachers understand that anti-Blackness permeates the work of educators at every level and wreaks havoc on the lives of Black children and their families. One of the essential steps in radically rethinking teacher education must include teachers' acknowledgment and understanding of anti-Black racism. They must also exhibit the courage to dismantle practices that not only dehumanize students but also foster instances of racial trauma. Only with these admissions will teachers begin to develop trust and understanding—crucial elements in building positive relationships—which scholars have proven essential to validating and protecting the potential of Black males in schools (Howard et al., 2021).

The classroom teacher is the "critical linchpin" in student engagement (Toldson, 2008, p. 6). For teachers working with Black male achievers, preparing a challenging and well-communicated curriculum is only a part of fostering their success. Howard et al. (2021) found that meaningful teacher-student relationships positively influence the academic performance and educational aspirations of Black students. The importance of school culture and teacher relationships cannot be overstated. Toldson (2008)who synthesized data from thousands of Black males—found that teachers who were interested in students, supportive of their academic goals, and affirming of their strengths had the most success in educating Black males. Black males perform best in spaces that feel safe to

learn—where they can be sure that their teacher is rooting for them to succeed. Black males will thrive in classrooms where they can be sure that they matter to their teachers not only as a student but also as a human being. Thus, we champion an approach to teacher education that disrupts anti-Blackness, prioritizes humanizing pedagogies and teacher qualities, for example, the ability to make students feel seen, heard, and validated; the ability to create a space where students feel secure in sharing their experiences and opinions; and the ability to strengthen students' strengths—in lieu of magnifying their shortcomings—when providing feedback and academic support. Quartz et al. (2008) found that teacher programs committed to developing qualities and pedagogies that would better prepare teachers to work within urban, low-income schools areas reported a retention rate in teaching higher than the national average (Milner and Howard, 2013). Irizarry (2007) postulates that classroom cultures are co-created by both the teacher and student; his work on cultural connectedness suggests that teacher education programs invoke intentional efforts to prepare more teachers and teacher educators of color to address the racial and linguistically diverse needs of students. Milner (2013) suggests that the experience of having a same-race teacher increases the likelihood that a Black student has both culturally relevant instruction and higher teacher expectations. Educator workforce data documents clearly the need to diversify teacher and teacher educator racial makeup. In 2013,nine out of every ten white fourth-graders were taught by a white teacher, while approximately two of every ten Black students had a Black teacher (NCES, 2020). In 2016, despite there being an increase in the number of Black educators, the elementary and secondary teacher workforce was still 82% white. Redding (2019) contends that the homogenous (read: overwhelmingly white) nature of the teacher workforce can result in and enable and exacerbate aforementioned barriers to learning opportunities such as being haphazardly referred for special education as well as being sent to the principal's office and/or receiving exclusionary discipline for more subjective offenses. Johns (2016) cites his experience being a Black male kindergarten teacher and suggests that there is profound value in Black male students having a Black male teacher. For example, Gershenson et al. (2018) found that "the effect of having at least one Black teacher on Black boys' probability of ever enrolling in college is almost twice as large as the effect for Black girls, and is strongly statistically significant" (p. 24). Herein lies the impetus for our call to radically reimagine teacher learning. The salience of race in classroom culture and its

impact on Black male student engagement cannot be overstated. The dearth of literature exploring the needs of Black males in teacher education is both disheartening and deserving of urgent rectification. There needs to be a paradigm shift. We urge teacher educators to rethink the way they prepare their teachers, which demands that they: (a) address cultural bias in teacher learning practices, (b) bravely shed antiquated teaching practices and consider incorporating a more social justice-oriented framework, and (c) adopt explicit efforts to recruit more Black (and Latino) teachers and prepare all teachers to work in urban contexts with diverse populations.

To push for a more comprehensive manner in which we understand Black boys and young men, theories and frameworks are needed which recognize the historical factors which influence these dynamic identities, and how anti-Blackness plays a role in this process. For example, we anchor a framing of Black male identity using a critical race theory approach, which is centered on four key tenets that are essential to educators better understanding the realities of Black boys and young men in schools:

1. **Center Race and Racism.** All CRT research within education must centralize race and racism, including intersections with other forms of subordination such as gender, class, and citizenship.
2. **Challenge the Dominant Perspective.** CRT research works to challenge dominant narratives and re-center marginalized perspectives.
3. **Value Experiential Knowledge**. CRT builds on the oral traditions of many indigenous people around the world. CRT research centers the narratives of minoritized voices when attempting to understand inequalities.
4. **Engage Interdisciplinary Approaches.** CRT scholars believe that the world is multidimensional, and similarly, research about the world should reflect multiple perspectives.

Each of these tenets lends itself to recognizing the role that race and racism have played in the lived experiences of Black boys. Moreover, this framework seeks to disrupt deficit notions of Black boys and young men (Canton, 2012; Terry et al., 2013), recognizes the utility of their voices in naming their experiences (Howard & Lyons, 2021), and makes the important call for intersectional analysis of their realities (Reynolds Vassar & Howard, 2022). We would offer to lift up the limitations of CRT, which

examines the role of race and racism across all groups of color, as well as the need for a more explicit focus on anti-Black racism, which squarely situates our discussion, analysis, and practices on conditions facing Black children. When it comes to the unique experiences of Black people and Black boys and young men, Bryan (2021) makes a compelling case about the need for CRT to go further in acknowledging the unique racialized experiences of Black boys, and he calls for a BlackBoyCrit. He defines it as:

> An inter-curriculum framework that acknowledges Blackness and maleness, contests anti-Black misandry in the early childhood experiences of Black boys and instead provides them educational experiences that are grounded in their lived realities and those of their Black male teachers (p. 57).

Disrupting anti-Black racism, engaging in complex theories and social justice frameworks that are unique to the lived experiences of Black youth writ large, and Black males, in particular, need to be part of teacher education framing, syllabi, planning, and required readings in a substantive manner.

## Social Justice and Teacher Education

The teacher education field faces a challenging demographic reality. More than 50% of the nation's school-age children are students of color, yet less than 20% of the nation's 3.2 million teachers are educators of color. Moreover, close to 40% of the nation's schools do not have a single teacher of color (Kohli, 2021). Hence, the teacher education field continues to grapple with a vexing reality; a disconnect between who teaches and who learns. How can and should teachers be prepared to teach in an increasingly diverse society? What skills and knowledge are necessary? How do we address the empathy gap that exists between many Black males and their teachers? (Howard et al., 2021) To that end, teacher educators need to think not only about preparing teachers to teach content and understand pedagogy but also how to think differently about how they engage Black boys and young men (Milner, 2013).

In order to respond to the growing chasm between many Black boys and young men and the teachers they interact with daily, a more equity-focused and social justice approach is needed. Social justice within the context of education and teacher education, in particular, rests on the idea that demands and works toward equity for all students, but it also

recognizes historical disadvantages which lead to current day disparities (Francois & Quartz, 2021). Social justice approaches to education also recognize the importance of growth that is provoked by student diversity. The recognition of different ways of being, knowing, communicating, and learning are integral to social justice education. It also recognizes personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from race, ethnicity, gender/gender identity, religious and spiritual beliefs, class, age, color, sexual orientation, disability, immigrant status, and national origin enhance creativity and learning potential (Francois & Quartz, 2021). Education works when teachers are empowered with the knowledge, resources, strategies, skills, and resources to incorporate students' backgrounds and experiences as strengths rather than view them as hurdles to overcome (Howard & Milner, 2014).

Moreover, social justice is about distributing resources fairly and treating all students equitably so that they feel safe and secure—physically and psychologically (Edwards, 2021). Sadly, a look at schools across the nation makes it clear that equitable distribution of resources remains unequal, and there is often a race-based connection to these differences. To that end, students in poorly-funded schools often do not have the technology, new books, or art and music programs that create a well-rounded education, while students in more affluent areas have the latest academic resources, school counselors, librarians, and more to help them succeed (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). These schools are also disproportionately where Black boys and young men are present. Bringing social justice into teacher education does not mean just having a reading, a course, or a statement about social justice matters. On the contrary, it means examining the very policies, practices, structures, curriculum, field placements, admissions procedures and requirements, mentor teachers, means of support and assessments of how the work is done. Also critical to the work is the nature of where the work is done (Francois & Hunter Quartz, 2021). Community engagement that centers the perspectives, knows the histories and recognizes the cultural complexities of Black life is vital as well for teacher education programs (Clark et al., 2021).

We argue that for social justice work to be meaningful in the current moment means to recognize the pervasiveness of institutional and structural racism (Howard, 2021). Often, absent from many conceptions of social justice work in teacher education is a true reckoning of how the effects of racism shape the day-to-day lived experiences of Black people, and Black males in particular. The more nuanced social justice framing

cannot be centered solely on a class divide that anchors economic disparities at its center. Race must be deeply theorized within the historical and contemporary context; anti-Black racism must be essential in course work; and teacher educators have to ensure that they have the racial literacy to engage in deep and thoughtful work with teacher candidates about the complexities of race. The challenge here, of course, is that while the racial composition of today's teaching population is overwhelmingly white, it looks robust when examining the racial composition of today's teacher educator faculty workforce.

## Teacher Learning & Talking Race

As teacher educators seek to build a more inclusive and racially inclusive approach to preparing teachers, it is vital to recognize the important role of community. Connecting, listening, and learning about the communities where we prepare teachers to work are just as important as the content that they will teach students (Francois & Hunter Quartz, 2021). Community members who have lived through transformation, historical setbacks, political issues, and the day-to-day realities of communities are vital in how we prepare teachers. Knowledge of community is also vital for many pre-service teachers who are quite unfamiliar with some of the communities where they plan to work. So, to understand and support Black males means understanding what they feel, hear, see, and experience in their communities in a manner that is asset-based, tied to hope, and possibility. Clark et al. (2021) call for greater community-engaged teacher preparation as an approach that is:

> Predicated on the concerted cultivation of collaborative relationships among universities, communities and schools. Grounded in the equalization of power structures that traditionally privilege the expertise of the university and the knowledge of the school over the wisdom of the community, this approach positions community members as experts and colleagues in the preparation of future teachers (p. 5).

Knowing community for many Black males means having the ability to understand, recognize, and talk about race and racism (Howard, 2008, 2020). Many educators still feel reluctant to address race and racism in the classroom because of their personal discomfort around the strong emotions they can elicit. Here is some advice:

1. Always consider the racial demographics in your classroom.
2. Avoid situations where there is one student of color who is expected to serve as the spokesperson.
3. Help students understand how racial exclusion of decades and centuries past has led to racial disparities today.
4. Do not shy away from talking about white supremacy, structural racism, and implicit bias for fear that students cannot handle the discussions.

Education scholar Rich Milner (2013) says that good intentions, without action, are not enough when it comes to conversations about race. Students want to discuss topics about race but often find themselves with teachers who are either unwilling or unable.

The uncertainty that many educators (white and teachers of color) have about discussing race and racism is nothing new. However, when contentious race-related events occur, many classroom teachers respond with ambiguity, avoidance, and outright fear. When teaching Black males, a group that has historically and contemporarily been objectified, scrutinized, and analyzed through a racial lens, ignoring race can be detrimental. This avoidance has to cease.Teachers need to be reflective, honest, bold, courageous, and willing to engage students honestly about race, no matter their age.

There are differences along racial lines for teachers and their willingness to discuss race. Many white teachers do not see race as important, adopt color-blind approaches, and are unable or unwilling to engage in race-related topics and discussions. White teachers must develop the capability to engage with race-related issues in the classroom. For teachers of color, there may be more of an inclination to have race-related discussions because of firsthand accounts of racism or discrimination. To be clear, though, even some teachers of color are uncomfortable in discussing race. Thus, the goal must be for all teachers to develop the competencies to engage their students in race-related discussions.

To be fair, such dialogues about race are rarely easy. In our work with educators, we have heard countless numbers of teachers (mostly white) claim that they feel woefully ill-equipped to discuss issues related to race, even though they work in majority non-white schools. For many white teachers, this is in part because these discussions fly in the face of timeless mantras and core values that are ingrained in American schools (Milner, 2020). Meritocracy, fairness, equality, justice, and egalitarianism are all

core concepts that educators teach and preach both implicitly and explicitly to students of all ages. However, when race enters the conversation, issues around meritocracy are called into question because of the salience of white privilege and the disadvantages faced by communities of color. We also face a justice system that in the eyes of many does not seem to administer equitable outcomes to people of color. Below are several immediate steps that educators and teacher educators can take in increasing:

1. **Increase your own racial literacy**—Demographers state that in the year 2042, our nation will be predominately comprised of non-white people. Our country's racial, ethnic, and linguistic demography is changing rapidly. Thus, teachers need to increase their racial literacy to better understand, connect, and teach today's learners. Approximately 80% of our teaching population is white, and over half of our student population is non-white. All teachers must work to increase their racial literacy. See the titles below as good starting points.
2. **Examine content in the curriculum**—Frequently, school content and curriculum can have language, examples, or images that can convey hateful messages. Teachers must be diligent in examining anything that could be controversial in textbooks, literature, or examples in videos share in the classroom. Such content should be excluded from what students are being taught, but skilled teachers may choose to have educative discussions about why certain language is used in the content, and why it should be removed.
3. **Address race issues** —Far too often, when teachers hear racist comments, hate speech, or racially inappropriate language, there is a tendency to ignore it because they are not sure how to address it. Teachers might think, "I am not sure what to say," or "How should I address a racially insensitive word?" or think, "It wasn't my issue." Whenever hearing hate speech, teachers should immediately speak out against it, tell students that such talk will not be tolerated, and be firm in such as stance. Silence on these matters is complicity. Remaining silent does not protect students; it only gives license for more hateful language to be used in the classroom or schoolyard.

## Conclusion

It is our hope that this framework and chapter offer a clarion call to continue rethinking the manner in which we study Black males. Abundantly clear from the literature is how our epistemologies, theories, practices, policies, and methods are ever-evolving and informing educators about how best to identify and address the needs of Black males. We still have more work to do. It is not our intent to claim that an intersectionality framework on its own will redress years of oppression, exclusion, and emasculation, even mutilation and murder countless numbers of Black males have experienced and continue to experience in U.S. schools and society. We simply want to urge more probing, more encompassing, deeper levels of analysis that would center Black males and have them define, describe, and analyze their realities on their own terms, without being placed in restrictive categories informed by narrow constructions of race, class, and gender.

The call to education for teacher education programs is to radically rethink the manner in which pre-service teachers are being prepared to teach Black males. Why is this necessary, some might ask? There is a multitude of reasons. The task of preparing teachers to work with all students has always been the goal. However, when looking at the student groups who have historically been marginalized, a one-size-fits-all approach cannot suffice. Our call must be loud for something different; our practices must be humanizing approaches that eradicate anti-Blackness; and our efforts must be ongoing in all that we do when it comes to educating Black males. Lastly, investing in this work is not a zero-sum game. When we support, uplift, love, and care for Black boys, one of the most marginalized student groups in schools, all students win.

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PART IV

# Anchoring Field Experience/Clinical Practice: Leveraging School-Family-Community Connections


CHAPTER 10

# Growing in Understanding of Ourselves and Each Other: Preparing Teachers for Anti-racist Classrooms Through Connections to the Field

*Jennifer Waddell, Loyce Caruthers, and Bradley Poos*

For decades, scholars' recommendations (i.e., James Banks, Geneva Gay, Tyrone Howard, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Sonia Nieto, and others) have urged school districts and teacher preparation programs to prepare and support teachers' capacities for culturally relevant teaching (CRT) and teaching in diverse schools and communities (Howard & Rodriguez-Scheel, 2017). Over the last five years, we have seen the consequences of inaction on the part of teacher education. Fear, division, and racism permeate our daily lives more visibly and vividly than ever before. Educators in PK-12 schools and those responsible for preparing educators are faced with the imperative to change how children and youth are socialized and

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learn to be adults. It is critical that all teachers understand the foundations of our country's division and are prepared to teach for anti-racism and social justice.

Teacher educators have a mandate to help our candidates develop into culturally competent educators (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sleeter, 2001) who are "transformative intellectuals and change agents" (Giroux, 1988). Curriculum in teacher education must provide opportunities for candidates to engage in dialogue and reflection of their own backgrounds, experiences, biases, and assumptions "to more deeply understand diversity and its multiple relationships to teaching and learning" (Milner, 2010, pp. 118–119). Candidates also need to have experiences in which they authentically engage with their students and communities so as to "challenge their belief systems and result in a change in dispositions" (Warren et al., 2011, p. 109).

Scholars of teacher education have recommended frequent and relevant connections between theory and practice, including an emphasis on culturally responsive pedagogy, child development, and learning theory (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2006, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Haberman, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2006; Waddell, 2008; Zeichner, 2003, 2010, 2011). Calls for more relevant teacher education include recommendations for extended field experiences with coursework taught in K-12 classrooms and for closely supervised clinical experiences in authentic settings (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Gay, 2004; Haberman, 2000, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2006; Waddell, 2008; Weiner, 2000; Zeichner, 2003). Darling-Hammond (2010) summed up these recommendations in stating, "The central issue I believe teacher education must confront is how to foster learning about and from practice *in* practice" (p. 61). She goes on to state that, "No amount of coursework can, by itself, counteract the powerful experiential lessons that shape what teachers actually do" (p. 61).

Milner (2012) proposed a model that aligns the calls for multicultural teacher preparation and extended fieldwork and connections to PK-12 schools. Milner (2012) "describes three essential and necessary interactions among the preservice teachers that seemed to increase their knowledge base and understanding: (a) cultural and racial awareness and insight, (b) critical reflection, and (c) the bridging of theory and practice" (p. 350).

To effectively learn to teach while incorporating these interactions, teacher candidates must be immersed in clinical practice and the everyday realities of teaching. In an effort to make teaching practice more central to

teacher education and bridge the divide between university programs and the PK-12 schools for which they prepare teachers, there have been recommendations for authentic practice-based teacher education (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Lampert, 2010; Zeichner, 2012). Grossman (2010) supports the recommendations for clinical preparation, stating that "providing high-quality practice opportunities for prospective teachers is fundamental to the enterprise of teacher education" (p. 7). Hollins (2011) further supports the recommendations for clinical practice by proposing a model for practice-based teaching in which, "Learning to teach integrates academic content knowledge and experience for teaching practice in an authentic context guided by a theoretical perspective and a philosophical stance" (p. 404). This chapter explores components of an urban teacher preparation program that utilizes Grossman's (2010) and Hollins's (2011) approaches for learning to teach in authentic contexts and demonstrates how practice-based teacher education, with a focus on critical reflection, can prepare culturally relevant and responsive teachers who are committed to anti-racist and social justice education. The chapter expands upon the results of two previous studies, focusing particularly on graduates' conceptualization of components of the program that helped prepare them to be social justice and anti-racist educators and the connection of those components to field experiences.

## Institute for Urban Education

The teacher preparation program discussed in this chapter, the Institute for Urban Education (IUE), was envisioned in 2003 as a response to a university's negligence in preparing educators for the Midwest City in which it is located. The program became a reality in 2005 with the inaugural cohort of IUE scholars. In 2003, the university was primarily preparing White students from suburban areas who would then return to suburban areas to teach (Waddell & Ukpokodu, 2012). The university is physically located in the heart of the City Public School System's attendance boundaries. At the time of the program's inception, the school district was unaccredited and representative of Milner's (2011) definition of urban-emergent, as it is located in a large city and has "some of the same characteristics and sometimes challenges as urban intensive schools and districts in terms of resources, qualification of teachers, and academic development of students" (p. 560).

The IUE was designed to heed the call for better-prepared teachers for local urban schools, which in 2003 included three urban-emergent districts and charter schools located in the city. In particular, the IUE responded to demands for preparing teachers through strong connections between coursework and the realities of PK-12 education. As such, program components were constructed to produce the following: (a) a cohort model designed to elicit a sense of belonging and safe spaces for learning for students and faculty interaction; (b) immersion experiences in PK-12 schools and the community; (c) a focus on the historical and cultural contexts of education including the City and the systemic racism that has shaped the marginalization of the city; (d) early and extended field experiences in urban schools; (e) programming that focuses on understanding self, implicit bias, and the manifestation of personal beliefs in interactions with others; (f) courses taught in authentic contexts in urban schools and communities; (g) culturally relevant, anti-racist, and social justice pedagogy; and (f) a focus on building authentic and equitable relationships with students and families (Caruthers et al., 2021; Waddell, 2008; Waddell et al., 2022; Waddell & Ukpokodu, 2012).

Each scholar in the IUE is provided a robust scholarship to help off-set educational costs, increase access to higher education, and provide compensation for the co-curricular activities and courses that are integral to the program. In exchange for the scholarship, each IUE scholar commits to teaching in a City partner school for a minimum of four years upon graduation. The program's mission is "to address racial disparities and educational inequities through the preparation and support of exemplary teachers for richly diverse schools in the City" and "partner schools are situated in contexts that may include racially, culturally and linguistically diverse student populations that have been historically underserved in US public schools" (University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2022).

Over the course of the last 15 years, due in part to a U.S. Teacher Quality Partnership grant and early program success, the program has impacted reforms within the teacher education program at the university. All candidates receive their baccalaureate degree from the Teacher Education department and courses that were once designed for IUE now serve students in the teacher education programs, including those not identified as IUE scholars. Faculty and staff in the IUE also serve as instructors for the degree program, thereby serving IUE candidates and non-IUE teacher candidates. Based on the 2009 Teacher Quality Partnership Grant designed to merge IUE reforms with the teacher

education degree program, the degree program follows a practice-based approach to teacher education (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Grossman, 2010; Hollins, 2011) where courses in reading, math, classroom environments, and guidance are taught in partner schools and early learning centers in which program candidates work closely with master teachers and PK-12 students, similar to a medical school model. The degree program employs Hollins's (2011) model for practice-based teacher education: focused inquiry, directed observation, and guided practice. In addition, IUE candidates engage in co-curricular program and extended field experiences, each focused on examining what it means to be a social justice and anti-racist educator.

The first cohort of students began their four-year undergraduate program in the fall of 2005, graduating and becoming teachers in 2009. Today, 100% of teachers from the inaugural cohort are still in education, with two serving as educational administrators in the City's urban public schools. Overall, IUE celebrates a 90% five-year teacher retention rate, with approximately 85% of graduates still working in public schools beyond the five-year mark. To date, 51% of IUE graduates identify as students of color and 18% identify as male. There have been multiple studies focused on the teacher preparation experiences of IUE graduates, each in an attempt to evaluate the program for continuous improvement as well as an effort to understand the components of teacher preparation most impactful on program graduates who, as teachers, have defied the odds within urban teacher retention. This chapter explores the themes of two previous studies (Caruthers et al., 2021; Waddell et al., 2022), each working with the same set of data and examining graduates' conceptualization of their teacher preparation experiences and that were most impactful in preparing them as anti-racist and social justice educators. We explore the findings that were most closely connected to field experiences and fieldwork.

## Previous Studies

*Participants* The study participants were drawn from a 2013 program evaluation in which 29 program alumni responded to a survey about their teacher preparation experiences. In 2021, survey respondents who were still in education were then individually emailed and invited to participate in a study focused on their preparation for social justice teaching. Nine graduates responded to the invitation within the first week and thus were

selected for the study. One of the study participants identified as male and eight identified as female. Five study participants identified as Black and four identified as White. Each of the participants had exceeded the five-year teacher retention mark, with years in education ranging from 8 to 12. At the time of the study, seven respondents were teaching or serving as school administrators in urban schools located in [the City], and one respondent was teaching in a rural school (though they had taught in an urban charter school for six years upon exiting the program). Of the nine 2021 respondents, three were working as administrators: two were building principals and one was working as an assistant principal.

*Data Collection* The authors conducted individual in-depth, semi-structured interviews with each participant; each interview lasted 45–60 minutes and was audio-taped and then transcribed verbatim. Questions focused on the ways in which the educators meet the needs of their students, describe teaching for social justice, and conceptualize their teacher preparation experiences.

*Results* Analysis of the first study (Caruthers et al., 2021) focused on preparation for Black Mattering and responded to the following research questions:

> (a) How did your pre-service program help you disrupt anti-Blackness? (b) In what ways do you engage families and communities in the education of Black children and youth? (c) What do you wish you had learned during your pre-service experience to support Black mattering in schools? (p. 8).

The first study identified three themes drawn from the data: (1) pre-service preparation for Black mattering, (2) involving families and communities, and (3) trusted spaces for learning (Caruthers et al., 2021).

The second study (Waddell et al., 2022) approached the data through the lens of preparation for social justice and responded to the following research questions: "(1) How do program graduates conceptualize their preparation for social justice teaching? and (2) What IUE [urban teacher preparation program] experiences contribute to current practices of program graduates?" (p. 6). Analysis of the second study found that impactful experiences among the participants stemmed from two main categories: foundational experiences (mindset of examining self, conversations over time, and truths about racism and inequity) and pedagogical experiences

(field experiences across multiple districts and schools; preparation for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2006, 2020); and focus on building relationships with students and families).

A common link between the findings from both studies was the significance of fieldwork in the preparation of teachers for social justice. Findings with these linkages are (1) trusted spaces for learning and mindset of examining self (both studies), (2) truths about racism and inequity (study 2), (3) field experiences across multiple districts and schools (study 2), and (4) involving families and communities (both studies). The following section summarizes each of these categories of study results and its connection to fieldwork in the teacher preparation program. In writing this section, we returned to the data sets to further examine themes and connections to fieldwork and related program components.

## Study Results and Fieldwork

Both studies identified stories graduates told related to the thematic findings. Due to the nature of the highly integrated practice-based model, one can read the findings and may or may not see the connection between the finding and fieldwork. Yet each finding's significance is grounded in the connection between the program's content and the field experiences to which they are connected.

*Trusted Space for Learning and Mindset of Examining Self* In both of the studies, participants shared experiences in which they engaged in critical self-reflection within their cohort and with their instructors. These conversations and reflections were grounded in experiences that took place within field experiences and community immersion.

*"Many graduates described their time in IUE as 'transformative' or 'life-changing'. They shared that learning about self was an unexpected but necessary component of preparation for social justice teaching" (Waddell et al., 2022, p. 8). As previously mentioned, the program focuses on critical reflection:*

> a process of constantly analyzing, questioning, and critiquing established assumptions of oneself, schools and the society about teaching and learning, and the social and political implications of schooling, and implementing changes to previous actions that have been supported by those established assumptions for the purpose of supporting student learning and a better schooling and more just society for all children. (Lui, 2015, pp. 10–11).

Lui's (2015) model of critical reflection to this end considers four characteristics:

1. There are two important dimensions in critical reflection: the content and the processes. Content means what teachers reflect about, and processes mean what thinking processes they go through while reflecting.
2. The content of critical reflection includes established assumptions of oneself, schools, and the society about teaching and learning and the social and political implications of schooling.
3. The processes of critical reflection include constant analyzing, questioning, and critiquing the established assumptions and implementing changes to previous actions that had been supported by those established assumptions.
4. The ultimate goal of critical reflection is producing actions for enhanced student learning, better schooling, and a more just society for all students (p. 10).

Within IUE, critical reflection was brought into the field experience in two distinct ways: (1) discussion sessions as part of or after each field experience day; and (2) courses taught in the field. Within these field-based courses, candidates reflected weekly on their work with PK-12 students, observations within schools and connections to course content, and how the experiences impacted their worldview and their work as a teacher. In each of these venues, candidates engaged in dialogue in which they reflected on observations (what they saw or experienced), how the experience impacted their understanding of self, how it impacted their thinking about teaching and learning, and what impact it may have on their future work as a social justice educator.

In their interviews, the graduates spoke about these reflective dialogues and their impact. Sally, a Black female, discussed the process and the significance of Liu's fourth characteristic:

> we were expected to think about our role in society, how we've interacted within society from an intersectional perspective: as a woman, as an educator, as a black woman who is an educator. That was very grounding so that I could better understand myself so that I can understand the different complexities of society at large and my role in that. Then the grounding of educational equity: what does it mean to teach for a way to ensure that.

For a moment, Sally was confronted with her intersectionality of what it means to be Black and female, confronted with Du Bois's double consciousness, "a duality in African-American life. Fueled largely – but not exclusively – by racism, this duality is a kind of paradox …" (Meer, 2019, p. 51). She went on to state:

> At that intersection of learning about practices, learning about theory and then being self-reflective, I was really able to be critical of my own experiences and be sure that I wasn't perpetuating things that I had experienced that were harmful because I was made aware of it through that reflection and I also had the opportunity to reflect on the experiences that really were affirming and pushed me and helped me so that I could be clear about what those were so that I could practice that as an educator myself… because my experience was helpful in forming that lens but also hearing my peers experience has helped to further my understanding of my beliefs around who I wanted to be as an educator.

As she reflected on this duality, it was clear to Sally that her own racial harms presented the possibilities of barriers to hearing the experiences of her peers and engaging in anti-racist practices.

Marva, also a Black female, commented on the power of the reflective dialogues and reflecting in a safe space as well:

> [The] training teachers on how to effectively communicate and be open about different biases from various experiences they've had because I think too often we don't get a chance to talk about what we are truly expressing to our kids [and] not even knowing it sometimes, because it's just implicit based on our experiences, so what's been most effective for me is hearing various teachers talk about what they've gone through and how they have translated that to kids.

She too desired a mindset to support anti-racist dialogue with students, which has become more of a struggle within the current backlash of critical race theory. As cited in Waddell et al. (2022), "Russell, a White male shared how this mindset shapes current practice, 'Because of that, I developed a practice of being very self-reflective each and every day. How can I tweak the next day's lesson or the next unit to meet the unique needs of the Black students that I'm teaching?'" (p. 5).

MellieTee, a White female, also commented on the power of critical reflection, "reflective practice and being a reflective practitioner… We

need to be in positions where we are truly questioning our motives and we're questioning our thoughts and beliefs and our practices." Mellie Tee illuminated the importance of not being blind to how Whiteness can obscure the dominant meaning of her role in schools and the privileges it brings— constantly questioning the intentionality of practices (Picower, 2009).

Grace, a White female, evolved from being blind to the meaning of Whiteness to helping other with difficult conversations regarding race. She commented on the necessary step of learning to be uncomfortable with reflection and self-growth and how this habit of mind has shaped who she is today,

> I distinctly remember the first time I ever felt really uncomfortable in a classroom, and it was in the IUE when we were talking about race… But then I progressed to a point where I bring up uncomfortable conversations, I talk people through uncomfortable conversations. I don't know if I could pinpoint a specific experience, but more of the feeling of moving through and learning how to be comfortable with conversations that feel uncomfortable. Being in the program with other students who were not white was also very impactful because I got to hear somebody else's perspective and I got to gain insight into other people's experiences… If I had to summarize the knowledge down that I received it is that, in all honesty, who I am in a cultural context: who I am as a white person and the skills to navigate conversations and reflections for myself. It's not necessarily [something I can put in a lesson plan], it's more of a larger piece. It changed who I am. So, walking into the program, I was very different than walking out of the program because my understanding of myself increased dramatically, my understanding of who I was within society, even how other people might see me in society. So that's been huge piece of me teaching. Reflections are dramatically important for a teacher. So, when I am having a difficult time or if I'm needing help navigating a situation, I can go back to that piece and reflect on my role within things.

As demonstrated in Grace's comment, a natural outcome of the field experiences was the connection to coursework directly focused on racism and inequities. Kay (2018) highlights having brave spaces, not safe spaces in schools that are likely to be ambiguous and biased because they are left to individuals' interpretation of safety. We characterized the space within the IUE as safe spaces for acquiring truths about race so that scholars can advocate for brave spaces in schools and classrooms that contribute to anti-racist practices.

*Truths about Racism and Inequity* Findings of study 2 reported the significance of learning the truths about institutional systemic and individual racism and the inequities faced by marginalized communities and students in urban schools. These truths were largely discovered by candidates making connections between their coursework, cohort and seminar discussions and what they were both observing and experiencing in the field. Knowing these truths and being able to openly discuss ideas for changing society was an anchor to the graduates' current practice.

Truth-telling was and is an intentional and focused aspect of the social justice seminars. The IUE curriculum within the seminar structure, in which all IUE students were (and still are) required to participate, entailed a student journey through personal growth around equity and teaching for justice. Students confronted intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic racism; they deeply explored the roots of racism and inequity within the local community and learned ways in which to challenge inequities and teach for justice. The social justice seminars unfolded across a four-year curriculum and were experienced biweekly with the cohort.

Sally reflected on the focus on truths within society,

> …from the jump, we were expected to think about our role in society, "how we've interacted within society from an intersectional perspective: as a woman, as an educator, as a black woman who is an educator. That was very grounding so that I could better understand myself so that I can understand the different complexities of society at large and my role in that" (Waddell et al., 2022, p. 10) …
>
> I, as a black woman, have experienced that since I was a kid, so I know that, and I also see that perpetuated within schools. There has to be greater intentionality because kids have that stigma that white kids don't have, and they internalize that of course and that's why intentionality is so critical.

Study 1 captured the double consciousness experienced by Sally, and in Study 2, Sally's truth is illuminated. She names the stigma of being Black as a child—"I as a Black woman, have experienced that since I was a kid." This reminds us of anti-Blackness and how Black bodies become disdained and marginalized in schools (Caruthers et al., 2021).

As a White Female, Mellie Tee recalled her pre-service training and exposing truths about the broader constructs of race and its systemic underpinnings. As stated in Waddell et al. (2022), Mellie Tee shared an appreciation for learning about systems of oppression, she said:

> My pre-service training, specifically [IUE], was really centered around learning and thinking about underserved youth. About the ideas of not only diversity, but systemic oppression… people in our society who were not given the same equitable access to not just education, but health care, housing, [and] jobs (p. 9).

Acquiring truths helped to prepare Mellie Tee for teaching in diverse settings where her opportunities for learning from other teachers of color have been limited given the reality that most teachers in schools are White and female (Kay, 2018). Hence, it becomes even more important to understand underlying realities that often constitute implicit bias and little regard for understanding race.

Grace reflected on her role in such a system that has been built on an established culture that is a safe space for the dominant culture of whiteness and the accountability language of testing. She stated:

> We know that the system of education has so many challenges, so to narrow that down for me … one of the biggest things I've had to think about and process and overcome is some of the things that are set up in the system and 'how I navigate those for my students in a way that I think is fair. [Such as] testing. It's not always relevant, it's not always culturally written'. So how do I navigate those results and advocate for my students and what I know they're capable of doing while also respecting that this is an established culture that I have to be within? I don't have a good answer for it. I'm back in a classroom and back at that same thing but "I do think that I found the fire to fight the battles if that makes sense" (Caruthers et al., 2021, p, 14).

Grace has acquired the truth of a flawed system—"an established culture that I have to be within?" She implicitly questions the opportunities White educators in their sheer numbers have to increase learning and achievement of marginalized youth (Milner, 2010, 2011; Picower, 2009).

Not only did much of the IUE coursework connect to the present truths about racism and equity, but some courses also placed students in the field for 50% or more of the course contact hours. One such course many of the graduates spoke about was a community immersion course in which students spent a summer learning in and from the community. The three key aspects of this course were learning from community members via panels and readings, whole or small group experiences in the community (e.g., neighborhood walks), and working as an unpaid intern in a community agency (e.g., urban youth academy). MellieTee commented:

> That was the most wonderful and life-changing experience for me at the time. [IUE] had a summer program. I think this was probably one of our last summers in the program. It was really a boots-on-the-ground field experience for what many members of our community are experiencing. That was really wonderful and impactful.

MellieTee also commented on how the variety of field experiences helped provide illustration of the content in courses:

> Another experience was all of the hours of field experience that we had; it was 500 hours of teaching. We visited schools obviously in [the] City…, all over the city to see different schools. But we also visited the schools that were in other school districts, like [suburban schools], to see what sorts of resources children have in different communities. That was coupled with the study of race real estate and uneven development where we were able to truly learn one of the foundational reasons why oppression exists and in jobs is because of how our city has been redlined and how it's been gerrymandered and how taxes work and how public-school systems are funded by taxes and support it that way. We really were exposed to schools that are being funded by property taxes that have the resources that they need, and then schools that are making it work.

Her comments regarding race and real estate and funding of schools reflect Gotham's (2002) historical analysis of housing patterns in the city characterized by racially restrictive covenants, blockbusting, White Flight and redlining that today influences the dynamics of race. Exposing these dynamics has been an intentional component of IUE scholars' learning about communities. The community immersion experiences and the variety of other field experiences were impactful components of the program, as demonstrated by the second study.

*Field Experiences Across Multiple Districts and Schools* Results of study 2 discussed the significance of field experience across multiple districts and schools. While the connection between this theme and fieldwork is inherent, here we expand further on the significance of this finding and the ways in which field experiences across multiple districts and schools are approached within the program.

The program implemented field experiences each semester of the program and made a point to provide experiences across various school districts, school demographics, and school cultures. As indicated previously,

field experiences are coupled with reflective dialogues, either in cohorts at the site or within the context of courses within the semester, as well as the IUE social justice seminars. School sites were carefully selected by the faculty and in collaboration with school partners. The goal in identifying partner schools as field sites, as well as course sites, was finding schools who are serving all students and doing so in ways that align with the program's social justice mission. Still today, IUE collaborates with school principals and teachers via shared learning, small group discussions, and book studies.

IUE scholars also have opportunities to observe in suburban schools and note the differences in resources, potential teaching philosophies, and student demographics. All field experiences are highly supervised, with university faculty being present on-site and opportunities to deconstruct experiences through group and individual reflective dialogues. The graduates in the studies reflected on such experiences from when they were in the program.

Angie, a Black female, shared the power of having multiple field experiences coupled with the reflective dialogues and instructors who were teaching courses in the field,

> I would say [field] experiences, but we went to the classroom all the time, every semester, so that was helpful. They sent us into the schools, we talked about everything we were experiencing. I had some great [supervisors]. We had teachers who were actually in the classroom teaching, professors who had been in the classroom…I also think I can't overstate the importance of those conversations we had about biases, in particular about white privilege and how that's impacting the classroom.

Ella, a Black female, also spoke of the power of early and extended field experiences,

> When I joined the IUE, I think we were in the classroom the second or third week of my undergrad freshman year. So, we were able to get the different experiences and a suburban school, an urban school, and then I student taught [in KCPSS]. I think my most impactful experience was really just learning and growing within myself over the course of my experience in the classroom.

Marva also found power in the opportunities to experiences multiple schools and districts,

> The IUE made it their mission to make sure that we got out into the field starting our first year, whereas other educational programs—they will wait until their senior year to actually give you feel experience. They had us observing schools right off the bat, so we had a chance to experience the suburban, urban, rural districts, and so that gave me a really good insight because, of course, when you're in high school, or just in your schooling, You only come with your own experience, and so you're really not sure how those other schools function, and so for them to get us out there and see the things that were really going on, it—for us to really be able to form our own opinions about whether not we felt like we could handle these things on our own once it came that time—that was very beneficial because I had never seen inside a lot of schools, and so I got to see how teachers were interacting with students of all different races.

Finally, the program continues to employ a year-long culminating experience, in which candidates are placed in the same school for the entire academic year. IUE teacher candidates are expected to follow the school district calendar and participate in the summer professional development and beginning of school year activities. This allows the IUE teacher candidates and the school personnel to view them as a part of the school community. The program also utilizes co-teaching as its model for student teaching. Graduates participating in the studies were at their school site for three to five days in the fall semester and full-time in the spring semester. Graduates spoke of the powerful impact of this experience.

Grace shared the powerful impact of co-teaching and intense supervision,

> One of the things I am not sure I even spoke about earlier is having the full year of student teaching. Having someone with me all the time was so important. I struggled a lot in my student teaching, and my supervisor was fantastic about helping me set context. Since that time, I've had her voice in my head and I've had multiple instructional coaches and even now if something is happening those voices come back and the questions, they asked me come back… those questions became a part of how I reflect and a part of who I am as a teacher.

A final aspect of the program of which graduates spoke was the importance of involving families and communities.

*Involving Families and Communities* A prevalent finding in both of the studies related to the preparation for and the importance of involving families and communities in teaching for social justice. These themes have a direct connection to fieldwork, as each of these areas was a course in the program, and each course was taught in a field-based manner.

The "Working with Families and Communities" course was originally designed as an IUE course and is now part of the degree programs for all IUE and teacher education undergraduate students. The course combines academic knowledge with opportunities to learn from families (via panels, experiences, and activities) and of which the student is expected to complete independently and/or with their cooperating teacher during the fall semester of their year-long internship. The course focuses on breaking down the historic power dynamics between marginalized families and schools and on the importance of building authentic and trusting relationships with families.

Mellie Tee reflected on the course and how it still impacts her work today,

> the skill of listening, which I'm still working on. How to listen and communicate with families. The number one person or the number one thing in a child's life is their family. So, if I can cultivate a bridge that we can both walk across and a bridge that we can both meet each other at and work with each other on, I would say that is probably the greatest skill because that's really going to get you the most positive outcomes. When you're communicating with parents, even if you're finding difficulty in the classroom day to day. It's okay if you're finding difficulty as long as you were able to communicate with parents and be a good listener. Sometimes not having an opinion, not having anything to say as better than saying what you feel.

Russell, a White male, also reflected on how the "families" course still impacts his work today.

> My first year teaching— and I continued this every single year with every single student—but I did home visits. That was important for me to get into the homes and listen and understand where the parents were at, where the family is at, and what the students needed. That was very helpful…I decided to do that. I would credit that as something that was [inspired by the IUE]. I felt like I had to do it even though I wasn't required to do it. It's kind of like explaining how you learn to become a really fluent reader…because it's so ingrained in me now. But I felt so motivated by my peers who I would hear in my coursework. They would talk about successful home visits they

> had and things like that. So being motivated by my cohort was really important. It felt like the right thing to do, and it was also very rewarding even though it was extra work. It was very rewarding being able to be in the homes and getting to know the students.

## Conclusion

Hollins (2011) further supports the recommendations for clinical practice by proposing a model for practice-based teaching in which, "Learning to teach integrates academic content knowledge and experience for teaching practice in an authentic context guided by a theoretical perspective and a philosophical stance" (p. 404). The results of the two studies discussed in this chapter reveal the strength of such a model. To teach for social justice, teacher education must include carefully designed coursework and field experiences that are not just closely linked, but that have the theoretical thread of social justice, educational equity, and critical reflection integrated into all aspects of the program. Faculty in such a program must engage in shared and individual reflection. Teacher educators, just like the students with whom they teach, must engage in meaningful reflection and discourse about their role as educators for social justice—it should permeate all decision-making. As Liu (2015) states,

> In the final analysis, although this framework offers a wealth of insight that guides and inspires teacher educators to explore strategies in our own teaching practice to enhance transformative learning of our prospective teachers, teacher educators are, in the end, teachers as well; we can best inculcate habits of critical reflection for transformative learning in others when we demonstrate them ourselves (p. 149).

As teacher educators, we must be willing to engage in our own dialogue around our backgrounds, biases, and actions. We must constantly ask ourselves, "is this changing the narrative?" and we must call on one another when we fail to meet this challenge.

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CHAPTER 11

# Developing Culturally Responsive Anti-racist Activists

*Novea McIntosh and Rochonda L. Nenonene*

Moving the vision of the program forward, two faculty members, an Afro-Caribbean Black woman and an African American woman, the Urban Teacher Academy has evolved to function as a counter-space where candidates can interrogate their own identities and roles in resisting the traditional oppressive systems and embedding abolitionist and anti-racist pedagogical practices, thereby liberating our students (Love, 2019; Milner, 2007; Paris & Alim, 2014). Working at private religious PWI grounded in Marianist traditions which embrace this activist work

> to confront social ills with a perspective that is both compassionate and controversial—to challenge the status quo in the search for the common good. This requires us to be creative and innovative as we consider our response to the problems of the world. It also demands that we be courageous; that we be modern-day prophets, bringing to light the hard and often uncomfortable issues of our day. (Society of Mary, 1991, p. 20)

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This chapter aims to provide hope for situating revolutionary practices in White spaces or institutions, as we draw on the work of our ancestors and contemporaries intent on disrupting the status quo and advancing radical revolutionary work in education to uplift minoritized and racialized groups.

## My Activist Self

I identify as an Afro-Caribbean scholar-practitioner, a critical theorist researcher in this academic space whose scholarship is grounded in critical and sociocultural theories of research with the framework of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). With an ancestral heritage and education steeped in Black consciousness and African intellectual traditions and with a passion for human emancipation (Wynter, 2015) within the confines of a Eurocentric education, I have evolved as an activist and disrupter of systemic oppression and the perpetuation of white supremacy in academic spaces (McIntosh, 2021). The Urban Teacher Academy at this PWI serves as a counter-space, amplifying my minoritized voice and narrative, an authentic representation of the realities of culturally and linguistically diverse immigrants and BIPOC students in societies across the world. Hence, I intentionally incorporate and activate the narratives and voices of minoritized and underrepresented groups in the curriculum in preparing my students to teach in urban schools. I am a social justice activist, a disrupter, teaching to change the world. In this academic space, I value the university's Marianist mission and commitment to the common search for truth, to the dignity of the human person (Association of Marianists Universities), hence my personal mandate to understand and improve the world and to give voice to the marginalized and underserved in wider parts of the world through my teaching, scholarship, and service to others.

## My Activist Self

I am an African American and a product of urban schools. I benefited greatly from having caring, compassionate educators as role models in my life who valued education, spoke of "Black Empowerment," and expected excellence. Access to quality educational opportunities and being taught by teachers who did not view me from a deficit perspective was the manner in which I was able to tap into my academic potential and succeed. Therefore, it has always been important for me to give back to urban education. At my core, I am an urban educator. As a teacher educator and

researcher, my work is grounded in constructivist (Banks, 2006; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll et al., 1992) and sociocultural theories (Ogbu & Simon, 1998; Whaley & McQueen, 2004, 2010) of the teaching/learning process. Inspired and influenced by the works of Anna Julia Cooper (1892), Dubois (1903), and Freire (1970), my research incorporates the conceptual frameworks of critical pedagogy, culturally responsive/sustaining educational practices, and social justice. I am committed to connecting my scholarly contributions to the profession in a manner that promotes "educational excellence … inclusivity, equity, community, collaboration, solidarity with the suffering and poor and a spirit of service" (Association of Marianist Universities, 2019, p. 14), which means my commitment is to help develop compassionate, knowledgeable, and culturally responsive teachers who recognize that learning can only take place in an environment that is nurturing, supportive, and free of bias.

## Theoretical Frameworks

Our revolutionary work is constructed within the frameworks of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), anti-racist (Kendi, 2019), abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019), and decolonization of education informed by critical race theory to challenge the conditions of inequality, oppression, and exploitation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students underrepresented and minoritized in p-12 classrooms (Glesne, 2011). 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). Abolitionist teaching is the practice of working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, (re)membering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustice in and outside of schools (Love, 2019, p. 2). Kendi (2019) notes of anti-racist teaching: "The opposite of racist isn't 'not racist.' It is 'anti-racist.' … One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an anti-racist. There is no in-between safe space of 'not racist'" (p. 9).

## Methods

We examined our activist revolutionary practices embedded in the urban teacher academy course with mostly White teacher education female students. We employed narrative inquiry grounded in the notion that narratives are types of stories open to multiple interpretations and shifting meanings (Clandinin, 2007) as we explore racialized narratives in the urban teacher education course. This revolutionary work to agitate and re-center teacher education curriculum propels us to draw on innovative and intentional topics such as decolonization, abolition, and anti-racist teaching. This utilization of the qualitative method provides both counterspaces and distinctive methodological advantages for theorizing and representing revolutionary pedagogical practices in education essential to justice work. As a method for reimagining, revolutionizing, and igniting curricular practices in the Urban Teacher Academy, it provides the opportunity to further uncover and disrupt traditional oppressive practices antithetical to social justice. We also engaged in a collective analysis of our course materials, students' work, and students' narratives. The primary data sources are drawn from the urban teacher academy course with a qualitative analysis of eight preservice teachers' narratives used to illustrate how students engaged with the course content steeped in revolutionary pedagogical practices. It will unearth (a) preservice candidates engaged in critical thinking and problem solving; and provide an understanding of the context in which urban teachers are working; (b) preservice candidates' reflections on how this content is armed to resist, agitate, and re-center race as a central role in teaching in urban spaces; (c) the understanding that race is so ingrained in how we view each other that it cannot be overlooked or ignored (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1998). It will further reveal reflections on the impact of this revolutionary work on preservice teachers' persistence and commitment to disrupt and dismantle oppressive systems to teach to practice freedom.

## Urban Teacher Academy

Designed in 2001, the Urban Teacher Academy (UTA) was developed as a means of addressing the growing demand for quality urban classroom teachers. Ladson-Billings (2001) states that "one of the current concerns plaguing the nation's schools is how to find teachers who are capable of teaching successfully in diverse classrooms" (p. 12). UTA's goal is to

increase the number of highly effective, reliable teachers in the district by recruiting preservice teachers to the urban school setting, providing them with specialized training, and supporting them with mentors during their field experience and as they begin their careers (Nenonene, 2007). UTA's structure was developed to work in tandem with the existing teacher licensure program structure already in place in the Department of Teacher Education. Candidates choose to add this university certificate designed to provide an urban perspective on teaching strategies and pedagogies that would enable preservice teachers to develop a culturally responsive/sustaining knowledge base, skill set, and understanding needed to be effective and successful in the urban setting.

### *Instructional Model*

The instructional model utilizes three program areas that assist preservice teachers in the development and understanding of issues that are relevant to urban education: seminars; field experiences; and professional education coursework (see Fig. 11.1). Each UTA experience is intended to deliver knowledge cogent to the field of urban education and practical so that preservice teachers will develop skills and strategies that will help

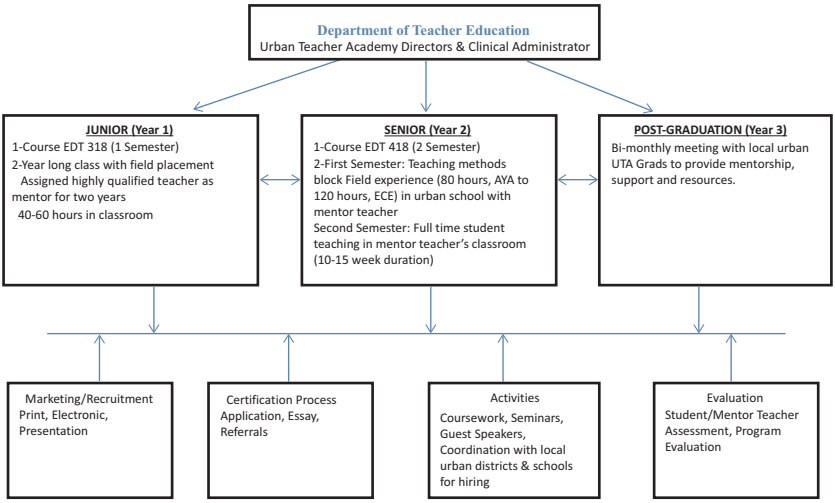


**Fig. 11.1** Urban Teacher Academy instructional model

them be successful in the classroom upon graduation. Additionally, once candidates have graduated, we continue to offer long-term sustained support to UTA grads by holding bi-monthly meetings.

### *Seminars*

Seminars address issues pertinent to urban teaching that may not be covered with the appropriate emphasis or depth required to adequately prepare candidates for teaching in the urban setting. Seminar topics cover a wide range of issues identified through the literature as critical for those teaching in urban areas and are intended to help not only preservice teachers but also veteran classroom teachers who wish to stay current on what is appropriate and considered best practice when working with urban students and families. The seminar topics include, but are not limited to:

- Socio-economic concerns (health, impact of poverty, digital divide, etc.)
- Conflict resolution and classroom management
- Cultural competency and disrupting deficit thinking
- Social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices
- Community resources and collaboration with agencies

Varied teaching strategies such as the use of technology, cooperative learning, and the use of case studies and simulations for interactive learning are used to enhance student engagement. An emphasis on problem solving, application, and self-reflection for both preservice teachers and mentor teachers is the goal.

### *Urban Teacher Academy Professional Education Course*

As a means of ensuring that all relevant material and topics regarding urban schools, students, and families are discussed, understood, and incorporated into the UTA student's philosophy and pedagogy, courses for both juniors and seniors were developed. Not originally a part of UTA's instructional model, the course was designed to cover the myriad of topics that cannot be covered in the space of four main seminars throughout the year. It is the reimagining of the senior-level course that is the focus of this chapter.

### *Field Experience*

Placement in urban schools provides hands-on participation in real classrooms with real students and teachers. This opportunity to apply knowledge, concepts, and skills studied in class and seminars makes it possible for candidates to translate theory into practice. For UTA participants, both the junior and senior years, all field experience and student teaching will be designated in urban classrooms with teachers who have demonstrated effective and impactful educational practices. The exemplar urban placement provides the UTA student ample time to identify patterns, understand student behaviors, and plan according to the different needs and learning styles of the student. Additionally, the urban placement provides the UTA student with the benefit of being able to see how effective veteran teachers engage students, make professional decisions, and work with colleagues.

### *Graduate Support*

Critically important is the support of novice teachers, particularly when they are in urban settings (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Recognizing that high-attrition rates are associated with lack of support and navigating the bureaucracy of school districts (Borman & Dowling, 2008), since the inception of the program, we have offered bi-monthly meetings to support local UTA grads. More recently, utilizing online platforms has permitted the inclusion of grads who are not teaching locally. These meetings facilitate the development of professional practice and help develop supportive networks among the UTA grads. Most recently, grad meetings have included discussions around anti-racist teaching, the controversy regarding critical race theory, and Emdin's (2021) work aimed at "celebrating protest, disrupting the status quo, and reclaiming the genius of youth in the classroom" (back cover).

## Reimagining of UTA

MLK in his historic *I Have a Dream* Speech, "We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there 'is' such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action" MLK (Yale Law School, 2008).

Our history in the United States has been rife with systemic racial oppression and reckoning over time. MLK's charge during the civil rights movement, though frequently echoed, did not move the fundamental racist, colonial white supremacists' traditional practices in our education system. In an open letter to our university community, authored by the president's council on how to become an anti-racist university, they noted:

> The outpouring of grief and anger over the recent murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, among others, highlights a long-standing pattern of unjust deaths of Black citizens, along with many systemic, racist injustices that impact African Americans, Indigenous Peoples, Latinx, Asian Americans, and other populations that are underrepresented at UD. As a nation, we can—and must—do better (University of Dayton, July, 2020)

In higher education, particularly teacher education, this message resounded as we were faced with the reality that our preservice students were teaching the underrepresented in urban spaces who were further traumatized by these recent events. The council further explicitly charged us: "We are called to embrace human diversity, communicate with respect, and to understand, disrupt, and dismantle systemic racism. Black lives do indeed matter." As two women of color whose work is diversity, equity, and inclusion, we knew our work would be at the forefront of this call in teacher education.

How will our candidates function in urban spaces, as like us, they witnessed and have lived through the convergence of a double pandemic, coronavirus, and systemic racism and the lasting impact of an insurrection? Ladson Billings in *Dreamkeepers* (2009) noted, "the pedagogical instruction that many teachers of African-American students received from their teacher preparation programs leads to an intellectual death" (p. 17). The work was urgent. We sought to reimagine the curriculum to arm students with activist tools to teach in urban schools (see Table 11.1). So, we seized the moment and revolutionized, our work moved it from culturally responsive pedagogy to anti-racist teaching practices from lessons learned from critical engagement, community activism, and justice work to reimagine the curriculum, "… to begin always anew, to make, to reconstruct, and to not spoil, to refuse to bureaucratize the mind, to understand and to live life as a process-live to become" (Paulo Freire, 1972, p. 3). With the convergence of a double pandemic Covid 19 and racial oppression, the

**Table 11.1** Reimagining the Urban Teacher Academy curriculum

| *Activist moves* | *Curriculum changes from CRE to anti-racist activism* |
|---|---|
| Reimagine | Revising the course; funds of knowledge, abolitionist teaching, anti-racist teaching adding to the theoretical framework with contemporary works, for example, interrogate your identity and vigilantly reflect through journals, identify, and call out racism and white supremacy. Disrupt it in your teaching by representing students' history. Have conversations about race with students and celebrate their funds of knowledge. Take action when you see racism and advocate for your students (Moll et al., 1992; Love, 2019; Kendi, 2019) |
| Reclaim | Using the narratives we learned from our ancestors, invisible and silent from traditional oppressive systems. Include historically marginalized diverse intellectual traditions. Decolonize the curriculum. Include the voices of indigenous narratives. Explore the counter histories of minoritized groups and embed these in lesson plans (Anna Julia Cooper, 1892; Marcus Garvey, 1969; Dubois, 1903; Wynter, 2015; Nieto, 1992) |
| Agitate | Retelling stories we share to combat the fragility of democracy in search of hope and an anti-racist system (headlines, news, banning of textbooks, etc.). Interrupt the negative depictions of marginalized communities in the media and attempts by traditional educators to regulate and censor content and literature seen as controversial from school curricula. How to be an anti-racist in education (Kendi, 2019)<br>Blogs: to connect with classroom experiences/clinical practices/readings (Milner et al., 2018) |
| Inspire | Practices we learn to heal the mind/body/soul and justice in educational spaces restore the whole person. Employ social emotional learning (SEL) strategies such as mindfulness, critical sisterhood, and allies to support the work and restore the activist spirit. Explicitly acknowledge the risk taking involved in disrupting the status quo and being an anti-racist teacher and an abolitionist teacher who believes that no Black, Brown, or Indigenous child is disposable. Build community with parents and students (CASEL, 2015; González et al., 2005) |

urgency to arm candidates with strategies to connect with and engage students and construct pedagogical practices in ways that are culturally relevant, racially affirming, and socially meaningful for all students became even more fitting. Our students are living in challenging times where they are firsthand witnesses to the inequities, systemic racism, and oppression faced by students with learning exceptionalities and marginalized and underrepresented groups in education, so teaching and learning became more authentic as their lived experiences and narratives were integrated in

the classroom in real time. Our ultimate goal was to encourage students' learning and development of efficacy, risk-taking, socio-cultural awareness, contextual interpersonal skills, and self-understanding through integrated readings, discussions, field experience, and presentations.

## Our Actions Infusing Activism into UTA

"As a teacher, I recognize that students … enter classrooms within institutions where their voices have been neither heard nor welcomed. … My pedagogy has been shaped to respond to this reality" (Hooks, 1994, p. 84). As we embedded ourselves in our histories, we drew on the narratives we learned from our ancestors to inform the future of more radical and revolutionary education. We critically reviewed traditional colonized materials they were taught and identified how they perpetuate systems of injustice. We explicitly interrogated established paradigms and canons discussing and disrupting the surface culture evident in multicultural education (Hammond, 2015). We actively democratized and internationalized the course and materials with an intention to prepare our students for practice on a global stage.

## Lessons Learned

As we reflect on what our reimaging has meant for us as educators, our students, and implications for teacher preparation, we have concluded that the lessons we have learned offer important perspectives that can help further push EPP in the right direction toward correcting institutional structures, policies, and processes that support White privilege and maintain oppression and marginalization through education. Informed by students' narratives, presentations and coursework, and our own experiences through this process of reimagination, we have come to these conclusions.

### *Decentering Whiteness*

First, EPPs must recognize and take the responsibility of training candidates in environments that decenter whiteness and advocate for equity and inclusion. Matias et al. (2017) state that

> in order to debunk the hegemonic whiteness that inoculates how teacher candidates are selected, what curricula and pedagogies are presented in programs, which partner schools are selected for practicum experience, which exams are purchased and administered to students, which standardized performance assessments are used, which teacher performance standards are imposed, and who are the teacher educators (the professors), there must be an active resistance to the racial norms of whiteness. (p. 8)

This active resistance is demonstrated through the deliberate actions we took as teacher educators to provide content and experiences for candidates aimed at facilitating critical self-evaluation and decentering whiteness. Restructuring the course for UTA candidates offered the opportunity, for us as faculty of color, to disrupt the traditional EPP practices and provide space for resistance, questioning of norms, and growth toward understanding and developing accepting and inclusive environments.

### *Teachers as Social Justice Advocates*

The second lesson gleaned is a benefit identified from giving candidates a clear perspective on schools as a system that supports racism and privilege, and how teachers can counteract these systems. Teachers as social justice advocates who can enact change appeal greatly to this current generation Z students (Parker & Igielnik, 2020) and align with their interest to contribute to their communities in meaningful ways to promote positive societal change. To that end, 100% of the UTA students who participated in the restructured course accepted teaching positions after graduation, with 88% accepting teaching positions in urban school districts. All indicated the desire to make strong connections with their students and committed to supporting their colleagues in creating welcoming and inclusive school environments. Additionally, this generation's commitment to social justice has led to an increase in candidates' interest to teach in high-needs areas and thus opt to participate in UTA. From a cohort of 4 students in 2001 to now having close to 200 students participate and graduate with the UTA credential, it is evident that having UTA-like specialized programs fulfills a need.

### *Creating Inclusive Spaces*

The third lesson learned is that EPP has a responsibility to produce graduates who have a knowledge base and skill set that will enable them to create inclusive, supportive spaces for all learners in K-16 education. It also helps to move social justice advocacy forward in the nexus between teacher practice and equity. Using a collective analysis of our course materials, students' work, and students' narratives created the opportunity to examine keenly the work as social justice educators revolutionary and radical existing research that would be useful to preservice teachers as they make sense of their experiences before they teach in urban schools. Hence, to move from culturally relevant pedagogy to anti-racist activists, Howard (2003) called for the need for critical self-reflection. Since all our candidates are white females, this reflection was a deep interrogation of their whiteness as they sought to improve racially just teaching practices (Matias, 2016). It is no illusion; preservice teachers continue to have a deficit view of urban schools, and we must disrupt this with revolutionary practices. As one participant shared in her narrative:

> Before UTA, I unfortunately thought of urban schools as rough schools that are full of troubled kids (due to the stereotype). Now, I know urban schools are wonderful schools full of diversity and strong, amazing students.

This narrative is common amongst teacher candidates whose mindsets are shaped by the traditional colonized systems in which we educate students. The effect of decolonizing the curriculum is critical to arming teachers with the right attitude and tools to be just teachers, not saviors with patronizing pedagogies (Matias et al., 2017). The UTA reimagined course not only uncovered but also dismantled the whiteness, giving voice to a warm demander teacher (Hammond, 2015, p. 97). As this participant reflection revealed,

> Before taking these courses, I wanted to go into urban teaching with the mindset that "these kids need saved." After learning more about what urban education entails, this is not the case. These students don't need "saved" more than students who attend wealthy suburban schools. These kids need an educator who will support, challenge, and show empathy toward them. Teachers will not have all the answers, but being there for the students and wearing several hats is what is most important in urban education.

### *Anti-racist Teachers*

The fourth lesson is that EPP must embed and teach revolutionary pedagogy in the curricula to be socially just in their practices (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Matias et al., 2017). For instance, anti-racist teaching explicitly identified the inequitable education outcomes fostered by hegemonic practices in schools which need to be disrupted to provide urban students with access to resources, in this instance anti-racist teachers who can contribute to the healing of the mind/body/soul and justice in communities. As one student noted in her narrative,

> I have learned so much about becoming an anti-racist and abolitionist teacher. These are mindsets and strategies I have wanted to apply but now I have been given the tools and knowledge to do so. I have learned the importance of having difficult conversations and how important collaborating with other educators is to continue to evolve and progress as an educator.

### *Advocacy and Voice*

Finally, the most valuable lesson learned was affirming our roles in EPP spaces, using our voices as faculty of color in the academy, can and should be used to correct the intentional negative framing, microaggressions, and inequitable opportunities and outcomes experienced by many (Nenonene et al., 2021). All participants noted the value of having us, two women of color, facilitate these uncomfortable conversations in an authentic space with them as they sought to understand students from BIPOC communities. We provided them with revolutionary pedagogy from the invisible intellectual cannon, amplifying minoritized voices in our UTA space. We believe we rocked the boat and disrupted the system as one student shared in her narrative,

> My professors have been so informative and integral to my development as a teacher. They have certainly situated themselves in my life as essential mentors and figs. I probably would not have graduated without. I think that the lessons I will take most from them are to not be afraid to disrupt the system, and to always be both an advocate and an activist for my students both inside and outside of the classroom.

## Conclusions

Faculty of color working for social justice in teacher education must reimagine and draw on their ancestral heritage with revolutionary pedagogical practices to arm this new generation of teachers who work in urban schools. We cannot underestimate the importance of sharing our narratives to empower candidates and help create spaces where oppression will be recognized and confronted (Milner, 2007). We bear the responsibility and call for critical engagement of this generation of students who live in a challenging period of our history, where they witnessed firsthand systemic racism designed to marginalize and destroy minorities and racialized groups. Social justice work must embrace anti-racist and abolitionist teaching in the search for hope, healing, and practice of freedom in our schools. More research is needed to understand how embedding these revolutionary frameworks in teacher education curriculum can be sustained beyond the confines of the classroom, thus truly liberating colonized education systems.

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CHAPTER 12

# The Role of Anti-racist Pedagogy and Practices in Professional Development Schools

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## Introduction

The role of anti-racist pedagogy and practice for colleges of education has become more prevalent as societal violence and injustice continue to perpetrate our school communities. Despite being a state with one of the most diverse populations in the United States, New Jersey is sixth in segregated schools nationally (Orfield et al., 2017). Preparing pre-service and in-service teachers to implement social justice, equity, and

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anti-racism-oriented practices in their teaching became a priority of Rowan University in 2015. In 2015, Rowan University's College of Education (CED) began its development of a vision and mission grounded in social justice, equity, and anti-racism. The vision situates the college as "a leading force in preparing and supporting reflective practitioners who use education to transform our global society" (Rowan University, 2021a). The college's tagline "Access, success and equity, turning research into practice" (Rowan University, 2021b) is used to guide the vision as well as the college's strategic initiatives.

Part of the college's renewed commitment to equity was the installment of a new doctoral program focused on access, success, and equity, whose inaugural cohort was made up of 70% candidates of color and who were mainly either research assistants in faculty-led equity-based projects or Professors-in-Residence (PIR), the faculty assigned to a Professional Development School (PDS). As new PhD students/PIRs joined existing PIRs, the collective mission began to extend the CED's social justice and equity-based vision into its PDS partnerships. The newly created Office of Educator Support and Partnerships (OESP), led by an Executive Director who was herself an experienced PIR, having spent 14 years working in that role, strategically placed PIRs into schools that would benefit from their specific expertise and skill set. In this chapter, we discuss the work being implemented in a Professional Development School Network to engage P-12 partners and university faculty in anti-racist work.

## PDS Partnerships and the four Non-negotiables

PDSs are innovative collaborations formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P-12 schools. According to Dresden et al. (2016), "PDS is not a thing; rather, it is a set of relationships. A PDS is not a product; instead, it is a process" (p. 75) with goals to: (a) assist in the preparation of teachers and other school-based educators; (b) provide

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professional development of teachers and other school-based educators; (c) maximize student achievement and well-being; and (d) apply inquiry designed to improve and support student and educator development (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; NCATE, 2001). In 2008, the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) developed 9 Essentials that differentiate university-school partnerships from PDSs (NAPDS, 2021). While guided by all 9 Essentials, the expectations of Rowan University's PDS work centers around what has been identified as the four non-negotiables with the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement with an equity-based orientation (Leftwich et al., 2020).

The work conducted with PDS partners is collaborative in nature to promote learning and the mental and physical health of diverse learners in all settings. The CED at Rowan University is also very interested in preparing and supporting professionals (both pre-service and in-service) through the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. All involved in the Rowan University's PDS Network recognize that the work should be driven by the four cornerstones, also known as the "non-negotiable," of teacher preparation and ongoing professional development: (a) Pre-service: Varied forms of initial teacher preparation, such as clinical practice, field placements, and on-site coursework; (b) In-service: Multiple opportunities for teachers/staff to engage in continuing professional development by working with university faculty members; (c) Student Learning: Efforts to increase all students' achievement; (d) Research: Scholarship that focuses on teaching and learning for the purpose of improving both.

In addition, a PDS is a collaboration between P-12 school administrators, P-12 school faculty/staff, and a university in which the partners take a shared responsibility in meeting the need of the school to educate the P-12 children as well as to prepare teacher candidates to enter the teaching workforce (Ball & Rundquist, 1992; Cozza, 2010; Grisham et al., 2002; Lieberman, 1995; Taymans et al., 2012; Trachtman, 2007). A PDS model can create environments in which university students, faculty liaisons, classroom teachers, and P-12 students in the schools can engage in long-term, ongoing research-based initiatives that benefit all members in the learning community (University X Website, 2021c).

PDSs are mutually owned spaces that allow both the university and school partners to collaboratively address problems they face (Burns & Badiali, 2020). PDS relationships require a balance of independence so that each partner can function separately, and interdependence, which

requires partners to collaborate to move PDS agendas forward (Sumowski & Peters, 2019). Like a living, breathing organism, PDS partnerships grow, change, and adapt over time based on the priorities and needs of each member in the relationship. As Decker et al. (2018) describe, PDSs involve a cyclical relationship:

> The development of strong, vibrant, mutually beneficial PK- 20 partnerships serve to promote shared responsibility for the preparation of teachers, provide a context to empower and better serve complex learning environments for both candidates and PK-12 students, and ensure professional accountability for candidate effectiveness. These, in turn, empower teachers to meet the diverse needs of children in our schools. It truly does take all key stakeholders in a clinical partnership to prepare educators to enter the 21st-century classroom. (p. 44)

As PDSs continue to create spaces for both universities and school partners to address problems collaboratively, PDS work provides a structure for reconceptualizing anti-racism in a school-university partnership. This reconceptualization is explored further in the next section.

## Reconceptualizing Anti-racism in School-University Partnerships

In 2021, the NAPDS revised the 9 Essentials to more explicitly address social justice and anti-racism. This further supports how PDS sites can be ideal places to promote an anti-racist stance. As highlighted in Essential 1: A Comprehensive Mission, NAPDS revised the essential so that anti-racism is more explicit (see Table 12.1). This shift in language was

**Table 12.1** NAPDS Original/Revised Essential 1

| *Original Essential 1* | *Revised Essential 1* |
|---|---|
| A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community; | A professional development school (PDS) is a learning community guided by a comprehensive, articulated mission that is broader than the goals of any single partner and that aims to advance **equity, anti-racism, and social justice** within and among schools, colleges/universities, and their respective community and professional partners. |

especially important given the fact that the comprehensive mission is often used as a blueprint for all PDS work. Specifically, the mission of the partnership provides an overview of what the PDS work will entail between the two partners. The intentional inclusion of anti-racism was also embedded into the detailed explanations of the remaining essentials. In addition, during the rollout of the Revised 9 Essentials at the 2021 NAPDS national conference, social justice, equity, and anti-racism were highlighted as key concepts. Hence, the mission should explicitly articulate how PDSs are advancing these three concepts.

When courses and field experiences are carefully and collaboratively designed with the school and university partners, pre-service teacher education can have a significant influence on the beliefs and pedagogies of novice teachers (Cantor, 2002). Just as the school-based clinical experiences should help pre-service teachers learn about how to teach reading and classroom management techniques, school-based clinical experiences can help pre-service teachers with their understanding of social justice, equity, and anti-racism. Embedded coursework and field experiences in PDSs that are enacting culturally relevant, culturally sustaining, and equity-based pedagogies can help pre-service teachers breach the disconnect between the theory and praxis (Middleton, 2003). With partnerships focused on commitments to social justice, equity, and anti-racism, PDS experience in schools can help pre-service teachers understand their own biases, break down previously held deficit ways of thinking, understand the needs of the students in their classrooms, and find ways to design learning experiences to best meet the needs of the students in those classrooms (Fall, 2018; Peters et al., 2018).

At the same time, while working with the university partner, school-based teachers and staff can also develop their ideologies and pedagogies around these critical topics (Leftwich et al., 2021). Partnerships between schools and universities can provide opportunities to help cultivate teachers' dispositions around many topics, but specifically around topics of social justice, equity, and anti-racism that can benefit students, teacher educators, mentor teachers, and emerging teachers (AACTE, 2018). For example, Husband (2021) suggests:

> university faculty members (who are involved in PDS partnerships and committed to issues of social justice and equity) might work alongside cooperating teachers to diversify and decolonize the early childhood curriculum in ways that are meaningful, contextually specific, and mutually beneficial for all parties involved. (pp. 18–19)

In order for PDS partnerships to change ideas and dispositions around equity and justice, "both the school community and university must be cognizant and in accord about the level of commitment and dedication necessary to tackle issues born from long-standing hegemonic practices supported by biased systemic processes and policies" (Fall, 2018, p. 8).

## The Role of Anti-racist Pedagogy and Practice: Voices from the Field

In one public research university in the northeastern United States, Rowan University's CED established its first PDS partnership in 1991. Rowan is a predominately white institution, especially in the teacher preparation programs. Historically, the majority of the PDSs partnered with the university mirrored the demographics of the university in student population, P-12 teachers, and administration. Of the 11 schools in the university's PDS network, 3 are led by principals of color and 2 have an assigned PIR of color. What lacks in diversity at the administrator and P-12 and university faculty level is made up for in the diversity of P-12 learners. For example, 7of the 11 schools have a student of color population of 50% or more.

The following vignettes delineate PDS work that embeds anti-racist pedagogy and leads to anti-racist practices. Table 12.2 gives a brief overview of the PIRs and the school contexts. Each vignette will then detail the experiences within the PDSs that highlight how PDS can be used as a platform to engage in social justice, equity, and anti-racist work.

The first vignette describes the experiences of a PIR that leaves the PDS without another PIR ready to pick up her work. Madji describes how a PDS can be a setting for establishing a research agenda that she eventually used for her doctoral dissertation. The second vignette discusses a PDS that has been in the network for four years and provides a PDS transitioning from one PIR (Dan) to the next PIR (Cathy). In the two stories in this single vignette, the authors describe the professional development of the faculty and staff as well as how a PDS can be used to prepare future educators and clinical interns placed at the school. In the third vignette, Brent and Casey provide a description of their collaborative work as co-PIRs at an established PDS that has been in existence for six years. In this vignette, the authors describe how a PDS can be used to address student achievement. All three vignettes paint a picture of how PDSs can be used to move the work of social justice, equity, and anti-racist pedagogy forward through the four cornerstones, "non-negotiables" of PDS work.

**Table 12.2** PIRs and school contexts

| *School* | *Professor(s) in residence* | *School contextual information* |
|---|---|---|
| Western Valley School | Madji | • Rural-urban fringe public school<br>• 686 students, K-8 grade<br>• 60 full-time teachers<br>• 52% female, 48% male students<br>• Hispanic (72%), black (22.5%)<br>• 86% free or reduced-price lunch<br>• 11 years in the rowan PDS network |
| South Atlantic School | Dan<br>Cathy | • Suburban public school<br>• 875 students, 5–8 grade<br>• 75 full-time teachers<br>• 51% female, 49% male students<br>• White (70%), Hispanic (12.6%), black (9%)<br>• 26% free or reduced-price lunch<br>• 5 years in rowan PDS network |
| Northeastern School | Brent Casey | • Suburban public school<br>• 408 students, 4–6 grade<br>• 39 full-time teachers<br>• 55% female, 45% male students<br>• White (33%), black (31%), Hispanic (25%)<br>• 50% free or reduced-price lunch<br>• 7 years in rowan PDS network |

## Madji's Story: Western Valley School

My personal narrative as a PhD student deeply connects to that of this PDS's story and accomplishments on various fronts. Particularly, how this PDS deeply engaged in a justice-oriented PDS model, most visible in a research focus and output that supported all other PDS non-negotiables, notably professional development (PD), support of clinical interns, and, ultimately, student achievement. I joined the WVS family in 2016, six years after it became part of Rowan University's PDS network.

As a new PhD student and former elementary school teacher with expertise in English as a second language, bilingual education (BE), and Spanish, I was purposely assigned to Western Valley School (WVS), a predominantly Hispanic-serving school. When I drove into town on my first day of work, I could not ignore the strong presence of businesses with signage written in Spanish. I later learned that most residents in the area

were Zapotec and Spanish-speaking immigrants, mainly from Oaxaca and Puebla, Mexico. As I walked into WVS, I was stricken by its diversity right away, not only in the student body but also in the adults at the school. Compared to schools I had frequented as a student, a parent, and a teacher, there was a significant number of Black and Latinx adults in leadership positions, both in classrooms and in administrative roles. I later learned that despite this diversity and an incredible desire to create an inclusive school community, WVS had to create the structures and processes necessary to achieve such an important goal.

After nearly a year of surveying community members, planning, and intense episodes of creating alliances and acquiring buy-in from more reticent school stakeholders, the WVS steering committee designed a robust social justice and equity-focused PDS plan. Our principal goal was to improve the experiences of minoritized students, especially those labeled as English Language Learners (ELL) and bilingual education students. Placing students at the center of the PDS work and including the adults who support their learning in the school's action plan, we interrogated the factors that supported or hindered students' social and academic lives within the WVS school community.

I arrived at WVS as an experienced and active advocate for school policies and practices that legitimize and celebrate linguistic and cultural characteristics of *othered* groups. Naturally, my PhD research interest was grounded in anti-racist and anti-linguicism viewpoints that attempted to highlight and advance minoritized communities and their academic experiences. These personal and professional philosophies strongly influenced our PDS model. In fact, our steering committee addressed racial, ethnic, and linguistic discrimination; denounced Whiteness and its hegemonic ideologies; condemned standard language philosophies; and created an ethnoracial and linguistic-based social justice and equity PDS model. We accomplished this work through our professional development, teacher preparation, research, parent involvement outreach, and student empowerment activities.

Our research output was particularly successful. I, many times in collaboration with PDS stakeholders, presented close to two dozen times about work connected to my PDS work. Additionally, I wrote nearly 12 articles inspired by my PDS work, 4 of which were specifically about our research work at WVS. This work gave us a path to connect our research back to schooling policies and practices at WVS, which was ultimately our principal goal.

## Dan and Cathy's Stories: South Atlantic Middle School

Since SAMS joined Rowan's PDS Network, there have been three different PIRs, including Dan and Cathy. The PIRs from 2017–2020 were doctoral students in the university's PhD Program. During Dan's year (2019–2020), his PDS work was halted due to SAMS going remote as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Still working through the impact of the pandemic, during the 2020–2021 school year there was an institutional pause on all PDS. Then in 2021, Cathy, a full-time tenure-track faculty member, took over the role as PIR at SAMS.

### *Dan's Story*

I began my relationship with the SAMS in the winter of 2018. At the time, I was a doctoral student and PIR at another PDS in Rowan's PDS Network but was reassigned to SAMS as the former PIR at SAMS, also a doctoral student, requested that I facilitate a professional development seminar focused on Culturally Responsive and Culturally Sustaining practices for the middle and elementary schools in the district. This was to be the beginning of my relationship with the staff at SAMS. In the winter of 2019, I returned to SAMS to conduct a similar seminar for the staff at the local high school. Little did I know that within six months, I would become the new PIR at SAMS. These seminars laid the foundation for the anti-racist and social justice-oriented work I would conduct at SAMS during the 2019–2020 school year.

During the summer of 2019, I met with the assistant principal and principal at SAMS to outline our collective goals and to determine where and when the goals of the school and district could align with the overall goals of the PDS network with a focus on anti-racist practices. What struck me most about the initial meeting with the school administration was their commitment to social justice-oriented work, as well as their commitment to increasing student achievement. Together, we created goals focused on improving student achievement, improving student attendance, and furthering their anti-racist and social justice-oriented practices.

Continuing the former PIR's work on social justice-oriented writing tasks, known as "Why Should I Care About," I worked with the SAMS's literacy coach to create school-wide research simulation tasks focused on a social-justice issue created by a team of grade-level teachers and

administered six times throughout the school year. Each task had a specific focus that asked students to research a particular relevant topic that incorporated themes of social justice. In this way, each writing task became an authentic opportunity for every student in the school to further their critical consciousness. Further, by having the staff create the tasks as a team, they were also developing their own collective critical consciousness. Although our year was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to administer, score, and analyze multiple "Why Should I Care About" tasks. This collective endeavor is one that students and staff all seemed to enjoy because of the topical nature of the tasks as well as the focus on improving student achievement.

Another activity the SAMS's team planned together was the implementation of a social justice and anti-racist book club focused on the text *White Fragility* (DiAngelo, 2018). Beginning in October of the 2019 school year, we met twice per month to discuss concepts and themes covered in the chapters read for each meeting. Depending on the day, our group consisted of no less than 10 staff members, while some meetings saw upwards of 20 staff members in attendance. Our group was made up of myself, teachers from grades 5–8, and all the administrators in the building. Together, we discussed concepts such as the "good/bad binary," "whiteness," and "colorblindness" to name a few. On most days, there were always a handful of staff members who chose to hang around and discuss the concepts beyond our scheduled hour or allotted time. In doing so, we began to build stronger relationships with one another, as well as gain insight into one another's personal backgrounds and current understandings of race, racism, and social injustices. The thinking work we did before, during, and after our book club meetings became a binding source of growth for the collective group as we went our separate ways. This work not only informed our decision-making in our planning and practices but it also guided us as we interacted with the students, families, and community at SAMS.

Finally, one of the trademarks of the PDS network was the annual African American Read-In, conducted each year during the month of February. As stated on the NCTE website, "During the month of February, schools, churches, libraries, bookstores, community and professional organizations, and interested citizens are urged to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month by hosting an African American Read-In" (https://ncte.org/get-involved/african-american-read-in-toolkit/). At each of the schools, in our PDS network, the PIR and staff worked

together to create meaningful events held throughout the month of February. The Read-In at SAMS was a great success, as staff, university faculty and administrators, parents, and community members all participated in reading African American texts to the students at SAMS. By uplifting and highlighting texts authored by African Americans, the students and staff at SAMS were exposed to texts, concepts, and themes that have been historically left out of the traditional curriculum. As a school community, we utilized this event to inform future curricular and instructional choices throughout the school year by including more perspectives that have been marginalized in the past.

Given the strain that COVID has put on the students, faculty, and staff at SAMS, Cathy, the PIR who replaced Dan, had to take a different approach to the non-negotiables of PIR work and focus less on the in-service teachers, as Dan had, and focus more on the pre-service teachers at SAMS. Below, Cathy discusses her work at SAMS, specifically focusing on how her work with the pre-service teachers at SAMS provided her an entry point to begin establishing relationships within the SAMS building.

### *Cathy's Story*

My role with SAMS began in the fall of 2021. Similar to the previous PIR, I too was excited about moving the former PIR's PDS agenda forward. Between transitioning into the role as the new PIR in the building, coming back to PDS work after the hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the needs of the teachers in school during this pandemic recovery, my anti-racist work is, unfortunately, limited. At the beginning of the 2021 school year, the teachers were most concerned with learning loss and social-emotional learning issues caused by the pandemic. I have, however, made teachers aware of my commitments to social justice, equity, and anti-racism. Specifically, I had begun to interact one-on-one, in small groups, to begin important discussions around an anti-racist stance. When I hear faculty and staff make statements that go against my commitments to social justice, equity, and anti-racism, I have tried to work with the faculty as a critical friend to help them see how their statements may be problematic. I was purposely cautious in the way I responded to the teachers in these situations as I want to continue to develop rapport, rather than shut it down. One of the key elements to a successful PDS partnership is the relationship between the PDS and the university partner. This is not something that

occurs overnight but rather is built over time. Given the uniqueness of this situation, with me as a new PIR and the teachers and students of SAMS returning to the building for full-time face-to-face instruction since the shutdown in 2019, the process has to be carefully navigated.

As I continue to build rapport with the faculty and staff at SAMS, I plan to engage in more focused PD around their goals of social-emotional learning and learning loss. By being attentive to their needs, I can then begin to weave my own commitments to social justice, equity, and anti-racism. I plan to work with the PDS Steering Committee and the building administration by providing opportunities for faculty and staff to engage in this work in a meaningful way. For example, I hope, in the near future, to engage in another anti-racist, equity-based book club like the former PIR. There is a continued need for PD in this area. I see and hear it each day I am at SAMS. The teachers there are not outwardly racist but have made comments in small group settings (i.e., "those parents don't care," "there were some 'good' slave owners") that suggest an unconscious bias (or perhaps a conscious one) that needs to continue to be unpacked.

As I continue to work at SAMS, I will focus on the "non-negotiables" of the PDS in providing meaningful PD for teachers around social justice, equity, and anti-racism and creating spaces for sustained work for our clinical interns to dig deeper with these topics. All of this is consistent with my research agenda of equity and justice in teacher education with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. That is, as opportunities to engage in anti-racist work with faculty and staff arise at SAMS, it will be the perfect way to merge my personal commitments to social justice, equity, and anti-racism with my research agenda. Ultimately, the goal of anti-racist teacher education is to change the minds and hearts of teachers to help impact student achievement. Through arrangements with the university's Office of Clinical Experiences, I will teach courses at SAMS to provide opportunities to work with interns in our programs to help disrupt whiteness in the classroom and school curriculum (Picower, 2021).

I would love to be able to be specific about my work with the clinical interns at SAMS, but to be consistent with the tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), I need to meet my students where they are. Regardless of what the clinical interns bring to the table or what they bring to SAMS, my goal is that they recognize and value the funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) all students bring to the classroom, and use those funds of knowledge to help students reach their academic and social-emotional best.

## Brent and Casey's Stories: Northeastern School

In a newly formed PDS structure, Casey joined Brent, serving as a co-PIR at both Northeastern School and another PDS in the network from 2018 to 2020. Both Brent and Casey are full-time tenure track faculty members who receive reassigned time for the equivalent of one course for work as PIRs. These numbers indicate that 68% (~81%) of students with IEPs are disabled students of color. This school, like many others across the United States, struggles with the overrepresentation of students of color in self-contained special education classrooms (Annamma et al., 2013; Artiles et al., 2010), hence the PDS focus on the intersections of race and disability in this school, and the PDS non-negotiable of increasing P-12 student achievement. In this vignette, we focus on the experience of working collaboratively as co-PIRs to move forward anti-racist social-justice oriented PDS work.

## Brent's Beginnings

As I began working at Northeastern School in 2016, a PIR who had established the PDS a year earlier, passed the reins over to me. The previous PIR had a focus on teaching literacy, which was not my background. So, in order to honor the previous PDS work as well as infuse my expertise into the PDS work, I developed two PDS sub-committees, one focused on literacy and the other focused on inclusive education and disability studies. At times, the sub-committees worked on issues related to literacy and inclusion, and at other times, the sub-committees worked on separate goals. However, the unifying goal of both sub-committees was to remove barriers to learning for all students at Northeastern School.

## Casey's Beginnings

I subsequently entered Northeastern School as a first-year tenure-track Assistant Professor in 2018, two years into Brent's time as PIR there. Unlike the typical PIR transition process, in an experimental structure, I joined Brent as a co-PIR; he did not leave or change his role but rather remained a consistent presence in the school, and we worked collaboratively to move forward and expand on previously established PDS priorities. In contrast to the typical model in which one PIR is assigned to one school, I split my allocated PDS time between Northeastern School—a

well-established PDS with an experienced PIR as my partner—and a PDS just joining the network with a new PIR Ph.D. student as my partner. My role was to bridge a relationship between these two PDSs with similar commitments to moving toward more equitable, inclusive practice.

On one of my first days at Northeastern School, Brent toured me through the hallways to get my bearings and introduce me to PDS Steering Committee members I would be working closely with during my time there. While I was grateful for the familiarity of a preexisting collaborative relationship with Brent and the collective efforts that he and the faculty, staff, students, families, and administrators had made over the prior two years to establish a foundation of trust and shared commitment, I did not know what to expect, or where (or if) I would fit in. As we turned the corner into the empty classroom of one of the PDS committee leaders, she greeted us from behind what I immediately recognized as a copy of the Connor et al. (2016) *DisCrit* book. She welcomed me to Northeastern School and enthusiastically shared about the work the PDS committee had been focusing on moving students of color with disabilities into more inclusive placements. I later learned that this teacher had felt so connected to and motivated by the PDS work that she chose to independently dive into DisCrit to support the continued efforts to recognize and respond to the intersections of race and disability at Northeastern School. After initial introductions like this one, I began to understand that the level of trust and commitment that Brent and the PDS Steering Committee had established over the prior two years was foundational to the conversations, practices, and decisions at Northeastern School in which I began to participate. My ability to jump right in and contribute to the work was fundamentally facilitated by these existing relationships; a stark contrast to what I was experiencing alongside my co-PIR at my other newly established PDS site. From this starting point, and with the deep commitment of the committee members, administration, and students to the PDS partnership, I found my place as part of the team at Northeastern School.

In our roles as PIRs, in collaboration with a PDS Steering Committee, our work has aimed to systematically desegregate the self-contained classrooms at Northeastern School. Along with school and family partners, we have taken up these practices because the school data show overrepresentation of students of color in special education, which is a national trend

(Cruz et al., 2021). In practice, this means proactively and sustainably creating inclusive educational structures and practices that support disabled students of color in age-appropriate general education classrooms. To do this requires that we, along with administration, teachers, staff, clinical interns, students, and their families, create spaces of resistance where people can openly discuss challenging school issues, such as how the intersections of race and disability manifest in this school.

Our collective work draws on DSE and DisCrit theoretical frameworks, which both situate challenging long-held assumptions and practices related to disability and special education as a social justice imperative (Annamma et al., 2013; Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012). Disability has historically been constructed as a deficit, exacerbated by the stigma of difference associated with intersecting marginalized identities, such as racial and ethnic diversity (Annamma et al., 2013). Disability studies in education (DSE) scholars situate disability as a natural form of human variation and are concerned with the ways that meaning is made of disability within educational systems (Baglieri et al., 2011). DisCrit scholars focus on the ways in which racism and ableism act as collusive forces to perpetuate oppressive educational structures and experiences (Annamma et al., 2013). As a result of this work, we implemented three structures to promote anti-racist pedagogy in PDS work.

In order to constructively push back against the overrepresentation of disabled students of color in self-contained classrooms at this school, we, in collaboration with the special education teachers, the case manager, families, and students created the first structure, *Action Plan Meetings* to infuse social justice into the day-to-day experiences of clinical interns. Action plan meetings are communicative structures put in place to continuously and proactively support disabled students in inclusive classrooms (Elder et al., 2018). These are continuous in that they occur regularly throughout the school year, and they are proactive in the sense that the student and parents, along with the IEP team, come together to discuss what is going well and what needs additional support related to inclusive practices.

During action plan meetings, students (if comfortable) along with their parents and the IEP team reflect on the effectiveness of inclusive supports, and everyone is encouraged to reflect on existing supports and consider the implementation of additional supports or resources to facilitate the

development of sustainable inclusive supports. Through this approach to action planning, inclusive supports are designed with input and recommendations from students and their families rather than imposing school-based supports that are decided solely by the IEP team.

The second structure we employed was the *PDS Lead Supervisory Model*. This model is another communicative approach that promotes constructively critical dialogue about how students with disabilities are supported inclusively (or not) at this school. In this model, Brent invites all clinical interns at the school site to attend voluntary weekly meetings. These meetings are meant to be a safe space that students can access and utilize as it makes sense for each one individually.

Brent frames these meetings as opportunities for interns to receive additional information and resources related to inclusive education, learn about how the school is applying DSE and DisCrit to desegregate classrooms, and to gain opportunities to participate in a variety of school activities, like Action Plan Meetings, that they might not otherwise have access to. Additionally, in these meetings, Brent shares updates about the active research he and Casey are engaged in with teachers related to inclusive education, and interns are invited to observe and participate, if interested. Brent intentionally frames these meetings as another site of resistance for clinical interns that promotes the dissolution of school structures that impede access to inclusive settings for disabled students of color.

The final structure in place at this PDS that represents an active site of resistance to the segregation of disabled students of color is the monthly *PDS Steering Committee Meetings*. Similar to the *Lead Supervisory Model*, the *PDS Steering Committee* is fluid and teachers can participate as much or as little as they desire. Steering Committee agendas are developed in collaboration with PDS teacher liaisons and the building principal, and the meetings are facilitated by Brent. During the meetings, Brent provides updates on PDS work including in-preparation, in-press, and published PDS research, Action Plan Meeting updates on students of color increasing their time spent in inclusive settings, and the current status of PDS-related school goals. At times, these updates involve discussing emerging research findings related to legal and historical aspects of race and disability in the region (e.g., comparing city demographics with the numbers of students in self-contained classrooms both at the school- and district-level). Following updates, participants have time to review the professional development agenda and work collaboratively to plan related activities. In

Casey's position as co-PIR bridging two PDSs committed to inclusive school reform, she worked to create space for the PDS committees at both schools to connect with and learn from one another. The Northeastern School PDS committee took a mentorship role in sharing their learnings from their existing work and professional development.

Traditionally, professional development activities are identified and created by teachers. The teachers ensure professional goals align with both building and Steering Committee goals related to inclusive education and social justice. Teachers work over time to create interactive and engaging professional learning opportunities during the district's planned half- and full-day professional development days, which directly connect to desegregation and inclusion initiatives of this PDS. Having critical conversations with the PDS Steering Committee and then taking related action steps related to professional development activities represents DisCrit Tenet 5, where practitioners reflect on the historical and legal aspects of the intersections of race and disability in their school, district, and city as they develop plans to push back against structural racism (Annamma et al., 2013).

The DisCrit- and DSE-informed inclusive work at this PDS has led to the partial removal of structural barriers to inclusive education, resulting in more students of color with disability labels increasing their time in general education settings. By putting in structures that promote sustained dialogue around the intersections of race and disability, teachers and staff can better anticipate the needs of these students as they transition out of segregated classrooms and into inclusive classrooms. By developing a common DisCrit- and DSE-infused language through which to discuss inclusive school reform and disability, administrators, teachers, and staff are encouraged to have critical dialogue around inclusive education grounded in a shared understanding that all students can learn (Jorgensen, 2005) and that it is their right to be educated with their non-disabled peers (Giangreco, 2010). These approaches helped Northeastern School resist deficit models of disability and question traditional segregated approaches to special education (Connor et al., 2008).

## Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, in the stories of the three schools and the PIRs working within them, the authors distinctly demonstrate how PDSs can be used to establish a social justice, equity, and anti-racism agenda. Anti-racist

PDS work is not meant to be prescriptive. Rather, its goal is to be explicit about approaches to resisting racist school structures and desegregation and to improve upon them at their respective school sites. Focusing on the four non-negotiables of PDS (university students, P-12 faculty and staff, research, and P-12 student achievement), the vignettes provide examples that can be replicated. Indeed, we consider our contributions to this volume as the beginning of a critical dialogue within the field of PDS about how we can more effectively prepare pre-service teachers, support in-service educators, and establish research that questions policies and practices in schools, with the ultimate goals of increasing student achievement to foster more sustainable, equitable school communities.

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CHAPTER 13

# Working Toward Anti-racist Teacher Preparation: Clinical Experiences in Urban Schools

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## Introduction

This chapter evolved from a study focusing on teacher candidates' perspectives of how their clinical experiences impacted their ability to translate theory into practice in urban school placements. These perspectives provide a view into the most influential aspects of field experiences that contribute to development of content knowledge and pedagogical skills, in addition to opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in professional teaching standards. While the overarching focus aligned with the state professional teaching standards, the underlying importance of culturally responsive/relevant and sustaining pedagogies (CRP/CSP)—student-centered, asset-based approaches to teaching—was a clear theme across the research. Amid conversations with TCs, several aspects quickly became apparent. First, teacher candidates' voices are a more valuable resource for

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reflecting on teacher education programs than most people consider, and second, focusing on CRP or CSP is not enough—the conversation needs to move beyond CRP and CSP toward anti-racist pedagogy in teacher education programs. What follows is an overview of relevant literature that provides background and framing for our study, a brief description of our research, our findings, lessons learned, and implications to support movement toward teacher preparation focused on development of anti-racist pedagogy. Finally, as teacher educator practitioners that reflected on findings of this study, we also included strategies for teacher educators to consider for both classroom and field-based experiences.

## Urban Teacher Education Programs and Clinical Experiences

Education reform often focuses on teacher quality as a central lever for improving student achievement, particularly in urban areas with high concentration of people of color, poverty, and limited school resources. Indeed, the urgency to improve teacher education programs (TEPs) has gained widespread attention and generated ongoing criticism of university TEPs. Despite criticism, there is substantial evidence that teachers who complete traditional TEPs are better prepared and stay in teaching longer (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ingersoll et al., 2014; Jacobs, 2013). A key component of traditional TEPs is the clinical experiences TCs have in K-12 classrooms (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2006), yet clarity of what quality looks like is lacking. While clinical experiences are typically state mandated and included in traditional TEPs, not all give TCs the opportunity to translate theory into practice (Capraro et al., 2010; Korthagen et al., 2006). Indeed, research on clinical experiences and students' ability to bridge university coursework and teaching practices is ambiguous and suggests that clinical experiences are often contextualized and uneven (Ritter et al., 2007; Téllez, 2008). Clinical experiences, by design, function as the important connector between the theory and practice of teaching and learning.

Beyond curriculum, instruction, and assessment, it is imperative that urban teacher education programs foreground centering culture and place. This includes emphasizing equity and anti-racist pedagogies and explicitly engaging TCs in the work of empowering students of color who have been historically marginalized in schools and society. The complex

nature of urban schools—racial and ethnic heterogeneity, concentrations of poverty, and large, dense bureaucracies (Chou & Tozer, 2008; Hollins, 2012; Weiner, 2002)—places higher demands on teachers and teacher education programs (TEPs) alike, and urban teacher education programs are faced with the challenge of how to intentionally center equity and situate anti-racist practices at the core of TCs' developing practices. Indeed, a central component of any teacher education program, but perhaps even more crucial in urban teacher education programs, is the importance of culturally responsive (CRP) or sustaining pedagogies (CSP) and foregrounding diversity and equity (Han et al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012; Zeichner et al., 2015). Culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2014) have no doubt inspired countless educators in the past several decades to consider how to center the cultural practices of their students. It can be helpful to take a step back and clarify what these important terms mean. Gay (2010) suggests that culturally responsive teaching is teaching through the assets that students bring to the classroom—their culture, strengths, capabilities, and experiences. Ladson-Billings (2014) identified three features of culturally relevant pedagogy—student learning, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. More recently, Paris (2012) suggested that perhaps being responsive and relevant aren't enough; he argues that teachers need to do more to center languages, literacies, and cultural practices to sustain our developing multiethnic society. To contribute to the evolving conversation on resource pedagogy tradition, Paris suggests we move toward culturally sustaining pedagogy and encourage teachers to "embrace cultural pluralism and cultural equality" (Paris, p.93). These asset-focused approaches frame the work urban teacher educators do in university classrooms and, consequently, become the foundation for teacher candidates' developing practices as they engage in field experiences in urban classrooms.

Explicitly engaging teacher candidates in navigating the landscape of urban education requires translating theory and practice through thoughtful clinical experiences that allow TCs to develop pedagogical practices to empower students. Undoubtedly, field-based experiences are essential for this process to occur, as TCs have opportunities to demonstrate their developing pedagogies and enact equity-focused practices within classrooms. While coursework provides the foundation for thinking about curriculum and instruction, it is field experiences where students can work with other students to authentically connect the curriculum to their lives. It is in the field that TCs observe instruction of veteran cooperating

teachers, have opportunities to plan lessons and units for the students in their placement classrooms, teach lessons and assess the students in various ways, and reflect on each of these aspects along the way. This preparatory work cannot be done in university classrooms. Field-based experiences are critical to developing teacher practices and empowering TCs to become effective educators.

## Asset-Based Framing of Teacher Education

Teacher education programs have various foci that aim to prepare future educators to be effective teachers upon program completion. Some programs emphasize asset-based teaching with a goal to support TCs in the development of teaching via an asset-based lens and centering students in classrooms. While this framing of teaching is imperative for the development of all teachers, it is especially critical for those who plan to teach in urban schools because of the student demographics that are predominant in urban communities, where students of color from historically marginalized backgrounds make up the majority. Relevant urban teacher preparation programs, including the focal programs in this chapter, support their TCs to challenge dominant deficit-perspectives in particular ways. Some may have equity-focused missions and coursework (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Oakes, 2005; Schultz et al., 2008; Trinder, 2020), intentional urban clinical experiences (Rushton, 2000, 2001, 2003), or partnerships with urban schools (Sobel & Taylor, 2005), all with the goal of effectively preparing teachers. Threaded throughout these examples is a trend of promoting culturally sustaining and/or anti-racist teaching as an approach to preparing future educators. For example, in their study of four beginning teachers who completed an urban-focused teacher education program, Schultz et al. (2008) found that TCs with urban field experiences expressed deeper commitments to teaching in urban contexts, even if they initially had deficit perspectives of urban communities. Borrero's (2011) examination of perspectives of 20 Teacher candidates (TCs) enrolled in an equity-oriented TEP emphasized the importance of community as a resource, the importance of recognition of systemic and racial oppression in urban communities, and the importance of serving as role models to students. Lane et al. (2003), in their study of an urban-focused graduate TEP, found that TCs became change agents by influencing the thinking and altering the teaching practices of traditional teachers at their urban placement sites

because of thoughtful program coursework, fieldwork, and support provided from university instructors/supervisors. In a study involving preservice teachers enrolled in equity-focused coursework in both a rural and urban situated TEP (Han et al., 2015), authors highlighted TCs' dispositions toward social justice teaching, noting that those in the urban TEP walked away with asset-based perspectives of urban students and recognizing the importance of social justice teaching and critical pedagogy.

As exemplified above, asset-based approaches to teacher preparation can serve as an entry point to support future educators' development of pedagogy that is culturally sustaining and/or anti-racist, where they center students' experiences at the core of their planning and instruction and work to unpack and dismantle systemic oppression prevalent in urban schools and communities. With similar equity and asset-based goals as the programs highlighted above, the research team, also faculty in the focal programs, made ongoing intentional decisions regarding field experiences, partnerships, and field-based assignments in efforts to effectively prepare TCs to become educators in urban communities.

## The Research Study

Our university has an ongoing commitment to partner with the city's public school system to support teaching and learning, especially in the most under-resourced schools. The university is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse universities in the country and holds a strong commitment to interrupt social disparities across schools and communities (University of Illinois Chicago College of Education, 2022). The city's public school district includes over 500 schools and serves over 350,000 students. The majority of the district's students are Latinx and African American, and nearly 80% of the student population is of lower income socioeconomic status (Chicago Public Schools, 2021). Like in other large urban areas, teachers within the district face the formidable challenge of teaching within the context of racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, high concentrations of poverty, high rates of student mobility, and lack of resources (Griner & Stewart, 2013). Hence, our TEPs are committed to providing opportunities in both coursework and clinical work to help cultivate teachers' awareness of the complexities of urban schools so they can recognize, understand, and effectively navigate the complex nature of urban schools. Within coursework—via readings and assignments—faculty

emphasize the importance of culturally sustaining teaching, an inclusive learning experience for K-12 students, a diverse range of texts and materials for students, and overall, developing and nurturing a student-centered learning environment. We make intentional decisions about fieldwork duration, course assignments and materials, school partnerships, and clustering TCs in school sites when possible.

With this in mind, we found it imperative to hear from the TCs about their experiences in the K-12 urban schools and classrooms and what specifically had prepared them in to become urban educators, especially given the equity-focus of our TEPs and the intentionality of our clinical experience considerations. We wanted to know their perceptions on what course and theoretical aspects they were able to make connections to in the field, putting theory into practice.

## *Methods*

The study was a mixed-methods study employing surveys and focus groups to discover TCs' perspectives of how urban field experiences contributed to development of TCs' content knowledge and pedagogical skills and provided them opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in professional teaching standards. Moreover, we explored TCs' perspectives as they translated theory into practice in their urban school placements. Within this larger study, we aimed to specifically answer the following research questions:

- How do clinical experiences contribute to the development of TCs' content knowledge and pedagogical skills?
- How do clinical experiences provide TCs with opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in professional teaching standards and translate theory into practice in urban schools?

This chapter focuses specifically on the qualitative data gathered from focus groups and open-ended survey responses highlighting TCs' perceptions of their pedagogical development, specifically related to CRP/CSP. The focal question guiding this piece is *How do clinical experiences in two equity-focused teacher preparation programs support TC development of culturally responsive and/or sustaining pedagogies (CRP/CSP)*?

### *Participants and Procedures*

All students ($n$ = 80) in elementary and secondary education programs within one college of education completing pre-student teaching in fall semester and student teaching in spring semester were eligible to participate in the study. A total of 21 students chose to participate, including 13 secondary education TCs and 8 elementary education TCs. Of the 21 students, 8 identified as male, 13 as female. Participants included 12 White, 3 African American, and 6 Latinx students. Data was collected throughout the academic year, spanning September–May. In September, TCs completed Survey One before their clinical experiences commenced. Students completed Survey Two in December. Analysis included a comparison of responses across the two surveys, with a focus on changes in TCs' feelings of preparedness. The first focus group followed to bring TCs together to discuss initial survey findings. In May, students completed the survey for the third time, giving three data points across the year for comparison, again followed by the second round of focus groups to give participants the opportunity to refute or support initial findings and add further insights.

### *Data Sources and Analysis*

The survey included both closed and open-ended questions; however, as mentioned above, we will focus on analysis of the open-ended responses component. The survey was designed to mirror the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS), the standards TCs were expected to meet by program end. These standards were developed to articulate what teachers are expected to understand and be able to do as effective educators (Sachs, 2003). Data collection also occurred via focus groups to enhance and build upon survey responses and themes. Semi-structured focus group protocols were developed based on survey data analysis. Qualitative data was put into Dedoose.com to conduct thematic analysis. Through this analysis and focus on perceived content and pedagogical development due to clinical experiences, we saw themes related to culturally responsive and/or sustaining pedagogy. This prompted us to conduct a deeper analysis of related codes to examine how TCs felt their clinical experiences contributed to their development of CRP/CSP. Since several Professional Teaching Standards connected to asset-based teaching with overlap to principles of CRP/CSP, these initial codes and themes (e.g., school

placement context, relationships with students, relevant lesson planning, classroom community, differentiating instruction, teaching diverse learners) emerged through both initial and deeper analysis. In the findings below, we focus on key themes that helped us understand how TCs felt about their development of pedagogy related to culturally responsive and/or sustaining pedagogy because of experiences that occurred during the clinical component of their teacher education program.

## What We Found

Through our analysis, we found that two key themes were prevalent: (1) creating bridges between university coursework and fieldwork experiences and (2) school placement context. When talking about these aspects, TCs made connections to their developing pedagogy due to clinical experiences, highlighting their opportunity to connect theory to practice while in the field, and that their ability to do so effectively was contingent on placement contextual factors.

### *Creating Bridges Between Coursework and Fieldwork*

*Building Relationships with Students*

As a result of the TEPs' emphasis on equity and asset-based teaching, TCs' seemed to emphasize the importance of making connections with students and centering students in their developing teaching practice. The focus on building relationships with students, connecting learning and lessons to students' backgrounds, interests, and experiences, and activating their prior academic and personal knowledge was mentioned by the majority of participants. Urban field placements helped TCs emphasize knowledge of learners and its connection to teaching, which are important aspects of CRP/CSP (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012). For example, trends within responses aligned with the state teaching standard emphasizing teaching diverse students showed that TCs felt they grew over the year. Their coursework included areas related to teaching diverse learners and considering several social and cultural factors, especially within urban contexts; clinical experiences helped them apply this theory in practice. One TC said, "I found that once you have a relationship with the children in front of you then and only then can you begin to really begin to do

empowering work with the students." Relatedly, another focus group participant said,

> I think it takes time to create a little bit of that relationship first before you feel like you can really do that. Again, for me, it's all about getting to know them and letting them get to know you. I think I can say that I and I can read about it, and I can write about it, but until you actually do it, it's so different. I feel definitely more prepared because I got to do it, and I got to see what students bring to the class every day and how it changes every day.

Another TC's open-ended survey response read, "Relationships, relationships, relationships. Without relationships I would not have been able to push my kids the way I was able to. Without relationships you cannot foster confidence within students that allow them to believe in themselves no matter what!"

When talking about the importance of understanding students' cultural backgrounds as a key aspect of urban teaching, one TC said,

> It's like a balance of jumping into their culture without making yourselves like … You may have lost your father. I have my father. Your father may be in jail. My father's not in jail. There's an experience where I can engage with you in your culture without me feeling like I need to change … I don't need to change who I am to meet you where you are. You don't need to change who you are to meet where I am. I think that's something that I learned a lot.

The pattern of learning about the importance of building safe, trusting relationships that was highlighted throughout the coursework was put into practice when TCs were in classrooms, interacting with students, and developing a reciprocal level of trust and respect. Affirming students and creating a safe, positive learning space helps support more effective learning (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012).

*Lesson Planning and Instruction*

Beyond building positive relationships with students, TCs also talked about bridging coursework to fieldwork when it came to lesson planning and instruction. Again, by making connections to how their TEPs highlighted asset-based and culturally responsive pedagogy through coursework, TCs were able to build off the established relationships with students, and connect the lessons to students' interests and backgrounds. One TC elaborated on this point during a focus group session and said,

> I feel very prepared. I think that all the prepping that I did in education and all that helped me and overall the whole mission of being diverse and all that really helped me jump in right from day one and to getting to know them, I surveyed them, and I included things that they like, such as superheroes and all that, into the lesson.

Similarly, another participant said, "If you're teaching 10-year-old boys and you're not talking about Minecraft or Pokémon, there's a good chance you're not reaching them." These examples that were prevalent across the data portray how TCs considered what they learned about students as they prioritized relationship building during their clinical experiences and subsequently planned lessons reflective of students' interests. Some of the TC participants made deeper connections with their students when planning lessons. During a focus group session, one TC shared:

> To meet students and take their culture and different perspectives into consideration, I think the way you do that is by selecting a text that's really speaking towards ways where students can benefit. We read The Color Purple in our world literature class and that was a great way for a lot of students to use their own perspectives, again, through the lens of the text.

By making learning relevant and meaningful to students, more optimal learning occurs (Ladson-Billings, 2014). TCs saw the importance of this, as they were able to connect key themes they learned in their courses to their fieldwork. This, in turn, helped them feel more prepared to do so during student teaching and beyond.

### *School Placement Context*

As a reminder, our university is situated within a large urban center and our teacher education programs have a strong commitment to partnering with under-resourced schools within the district. With this in mind, school placement sites represent the district's context of racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, high concentrations of poverty, high rates of student mobility, and lack of resources in many schools. While all TCs were placed in classrooms in the same large urban district, the context of the schools and classrooms varied. Our students should be well prepared to work in an urban setting, as programmatic coursework and early fieldwork experiences aim to develop teacher candidates' awareness of the complexities of

urban schools so they can recognize, understand, and effectively navigate the complex nature of urban schools. Within this study, TCs' perceptions of their school placement context underscored how essential university program and school alignment were in supporting them in their developing pedagogical practices.

The importance of school placement context and the impact on TCs' perceptions of CRP/CSP development play out in multiple ways—the importance of linked yearlong placements and positive experiences with like-minded cooperating teachers whose philosophies are aligned to the TC and/or the university program goals.

The yearlong placement was yet another important and influential component of the TCs' field experiences. Students in year-long linked placements in the same school and classroom had increased exposure to students, more time and efforts focused on building positive relationships, increased autonomy, and planning/teaching responsibilities. These extended experiences had a positive impact on TCs' perceptions in their ability to teach and assess students from diverse backgrounds, collaborate professionally, and become advocates for their students. One focus group participant shared how impactful their year-long placement was:

> Not only is the school very important, but also the mentor that we had. It was a good thing that I was able to observe the same classroom in the fall and then student teach in the spring, because we were working as a team already … By the time student teaching came, the observation came before student teaching, I was already prepared. I wasn't shy. I already had my teacher's voice in that classroom. I cannot imagine going to a student teaching in a new classroom and going in there and being unaware. I knew the school. I knew the community. I felt in place, the same language was spoken. I knew what I was bringing to the table. I knew what to bring, I knew what not to bring.

Students also highlighted the importance of alignment between their university coursework and their cooperating teacher's pedagogical approach. When students were given the opportunity to transfer their theoretical knowledge to practice in an environment that supported CRP/CSP, the practice had a positive impact on their feelings of preparedness. When talking about the effective pedagogy enacted by their cooperating teacher, one TC said, "Seeing my mentor plan and teach lessons that related to the students was really helpful." A follow-up response regarding

observation of TCs' teaching when in a classroom that fostered CRP/CSP included, "I think the debriefs about lessons with your mentor teacher helps a lot because they have mastery teaching the content." One TC said, "I feel like I grew and I'm ready to actually teach lessons because of so many field hours, observations of good teaching, and our year-long placements." Again, those who felt they had strong mentors as models, and the "right" space to learn and practice felt more prepared.

### *Equity-Focused Coursework Was Not Enough: TCs' Perceptions of Limited Pedagogical Development*

While several participants perceived themselves to have developed in culturally responsive and sustaining teaching because of clinical experiences, some acknowledged limitations in bridging theory and practice. When students felt that there was a disconnect between their own pedagogical approach and that of their mentor teacher, their experience was hindered. While university coursework highlighted the importance of CRP and equity-focused curriculum, along with thoughtful partnership, some TCs found themselves in classrooms where that wasn't the norm. One TC explained, "The field experience was ultimately not in a classroom that I controlled, so I could not always teach the way I would like and implement a lot of learned methods of inquiry. Without that application and experience, the understanding was greatly lessened," while another said, "I think if the attitude that my mentor teacher had would have been a little more flexible toward those things [CRP], it would have allowed me to explore more of things that I really wanted to do in the classroom when I didn't have to negotiate back and forth."

Another example of disconnect is those TCs who felt they were not in placements with mentors who effectively differentiated instruction, a vital component of CRP/CSP (Ladson-Billings, 2014), did not feel confident and fully prepared to enact such practices in their beginning years of teaching. TCs placed with cooperating teachers that did not highlight diverse learning needs in their planning and instruction saw limitations as exemplified by this TC, "My collaborative teacher specifically threw diversification out the window. He was like, 'I don't look at identities at all. I think they're fine, they just need to be challenged, blah, blah, blah.' … But you should be aware of what their accommodations are. I never received any of that information as a result of that. That was a challenge." Relatedly, if they were not in a placement classroom that was conducive to

"student-centered teaching," they had more difficulty finding opportunities to create lessons and teach in a more responsive and relevant manner. One TC, in a focus group session said, "I feel that we have talked a lot about creating a safe environment for students in my classes … I have an idea of how I would do this, however, I don't have the experience of actually doing this in a classroom. I still have questions about how to implement this and what to do in certain situations." Another TC observed an overarching challenge and recognized the difficulty in meeting the multiple demands of urban teaching: "I find it difficult to develop an instructional opportunity that balances the needs of diverse students while still covering all of the content matter that I need to cover."

TCs understood why content and instruction had to align with students' backgrounds because of mission-driven program coursework; if this was not occurring in placement classrooms, it created potential barriers to embody CRP/CSP during student teaching. However, despite possible limitations and field-related shortcomings, all participants felt they graduated with a strong understanding of important aspects of CRP/CSP (e.g., building positive relationships with students, differentiating instruction for diverse learners), and while they didn't yet have their own classroom, and some felt they were not in placements with cooperating teachers that cultivated their ideal learning environment, they still acknowledged the importance of CRP/CSP and asset-based teaching and knew they had to prioritize this in their future teaching careers.

## Discussion and Implications

Learning to teach in urban schools requires translating theory and practice through thoughtful school placements that allow TCs to develop pedagogical practices to empower students. This really highlights the urgency for TEPs to be strategic and thoughtful about their placements and school partners. Even though program faculty thought placements were strategic, this was not always the case, which means more collaborative work needs to be done. When TCs were given the opportunity to complete field experiences in urban settings and create a bridge between coursework and fieldwork, they were more likely to feel confident about pedagogical skills related to culturally responsive and/or sustaining pedagogy. Providing meaningful field placements is a key aspect of teacher education, and it is imperative to develop strong relationships with all school stakeholders to ensure a productive and educative experience for the TC. Additionally, it

is the responsibility of teacher educators to bridge the theory-practice gap to ensure that TCs have authentic preparation. By supporting TCs in the development of self-reflection through the bridging of theory and practice, TCs may feel more ready to teach and enact principles of CRP/CSP in the classroom.

However, this study also reveals the importance of supporting TCs to develop not only an understanding of CRP/CSP but also to dig deeper and build upon these practices to move toward anti-racist teaching. Since concluding the research highlighted in this chapter, we recognize that this work is just a starting point, and there is much work to be done to better prepare teacher candidates to engage in anti-racist practices. First, we have to name anti-racist teaching as a vital component to effective urban teaching and must support our TCs to move beyond superficial understandings of asset-based teaching. While this study highlights important considerations for supporting students in translating theory into practice, there is a decided need to advance our thinking about how to best prepare teachers to enact anti-racist pedagogies and disrupt the status quo. Participants in this study did take away some aspects of CRP/CSP related to anti-racist teaching, highlighting the emphasis on relationships with students, connecting learning to their experiences, and the importance of actively observing this planning and instruction modeled for them by practicing teachers in placements. However, TCs' understanding of CRP/CSP was limited to surface-level understanding and connections to teaching practice that in turn limited their movement toward more impactful anti-racist teaching practices. For example, TCs talked about connecting to students' interests and building trust and positive relationships, but most seemed to miss the criticality of connecting to the community, drawing from and accentuating assets that come from families, and partnering with families and community organizations. Additionally, TCs (both via surveys and focus groups) talked "around" creating learning experiences that center the students beyond their interests, rather than explicitly emphasizing this aspect. While still a step in the right direction, making relevant connections to students' lived experiences was limited (in majority of TC participants) to hobbies, interests (such as video games and superheroes) and sometimes language, rather than patterns and experiences of people of color in marginalized urban communities related to individual, cultural and community assets, racism, classism, discrepancies in schooling resources, and so on. Race broadly, and systemic racism and oppression were rarely mentioned by any TC participants. To be an urban teacher and

an anti-racist teacher, it is unavoidable to talk about race and historical marginalization of some groups versus others. While the research study at the center of this chapter did not focus specifically on race, it is important that urban educators move past being uncomfortable talking about race and racism. Oftentimes, educators may shy away from discussions about race as it may be uncomfortable, or they may feel ill-prepared to talk about race and racism. To be sure, teaching about and talking about racism and related systemic oppression in classrooms takes courage from educators and students alike, and these conversations can be difficult for everyone. But these conversations are central to anti-racist pedagogy. Anti-racist educators acknowledge their power, privileges, and identities to work toward dismantling barriers that perpetuate inequities in our schools.

Implications from this study highlight the importance of teacher education programs prioritizing intentional field placements, readings, and assignments that heavily focus on teaching about systemic oppression and racism, helping TCs understand how to break this down with K-12 students, and align curriculum accordingly to help students themselves think outside the box to work toward rebuilding what schooling experiences have historically represented. Integrating CRP/CSP into teacher education is extremely important but must be done at a deeper level. TCs need to understand the complexity of CRP/CSP and the connection to anti-racist teaching. Highlighting broad conceptual understandings is not enough; we must be more deliberate with how TCs can facilitate and nurture a learning environment which sets them up to teach students via an anti-racist lens. Only then, can teachers begin to interrupt the status quo and address long-standing racial disparities in schools. By providing scaffolded supports in teacher education programs for future educators to facilitate conversations in classrooms with their students to work toward rebuilding what schooling experiences have historically represented, and being thoughtful, purposeful, and collaborative with school placement partners, teachers can begin to address the dismantling of persistent inequities in urban schools and prevailing pedagogical approaches. Teacher preparation programs and clinical experiences need to be reimagined, empowering TCs to enact anti-racist pedagogies and allowing them to envision their roles, as well as their students', as agents of change in classrooms. As a result of this study and its findings, we felt the urgency to do more and created and enacted several assignments and experiences in our field-related coursework in hopes of better supporting teachers to effectively teach in urban schools and communities. In the following section,

we share ideas for supporting the development of anti-racist pedagogy in a teacher education program that emerged as a result of this study's findings and implications.

## Assignments and Field Experiences for Urban TEP

In efforts to create clear connections to teacher education practice, this chapter includes examples of assignments and field-based experiences that can better prepare TCs to become effective urban teachers. The assignments listed below are suggestions to advance students' thinking about how to center culture and place, emphasize equity and anti-racist pedagogies, and explicitly engage TCs in empowering students.

### *Urban Teacher Education Assignments*

*Identity Chart and Implicit Bias Activities*
Identity charts can deepen TCs' understanding of themselves, help them to better understand their implicit biases and how to interrupt them, and identify how their assumptions and biases impact interactions in the classroom. Using ongoing activities that give students opportunities to examine their own identity and biases can help them to consider how their positionality and assumptions about students can help build relationships and break down stereotypes. Sharing identity charts in class can also be an effective community-building tool.

*Community and School Asset Mapping*
To combat deficit thinking about urban schools and students, researching school communities and neighborhoods to highlight assets helps us to think about communities in terms of their assets—and approach urban communities and schools in a capacity-focused approach. TCs can go one step further to focus on schools specifically to identify the assets of the classroom and school community. In this way, TCs are prepared to build on these assets and integrate them into their planning and instruction.

*Integrated Multidisciplinary Lesson Plans*
Creating integrated units that emphasize social justice, student voice, and community connections can be an effective way to encourage collaboration, critical thinking, and highlight community assets. If possible, having

TCs working in collaborative multidisciplinary groups can be an effective way for them to learn from each other as they plan lessons together to engage students in social justice community-centered work.

### *Field-Based Experiences*

*Developing Norms and Class Expectations Collaboratively with Students*
Classroom norms set the tone for the class, and including students in the process of developing the norms helps to set the stage for inclusion of student voice and valuing student perspective. When created and implemented collectively, students take on ownership of classroom expectations and respect.

*Ongoing Critical Reflections of Teaching Practices*
Embedding ongoing opportunities for TCs to reflect on their teaching practice is key to improving their teaching practice, and critical questions that focus on culturally sustaining and anti-racist pedagogies can focus reflections to put students at the center of instruction.

*Creating Authentic Assessments with Students*
Including students in the creation of authentic assessments that give them opportunities to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of skills and content knowledge can be a valuable way for TCs and their students to collaborate and share ideas about how assessments can promote learning.

*Resource Analysis Audit*
Completing a resource analysis can be an effective way for students to consider whose voices are prioritized in curricular materials. After planning a unit, analyze the resources with students. Whose voice is included? Who is represented in the resources? Who is missing? What alternative resources might be included?

*Providing Opportunities for Students to Question and Critique Assignments, Assessments, Readings, and so on*
Provide ongoing space where students can openly question and critique their educational experiences. Teacher educators need to be flexible and open to changes in assignments, readings, and assessments.

*Find Ways to Include Community in Curriculum*

How can family and/or community members contribute to the curriculum? What assets from the community and school can you integrate into your curriculum and instruction? Engage in a community walk to get to know the community that the school is situated in. Interview the community members (both in and out of the school) to get various perspectives of the assets in the neighborhood.

*Creating Lesson Plan Templates and Observation Protocol to Promote Anti-racist Teaching*

By having TCs complete lesson plans in a template that emphasizes asset-based teaching and centers the students in the lesson, TCs in turn can start to develop culturally sustaining pedagogy. Additionally, including guiding questions that encourage TCs to plan lessons that promote higher-order thinking and encourage critical discussions with students can also contribute to pedagogical development. When observed by cooperating teachers or field instructors, an aligned observation protocol is also an effective measure of supporting development of anti-racist teaching practices.

## Final Thoughts

When we began this work, we started with an exploration of teacher candidates' perspectives of their urban clinical experiences and how they were able to translate theory into practice. Hearing their stories, we quickly realized the underlying importance of culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies in their developing teacher practices and considered how they were making sense of this in the field. We also realized what was missing in our teacher preparation process—accounts of anti-racist pedagogy. Despite the underlying discomfort in talking about race and racism and our own identities and biases, conversations in teacher education programs need to move beyond CRP and CSP to support teacher candidates in better understanding how to enact anti-racist pedagogies. Indeed, teacher education programs need to do more to advance future educators' thinking and understanding of their own identities and perspectives and better understand how those shape teaching practices and contribute to implicit bias. Teacher educators have an obligation to confront racism in schools and need to hold ourselves accountable for this work. We need to not only prepare our students to be anti-racist educators, but we too must fully commit to being anti-racist educators ourselves.

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# Epilogue

*Ann E. Lopez*

Education plays a significant role in society in many ways—educating the next generation, being a vehicle for social change, creating spaces for thinking and reflection and the emergence of new knowledge. Teachers also play a central role in this endeavor given their impact on student learning and outcomes. Teacher education is the professional preparation in pedagogy and all aspects of teaching and learning of those who want to enter the profession of teaching. There is growing evidence which demonstrates—among all educational resources—teachers' abilities are especially crucial contributors to students' learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Teachers further play an important role in the development and growth of students. Given the centrality of the role of teachers and their impact on students, how teachers are prepared to take on this important role has been a priority for policymakers. One of the challenges of education faculty over the years has been to design teacher preparation programs that support pre-service teachers to understand the complexities of teaching and learning and respond to contemporary societal issues, including understanding complex classrooms serving an increasingly diverse student population.

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Historically, teaching and learning, and the preparation of teachers focused on preparing a predominantly white student population and white teachers. This approach often ignored the large population of diverse learners that occupy schools, with the result of some students being "pushed and left out" of school as their educational needs were not being met. The realities of what it takes to teach in schools with diverse learners so that all children have an opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive can be daunting for teachers, especially new teachers. Classrooms today are made up of students who come from low-resource households, have different learning needs and disabilities, speak different languages, and are members of different racial and ethnic groups. Darling-Hammond (2006) suggests that a particular kind of teacher education is needed to prepare teachers for teaching in such a classroom. Darling-Hammond argues further that schools of education must design teacher preparation programs that help pre-service teachers to understand different approaches to learning, social and cultural contexts, and be able to enact these understandings in complex classrooms serving increasingly diverse students. This means that the enterprise of teacher education must include a transformative agenda. The editors, Browne and Jean-Marie, do just that in this volume, which reconceptualizes social justice approaches in teacher education by centering antiracist education and pedagogy.

Antiracist education is an action-oriented educational strategy that addresses racism and other forms of oppression and challenges educators to reflect on and act on their power and privileged positions within teaching and learning spaces (Dei, 1996; Lopez, 2005). Dei (1996) conceptualized the following as key principles of antiracism education:

- Recognizes the social effects of race even as a social construct
- The full effects of race on people's lives cannot be understood without a comprehensive understanding of other forms of oppression
- Questions white supremacy, whiteness power and privilege
- Questions how certain voices in society are marginalized, and the delegitimization of the knowledge and experiences of groups positioned on the margins
- Recognizes that people do not engage in teaching and learning as "disembodied" individuals but bring their background, identities, and lived experiences into schooling and learning processes
- Acknowledges the importance of developing education systems that are inclusive

- Acknowledges the role of educational systems in producing and reproducing racial, gender, and other forms of inequities and oppression in society
- Stresses that the issues faced by students and youths cannot be seen in isolation from the material and ideological circumstances in which students find themselves
- Questions institutional structures and practices of education and schooling that perpetuate injustices

How teachers are prepared for their role has been a part of the discourse on public education and the focus of policymakers. Critical educational scholars argue that addressing forms of oppression that impact students, educators, and communities must be a central aspect of teacher education. Research continues to show that some students are not achieving their full potential because their schooling experiences do not reflect their lived realities, and they are furthermore oppressed by aspects of their identities. It is not enough to tell students oppressed by education systems to be even more resilient. While resiliency is a good trait, students should not be expected to buttress systems of oppression by being asked to be more resilient. Education systems, including teacher preparation programs, must respond to calls for change. Over the years, teacher preparation programs have been criticized for not adequately preparing teachers to enter increasingly more diverse classrooms. The question has always lingered: What are the skills and knowledge new teachers need to adequately enter the profession and diverse classrooms and be effective? Research suggests that the extent and quality of teacher education matter for teachers' effectiveness, perhaps now more than ever before. The expectations that schools teach a much more diverse group of students to higher standards create greater demands on teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Critical scholars such as Marom (2019) and Sleeter et al., (2014) assert that racism is normalized within the structures of teacher education. Racism is deeply embedded in the structures of teacher education programs; yet, programs obscure their culpability in maintaining and perpetuating racial harm (Kohli & Pizzaro, 2022). The curriculum and approaches in many teacher preparation programs do not intentionally disrupt and challenge deficit framings of Black, Brown, and Indigenous students and global minority communities. While some teacher preparation programs have made strides toward serving racially diverse communities, many have remained steeped in what Souto-Manning (2019) describes as, "White

ways and systems of knowing which … further white interests through the invisibility and/or normalizing of systemic racism" (p. 100). Despite growing diversity in schools, teacher educators and teacher candidates remain predominantly white and curriculum rarely interrogates oppression because it is structured to privilege white comfort (Lopez, 2016).

Teacher preparation programs have remained steadfast in reproducing a predominantly white teaching force with little sociopolitical analysis grounded in deficit frames of students, families, and Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities (Kohli & Pizzaro, 2022). In this volume, critical educational scholars posit frameworks for teacher education that advance social justice praxis and offer workable solutions that practitioners and academics on this journey can embrace. These include challenging hesitancies and barriers to enacting a more structured pedagogy of antiracism in teacher preparation programs at the faculty level; engagement of white students in antiracist education and pedagogy; challenging racist educational structures; examining how ontological proximity to whiteness, white fear, and commitments to white perfectionism operate as forms of violence against diverse students; the use of storytelling to support antiracist pedagogy; intentionality in addressing the needs of Black males in schools; and the role of field-based experiences and activists. As Kohli & Pizzaro (2022) point out, critical scholars and practitioners over the years have engaged in praxis aimed at disrupting the status quo, challenging and decentering white privilege and whiteness, exploring pedagogies of discomfort, and supporting teacher candidates to develop expertise in culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining pedagogies (see e.g., Gay, 2010; Hossain, 2015; Ohito, 2016; Paris & Alim, 2017).

This book offers a way forward for teacher preparation programs to change and become more responsive to increasing diversity in schools. This includes being intentional about critical praxis that names and addresses white supremacy and how it is manifested in teacher education policies and practices. Teacher preparation programs must disrupt harmful cycles of white dominance, challenge race-evasiveness, support faculty in developing racial literacy, build respectful and authentic relationships with communities, and listen to and include the voices and experiences of Black, Brown, and Indigenous teacher educators (Kohli & Pizzaro, 2022). The chapters in this volume will be of benefit to teacher educators and teacher candidates in developing practices that move away from performative and aspirational social justice education. Equity and social justice education grounded in critical transformative praxis challenges confront

injustices in society so that all students can succeed (Lopez, 2019). Centering antiracist praxis in teacher education cannot be done in isolation; and this book helps us to understand ways in which collaboration can be achieved through community work and across areas of difference. The authors in this volume draw on research as well as their own lived experiences as they reconceptualize social justice in teacher education by moving towards antiracist pedagogy. They have addressed some of the most compelling issues in education and schooling, and more specifically, teacher education. This work is an important resource for faculties of education, school boards, in-service teachers, researchers, and policy makers. The chapters help us to better understand antiracist pedagogy not only in theory but also in practice and the different entry points that teacher educators can take to this important work. A question that is always asked is: how to build capacity among pre-service teachers as well as in-service teachers? This volume offers possibilities for capacity-building antiracist education and pedagogy—Part I—Laying the Foundation and Shifting Frames in Teacher Education, Part II—Disrupting Teaching and Learning for Emancipatory Practices, Part III—Curricula Revitalization for Preparing Today's Pre-Service Teachers, and Part IV—Anchoring Field Experience/Clinical Practice: Leveraging School-Family-Community Connections as a roadmap for the future of teacher education.

Over the years, a critique of social justice education has been the lack of ways that it can be implemented in various contexts. By reconceptualizing social justice in teacher education, this volume directly addresses this critique. If we are to challenge the ways in which students are marginalized in teaching and learning spaces, racism and all forms of oppression must be named and challenged, and antiracist education must become everyday practice. Although teacher education is only one component of what is needed to enable high-quality teaching, it is essential to the success of teaching and learning in schools. To advance knowledge about teaching, to spread good practice, and to enhance equity for children, it is essential that teacher educators and policy makers seek strong preparation for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2006). This book provides practitioners and scholars with a greater understanding of possibilities for social change through critical and antiracist teacher education praxis. Social change will only occur when equity is achieved in society and education. Those who work for social change across the globe now have garnered in one book examples from different voices and contexts to draw from for their own capacity building, action, and praxis. This book offers hope as we work towards building a more just society.

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# Index[1]


**A**
Alim, H. S., 15, 111, 215
Anti-racist classroom, 195–211
Anti-racist educators, 197, 199
Anti-racist pedagogy, 3, 15–16, 21–34, 105–121, 129–147, 231–248
Antiracist practices, 105–121
Antiracist teaching, 100
Anti-racist work and action, 66

**B**
Bakhtin, M. M., 50
Banks, J. A., 109, 109n3
Bell, Derrick, 23
Black male identity, 173–177, 180
Black males, 171–186
Bonilla-Silva, E., 94, 96
*Brown v. Board of Education*, 4

**C**
Carter Andrews, D. J., 40, 89, 90, 93, 161, 162, 173, 175
Caste for education, 158–160, 164
Chavez, C., 69
Children's literature and memoir, 131, 141, 142, 147
Clinical interns, 236, 237, 242, 245, 246
Cochran-Smith, M., 5–7, 196
Crenshaw, K., 116
Critical pedagogy, 3, 6, 12–14
Critical race theory (CRT), 22–25, 27, 29, 31, 34, 152, 153, 158, 160–162, 165
Culturally relevant and sustaining educator (CRSE), 39–59
Culturally relevant pedagogy, 3, 14–15
Culturally responsive anti-racist activists, 215–228


[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.



S. Browne, G. Jean-Marie (eds.), *Reconceptualizing Social Justice in Teacher Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16644-0

Culturally responsive pedagogy, 216, 217, 222, 255, 261, 270

**D**
Darling-Hammond, L., 196
Delgado, R., 43, 94, 113n6, 115
DiAngelo, R., 51, 55, 56, 113, 240
Dillard, C. B., 40, 42, 45, 57, 58, 154n1
Diversity and Equity Pedagogies Continuum (DEP Continuum), 106–109, 111, 113, 121
Diversity-in-action, 65–83
Dixon, K., 161–163
DuBois, W. E. B., 5, 23, 86, 93
Dumas, M., 91, 153, 172, 177, 178

**E**
Emancipatory teaching and learning, 99
Equity, 231, 232, 235, 236, 238, 241, 242, 247
Equity-focused practices, 255

**F**
Faculty diversity committee, 66, 70–72
Families and communities, 200, 201, 209–211
Field-based experiences, 254–256, 268–270
Field experiences, 196–199, 201, 202, 204, 207–209, 211, 235
Freire, P., 5, 7, 12, 13, 71, 86, 120, 217, 222

**G**
Gay, G., 111, 111n4, 161, 195, 196
Giroux, H. A., 6, 12, 13, 196

**H**
Haberman, M., 196
Hannah-Jones, N., 67
Harper, S. R., 174, 176
Hollins, E. R., 197, 199, 211, 255
Hooks, B., 57, 105, 120, 129, 176, 224
Howard, T., 161, 172, 175–183, 195
Humanizing pedagogy, 173, 179

**I**
Idealized whiteness, 85–100

**K**
Kendi, I. X., 31, 105, 157
Kinloch, V., 161–163
Kishimoto, K., 32, 96, 114–118, 118n11
Kitchen, J., 134
Kumashiro, K. K., 119

**L**
Ladson-Billings, G., 21, 22, 24, 43, 110, 111, 156, 158, 159, 161, 195, 196, 201, 216–218, 227, 242, 255, 260–262, 264
Leonardo, Z., 88, 89, 91, 94, 161
Love, B., 31, 57, 58, 172, 215, 217

**M**
Milner, R., 41, 160, 161, 174, 179, 181, 182, 184, 196, 197, 206, 215, 228
Muhammad, G., 164
Multicultural education, 3, 9–12

**N**
Nieto, S., 6, 7, 10, 11
Noddings, N., 136
Noguera, P. A., 172, 174

**O**
Ogbu, J., 152, 158, 217

**P**
Paris, D., 43, 111, 215, 255, 260, 261
Pedagogical practices, 130
Picower, B., 204, 206
Pre-service teachers, 30–33, 218–220, 226
Professional development schools, 231–248

**R**
Reflexivity, 39–59
Rushton, S. P., 256

**S**
Sealey-Ruiz, Y., 164
Shulman, L., 5
Sleeter, C., 89, 111, 112, 160, 161, 163, 196
Social justice, 3–16, 216–218, 225, 226, 228, 231, 232, 234–236, 238–242, 245, 247
Social justice and change, 66
Social justice frameworks, 181
Stefancic, J., 43, 94, 113n6, 115
Storytelling, 129–147
Strategic empathy, 22, 29–33
Students of color, 85–100

**T**
Tatum, B., 93, 120, 161
Teacher candidates (TCs), 253–270
Teacher education programs, 4–8, 13–16, 21–34, 151–166
Teacher preparation programs, 256, 258, 267

**U**
Urban settings, 219–221

**V**
Villegas, A. M., 5

**W**
White educators, 40, 42, 54–57, 59
Woodson, C. G., 5, 23

**Z**
Zeichner, K., 196, 197, 254, 255