Critical Education

"Push it Real Good!"
The Challenge of Disrupting Dominant Discourses Regarding Race in Teacher Education

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Abstract

Despite efforts to redesign an urban teacher education program for social justice and equity, faculty became aware of racialized issues Teacher Candidates of Color faced in the program. Therefore, this study examined the perspectives of teacher candidates to learn about how race is impacting teaching and learning for pre-service teachers. Overall, we discovered the dominant narratives, often called majoritarian stories (Love, 2004), were extremely difficult to disrupt and essentially remained largely intact for teacher candidates in our program. In addition, we found that majoritarian stories helped to maintain a level of superficiality for teacher candidates regarding issues of race. For this reason, we argue that there is a need to "Push it real good!" using Critical Whiteness to engage in deeper level work with teacher candidates in order to help develop strong teacher activists with the skills, dispositions, and knowledge necessary to substantially disrupt the inequitable status quo in education.

Spalding, Klecka, Lin, Odell, and Wang (2010) recently called for teacher preparation programs with a commitment to socially just teaching to "not just break down the walls of prejudice, racism, and intolerance but to construct new intellectual and affective scaffolds that will enable teachers and teacher educators to be activists and advocates for social justice in their classrooms, their schools, and society" (p. 194). This call for socially just teaching to rise to another level where new intellectual and affective scaffolds can support strong teacher activists is worth exploring. Particularly because, as Hytten and Bettez (2011) assert, it is difficult to be against social justice as, "we learn to pledge allegiance to a country that supposedly stands for 'liberty and justice for all" (p. 8). Yet there is no consistent or agreed upon definition of socially just teaching (Kapustka, Howell, Clayton, & Thomas, 2009; Zeichner, 2006) and unfortunately as Juárez, Smith, and Hayes (2008) argue, social justice often "means just us White people" (p. 20).

In a recent study examining pre-service teacher's perspectives on teaching for social justice, the predominantly White participants described teaching for social justice almost exclusively in terms of supporting student learning rather than in terms of disrupting systems and structures that oppress and perpetuate inequity (Cochran-Smith, Shakman, Jong, Terrell, Barnatt, & McQuillan, 2009). Pre-service and novice teachers face a clear challenge when grappling with the ideas of socially just teaching while they are also learning how to navigate the profession as a whole (Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Ovler, & Sonu, 2010). However, if they are not pushed to think about social justice and equity from a critical perspective they may remain unaware "of their own complicity…[with] discriminatory practices built in to education" (Silverman, 2010, p. 300).

Recently, a mid-sized teacher preparation program preparing ~300 teachers a year in a historically white institution in an urban area in the western U.S. was redesigned with an overt commitment to preparing high quality urban teachers committed to social justice and equity from a critical perspective. Various curricular and faculty changes were made focusing on helping teacher candidates (TCs) develop a critical stance towards issues of race and racism, as well as other issues of oppression and marginalization in education and society. In order to push their critical stance, all the readings reflected marginalized perspectives. For instance, TCs read Freire (1998), Tatum (2003), Duncan-Andrade & Morell (2008), and hooks (1994, 2003) and were pushed to question how their identity and life experiences shape their perspectives, values, beliefs, and expectations. Despite these efforts, faculty working closely with TCs of Color became aware of negative experiences students were having because of race and sought to better understand their perspectives and experiences, particularly in contrast to those of their White peers (see Matias, 2013a). For instance, one Teacher Candidate of Color had such negative experiences in her clinical placement based on race that she was transferred to a new site for her internship work. Therefore, in this study we seek to answer the following research questions:

- How do students think about their own race and racial identity?
- How does race or racial identity impact the experiences of students in the teacher education program?

Overall, we discovered that dominant narratives, often called majoritarian stories (Love, 2004; Fránquiz, Salazar, & DeNicolo, 2011), were extremely difficult to disrupt

and essentially remained largely intact for teacher candidates in our program. In addition, we found that majoritarian stories helped to maintain a level of superficiality for teacher candidates regarding issues of race. For this reason, we argue that there is a need to "Push it real good!" and engage in deeper level work with teacher candidates in order to help develop the type of "new intellectual and affective scaffolds" (Spalding, et al., 2010, p. 194) capable of creating strong teacher activists with the skills, dispositions, and knowledge necessary to substantially disrupt the inequitable status quo in education.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory

This study utilizes Critical Race Theory (CRT), a theory originating from legal studies (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), that centralizes race in discussions and analyses; challenges notions of meritocracy, neutrality, ahistoricism and objectivity; emphasizes the experiential knowledge (specifically of People of Color); and supports interdisciplinarity (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). The fundamental goal of CRT scholarship is to challenge dominant ideologies that perpetuate inequities at the intersection of oppressive issues around race, class, gender, language, ability, national origin, and heteronormativity (Yosso & Solórzano, 2005).

Methodologically, CRT offers a valuable conceptual tool to challenge and engage with dominant oppressive ideologies, the construct of "majoritarian stories." Love (2004) defines majoritarian stories as the narratives told by dominant group members to perpetuate and justify their dominance. Fránquiz, Salazar, and Denicolo (2011) argue that majoritarian tales create a standard around the norms of the dominant class that does not account for the epistemologies and lived experiences of People of Color. Consequently, these stories are generally invisible to dominant members of society and are considered normative and universal by those they do not negatively impact.

Mitchell (2013) identified common majoritarian stories in the education of secondary multilingual learners and their teachers: 1) there is no story about race; 2) difference is deficit; 3) meritocracy is appropriate; and 4) English is all that matters. The first majoritarian story, *there is no story about race* promotes the hegemonic ideology of "racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) or "post-racialism" (Cho, 2009). Essentially, this story suggests that racism was successfully eradicated in the United States through the Civil Rights Movement and asserts that racism is predominantly overt acts of individual prejudice and violence. This story overlooks issues of systemic and institutionalized racism, and in an essence, pretends they do not exist.

The second majoritarian story, *difference is deficit* asserts that students who vary from the perceived White, middle-class, English-speaking, able-bodied, heterosexual, Judeo-Christian norm are problems to be solved. This is a powerful story that marginalizes, oppresses, and otherizes students, families, and communities who do not fit into this perceived norm. When this story is being told, teachers, administrators, and others in power do not see students who are "different" as having assets, strengths, and great abilities to draw upon for their own individual learning as well as the collective learning of the class community.

The third majoritarian story, *meritocracy is appropriate,* is the cultural concept that is often perpetuated through American tales of individual success due to hard work

and perseverance. This notion of meritocracy overlooks serious issues of systemic inequity in terms of resource distribution and curricula that favor certain knowledge, perspectives, and ways of being in the world over others. This story is ahistorical and overlooks the centuries of overt racist practices and does not account for the "educational debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006) incurred towards Students of Color over the course of our nation's history.

The final and fourth majoritarian story, *English is all that matters* focused on the multilingual learner population and is described and researched in depth in Mitchell (2012). Essentially, this story asserts that English-Only instruction for multilingual learners still learning English is appropriate and promotes a limited notion of what it means to "know" English. Further, this story treats multilingual learners as if they are monolingual, particularly once they reach an often insufficient level of English proficiency. This story limits learning opportunities for multilingual learners and their teachers and effectively renders multilingual learners invisible in policy and practice as it constructs the population only in terms of their perceived limited English proficiency.

While the fourth majoritarian story focuses mainly on a certain population of students, the other three identified stories have been demonstrated to play a role in educational practices more generally (Viesca, Torres, Barnatt, & Piazza, 2013). Essentially, majoritarian stories perpetuate our fundamentally racist culture (Collins, 2000) and work as barriers to social justice and equity by minimizing issues of race and racism in social institutions and promoting deficit ideologies that blame non-dominant populations for the oppressive issues of social and educational inequities that they face (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Data Sources

Our data includes 14 semi-structured qualitative interviews with both Teacher Candidates of Color and White teacher candidates. Participants were recruited through emails sent to the entire populations of ~300 teacher candidates as well as targeted emails to Teacher Candidates of Color. There were no incentives for participating in this research and the overall population recruited is proportional to the actual population in the predominantly white institution where the study took place. Each participant participated in a 30-45 minute interview where they were asked questions about their experiences in the program as well as how they perceive race to have impacted their learning. The interviews were all transcribed and analyzed for this study. The following chart illustrates the race, gender, length of time in the teacher education program (out of three semesters) and license being sought by our research participants.

Table 1. Participant Overview

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Semester	License
LuXian	Asian	Female	2	SPED
Maria	Latina	Female	2	Elementary
Jackie	White/Persian	Female	2	Elementary
Ashley	White	Female	2	Sec. History
Brie	White	Female	2	Elementary
Chad	White	Male	2	Sec. English
Denise	White	Female	3	Elementary
Emily	White	Female	1	Elementary
Irene	White	Female	3	Elem/SPED
Kelly	White	Female	1	Secondary
Michelle	White	Female	2	Elementary
Nora	White	Female	1	Elementary
Pria	White	Female	3	Elementary
Rachel	White	Female	2	Elementary

Data Analysis

Following Yin's (2008) suggestion to "play" with qualitative data, a varied approach was taken to analyzing and interpreting the collected interview data. First, a consensual qualitative research approach (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997; Hill, Knox, Thompson, Williams, Hess, & Ladany, 2005) was utilized to collectively agree upon codes, themes, assertions and findings by all five researchers. Once larger themes were established and agreed upon, the data were organized into tables by theme for further analysis.

The major themes we identified were *majoritarian discourse, lack of understanding of contemporary racism, lack of understanding of whiteness, white privilege, difficulty in race talk, race minimalizing ideology, effects of race on learning, focus on race of others and program satisfaction/dissatisfaction*. All of the data across each interview were organized by one of these major themes and further analyzed (within theme).

Through this analysis, we felt a need to better account for contextual factors such as the student's self-identified race and where they were in the 3 semester teacher education program. Further, in order to look for patterns across students at different places in the program and from different self-identified racial backgrounds we organized the data by interview question in a table with a column for the semester they were in the program, their pseudonym, their race, and then their response to the question. By analyzing data with these contextual features accounted for, our content analysis (Krippendorff, 2012) was richer and enhanced the work of using consensual qualitative research (Hill, et al., 1997; Hill, et al., 2005) to come to our agreed upon codes, themes, assertions and overarching findings.

From both the in-depth analysis of our broader themes as well as responses to each interview question, as a research team, we agreed on our overarching findings described in detail below and organized around the following topics: developing awareness, white guilt, race and identity, mismatch between race of students and teachers, and in inability to identify racism in schools.

Findings

Through the multiple analyses described above, a clear pattern emerged exposing the power of majoritarian stories and the limited ability teacher candidates had to counter them. Specifically, the dominant discourses, or majoritarian stories, of a "racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) or "there is no story about race[1]" (Mitchell, 2013) appear to have only minimally been disrupted through the learning experiences in the program and were endorsed at some level by both White teacher candidates and Teacher Candidates of Color. However, our Teacher Candidates of Color did demonstrate a much stronger ability to counter these majoritarian stories, while at times still endorsing them. The following discussion will describe more in-depth the ways participants either endorsed or challenged this powerful narrative. Specifically, the following sections demonstrate how teacher candidates had a developing awareness around issues of race, expressed concerns based on white guilt, did not find race to be a major part of their identity, felt there were issues based on a mismatch between the races of teachers and students, and were unable to identify issues of racism in schools. All of these findings come together to demonstrate the challenge teacher educators and teacher candidates face disrupting the dominant cultural narratives around race and its salience.

Developing Awareness

Several of the research participants mentioned a developing awareness around issues of race and ethnicity; however, the depth of that awareness and the ability to translate that awareness into a counter-story that challenges majoritarian notions regarding race appears to have been extremely limited. Students mainly stated that their learning in the program had made them aware of the existence of issues around race (Emily, Chad, Nora, & Brie[2]) and developed an ability for them to see other perspectives (Chad, Nora, Ashley). For example, Chad stated, "Seeing the advantages that I've had because of who I am, my birth and things like that and things that I take for granted that I see and that other people can't take for granted so easily. That's something that I've seen or learned, been able to start taking it a little bit better since being in this program." Clearly the program did help Chad develop an awareness, however, it appears to have stopped with that initial development.

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[1] Oftentimes this is called a "colorblind" ideology, though we are avoiding the use of that term as it co-opts the label for an actual vision disability, something we casually do in English with various mental, physical and emotional disabilities (i.e., "crazy," "insane," "blind review," etc.). We seek to honor the humanity and lived experiences of all and are therefore striving to avoid using language possibly negatively linked to marginalized populations. Yet we also feel it is important to acknowledge the extensive and important work that has been done around the notion of colorblindness in critical studies on race (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Carr, 1997; Matias & Liou, 2014; Schofield, 1986).

[2] Names are pseudonyms.

Maria specifically mentioned the value of the concept of "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and how important it is to tap into the knowledge and resources that students bring to the classroom. She said, "I have my funds of knowledge, I am aware of them and respect them but I have to respect everybody's funds of knowledge and try to reach into them and like pull them out so that way everybody is available to learn based on the knowledge they already have." Kelly also talked about the importance of recognizing the impact of race and ethnicity on each individual student and their lives in general; however, in the same statement she dismissed the importance of her own racial background and positioning sharing:

> I think…that ethnicity is important in society as a whole and acknowledging the different roles it plays is important. It's not something I look to as a primary, something I used to self- identify first. So I don't identify as a White person first but going into the schools the expectation that I have is that it will be a bigger deal and it will be more important and I don't care where my students come from in terms of what their ethnicity is, but I do care about how that, their individual ethnicity is affecting their lives in general.

Some students recognized the impact of their increased awareness around race on their own identity. Denise said, "Being a White female, I feel like I have it pretty easy you know." Irene mentioned something similar saying, "Being White makes everything easier." Other students acknowledged how their own ethnicity deeply informs their perspective on life (Ashley, LuXian). Kelly went so far as to label her personal identity as a White person as negative. When the interviewer asked her if her ethnicity was important to her image of herself as a teacher, she responded:

> Yes. I generally feel it's a negative though. I feel like being White it is what it is and I'm lucky to come from the most privileged group in society but I really wanna work in urban schools and so being White and from a different culture, I get told over and over that I'm not going to be as effective and there's nothing really I can do about it as a White teacher because I can't fully understand the difficulties that my students are going to be going through and so no amount of sympathetic learning is going to be replacement for the life experience that Students of Color experience and I'm just another White woman coming to be a social worker in the school.

Kelly appeared to be grappling with what it means to be a White teacher working in a predominantly Black and Latino, racially segregated urban environment and the limitations she might have in understanding her students' life experiences and perspectives. However, she also demonstrates a sincere dearth of understanding about how to challenge the perpetuation of white privilege and to act as a white ally. In this statement, she mentions being "lucky" to be white rather than recognizing the burden she needs to be taking on in order to disrupt the racial hierarchy that privileges whiteness. Further, she seems resigned to the limitations of her whiteness and content to play the white savior role as "just another White woman coming to be a social worker in the school." Clearly, she has spent some time thinking about her whiteness and its privileges. Yet, it appears that this awareness is still at the very artificial stages and does not contain

a depth of understanding and commitment that would be necessary to disrupt dominant narratives regarding race.

Further, the statements listed above from Denise and Irene and Kelly illustrate a white perspective of having it "pretty easy," and that being White makes "everything easier." Even when Kelly describes being White as "it is what it is" she also calls herself, "lucky to come from the most privileged group in society." It appears that at this stage of developing awareness, students have started to grapple with notions of white privilege and how that impacts their lives (by having it "easier" and being "lucky"). However, in the context of teaching for social justice and working in urban schools, the initial awareness of white privilege that focuses on being "lucky" as a White person, does not help Whites act to dismantle the racial hierarchy of today.

Stokely Carmichael (aka Kwame Ture), a leader in the Black Power movement illustrated the problem with such limited awareness and insufficient commitment to disrupting racial inequities. In a speech he gave to a predominately White and liberal student body at the University of California Berkeley in 1966, he asserted that the Civil Rights Movement and the laws that resulted from it where not laws written for Black people. Rather, they were written for the Whites. He stated,

> I am Black. I know that. I also know that while I am Black I am a human being, and therefore I have the right to go into any public place. White people didn't know that. Every time I tried to go into a place they stopped me. So some boys had to write a bill to tell that White man, "He's a human being; don't stop him." That bill was for that White man, not for me. I knew it all the time. I knew it all he time.

Carmichael clearly describes racism as a White person's problem, though the dominant narrative is often about racism as being about People of Color. While People of Color bear the burden of the impacts and outcomes of racism (Bell, 1992), white supremacy (Gillborn, 2006), white privilege (McIntosh, 2001), and white normativity (Muñoz, 1998), white ignorance (Mills, 2007) to these issues is the source and perpetuator of racial oppression. Therefore, it is both troubling and insufficient for teacher candidates to only recognize white privilege as something that makes their lives easier or makes them lucky, or "is what it is." None of these stances our research participants endorse will disrupt issues of racism, rather such perspectives maintained by future teachers will continue to perpetuate them.

As demonstrated, all of these teacher candidates are at the very initial stages of understanding complex issues around race in education. In fact Rachel discussed her racial identity as a teacher as "Trying to see who I am and who they are and how we interact. I'm not really sure how to go into that deeper." LuXian, a Teacher Candidate of Color who countered some of the majoritarian perspectives about race put forth by her White peers, described the issue that potentially limited the teacher candidates from going deeper into issues around race in the classroom: these issues were almost only discussed in the initial courses of the program and not linked to internships in meaningful ways. She said, "The very first course that every student has to take, we had to really talk about ourselves and share information about who we are so I think it has played a role in the program in my learning experience but besides that one course not a whole lot." In fact,

several of the students mentioned a disconnect between ideas in courses and what they were able to see and even put into practice themselves in their internships. Again, LuXian illustrates this issue saying:

> The schools that they partner with are urban schools so it's good to get in there and be alongside those students. However, I just don't feel that we are learning about the urban population that we are able to put into practice […]I think the main thing is getting to know the students. That was something, I mean that is something that [the program] has emphasized, learning about the students' funds of knowledge and I don't see teachers doing that. I don't see them taking the time to do that.

Overall, it is clear that teacher candidates are developing an initial awareness about issues of race and racialization in their practice and development as teachers. However, the depth and breadth of that awareness does not appear to be expansive for multiple reasons such as the program's lack of depth around these ideas beyond the initial course and some of the disconnects between what is being learned in the university courses and what is being viewed and experienced out in the school internship sites. Further, in this space of developing awareness, teacher candidates have not yet recognized the roles they can play to disrupt racism or take ownership over it from their positionality as White people.

White Guilt

An additional issue that appears to be limiting students' perspectives regarding race is being stuck in feeling guilty about being white or even feeling angry about being asked to critically engage with issues around race. Brie mentioned how the course aimed at helping students explore their own positionality and experiences with racialization just made her feel bad. She stated, "I would say that for the first class when we started talking about it and unpacking those ideas you know you kind of feel like oh wow you are the dominant ethnicity so you kind of feel bad like you did something to someone, like previous ancestors." Kelly said, "I feel that I'm asked to consider my whiteness and my white privilege quite a bit. But it's not asking me to go beyond places that I had gone as an individual beforehand." In contrast Nora articulated, "I've learned about white privilege in the past before, but this is really taking it to a new level and I think that's extremely important." However, Kelly also talked about the way she has been made to feel guilty about being White as a form of oppression. She stated that the curriculum was only focused on making her feel guilty and not about doing anything to change racist issues in education. In fact, she strongly expressed that there was nothing she could do to change issues of white privilege and just said that being White:

> It is what I am. And as much as I would wish for a more tangible connection to the communities I'm teaching, I feel like you know, ways of exploring becoming a unified group are not emphasized, difference between the group are and so that's my big issue with it is they smack you over the head with a problem and the solution is to feel bad about the problem. That doesn't really take me where I want to go.

Unfortunately, Kelly and the others have not learned to move past feeling guilty about the privileges of whiteness and find practical ways to disrupt inequity based on race. In fact, it appears from the statement above that Kelly does not yet have battling inequity as a

goal or desired outcome for her work as a teacher. She simply wants to have a "more tangible connection to the communities" she teaches and find ways to become "a unified group." This desire for connection and unification appears to espouse a more universalist notion of everybody getting along versus proactively seeking methods of challenging the inequitable status quo around issues of race. As long as teacher candidates are not able to move past feelings of white guilt, it does not appear that they can engage with truly teaching for social justice and equity (Matias, 2013a).

However, based on the comments from students regarding only engaging in these issues during the initial courses in the program, it appears that teacher candidates were not given the tools to move past feelings of guilt and find ways to proactively disrupt the inequitable distribution of power and privilege based on racial lines. White guilt is not inherently negative (Matias & Allen, 2014). But if teacher candidates are not given the opportunities to turn that guilt into an emotionally invested commitment to sharing the burden of racism, it is likely that they will interpret conversations around white supremacy and white privilege as discussions aimed to make them "feel bad about the problem." Because the dominant narratives around race are so powerful, the work to disrupt them in teacher preparation must be equally if not more powerful.

Race and Identity

Some students cited race as unimportant to their personal identity as teachers (Emily, Chad, Pria, Jackie). For example, when asked if ethnicity is important to her teaching practice, Emily stated, "Not necessarily because I probably won't have necessarily all White people, so no." This statement demonstrates an awareness of racial differences likely to occur between her and her students, but in the end she does not feel that her being White will impact her practice. Interestingly, one can assume from this statement that she would find race impacting her practice if she was in a White racially monolithic classroom. Might she interpret race as being something that is performed only in the context of your racial peers? It appears that there is both more for Emily to learn as well as for the teacher educators supporting her in terms of her racial identity and its impact on her teaching practice.

Chad said, "Inclusion is important […] I think it's important to see the other, to see someone else, to see people for who they are and how race can play into that." This statement appears to acknowledge the way that race plays a role in a person's identity, but his emphasis is on inclusion and he does not make any statements about his own race and the role it might play in his teaching. Jackie talked about her intercultural experiences and travel stating, "Honestly, I don't see a lot of differences." Again, this is perspective minimizes the role race might be playing in her teacher practice and promotes an ideology suggesting there is no story about race. Further, it minimizes the role race plays in both individual and collective identities.

Pria offered her perspective stating, "I don't want anyone to think they are different or anything and that's why I don't think I take my race into consideration like it doesn't matter." Interestingly, Pria suggests that by her taking her own race into consideration, she would make others feel different. From such a position, Pria feels justified in not taking an active stance regarding her identity and race. It appears that she feels this stance is the most altruistic. However, by stating that race does not matter does

not make it the reality. In fact, white privilege and white supremacy is often perpetuated from ignorant spaces of intended altruism (Thompson, 2003).

Maria, a Latina, also limited her identity with race stating, "First and foremost, I am a person." However, Maria also countered the majoritarian perspective promoting an ideology that race does not matter by stating, "It's a little alarming that all of our teachers are White. They are teaching us, you know, a program about ethnicity but we don't have any Teachers of Color who are teaching us." She suggested that a major improvement for the program would be to get "People of Color to actually teach some of these classes, so that way there is validity in the program." This contradiction that was obvious to Maria (White people teaching all, or most, of the courses in an urban teacher education program) was not mentioned by any of the other teacher candidates. In the overwhelmingly white spaces of teacher education (Juárez, Smith, & Hayes, 2008), this contradiction is rampant and an issue that needs to be tackled head on. Yet, only the Teacher Candidate of Color discussed and recognized it in this study. But further, she contradicts the importance of race and identity by minimizing her own – "First and foremost, I am a person."

Despite this, Maria further told a counterstory about the importance of race in discussing her own positionality as one of the only Latinas in the program:

> You look around and you see that there is not too many Spanish people and you wonder why and how can you change that and how can you make is so that it's more fair and equal. I know that equality is giving you what you need to help move you up but why isn't that happening? Or why hasn't that happened because if it has there might not only be one or two Spanish people in every classroom. There would be more and then for me it makes me wonder how the school itself, how they're trying to get other people, like promote other people into the program and I wonder if they are even trying. Then I wonder how they are trying to do it and if they are even aware of how hard it is to be of ethnicity sitting in a classroom with mostly people who are [White].

Maria further challenged the majoritarian story about race by explaining how racial backgrounds impact life experience. When asked how her own ethnicity influenced her learning in her internships, she said:

> See, it's just not ethnicity. It's your experience with your ethnicity. It's not just because I'm Spanish, it's what I've experienced as being Spanish. Things that you don't realize until you're older and you look back. And I was one of the kids that was never picked for special projects, though I was really smart. Or until I moved to a town that was mostly Hispanic, then all of a sudden I was a good writer and somebody who is marked to go to college, but that never happened before when I lived in another town that was mostly Caucasian. It only changed and happened when I moved to this town that was mostly Hispanic and through a program called Upward Bound.

Maria's understandings about the salience of race in her life experiences, particularly within educational contexts tells a distinct counterstory to the insufficient, developing

awareness demonstrated by her White peers that overwhelmingly endorsed an ideology that minimizes the role of race. She clearly describes why racialization matters and why teachers should become aware of issue around race. However, as noted above, at times, Maria also minimized race in her identity (Bell, 1992; Yoshino, 2002).

Overall, the teacher candidates interviewed appear to still be endorsing the majoritarian story that there is no story about race by suggesting the focus on race and ethnicity in your personal identity as a teacher is not important.

Mismatch in Race Between Teachers and Students

When it came to discussing the impact ethnicity and race had on teaching practice, teacher candidates focused on the mismatch between students and teachers in terms of race (Michelle, Rachel, Denise). Michelle said,

> Visually that's the first thing that they see about me and you know skin color is a huge thing in the US and I think that it causes kind of a separation between like especially like the school that I'm at right now it's mostly Hispanic and there's like a separation between the kids and the teachers who are all mostly White and I think it's just important to be like conscious of my race as compared to that of others. You're not the only one in the school.

Michelle's statement acknowledges the mismatch in race between teachers and students, but suggests that an awareness of that mismatch and the separation it might be causing is all she really needs to be conscious of. Rachel made a similar comment stating, "I think because I'm White it will put certain boundaries and barriers between me and my students in urban settings, I think that will exist and I'm cognizant of that." And Denise echoed the sentiment mentioning, "I think it's something I have to be aware of as a teacher because I'm in the majority […] I have to be aware that my kids might see a difference between us because of our ethnicity." Each of these statements minimizes race and the issues that it actually can and does cause in schools by superficially focusing on difference. This demonstrates more of the initial awareness about race mentioned above as well as the lack of nuance and understanding regarding the distributions of power and privilege and what role a teacher for social justice should play in disrupting inequity. Realizing that students and teachers are from different racial and ethnic backgrounds is not enough to disrupt powerful discourses, systems, and policies that perpetuate inequity (Matias, 2013c). Maria's statements above about being a Latina teacher candidate in a program for urban schools with courses taught mainly by White instructors demonstrates some of the issues the mismatch between teachers and students face. However, the White teacher candidates did not demonstrate an awareness of the issues, just an awareness of a mismatch.

Some participants focused on their own feelings of being a minority in schools with predominantly Black and Latino students (Ashley, Brie). Ashley recognized the diversity in her school and that she actually added to it stating, "I am a White teacher in a very ethnically diverse classroom […] including refugee students and immigrant students from Africa and we also have several students that are just here for like from Spain just for a semester […] then we also have a wide mix of Hispanic and African American and then White students who live in poverty. So, I think I add to the mix of diversity." Ashley

seeing herself as adding to the diversity of the school is interesting, but particularly because it came as a response to a question regarding how race has influenced her learning experience at her site school. She never talked about learning, just the mix of diversity that she sees herself as a part of. This is a way to minimize the saliency of race, through a "celebrating diversity" perspective that does not recognize issues of power or privilege based on contemporary racial hierarchies or what she might be learning in a "diverse" space. Brie also talked about being White in a school that is majority Latino.

> It seems like the majority of the teachers in the school are White and women and the majority, 80% of the students speak another language besides English. I think there's only 6% that are White like me. And there's a large majority that are Hispanic or Latino. And I feel like we talk a lot about what we want to see at the university but in the actual classrooms I don't really see that to be inclusive and really get to know your students. It's really focused on standards and [state standardized test] and assessments. There's not really any community building or anything like that.

Here Brie discusses something important about her learning in her site school, that she is not seeing the things put into place that she is learning at the university. While this is an already well-established challenge in teacher preparation, it adds to the difficulty of helping students develop a critical stance towards issues of inequity in schooling contexts. Students may be interested in disrupting dominant narratives and operating from a space of criticality, but get easily socialized into the status quo within school buildings.

Interestingly, though all participants were doing their internship in racially diverse if not completely racially segregated schools in terms of the student population, several participants mentioned their race in their teaching practice as not mattering because they were White and were among mostly White teachers (Michelle, Denise, Irene). Michelle said, "Most of the teachers are White, so I feel like that's not an inconsistency or I'm not something different like a sore thumb or anything." It appears that she thinks her race would impact her learning more if she was in the minority, which in the building as a total, she is. However, she only compares herself to the other teachers in the building. This is interesting in terms of what it might mean for how she values and views students. Denise echoed the sentiment stating, "99% of the teachers are White, so it's been pretty easy to fit in." Upon being probed about her students Denise minimizes race stating, "I don't feel like they think of me as different but I do try to be sensitive to where they come from and their culture and really trying to learn about it." This statement demonstrate a positionality of power where she feels accepted by her students and not viewed as different, but overtly attempts to be "sensitive" to student backgrounds. Only those at the top of the racial hierarchy get to feel accepted and choose to be sensitive to the backgrounds of others. Those at the lower ends of the hierarchy do not get the option for sensitivity; rather, they are forced to take on different cultural practices belonging to those in power. Denise does not appear to recognize this issue. Along the same vein, Irene discussed acceptance because "most of the staff there is White."

Several participants said that their race has no impact on their teaching practice at all (Pria, Gabi, Jackie, Emily). Pria said, "Race and ethnicity don't really come up." Others like Jackie, Gabi and Emily just said no, that race or ethnicity was not important

in their teacher practice. One participant, Brie, was still grappling with this notion and simply said, "I don't know," in response to a question regarding the impact of her race on her teaching. These responses demonstrate a clear subscription to the majoritarian story that there is no story about race.

Maria expressed that her ethnicity as a Latina would be a valuable resource to her as a teacher in her ability to connect and share common life experiences with some of her students. As mentioned above, she also talked about her own positionality in the teacher education program as one of the extremely limited numbers of Students of Color. She described it to be a serious issue of inequity that there were not more Students of Color in higher education and teacher preparation particularly. However, at times she also minimized the impact of her ethnicity on her teaching by saying things like, "Teaching the kids is what's important to me as a teacher" in response to questions regarding the impact of her race on her teaching practice. Michelle, a White teacher candidate, seemed to capture a common sentiment among our participants that focuses on the awareness teacher candidates had developed about race, "I don't think my personal ethnicity is important to my teaching. I think that being aware of ethnicity is important to my teaching." Clearly, this stance is not strong enough to counter majoritarian stories regarding issues of race and racism in school and society.

Inability to Identify Racism in Schools

Despite developing an awareness around race most participants could not identify instances of observed racism in schools of the teacher education program. Brie indicated that she feels it is probably underlying, but could not name it or any specific instance. Chad described having seen high school students engage in racist acts against other high school students, but did not name a particular instance. Rachel even felt that the focus on examining white privilege in some of the course work was racist against Whites. However, some students did identify some issues in schools around race. Irene discussed some of the ways she heard teachers talking about students that made her uncomfortable and that she felt were race based issues. Maria, as described above, shared personal experiences with racism in schools where she was not perceived as college material in a predominantly white school, but was quickly tagged as such in a predominantly Latino school. LuXian mentioned the way that students always ask her where she is from and said that she was not sure if she would consider that racism. Two of the Teacher Candidates of Color challenged majoritarian notions, at least at an important beginning level, but the overwhelming majority of the White teacher candidates still subscribed to a racial ideology that is problematic from a social justice and equity perspective.

Discussion and Implications

As our findings suggest, teacher candidates in our program were still struggling to actually let go of the dominant discourses around race and develop new ways of thinking and being in the world that would counter those majoritarian stories. These findings stand in relationship to other research on teacher candidates that suggest this work is difficult (Viesca, Torres, Barnatt, & Piazza, 2013; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). For instance, Liggett (2011) found substantial barriers in terms of structural obstacles that limited the abilities of teacher candidates to center their instruction around issues of social justice

and diversity. While some might argue that this difficulty in helping teacher candidates develop new perspectives and ways of being in the world that can proactively counter inequity takes time and requires patience with teachers on a developmental path, we believe there is more that can and should be done to better prepare teachers who can take their place on the frontlines to battle with students, families, and communities for equity and social justice.

Simply, we feel there is no time to waste in preparing humanistic warriors capable of substantially disrupting the inequitable status quo. Currently, our system is riddled with inequity from ineffective tracking (Callahan, 2005; Oakes, 2005), to policies that are widely limiting options for students to learn in languages other than English (Menken, 2010), and a growing crisis of a school to prison pipeline (Schott, 2009). The Schott Foundation for Public Education (2012) released a report called, "The Urgency of Now" that examines serious issues of pushing students out of school through suspensions and unreasonable discipline policies and found that out-of-school suspensions have disparate gender and racial impacts. There is an over-representation of Students of Color (Artilles & Trent, 1994; MacMillian & Reschley, 1998) and in some places multilingual learners (ELL Subcommittee, 2009) in special education programs. Further, as a system we are not graduating nearly 50% of our Black males (Schott Foundation, 2012) and year after year, The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) finds schools to be hostile environments for a large number of LGBT students (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). We assert that all of these issues could be substantially combated with a teaching force that understood the way majoritarian stories are impacting and perpetuating such severe issues of inequity and knew how to proactively counter them. Therefore, as teacher educators, we feel there is no time to waste and we must act in substantially different ways to help our teacher candidates develop the new intellectual and affective scaffolds for critical activism and anti-racist work.

In our efforts to develop socially just teachers and with our documented failures described above, it has become clear to us that CRT alone may not provide enough tools and conceptual models to effectively and efficiently push teacher candidates along a path of critical activism (Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tandon, & Galindo, In Press). As most of our teacher candidates are still White, the field of Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) offers valuable perspectives and models for White teacher candidates to critically examine their positionality, racialization, as well as the distribution of power and privilege across their life experiences. CWS goes beyond the acknowledgement of white privilege (McIntosh, 2001) and stages of white racial identity (Helms, 1990; Howard, 2006) and into an interdisciplinary approach to how whiteness is materialized through sociopolitical, historical, economic, and emotional means (e.g. Allen, 2002; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008; Denton & Massey, 1993; Lipsitz, 2006; Roediger, 1999). For example, Thandeka (1999) explores the emotional well-being of Whites entrenched in whiteness by positing that their emotional investment in whiteness stems from their shame of recognizing the reality of race. In fact, she articulates how psychologically this is a form of abuse because it teaches Whites to ignore what they bear witness to in terms of race. Such a process thus produces a form of neurosis that forces Whites to believe in race minimalization despite its known falsity. Acknowledging this dynamic adds to how we understand Leonardo and Porter's (2010) postulation of violence. For when white

shame is revealed it becomes too emotionally unbearable in the context of interracial dialogue, which is violent in itself. However, as CRT asserts this type of racial humiliation happens to People of Color on a daily basis (Matias, 2013b) and thus its application helps us balance our views on whiteness because such humiliation is a necessary step to open the possibility of the truly humanizing race dialogue that Leonardo and Porter (2009) suggest is necessary. Helping teacher candidates understand the differences between guilt, shame, and humiliation as well as the racialized experiences that differentiate the human experience around these feelings is something CWS appears to be able to offer more poignantly than CRT alone.

Some of the changes we have already implemented into our curriculum that appear to be having positive impact on teacher candidate learning (research is currently ongoing regarding the outcomes of these changes) include, expanding our readings to almost exclusively present counterstories to whiteness from the perspective of Scholars and Authors of Color (e.g. Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Berta-Ávila, 2004; Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006; Burnstein & Montano, 2011; de Jesús & Sheng, 2004; hooks, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Knight, 2004; Matias, 2013b; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005). The emphasis has moved from "understanding inequity" to becoming an ally. In doing so, the course lead for the first course in the program opted to conduct her course in three phases. The first phase focuses on developing an emotional investment to issues of racial justice. In noticing that our teacher candidates' discussions of racism distanced themselves from the issues of race we knew that they had limited emotional investment in wanting to change the status quo. Therefore, the lead course designer included readings to show how racism hurts People of Color so that the pain of racism has a face. In having a face, teacher candidates un-learn emotional apathy towards racism and re-learn how to feel race.

Upon learning how to emotionally feel race such that they personally invest in its demise, teacher candidates move into the second phase of the course, which teaches them how to share in the burden of race. Since the class is strategically taught in a race and ethnic studies manner, concepts, historical events, or historical figures that are brought up from a marginalized perspective are used but not explicitly taught. Similar to how standardized Eurocentric curriculum assumes that urban Students of Color must know all terms, concepts, and events in such a curricula, we opt to present a race and ethnic studies curriculum. Teacher candidates are instructed to write down what they do not know and research it from an ethnic studies perspective. By doing this our teacher candidates understand what it means to learn a counternarrative and why it was marginalized in the first place without merely asking People of Color to tell them. This is one particular way that teacher candidates share in the burden of race.

The third phase is strategically incorporating critical whiteness studies; for how can a class full of White teacher candidates be ready to support the positive racial identities of their urban Students of Color if they have not undergone the journey of understanding their White selves first (Helms, 1990)? Essentially, instead of merely acknowledging that one is White and that such a racial marker holds privilege, using critical whiteness studies details exactly how whiteness came to be and what privileges are derived from it. For example, Massey & Denton's (1994) work chronicles how the formation of white suburbia replete with racial covenant, red-lining, ghetto-izations, and

racial public policy all support whiteness such that after generations of home-owning, Whites have accrued much more equity than racial minorities. Another example is Vera and Gordon (2003) who document how Hollywood films hyper-hero-ifies Whites such that it normalizes the notion that Whites are saviors. By interrogating where whiteness comes from our White teacher candidates can understand that whiteness, just as the racialization of People of Color, are both socially constructed but produce real effects.

Once students complete the curricular work focused on allyship, they begin to study community and learn how to apply the concept of "funds of knowledge" into creating a classroom where they can "make the community curricular" (Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012). Essentially, they strive to use their allyship to engage in two-way processes where community knowledge and assets are foundational in the curriculum and the work of learning in schools is beneficial for communities.

While this approach appears to be more successful than our previous approaches with teacher candidates, we acknowledge that one-two courses in a teacher education program will never be sufficient to adequately disrupt dominant narratives that minimalize the role of race in society and education today. Therefore, we also are seeking for new ways to envision and enact teacher preparation for social justice.

Drawing back on the Carmichael (1966) speech at Cal Berkeley, the predominantly White teacher education/teaching force in the United States today would likely benefit from finding the answers to some questions he poses, "How can White people move to start making the major institutions that they have in this country function the way it is supposed to function?...And can White people move inside their own community and start tearing down racism where in fact it does exist?" He further argues:

> It is nonsensical for people to start talking about human relationships until they're willing to build new institutions. Black people are economically insecure. White liberals are economically secure. Can you being to build an economic coalition? Are the liberals willing to share their salaries with the economically insecure Black people they so much love? Then if you're not, are you willing to start building new institutions that will provide economic security for Black people?

Carmichael's poignant questions are at the heart of the implications of this study. Teacher candidates are struggling to understand issues of inequity associated around race, however, our educational, economic, and social institutions have been structured for centuries to ensure that this ignorance is passed on and perpetuates white privilege and supremacy. Our improved curricula for working with teacher candidates is important, but not enough. What Carmichael suggests is that White teacher educators and White teachers who are committed to equity and social justice need to work inside our own communities to tear down racism where it does exist. Racism will not be torn down by simply helping White people begin to develop an awareness that there is a problem. Racism will be torn down when White people move beyond awareness and start doing school, education, the economy, housing market etc. differently. In the realm of teacher preparation, positioning Students, Families, and Communities of Color as teacher educators would likely begin to disrupt the white hold on the knowledge necessary to become a teacher. Do classes have to meet at universities? Do teachers need to be trained

only by those with PhDs or years of experience as teachers? For a new institution to be developed that embraces the humanity of all and truly creates the opportunity for "liberty and justice for all," we likely need to think and act dramatically different than we do within the confines of traditional educational arrangements.

Therefore, we feel that the role of teacher educators is to "push it real good" when it comes to developing teachers capable of countering damaging dominant ideologies regarding race and equality in schools and society. We also feel it is important for teacher educators and those interested in equity to "push it real good" when it comes to tearing down racism in predominantly white spaces by reimagining the possible and redistributing power and privilege in terms of whose knowledge matters in learning to teach for equity and social justice.

Acknowledgements

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Critical Education