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Preparing a Diverse and Culturally Sustaining Teacher Workforce: The Role of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Policy in Teacher Education

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A DIVERSE TEACHER WORKFORCE

Preparing a Diverse and Culturally Sustaining Teacher Workforce:
The Role of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Policy in Teacher Education

MA Thesis

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Abstract

Schools in the U.S. are currently experiencing a general teacher shortage, as well as a shortage of teachers of color. As the student population continues to diversify, the lack of diversity within the teacher workforce has a negative impact on students of color, both academically and socioemotionally. This thesis examines the role of university-based teacher education programs in preparing a more diverse and culturally sustaining teacher workforce. It uses the framework of critical race theory to examine primary and secondary literature relevant to this issue. Discourse analysis of a policy document addressing the role of teacher education programs in diversifying the teacher workforce is also conducted using the framework of critical race theory. This discourse analysis examines how the language used by the Department of Education relates to the sociopolitical and historical contexts of neoliberalism and teacher education. This thesis puts the role of teacher education programs in conversation with larger political forces which create and perpetuate the inequities associated with the lack of diversity of the teacher workforce nationally. It presents pedagogical and policy-based solutions within teacher education such as culturally sustaining pedagogies and more equitable accountability measures, and argues that broader support must be provided by policymakers in order to create significant and enduring change.

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Preparing a Diverse and Culturally Sustaining Teacher Workforce

Introduction

This thesis will examine how teacher education programs can address the lack of diversity of the teacher workforce nationwide. Currently, there is a teacher shortage in the United States, and in particular, there is a shortage of teachers of color and teachers from low-income backgrounds. My research will explore the role of teacher education programs in preparing a more diverse and culturally sustaining teacher workforce, and propose pedagogical and policy based solutions. I will begin by providing an overview of this issue, and subsequent sections in the thesis will address the ways in which the neoliberal agenda has shaped teacher education programs, root causes of the teacher shortage and homogeneity in the teacher workforce, an analysis of culturally sustaining pedagogy as an approach to diversifying teacher education programs, discourse analysis of a recent policy report on diversifying the teacher workforce, and further recommendations to help teacher education programs engage in this important effort.

The idea that there is a “teacher shortage” is a more multifaceted problem than may be initially apparent. Perhaps the most alarming fact of the teacher shortage is that the demographics of the teacher workforce do not match the demographics of U.S. students, which has been shown to negatively impact students of color (Renzulli et al., 2011). The issue is twofold; not only is there a general shortage of teachers leading to inadequately staffed classrooms, but there is also a shortage of teachers of color (Goings & Bianco, 2016). The current literature has focused on the impact of this issue in the context of teachers who are already working in schools, but more information about the role of teacher education programs is needed. Examining the role of curriculum of teacher education programs in preparing a more diverse and culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2014) teacher workforce will benefit all students

by making schools places that culturally and demographically reflect the real world in which students live, a factor that has been shown to bolster both teacher satisfaction (Renzulli et al., 2011) and student achievement (King & Ray Butler, 2015).

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of traditional, university-based teacher education programs in preparing a more diverse and culturally responsive teacher workforce, and to determine what changes are needed to support this effort. Many universities include language about “diversity” and “social justice” in their mission statements, but considering the lack of diversity in the teacher workforce, it is unclear whether universities are actually putting this language into practice in their teacher education programs, and whether policymakers are actively supporting these efforts. This study examines this issue and discusses what pedagogical and policy changes need to be made in teacher education programs in order to create a more diverse, culturally sustaining teacher workforce.

I, the researcher, am a licensed secondary educator who left the classroom after four years of teaching to transition toward a career in education policy. Because part of the study will focus on teacher turnover, there is potential for bias on my part because of my professional experience. It should also be noted that I am white, female, and come from a middle class background. During my career as a teacher, I worked almost exclusively with students of color, and I taught only in under-resourced public and charter schools in Chicago. I often felt that my teacher education program had not adequately equipped me with the cultural knowledge necessary to work with these students. While my undergraduate teacher education program addressed issues such as implicit bias and incorporating elements of students’ cultural experiences into lesson plans, I would not say that the program was an explicitly anti-racist space committed to preparing educators to be culturally sustaining. I left this program with the

understanding that all students should be treated the same regardless of their background. As I entered the teacher workforce, I discovered that there is much more nuance involved in working with diverse groups of students. I essentially had to learn these nuances on the job, but many of the students with whom I worked needed urgent interventions. While I was committed to meeting students' needs to the best of my ability, I often felt that I was coming up short as a result of my inadequate preparation to work with such diverse populations whose cultural experiences differed so greatly from my own. Thus, my experience as a white educator working in diverse urban settings has inspired this study.

There are a few key terms that must be elucidated for the purposes of this study. First, *teacher shortage* is defined as a phenomenon in which the demand for teachers is greater than the supply (Guarino et al., 2006, p. 175). *Teacher turnover* is defined as “the departure of teachers from their teaching jobs” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 500). *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy* (CRP) 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” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469). A subsequent pedagogy, *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy* (CSP), is a pedagogical framework that “seeks to perpetuate and foster — to sustain — linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation” (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 1).

Methodology

This research is grounded in the framework of critical race theory, which focuses on the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012 as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 30). One of the goals of critical race theory is to deconstruct racial hierarchies while simultaneously acknowledging that race is socially constructed (Parker & Lynn, 2002 as

cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018). Brown (2013) notes that CRT began in the 1970s with the works of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman, who initially developed CRT as a critical approach to legal studies “that while concerned about how law itself helped to maintain societal inequity, failed to address how the construct of race and the practice of racism operated in these processes” (p. 328). Brown argues Gloria Ladson-Billings built on CRT in the context of education through her work on culturally relevant pedagogy (p. 328). Ladson-Billings (1999) argues that confronting racism in teacher education is necessary for the dismantling of racism in education as a whole. She explains that “Most prospective teachers are not racist in the sense that they overtly discriminate and oppress people of color. Rather, the kind of racism that students face from teachers is more tied to Wellman's (1977) definition of racism as "culturally sanctioned beliefs which, regardless of the intentions involved, defend the advantages whites have because of the subordinated positions of racial minorities" (p. xviii)” (p. 225). The subordination of both teachers of color and students of color has been enabled by the assumption that whiteness is equated with success, especially in the context of academic success. Dismantling these assumptions is necessary to understanding how teacher education programs can become safe and supportive spaces for pre-service teachers of color, and adequately prepare white pre-service teachers to approach their work from a perspective that sustains their cultures of a diverse student body rather than holding students to a standard of whiteness under the guise of “academic success.” Doing so can help prepare teachers of all races to contribute to the decolonization of education and bring equity and justice to students of color. I draw on the framework of critical race theory in discussing primary and secondary literature relevant to my research question.

I also conduct discourse analysis of relevant policy documents that focus on the preparation of teacher educators. Discourse analysis is a method of research that examines the relationship between language and its social context (Luo, 2019). Linguist Zellig Harris first used the term discourse analysis in 1952 to describe his process of examining “the syntax of units of communication larger than words or sentences” (Johnstone, 2018, p. 542). In other words, discourse analysis is an approach to language analysis that focuses on the meaning of spoken or written words “beyond the sentence,” which differs from most types of analysis associated with modern linguistics which focus on smaller portions of language, such as phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax (Tannen, 2020). Cameron (2014) explains that “Social researchers who do discourse analysis often want to make the point that even when we talk ‘in our own words’, these words may not actually be ‘ours’ at all, in the sense that they are not original or unique to any one individual” (p. 15). In this way, discourse analysis allows researchers to uncover the subtext of language used by individuals and groups by considering the larger social context in which the language is situated. My approach to discourse analysis is focused on how the language used in policy documents relates to the sociopolitical and historical contexts of neoliberalism and teacher education. Using this research method allows me to shed light on the current policy landscape of teacher education, examine how the dialogue on race and culture in teacher education has changed over time, and analyze contemporary debates. Using critical race theory and recent literature on neoliberalism in education and alternative teacher education programs, I examined language used in the U.S. Department of Education’s 2016 report “The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce” to determine the department’s current policy alignment in diversifying the teacher workforce.

Chapter 1

The Neoliberal Problem

It is widely acknowledged that neoliberalism increased its momentum and began to greatly impact education in the U.S. during Reagan's presidency in the 1980s, when the concept of trickle-down economics was introduced to lower taxes for the wealthy in hopes that they would invest their savings into public interests (Ali, 2019, p. 105). Instead, the class divide persisted, and public funds for schooling and vocational programs dwindled (Ottenberg, 2019, as cited in Ali, p. 105). This became the economic foundation for the neoliberal construction of education as a private good (Giroux, 2015). In 1983, Reagan's administration released the policy report *A Nation at Risk*. It argued that the nation's schools were failing to adequately prepare students to compete in the workforce, and it led to numerous education reform efforts. The report has been classified by many critics as a way of perpetuating inequalities by scapegoating schools, rather than striking at the systemic root of these issues: "*A Nation at Risk* and subsequent policies reflect the effort by capital, through the state, to blame schools for the essential injustices and contradictions of capitalism. ...Educational reforms provide the appearance that the state has taken responsibility for improving society and, therefore, increase the state's legitimacy" (Hursh, 2006, p. 18). *A Nation at Risk* also scapegoated teacher education programs in the same way, implicating them in the "failure" of schools on the grounds that university-based teacher education was "broken" and lacking in rigor, claims that paved the way for Secretaries of Education Rod Paige and Arne Duncan to argue that the only solution was to privatize teacher education and to withdraw teacher training from university spaces (Souto-Manning, 2019, pp. 1-2).

The neoliberal reform efforts that followed *A Nation at Risk* responded to the report's call for "more rigorous and measurable standards," as states adopted their own academic standards throughout the 1980s and 1990s, prior to the implementation of Common Core standards. In 2002, the Bush administration signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law. NCLB implemented mandatory high-stakes testing for all grade levels K-12 as a measure of "accountability." Schools that did not show adequate yearly progress (AYP) on these tests were labeled as "needing improvement." Schools with at least 40% low-income students were classified as Title I. If a Title I school did not meet AYP, NCLB required restructuring measures to be taken, or mandated the school's closure (20 U.S.C. § 6319). In this way, NCLB used high-stakes testing in an attempt to measure academic success, with a particularly watchful eye on high-poverty schools. While this was posited as a way to "improve" such schools, it actually reinforced neoliberal ideologies and unfairly punished schools with large populations of low-income students. As Lipman (2006) argues, "Discursively, the [NCLB] policies define education as a commodity whose production can be quantified, standardized, and prescribed. ...National testing constitutes a system of quality control, verifying that those who survive the gauntlet of tests and graduate have the literacies and dispositions business requires" (p. 46). Furthermore, the tests administered under NCLB have been found to be culturally biased in favor of white, wealthier students, and exemplify a movement to standardize culture and reinforce whiteness as the measure of academic success (McCarty, 2005; Watanabe, 2008). Not only were the tests manufactured to commodify and standardize education, but they were also designed to perpetuate existing socioeconomic and racial inequalities while placing the blame on "failing" teachers and schools.

In 2005, NCLB was repealed and replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA still uses mandated high-stakes tests as an accountability measure, but allows states more flexibility in setting their own achievement goals, and requires states to use additional criteria aside from test scores when evaluating schools (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). ESSA also promises a greater federal commitment to equity in education (Chu, 2019, p. 1). However, states are given flexibility in determining what equity looks like in their schools. In an analysis of state policies on equity following ESSA, Chu found that states largely proposed approaches to equity that focused on equitable funding and equal distribution of experienced, skilled teachers and administrators among schools, while the accountability policies in the ESSA focused more on equity in outcomes, with a particular emphasis on accountability for high-stakes test scores, graduation rates, and student growth scores. Chu infers that this “mismatch between access-oriented equity policies and the outcome-driven accountability systems” (p. 19) is caused by the assumption that equal distribution of material resources among schools and districts will lead to equitable learning outcomes through student assessment performance. However, as Chu explains, this assumption has proven to be false:

From a school finance perspective, numerous researchers have noted that fiscal inequities between schools in the United States are largely due to the fact that public schools are primarily funded by local property taxes (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Allbright et al., 2019), which benefits the more affluent districts and students they serve. The economic disparities, or income segregation, between districts and schools have been further complicated and exacerbated by the racial segregation that is still prevalent in the U.S. society (Owens, 2018). The equity policies and provisions found in the state ESSA plans still largely fall into what Cochran-Smith et al. (2017) called a “thin” equity centered on “individuals’ equal (or same) access to ‘high quality’ teachers, curriculum, and school opportunities” (p. 581) yet leave the broader economic, social, and political structures that cause and reproduce inequity, such as school finance systems (Baker & Weber, 2016), racism (Au, 2016) and poverty (Berliner, 2014), intact (p. 20).

While criticisms of NCLB’s inequitable policies likely led to the ESSA’s inclusion of language

around equity, this recent policy shift still does not address the systemic issues that create the inequities experienced by teachers and students in under-resourced schools and communities. ESSA essentially passes the buck from the federal government to states, maintaining an unwavering commitment to neoliberal business as usual via inequitable accountability measures. It is significant that no educators were consulted in crafting the ESSA. If they had been consulted, perhaps they could have emphasized that equity is not just a buzzword, but a necessity for students' livelihood, both in and out of the classroom.

Neoliberalism manifests itself in higher education in the form of corporate partnerships, reliance on private consultants, and a general shift toward universities operating as businesses (Saunders, 2007). As a result of this shift, most institutions and programs emphasize schooling geared towards job training rather than education focused on cultivating critical and analytical skills. This has led to an environment in which “universities are now construed as spaces where students are valued as human capital, courses are determined by consumer demand, and governance is based on the Walmart model of labor relations” (p. 6). Neoliberalism thus undermines the potential for education to act as a space in which students learn the value of democracy and become civic participants (Giroux, 2015, p. 7-8; Zimmerman, 2018, p. 351). For instance, if a teacher's instructional choices are constrained to a set of standards that are modeled after preparing students for the labor force, students miss out on activities such as service learning and lessons with a focus on culture and identity — opportunities which would allow students to reflect critically on their roles in their own communities and beyond. This could be particularly detrimental in teacher education programs because pre-service teachers are being trained to see themselves as responsible for preparing students for the labor force and to participate effectively in a culture of what Giroux calls “casino capitalism,” rather than

imagining their classrooms as democratic spaces that can affirm, sustain, and empower students socioculturally. By continuing to allow private interests to dictate the education of the public, institutions essentially communicate that classrooms are not spaces that work in the service of students' lives in this way. Consequently, as Giroux asserts, "it becomes difficult for young people too often bereft of a critical education to translate private troubles into public concerns" (p. 7).

Furthermore, a neoliberal education model also discourages students from pursuing careers that contribute to the public good. The majority of students who pursue postsecondary education in the United States find themselves in thousands of dollars of debt as a result, which likely constrains many of them to forgo careers in public service in favor of higher-paying jobs which enable them to pay off their student loans (Giroux, p. 9). This is a factor that has likely helped create a teacher shortage and has also led to a lack of socioeconomic diversity in the teacher workforce. Low-income students who may have to support their families may be less inclined to pursue a career in teaching in favor of something more lucrative and "in-demand." On the other hand, students who have a larger financial safety net (perhaps from their middle class families), may be more inclined to take the financial "risk" of pursuing careers in teaching and other public services. This dynamic may be contributing to the homogeneity of the teacher workforce, which is a detriment to schools and students.

In the wake of *A Nation at Risk* and NCLB, neoliberal criticism of teacher education has led to efforts by both private and public interests to privatize and deregulate teacher education programs (Zeichner, 2019, p. 1). Souto-Manning (2019) argues that criticisms leveled against teacher education in policy reports like Levine's *Educating Schoolteachers* (2006) and the National Council on Teacher Quality's *Teacher Prep Review* (2014) fail to address teacher

education as a platform for “upholding democratic principles and prioritizing the public good” (p. 5). Souto-Manning asserts that the critical discourse around teacher education assumes that all members of the public will equally benefit from privatization and competition, “thereby comprising gaslighting, “a form of . . . abuse where the abuser intentionally manipulates the physical environment or mental state of the abusee, and then deflects responsibility by provoking the abusee to think that the changes reside in their imagination, thus constituting a weakened perception of reality” (Roberts & Andrews, 2013, p. 70 as cited in Souto-Manning, p. 5). This gaslighting is the mechanism by which university-based teacher education has been positioned as “fundamentally inept” and subject to deregulation via NCLB, ESSA, and other market-based reforms (p. 6). Pre-service teachers who enter these programs with the desire to become culturally sustaining educators and to create democratic classrooms will find themselves constrained by the demands of a neoliberal system that actively works against these goals.

In 2006, National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) made the controversial decision to omit the term “social justice” from its definition of dispositions for teacher education programs. It could be argued that the language of social justice has been misappropriated by institutions as a way of virtue-signalling, without actually putting the idea into practice, and thus NCATE’s decision to remove the phrase is pragmatic. However, NCATE did not remove the phrase out of concern over its inauthentic usage by teacher education programs. It did so in an attempt to maintain “political neutrality” (Heybach, 2009, p. 234). However, as Heybach argues, this is a false claim. She cites NCATE president Arthur Wise’s stance on the decision: “I have come to learn, painfully over the last year . . . the phrase has acquired some new meanings, evidently connected to a radical social agenda. So lest there be any misunderstanding about our intentions in this regard, we have decided to remove this phrase

totally from our vocabulary” (Wise as cited in Heybach, 2009, p. 236). In her analysis of Wise’s comment, Heybach raises the question of what he means by “radical social agenda,” and also points out that Wise did not provide a counter definition of social justice, nor did he explain why the phrase was initially included in NCATE’s standards. Perhaps most importantly, Heybach wonders why Wise did not “choose to discuss any legitimate educative role social justice might play within the nation’s culturally diverse classrooms” (p. 236). This question is essential to a discussion of how teacher education programs are (or are not) preparing a diverse, culturally sustaining teacher workforce. By removing the language of social justice from its standards and leaving culturally diverse classrooms out of the conversation entirely, NCATE has essentially communicated that teacher education programs need not concern themselves with the challenge of preparing pre-service teachers to meet the needs of culturally diverse communities, nor the need to attract and support pre-service teachers who come from those communities. Rather than signifying a “radical agenda,” social justice ensures that all students can access necessary resources, both at school and in their homes and communities. Johnson and Johnson (2007) illustrate the necessity of social justice and further analyze the implications of NCATE’s decision to drop the phrase from its standards:

We can define social justice without espousing “a radical social agenda.” Social justice means that all children get enough to eat so that hunger does not plague them during the school day. It means that all children have adequate medical and dental care so they do not have to attend school in pain or poor health. Social justice means that children can go to bed at night and not worry about drug dealers and stray bullets. It means that pupils’ schools are free from rats, cockroaches, and other vermin. Social justice means that teachers in low income schools have the materials they need to teach. It means that when economically poor minority children recite “with liberty and justice for all” every school morning, the promise holds true. We suspect that even the most politically conservative citizens of this country would not look at a small, hungry, sick child and believe that meeting that child’s basic needs would indicate “a radical social agenda.” Why did NCATE sell our most needy pupils down the river by not affirming a commitment to them? “Lest” there be any misunderstanding, Arthur

E. Wise, president of NCATE, revealed the organization's apparent greater concern for self survival than for the social injustice that permeates the lives of so many public school children (p. 1).

Higher education students who do choose to enter teacher education programs will find themselves equally constrained by the limitations of neoliberal policies. These pre-service teachers may enter their programs envisioning themselves as social justice educators, or at least educators who will draw from students' lived experiences as a way of affirming them in the classroom. However, neoliberal policies, both past and present, have informed the practices of teacher education programs and the priorities of the schools in which most of these pre-service teachers will eventually be working. As Wynter-Hoyte et al. (2019) explain, “[Neoliberal] policies [such as No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, etc.] carry the assumption that if teachers teach the standards and students work hard, students will be able to compete in the global market (Hursh, 2007). This belief has no consideration for historical, social, or cultural factors that adversely impact people of color in America” (p. 430). Faculty and administrators of teacher education programs know that their pre-service teachers will be held accountable to teach these standards, and are obligated to prepare them accordingly. This has become the norm for teacher preparation, and it has reduced the opportunities for these programs to prepare pre-service teachers to work with diverse populations. The influence of neoliberal policy on teacher education becomes particularly clear when examining accountability measures embedded in current licensure requirements for pre-service teachers, including the edTPA assessment and licensure exams. Greenblatt (2018) explains that the theory underlying outcome-based accountability measures is that increased testing of pre-service teachers will “weed out” (p. 807) ineffective teachers, leading to increased achievement of K-12 students on high-stakes standardized tests. Greenblatt argues that although this theory seems sensible, it “ignores the political economy of schooling, the biases and flaws in standardized tests and how the tests are

scored” (p. 807). The edTPA reinforces the neoliberal emphasis on data and accountability without acknowledging the inequities of how accountability is measured, or considering other important elements of teaching such as socioemotional learning and democratic pedagogies.

According to Greenblatt:

In analyzing the edTPA, it is clear how the test is meant to train teachers for a data-focused mindset in their own classrooms. The edTPA states that teacher candidates are to “analyze student work from the selected assessment to identify quantitative and qualitative patterns of learning within, and across learners in, the class” (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity, 2014a). The tasks and rubrics seem to privilege assessment over all other aspects of teaching, with 10 of the 18 rubrics in the elementary education portfolio focusing on some aspect of data collection, analysis or usage (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity, 2014b) (p. 808).

Furthermore, the inequities associated with teacher licensure assessments are closely tied to race and class. The high-stakes nature of the edTPA assessment and licensure exams has led to further privatization in teacher education such as tutoring services, which brings teacher preparation further outside of the university space and also privileges middle class and wealthier pre-service teachers who can afford these additional supports (p. 809). Research on national and state level licensure tests reveals that pre-service teachers of color have lower scale scores on average, and that pre-service teachers of higher socioeconomic status had higher scale scores than their peers of low socioeconomic status (Taylor et al., 2017). Despite their inequities and neoliberal implications, university-based teacher education programs nationwide are required to continue utilizing the assessments to measure whether pre-service teachers will be effective in the field.

As we consider how teacher education programs can prepare a more diverse and culturally sustaining teacher workforce, it is essential that we understand how the neoliberal agenda influences policymaking in these programs. If we unquestioningly believe that leaders have students’ best interests in mind when they claim to remain “politically neutral,” we open

ourselves up to a political landscape that is decidedly not neutral, but works against the interests of students and schools who are most in need of policy changes that promote equity and justice. Let us not forget the oft-quoted wisdom of Desmond Tutu: “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor” (as cited in McAfee Brown, 1984, p. 19).

Chapter 2

Labor Shortages and Racial Homogeneity in the Teacher Workforce

The general teacher shortage can be attributed to issues of both recruitment and retention, coupled with present conditions of the labor market (Guarino et al., 2006). According to Goe and Roth (2019), most university-based teacher education programs demonstrate a commitment to implementing strategies to recruit more pre-service teachers of color (p. 7), but many of these potential pre-service teachers shy away from applying to these programs due to financial constraints. Most programs report inadequate financial resources to devote to these recruitment efforts (p. 8). Studies have found that shortages of teachers of color within K-12 schools are more often a result of teachers leaving the profession rather than a lack of hiring by K-12 schools (Ingersoll, 2015). General teacher turnover is caused by many factors such as retirement, student enrollment, and school funding reductions, but most prominent are issues of school culture and other organizational dysfunctions (Ingersoll, 2001, 2015). Since under-resourced schools are more likely to suffer from such cultural and organizational issues, Ingersoll's findings about turnover of teachers of color follows logically from the existing knowledge that teacher shortages and turnover are most prominent in low-income schools with the highest populations of minority students (Martin & Mulvihill, 2016), and that teachers of color are more likely to be employed in schools with these demographics (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). However, in order to increase the presence of teachers of color in the teacher workforce, it is essential to address both retention and recruitment (Ingersoll, 2015, p. 21).

Special attention must be paid to the shortage of teachers of color, considering the injustice of employing such a homogenous teacher workforce when the U.S. (and, consequently, its student population) is more racially and culturally diverse than any period in its history. The

most recently available data shows that 80% of teachers employed in public elementary and secondary schools are white, while 50% of all students in public elementary and secondary schools are non-white (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This demographic mismatch is problematic for schools and students. Studies have found numerous benefits resulting from students of color being taught by teachers of their own race, including increased test scores in both math and reading (Dee, 2004; Egalite et al., 2015, as cited in Goe & Roth, 2019, p. 1), and improved socioemotional capabilities (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). Studies have also found that teacher-student racial match especially benefits black students (particularly black male students), which is an important finding because this group continues to underperform compared to other racial groups, even when socioeconomic and school-related factors are accounted for (Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2018, p. 288). Furthermore, minimal exposure to teachers of color, and white teachers' perceptions and racial microaggressions against students of color can discourage these students from pursuing careers in teaching (Goings & Bianco, 2016), which may create a cyclical problem by perpetuating the existing shortage of teachers of color. Diversifying the teacher workforce can also benefit white students by reducing implicit bias, and ongoing research has confirmed that this effort can strengthen our democracy as well as our economy, bolster social justice efforts, and generally improve education nationwide (Albert Shanker Institute, 2015).

Ongoing dialogue around teacher education further illuminates its role in perpetuating a racially homogenous teacher workforce. According to Zeichner et al. (2014, p. 1), there are currently three main perspectives on university-based teacher education. *Defenders* are those who believe that external criticisms of these programs are fallacious, and that greater funding from governments and donors will serve as a panacea for any programmatic issues. The defender

camp is characterized by a belief that teacher education programs do not need to change their practices in any way, but that they need more monetary resources in order to keep conducting their work. *Reformers* are those who believe that these programs need to be dismantled and “replaced by an alternative based on deregulation, competition, and markets (Chubb, 2012; Schorr, 2013 as cited in Zeichner et al., p. 1). Those in the reformer camp believe that teacher education should be moved away from university spaces in favor of alternative licensure programs such as Teach for America. *Transformers* are those who “see the need for substantive transformation in the current system of teacher education, but who do not support disrupting the current system by replacing it with a deregulated market economy” (Zeichner et al., p. 1). Transformers believe that teacher education should remain within the university space and resist deregulation and privatization, but they also argue the need for university-based teacher education programs to be transformed. For example, transformers would most likely favor programmatic changes that would work to democratize teacher education, such as community-based learning opportunities and broad and consistent implementation of CSP. Policy trends over the last decade have favored the perspective of the reformers, as shortcuts such as alternative teacher licensure programs have been undertaken as a means to solving the teacher shortage problem and diversifying the teacher workforce (Martin & Mulvihill, 2016). Alternative teacher licensure programs vary in terms of their program requirements and locations where training and learning take place, but they are generally defined as non-traditional routes to teacher licensure located outside of universities, often on an accelerated timeline (Souto-Manning, 2019). The favoring of alternative licensure programs by reformers is problematic for two reasons. First, it constrains funding for university-based teacher education programs. Zeichner et al. cite a striking example:

In 2010, the Obama administration's education department distributed US\$263 million on a competitive basis to promote innovation in various sectors of education. The only teacher education projects that were funded in this competition were those from two of the major alternative certification providers, "Teach for America" which received US\$50 million and "The New Teacher Project" (now TNTP) which received US\$20 million. None of the proposals for innovation in teacher education submitted by college and university teacher educators were funded (p. 10).

Federal prioritization of alternative, private teacher education programs is yet another example of the neoliberal valuing of education as a private good rather than a public resource. Furthermore, this funding disparity interferes with universities' ability to continue to build relationships with the communities and schools in which pre-service teachers would be working, instead favoring external programs which often send pre-service and novice teachers into schools with little to no knowledge of the values and dynamics of those communities. By doing this, these programs allow little to no opportunity for pre-service and novice teachers to learn and implement culturally sustaining practices.

The second reason why the favoring of alternative teacher education programs by reformers is problematic is because these programs are often counterproductive in creating a more diverse and culturally sustaining teacher workforce. Souto-Manning (2019) says that while teacher education programs within universities are often complicit in perpetuating racist ideologies, "it is important to understand that "alternative" teacher education programs (located away from universities) are centrally implicated in reproducing inequities, despite their professed rhetoric" (Kumashiro, 2012, as cited in Souto-Manning, p. 2). A prominent example of this is Teach for America (TFA), which is a self-proclaimed "diverse network of leaders working to confront educational inequity through teaching and at every sector of society to create a country free from this injustice" (Teach for America, 2019). I've chosen to discuss TFA specifically because of its professed commitment to diversity, as well as its status as one of the largest and

most researched alternative teacher education programs in the nation. TFA is a non-university based teacher education program in which pre-service teachers (called “corps members” by the organization) receive five weeks of training before entering full-time, two-year teaching positions in under-resourced schools, often in communities that are unfamiliar to them. Critics have argued that while TFA has brought a considerable number of novice teachers of color into K-12 classrooms, the organization has caused the displacement of teachers of color more broadly. White (2019) notes “When analyzed from a critical policy perspective, TFA’s diversity gains may pale in comparison to the effects of the organization’s expansion, its policy commitments, and the role of those commitments in contemporary projects of anti-black racism which siphon jobs, resources, power, and control from teachers, parents, and students in high-poverty communities of color” (p. 5). She argues that TFA’s approach to diversity focuses on bringing individual teachers of color into classrooms, but does not compensate for the broader trend of declining populations of teachers of color nationally. Furthermore, White explains that “The structure of [TFA’s] initiatives ignores the context of school working conditions altogether, and it is linked to policies that undermine the retention of ToCs [teachers of color] broadly” (p. 27). These policies include charter school expansion, layoffs caused by school turnaround efforts, and the closure of schools with large populations of teachers of color.

By looking further into TFA’s history, particularly at founder Wendy Kopp’s writings on the organization’s ethos and practices, it becomes clear that TFA is closely linked to a neoliberal agenda, and also approaches education from a “reformer” perspective that perpetuates institutional racism. As Kopp was working to establish the TFA in 1989, she persuaded politician and business magnate Ross Perot to donate \$500,000 to the organization, leaving critics to suspect that TFA was “the beneficiary of a growing market ideology permeating American

society throughout Reagan’s presidency” (Barnes et al., 2016, p. 8). The organization has continued to maintain close ties to the private sector, the school choice movement, and charter school expansion. For instance, the Walton Foundation, which is TFA’s biggest private donor, paid \$4,000 for every teacher placed in a public school and \$6,000 for each teacher placed in a charter school in 2013 (Waldman, 2019). TFA’s affiliation with charter schools not only reveals the organization’s neoliberal foundation, but also its participation in racist and culturally unsustaining pedagogical models that so often play out in those schools. This begins with Kopp’s mission to recruit the “best and brightest” (Kopp, 1989, as cited in Barnes et al., p. 13) college graduates to teach for two years in schools with high levels of academic and/or socioeconomic need. Barnes et al. piece out this language to reveal its racial connotations:

The concern from a critical race theory perspective is that these glowing, celebratory terms are based largely on a single common factor—these students all attended and graduated from highly selective universities. However, research shows that students of color are systemically excluded from participation in these universities, even when discounting the impact of income (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Carnevale & Rose, 2003; & Reardon, et. al 2012). For Kopp to glorify a group of predominately white members of society, to validate their “possessive investment in whiteness” (Lipsitz, 2006), and then to ascribe that investment as the due reward of merit, is to reproduce a nefarious form of epistemological racism” (p. 13).

Despite TFA’s professed commitment to diversity, its roots are firmly planted in the equation of whiteness with success. This transcends Kopp’s privileging of a predominately white group of people as the “best and brightest” and extends into TFA’s training of its corps members, particularly regarding how culture should be addressed in the classroom. In an unpublished TFA presentation shared with its teaching staff in 2014, a portion on cultural responsiveness says that corps members should incorporate “some cultural integrity as well as academic excellence.” Barnes et al. interpret this statement as “implying the two operate along a binary, and are not mutually compatible. Teachers are also encouraged to “utilize students’ culture as a vehicle for

learning” which if learning is reduced to skill building, means uncritically appropriating culture in service to the status quo” (p. 20). It is clear that TFA’s mission is not to create learning opportunities in a context that responds to the marginalization of students and uses the classroom as a space of cultural sustainment. Instead, it views these students as operating at a cultural deficit, and academic achievement as a way to “fix” this deficit and prepare students to participate in a society that values whiteness and the “skills” of a neoliberal economy. TFA serves as an example of how alternative teacher education programs, especially those that operate from a neoliberal “reformer” perspective, can serve to undermine the effort to diversify the teacher workforce in a substantial and enduring way, despite their promises otherwise.

While alternative teacher education programs may pose a danger in preparing a more diverse and culturally sustaining teacher workforce, the role of traditional, university-based teacher education programs in doing so has been only minimally explored. The most recent research focuses on recruiting students of color to teacher education programs (Goe & Roth, 2019; King & Ray Butler, 2015; Martin & Mulvihill, 2016), but more information is needed regarding how the curriculum of these programs can help diversify the teacher workforce and serve pre-service teachers and students of color. Available data reveals that these programs are currently not doing enough to address the lack of diversity in the teacher workforce. Diversity requirements have been implemented in teacher education programs in most states, but the implementation of those requirements is often ill-defined (Akiba et al., 2010 as cited in King & Ray Butler, 2015, p. 47). Students of color are being pushed away from teacher preparation programs, and are facing inadequate academic support when they do enter those programs (Rodriguez & Magill, 2016). Additionally, many white teachers don’t feel confident in their ability to work with students of color after graduating from teacher education programs (Gayle-

Evans & Michael, 2006; Sleeter, 2001 as cited in King & Ray Butler, 2015, p. 47). While many teacher education programs include some discussion of race and/or social justice, these programs still perpetuate racist ideologies and assimilationist models of learning (Kendi, 2016 as cited in Souto-Manning, 2019, p. 2). One way that this happens in university-based teacher education programs is through a lack of meaningful, critical, and explicitly anti-racist approaches to preparing teachers to work with diverse student populations. Dominguez (2017) says that while efforts such as having brief contact with students of color before teaching full time in their communities or engaging in reflective activities that allow white pre-service teachers to unpack their biases are well-intentioned, “these types of efforts too often begin by positioning colonial ways of being and whiteness as normative” (p. 231). Rather than prioritizing the needs of students of color and their communities, approaches within teacher education such as “unpacking the invisible knapsack” of bias serve to prioritize the interests of teacher educators, “continuing to Other the agency and humanity of the colonized/student and community by presupposing “damage” (Tuck, 2009) and a need for assistance” (Dominguez, p. 231). Ladson-Billings (2000) argues for a more holistic approach to doing this work. She says that a singular course or field experience will not be enough, but that “a more systemic, comprehensive approach is needed. Work that uses autobiography, restructured field experiences, situated pedagogies, and returning to the classrooms of experts can each provide new opportunities for improving teaching” (p. 209). While Ladson-Billings made this argument twenty years ago, many university-based teacher education programs have not followed through. These approaches to identity exploration and self-awareness are important in teacher preparation because they transcend the act of simply asking pre-service teachers to acknowledge their own bias. The critical reflection that Ladson-Billings suggests allows pre-service to understand their biases within the context of real

classrooms and real students' lives, which can help teacher education programs dismantle the assimilationist approaches to reflection outlined in Dominguez's work.

Creating a more diverse and culturally sustaining teacher workforce is not simply about bringing more non-white bodies into the classroom to teach. It is necessary to address and actively dismantle larger institutional and epistemological issues of racism within education. While alternative teacher education programs outside of universities have been looked to as a solution to the lack of diversity in the teacher workforce, their ties to private interests and commitment to the status quo position many of them instead as a threat to the diversity of the teacher workforce. University-based teacher education programs still have an opportunity to serve as spaces that can do this work authentically and effectively, but these programs must commit to transformative approaches to education in order to do so. This must be accompanied by a policy shift that values the work of university-based teacher education programs rather than disproportionately funding alternative programs with neoliberal values.

Chapter 3

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

The use of culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) in teacher education programs would support pre-service teachers of color, better prepare white pre-service teachers to work with students of color upon entering the profession, and help teacher education programs contribute to the decolonization of education as a whole. Culturally *sustaining* pedagogy is an extension of a pedagogical framework that may be more familiar to most educators, culturally *relevant* pedagogy (CRP). Thus, in order to define CSP, it is necessary to first define CRP. Gloria Ladson-Billings first developed culturally relevant pedagogy in 1995. Ladson-Billings had grown dissatisfied with the existing multicultural education movement created in the 1970s, arguing that multicultural education served only to “exoticize diverse students as “other”” (1995, p. 483). James (1982/2010) further explains the limitations of multicultural education, emphasizing that “multicultural education often presupposes crude and ill-defined concepts of culture, and of the processes of cultural transmission” (p. 225). Multicultural education often reduces cultures to their tangible artifacts, such as foods and holidays, without addressing the complex meanings and ideologies underlying those artifacts (p. 225). Even critical approaches to multicultural education which claim to be anti-racist fail to address racial inequities and the norming of whiteness within education (Kehoe & Mansfield, 1993). Rather than creating pedagogy that would extend multicultural education, Ladson-Billings developed CRP as “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” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469). Her 1995 work on CRP defined three domains of the practice: academic success, cultural competence, and

sociopolitical consciousness. She explains each of these domains in the following way:

Academic success is defined as students' mental growth as a result of classroom learning (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 75). Cultural competence is "the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture" (p. 75). Sociopolitical consciousness is the application of classroom learning to outside contexts, for the purpose of solving real, tangible issues in the community and beyond (p. 75).

Ladson-Billings developed this framework as a way to help teachers meet the needs of marginalized students, dispelling the assumption that pedagogical strategies that lead to academic success for white middle-class students would also lead to success for all other student groups (p. 76). She explains that CRP works because it promotes cultural competence and makes learning personal for each student:

"By focusing on student learning and academic achievement versus classroom and behavior management, cultural competence versus cultural assimilation or eradication, and sociopolitical consciousness rather than school-based tasks that have no beyond-school application, I was able to see students take both responsibility for and deep interest in their education. This is the secret behind culturally relevant pedagogy: the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture" (p. 76-77).

In response to CRP, Django Paris and H. Samy Alim developed CSP as an extension (or, as Ladson-Billings (2014) calls it, a "remix") of Ladson-Billings's foundational work. Paris and Alim define CSP as a framework that "seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain— linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation. CSP positions dynamic cultural dexterity as a necessary good, and sees the outcome of learning as additive rather than subtractive" (2014, p. 1). While CRP lays the groundwork for educators to teach in a way that encourages a deep comprehension and valuing of cultures, CSP extends this practice by de-centering whiteness and "explicitly call[ing] for schooling to be a site for

sustaining the cultural ways of being of communities of color” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 5). Paris and Alim draw attention to the ways in which educators incorporate culture into their classrooms in ways that alienate the bodies and selfhoods of those who identify with those cultures and ignore the systemic discrimination experienced by those individuals. The authors foreground CSP as a pedagogical framework that combats these practices and strives to sustain the lives and cultures of the marginalized (p. 9). Ladson-Billings supports CSP as an extension of CRP and praises Paris and Alim’s work as a multiplicitous, intersectional framework that focuses on the many facets of culture and identity that students embody, not just on one element of cultural identity such as race or ethnicity (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 82). Continued research on intersectionality affirms that intersectional approaches to teacher education can be particularly beneficial in improving teacher-student relationships and bolstering a sense of belonging and identity among marginalized students in the classroom (Fortunato et al., 2018).

CSP can also serve as a way to sustain students’ linguistic identities in the face of unjust language policies. Wynter-Hoyte et al. cite Malsbary’s (2014) assertion that the enforcement of language policies such as English-only education must be identified as “institutionalized racism” (p. 443) because these policies send the message that “all immigrants and children of immigrants, who are brown and black, need to speak English (-only) in order to attain (white) success” (Malsbary as cited in Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019, p. 443). Implementing CSP in teacher education programs would help these programs (and the teacher workforce) to become more linguistically diverse and culturally sustaining. In their work on CSP and translanguaging, Bucholtz et al. (2017) assert “that language and culture are not only resources to be sustained, but are themselves forms of sustenance that nurture the identities of young people of color,” and that for this reason, CSP is a necessary revision of earlier pedagogies such as CRP (pp. 54-55). In

this way, teacher education programs can support and sustain pre-service teachers of color through CSP. If these programs do not embrace linguistic diversity, they will continue to alienate pre-service teachers of color and instead sustain the existing whiteness of the teacher workforce at large. Additionally, teacher education programs that do not embrace linguistic diversity will also reinforce the message to pre-service teachers of all races that they should enforce standards of whiteness in their own classrooms.

Teacher education can also use CSP to help pre-service teachers engage in the self-reflective work necessary to help them become culturally sustaining educators. Teacher education is not just about equipping pre-service teachers with the tools to teach content effectively, but also to create a context in which they can think critically about their own backgrounds as well as the sociocultural contexts of the students with whom they will eventually work. As Wynter-Hoyte et al. (2019) explain, “Creating critical spaces for students is imperative in embodying culturally sustaining pedagogy, but creating critical spaces for teachers within their work contexts is just as necessary in order to develop critical spaces for students” (p. 437). It is important that both educators of all races (including pre-service teachers) have access to these spaces in which they can work critically on themselves in the context of race and culture. For white educators, reflecting critically on the ways in which they conduct their teaching from a perspective centered on white norms is necessary before enacting CSP in their classrooms because, as Paris and Alim assert, CSP must explicitly de-center whiteness as a definition of educational achievement (p. 12). For teachers of color, this work is equally important because they may have internalized the white-centered education they received as young people. Speaking as a teacher of color, Dominguez explains, “Far too many of our tacit assumptions and approaches remain mired in the White gaze of coloniality. Far too often, our best intentions and

goodwill act to dehumanize, diminish, and dismiss youth of color, positioning teachers at arm's length from the Othered subjectivity of those students" (p. 229). This work should begin in teacher education programs in order to lay a foundation of constant critical reflection so that educators can create classroom conditions in which their students can do the same.

Studies have also pointed to the lack of critical consciousness among white pre-service teachers about their own racial identities which further justifies the need for the reflective work embedded within CSP to be implemented in teacher education programs. Archer Alvare (2019) explains that many white pre-service teachers perceive themselves as race-neutral and are unreflective about racial norms and white privilege, which is largely due to the fact that these pre-service teachers come from homogenously white, middle-class communities and that "As CRT posits, because racism and White supremacy are so commonplace and concealed by hegemonic narratives, such as that of a post-racial society, it is no easy task to counter the hegemonic normalization of whiteness" (p. 9). CSP's emphasis on the de-centering of whiteness can help dismantle white pre-service teachers' color-blind, race-neutral perceptions and confront racial inequities within education.

White pre-service teachers' lack of critical consciousness around race and privilege is also reinforced by the racialized notion of white innocence. Gutierrez (2019) explains that the concept of white innocence was first developed by legal critical race theory scholar Neil Gotanda in 2004 as an analytical framework for examining the racial ideologies in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to ban racial segregation in schools: "[Gotanda] argued that while the Court acknowledged that racial segregation "generates a feeling of inferiority" in Blacks (347 U.S. 483, 494), a fact previously unsubstantiated, according to the Court, it failed to address the nation's historical past of racist practices by explaining that modern psychological knowledge was absent

during previous court decisions on racial segregation; in effect, preserving the “innocence” of the nation by not accounting for its racist history” (p. 3). Gutierrez “employ[s] a white innocence analytical frame as a way of interrogating how we as education researchers, teacher educators, and practitioners conduct our work, reexamining the constructs and frames we use across our work, as well as how we theorize individuals from non-dominant groups, their practices, and their learning” (p. 3). She emphasizes emancipatory learning as a way to disrupt white innocence in teacher education. Emancipatory learning “is concerned with critically analyzing, resisting, and challenging these structures [of power] in ways that do not merely reproduce settler colonial logics (Patel, 2016) within educational research and practice—practices that propagate individualism, competitiveness, and neo-liberal ideals and demands” (p. 4). While Gutierrez doesn’t explicitly mention CSP in her discussion of emancipatory learning and disrupting white innocence, it is clear that CSP can serve as a framework for teacher educators and pre-service teachers to do this work. Paris and Alim view CSP as a pedagogy that “disrupts a schooling system centered on ideologies of White, middle-class, monolingual, cisheteropatriarchal, able-bodied superiority” (p. 13). White pre-service teachers will enter teacher education programs not only with a lack of critical consciousness around race, but also with unconscious paradigms rooted in white innocence. CSP’s disruption of these power structures can enable teacher education programs to dismantle these paradigms, which is essential to creating a culturally sustaining teacher workforce.

As the nation’s student population continues to grow more racially and culturally diverse and the teacher workforce remains predominantly white, a more critical consciousness around students’ cultural experiences and identities (and the way those experiences and identities are addressed in the classroom) becomes crucial. Teacher education programs have a responsibility

to transcend pedagogies that are merely *aware of* or *responsive to* students' cultures, which is why CSP is such a necessary extension of these earlier cultural pedagogies. Implementing CSP can help teacher education programs become sites where pre-service teachers of color can feel safe and supported, while giving pre-service teachers of all races the tools to dismantle white-centered ideologies as they work toward creating their own culturally sustaining classrooms.

Chapter 4

Policy Implications for Teacher Education

In 2016, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) released a report entitled “The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce.” The report argues that a diverse teacher workforce is beneficial to all students, but particularly to students of color (p. 1). The report’s stated purpose “is to provide a current snapshot of the racial diversity of educators in our nation’s elementary and secondary public schools” (p. 2). Prior to deciding that this report would be the subject of my discourse analysis, I also considered a few other reports. The first was the DOE’s “Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education: Key Data Highlights Focusing on Race and Ethnicity and Promising Practices” (2016), which examines postsecondary recruitment and retention data for all racial and ethnic groups nationwide, concluding with recommendations for universities to diversify their student populations through data transparency, financial and academic support, equitable admissions practices, inclusivity practices, and other strategies. While this report did discuss the role of cultural and socioemotional support for students of color, it did not address teacher education programs, and I ultimately deemed the report too broad for the purposes of this thesis. I also considered a report published by the DOE’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) entitled “Protecting Civil Rights, Advancing Equity: Report to the President and Secretary of Education” (2015), which outlines the OCR’s measures to ensure that students’ civil rights are protected within schools. This report focused mainly on issues within K-12 schools and did not discuss the role of teacher education or the lack of diversity in the teacher workforce. The third report I explored was the National Education Association’s (NEA) “Time for a Change: Diversity in Teaching Revisited” (2014). While this report touched upon the lack of diversity within pre-service teachers of color in teacher education programs and achievement

gaps in teacher licensure assessments, it did not discuss opportunities for teacher education programs to actively participate in diversifying the teacher workforce.

I ultimately chose “The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce” as the subject of my discourse analysis because its overarching argument for diversifying the teacher workforce is consistent with many of the findings from current literature which demonstrate the importance of a diverse teacher workforce (Renzulli et al., 2011; King & Ray Butler, 2015; Ingersoll, 2015; Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). However, while conducting discourse analysis of the report, I noticed a general divergence from the literature on culturally sustaining pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014), alternative teacher licensure programs (White, 2019; Souto-Manning, 2019; Barnes et al., 2016), and the threat of neoliberal reform to a sustainably diverse teacher workforce (Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019; Zeichner et al., 2014; Giroux, 2015). In short, while the report espouses the necessity of diversifying the teacher workforce, its recommendations and linguistic choices hint at a neoliberal agenda and bias toward alternative teacher licensure programs, and fail to appropriately address the role of culture within pedagogy as an essential element to diversifying the teacher workforce. Furthermore, the report fails to address teacher retention in a productive way.

“The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce” explores the different points along the educator pipeline (ie: postsecondary enrollment, enrollment in teacher preparation programs, postsecondary completion, entering the workforce, and teacher retention, which may differ for students enrolled in alternative teacher education programs). The report explains that “The educator pipeline provides the supply of teachers and educators for the elementary and secondary school workforce. ...The proportion of teacher candidates of color decreases at

multiple points along the teacher pipeline” (p. 9). The report’s examination of this timeline begins with assessing the demographics of bachelor’s degree programs, stating that “While 62 percent of all bachelor’s degree students in 2012 were white, 73 percent of students majoring in education were white. However, the racial composition of the population of students enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs is becoming more diverse over time. In addition, the racial composition of bachelor’s degree students who major and complete education bachelor’s degrees is also becoming more diverse over time” (p. 11). The report also notes that bachelor’s degree completion rates are lower for black education majors (42% completed within six years) and Hispanic education majors (49% completed within six years) than white education majors (74% completed within six years) (pp. 3-4). While the report does conclude that “Closing the completion rate between white and black education majors... could add another 300 black bachelor’s degree completions for every 1,000 black aspiring teachers” (p. 31), it does not address policy-based nor programmatic changes that would be necessary to do so, stating that “program quality is not within the scope of this report” (p. 2).

However, the report’s section on alternative licensure programs contains biased, evaluative language:

Many of the alternative-route certification programs are offered online and allow students to complete coursework while they work. This kind of flexibility and the accelerated schedule offered by alternative-route certification programs can be attractive to individuals who want to pursue a teaching career or change from their current careers to become teachers, but who need to work while doing so or have other relevant constraints (p. 17).

On the surface, this language may appear neutral, as it simply states why alternative licensure programs may be preferred by certain students. However, the words “flexibility” and “attractive” demonstrate a treatment of these alternative programs that differs from the report’s treatment of traditional university-based teacher education. The report’s discussion of the latter focuses

strictly on the lack of diversity of those programs and the lower completion rates for students of color. It does not include any language about the potential for traditional university-based teacher education programs to support students of color, or list any reasons why students may be inclined to choose those programs. Furthermore, the DOE's favorable perspective on the "accelerated schedule" of alternative teacher education programs is problematic because it suggests that we can rely on the "quick fix" of these programs to solve the complex problem of diversifying the teacher workforce as soon as possible. This language is also reflected in the report's opening quote from Education Secretary John B. King, Jr.'s 2016 address at Howard University, in which he calls for diversification of the workforce to be done "quickly and thoughtfully" (p. 1), two words that seem at odds with one another when we consider the complexity of this issue.

The report also fails to address the myriad of ways in which many alternative teacher education programs can be harmful to students of color and their communities, as outlined in the second chapter of this thesis. As mentioned in that chapter, diversifying the teacher workforce does not mean simply bringing more non-white bodies to teach in classrooms nationwide. Creating a diverse teacher workforce means supporting teachers of all races at every stage in the educator pipeline, including retention. Research has shown that alternative teacher education programs do not result in increased teacher retention, and that teachers who are certified on an accelerated timeline may not enter the classroom with the necessary pedagogical knowledge, classroom management strategies, and other skills necessary to effectively teach their students (Legler, 2002 as cited in Zhao, 2005, pp. 17-18).

While "The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce" acknowledges the importance of teacher retention in diversifying the teacher workforce, many of its points are counterproductive to the conditions necessary for teacher retention and sustaining a diverse

teacher workforce. The report emphasizes that alternative programs recruit a more diverse pool of teacher candidates into the teacher workforce than traditional university-based teacher education programs, stating that “Forty-two percent of teacher candidates enrolled in an alternative teacher preparation program not based in an IHE [institutions of higher education] were individuals of color. Thirty-five percent of teacher candidates enrolled in an alternative teacher preparation program based in an IHE were individuals of color. Fewer teacher candidates enrolled in a traditional teacher preparation program (26 percent) were individuals of color” (p. 4). The DOE’s language around retention of teachers who are alternatively certified places the blame on high-poverty schools in which these teachers are often employed, rather than citing issues within the programs themselves: “Alternatively prepared teachers tend to work in poor urban schools with high proportions of students of color. These high-poverty schools tend to have higher teacher turnover rates (those who leave the profession or “leavers,” and those who move to other schools) than low-poverty schools, which may be contributing to the lower retention rates of teachers of color” (p. 30). Not only does the report fail to acknowledge the issues within alternative licensure programs which contribute to reduced retention of teachers of color, but it also fails to identify the need to provide adequate resources within high-poverty schools and address systemic issues of inequality that impact these schools.

The report also “spotlights” a few programs and places that are working to diversify the teacher workforce, whose efforts may be “instructive” to other communities (p. 2). While many of these exemplified programs do offer important services to pre-service teachers of color such as financial assistance, academic support, and job placement, the report is vague in determining how these programs address the issue of retention by supporting teachers of color after they’ve entered the workforce. The first example, called the Boston Public School High School to

Teacher Program, recruits high school students who will eventually enter teacher education programs and provides them “mentors, gives them college prep courses, half their tuition and, if they are successful, teaching jobs. Eighty-seven percent of the participants are black or Latino” (p. 7). The report’s description of this program gives no information about how the participants are supported after entering the workforce, nor does it provide retention data for the 87% of participants who are black or Latinx. Similarly, the report describes the Call Me MISTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) initiative as a program that aims to “increase the pool of available teachers from a broader more diverse background particularly among the state’s lowest- performing elementary schools. Student participants are largely selected from among under-served, socio-economically disadvantaged and educationally at-risk communities” (p. 16). The report says that Call Me MISTER provides financial support via loan forgiveness for approved university-based teacher education programs, academic support, social and cultural support through a cohort system, and job placement assistance (p. 16). Again, there is no mention of whether the program provides support for its recruits once they begin teaching. The third “spotlighted” program is Teach Tomorrow in Oakland (TTO), which aims to recruit members of the local community who are committed to teaching in Oakland’s public schools. After receiving less than a year of training, participants are placed in schools as teacher interns. “During their intern year, participants function as a teacher of record while taking classes to earn certification. TTO provides tutoring, professional development, and classroom resources throughout the program. Participants are often recruited from the communities in which the program hopes to place teachers” (p. 26). While the community-based nature of this program could ostensibly foster student-teacher relationships which may potentially bolster the retention of diverse teachers, the report once again fails to provide any data that proves the program’s

effectiveness in doing so, and also provides no information about how TTO teachers are supported after completing their internships. Perhaps these programs do take measures to ensure retention of the teachers of color which they recruit, but the report's omission of this information suggests that the DOE's interest in diversifying the teacher workforce begins and ends with recruitment.

As part of its argument for the need to diversify the teacher workforce, the U.S. Department of Education asserts that teachers of color are more likely to "serve as advocates and cultural brokers" for their students (p. 1). Despite this, the report makes only one mention of culture in the context of pedagogy: "Teachers of color are positive role models for all students in breaking down negative stereotypes and preparing students to live and work in a multiracial society. A more diverse teacher workforce can also supplement training in the culturally sensitive teaching practices most effective with today's student populations" (p. 1). Note that "culturally sensitive" is the chosen term in this report, rather than "culturally sustaining" or even "culturally responsive." This linguistic choice implies that the DOE is either unaware of the current research on culturally sustaining pedagogies or unwilling to use the language of CSP in an attempt to remain "politically neutral." Cultural sensitivity is defined as the knowledge, awareness, and respect for cultural differences, as well as the ability to adapt one's own worldview to consider another person or culture (Kubokawa & Ottaway, 2009, p. 131). As established in the third chapter of this thesis, the institutionalized racism and white-centered standards of achievement prevalent in our education system require critical and conscious pedagogical practices to serve the academic needs of students of color and sustain them culturally. This is why CRP and CSP were developed. "The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce" approaches culture and pedagogy in a way that fails to critically address

the inequities of schooling, and instead starts and ends this work with “culturally sensitivity.” This reinforces the message that the DOE is unwilling to strike at the root of inequity when it comes to diversifying the teacher workforce, and unwilling to address the complexity of this issue that transcends the number of non-white teachers recruited to the workforce each year.

Another issue of culture within the report is its mentioning of teacher licensure tests. The DOE states that “Certification rates may be impacted by performance on licensure exams. Research suggests that teachers of color, on average, score lower on licensure tests and have lower passing rates than their white counterparts” (p. 25). The report does not explicitly identify the use of high-stakes testing as a factor in perpetuating the segregation and lack of diversity in the teacher workforce, nor does it acknowledge that the tests and testing environments may be biased against pre-service teachers of color, as other researchers have concluded (Petchauer, 2012; Rogers-Ard, Knaus, Epstein, & Mayfield, 2013 as cited in Greenberg Motamedi et al., 2018, p. 1). The report also fails to address other licensure assessments such as the edTPA teaching portfolio assessment, which Latinx licensure candidates are three times more likely to fail than their white peers (Goldhaber et al., 2017 as cited in Petchauer et al., 2018, p. 330). These oversights not only reveal the DOE’s unwillingness to critically assess licensure requirements to address inequities, but they also expose the department’s complicity in the ongoing privatization of education. Licensure assessments are a boon to corporations, particularly Pearson Learning, which owns and administers the edTPA and publishes a multitude of other education materials, including licensure test preparation materials. Pearson’s yearly profits have risen from \$2 billion in the early 2000s to \$6 billion in 2014 (Pearson, 2015 as cited in Attick & Boyles, 2016, p. 5), an increase that has been attributed to “the company’s continued influence over federal and global education initiatives which has led to the wholesale adoption of

Pearson's products in nearly every aspect of public education today" (Attick & Boyles, p. 5). The fact that licensure assessments are addressed in the report only briefly, incompletely, and without explicit reference to their biases points to the DOE's unwillingness to interfere with corporate influence on public education. This leaves the reader to understand that while the department claims concern for diversifying the teacher workforce, they will not go so far as to disrupt the neoliberal practices that create the underlying inequities preventing the creation of a diverse teacher workforce.

While "The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce" points to the critical need to diversify the teacher workforce, it approaches this issue incompletely and through the reformist lens of neoliberal corporatism. Bringing more teachers of color into the classroom is only one step in the complex process of diversifying the teacher workforce, and the DOE report disregards this complexity with its hyperfocus on recruitment and lack of attention to the need for policies that would facilitate the long-term retention of these teachers. These policies include dismantling the neoliberal influence on schooling, so that schools with large populations of students and teachers of color can have access to adequate resources and pre-service teachers of color are not subject to biased certification assessments which generate enormous profits for corporations. The DOE report's bias toward alternative licensure programs also suggests that the department is not committed to fully supporting university-based teacher education programs and public education in general. Without this commitment, diversification of the teacher workforce will not be accomplished on a significant, long-term basis.

Chapter 5

Democratizing Teacher Education

In order to democratize teacher education in the service of creating a more diverse and culturally sustaining teacher workforce, we must consider not only *how* pre-service teachers are learning the practical aspects of teaching, but *where* they are learning them. Research on spacialization within education reveals the benefits of consciously crafted partnerships between the “first” spaces of university-based teacher education programs and the “second” and “third” spaces of K-12 schools and other community-based learning sites. These benefits include the democratization of teacher education (Zeichner et al., 2014), bolstering existing culturally sustaining pedagogies within teacher education programs (Ladson-Billings, 2014), dismantling epistemological hierarchies within the university space (Souto-Manning & Martell, 2019), and providing a tangible context for teacher education programs to move from reflection to action in making their programs more culturally sustaining (Flessner, 2014).

On the most basic level, teacher education programs need to consider the demographics of student teaching and field experience sites. Ladson-Billings (2000) explains the problematic nature of teacher education programs placing the majority of field experiences in white middle-class communities, which “offer a different set of challenges and opportunities from those that teachers can expect to encounter in the urban classrooms populated by African American students. Thus, when new teachers enter urban settings, they experience a mismatch between what they expect based on their preservice preparation and what they find in urban schools” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 209). Teacher education programs must go beyond *explaining* that demographically different schools and student groups will present varying sets of challenges, and diversify field experience sites so that pre-service teachers can experience and respond to these

challenges in real time. Democratizing teacher education through physical space extends beyond considerations of demographics in field experience sites, however. Many researchers have expressed the value of creating “third spaces” within teacher education (in addition to the “first” and “second” spaces of K-12 classroom sites and university methods courses). Zeichner et al. (2014) offer the following explanation:

In our view, the preparation of teachers for a democratic society should be based on an epistemology that in itself is democratic and includes a respect for and interaction among practitioner, academic, and community-based knowledge. This vision reflects the concept of “leveling” that can occur in “third spaces” or contexts in which individuals surrender outward status and come together to engage more as equals (Oldenburg, 1999). ...What is involved in what we are proposing is the creation of new hybrid spaces where academic, practitioner, and community-based knowledge come together in new ways to support the development of innovative and hybrid solutions to the problem of preparing teachers” (p. 3).

Zeichner et al. cite the ongoing research on specific settings in which “third spaces” can be embodied most effectively (whether inside or outside of the university space), but they note that a community-based approach to third spaces has been found to be particularly effective. More specifically, pre-service teachers who are placed in community-based organizations (CBOs) as part of their field experience requirements “develop more nuanced understandings of diversity, including intra-group diversity; examine schools from an out-of-school perspective; attend to the role of context in learning; and learn and enact important relational aspects of teaching” (McDonald et al., 2013 as cited in Zeichner et al., p. 8), and CBO placements also offer opportunities for pre-service teachers to acquire deeper knowledge of literacy practices and pedagogy, and “to enact critical teaching practices that fostered engagement, oral language development, and reading comprehension for language-minority youth” (Brayko, 2013 as cited in Zeichner et al., 2014). Considering the importance of literary practices and pedagogy within CSP, it is also likely that CBO placements would enable pre-service teachers to practice CSP in

contexts that may reflect the diverse student populations with whom they will eventually work in full-time teaching roles. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings explicitly points to the ways in which CSP would help pre-service teachers maintain the balance of academic accountability and community-based learning that plays out when third spaces are involved in teacher education: “teachers undertaking culturally informed pedagogies take on the dual responsibility of external performance assessments as well as community- and student-driven learning. The real beauty of a culturally sustaining pedagogy is its ability to meet both demands without diminishing either” (2014, pp. 83-84).

The inclusion of third spaces within teacher education transcends the idea of physical spaces, and requires a restructuring of whose knowledge is valued within teacher education programs, both inside and outside of the university setting. This involves a diversion of power away from the Eurocentric knowledges and epistemologies traditionally privileged in the first spaces of university-based teacher education programs (Souto-Manning & Martell, 2019, p. 32). The hybrid nature of third spaces can allow teacher education programs to harness the “scripts and counterscripts” (p. 32) embodied in those spaces, which Gutiérrez says “[creates] the potential for authentic interaction and a shift in the social organization of learning and what counts as knowledge” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 152 as cited in Souto-Manning & Martell, p. 9). In other words, the concept of third spaces requires not just bringing pre-service teachers in contact with community members as part of their program requirements, but integrating community knowledge within those programs and dismantling the existing hierarchy that privileges the epistemologies of academia over community-based epistemologies. One way that third spaces accomplish this goal is by helping pre-service teachers to gain a more holistic understanding of their students’ lived cultural experiences outside of the classroom space. Ladson-Billings (2017)

discusses how she invites students in her methods courses to visit community spaces, especially traditional two-hour services at Black churches:

Those not socialized in these cultural spaces are often shocked by the degree of responsibility that children... have. Some are ushers, others may be choir members, and still others may be in charge of making church announcements. The very children that many school personnel argue have ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or some other emotional malady can be seen sitting for long stretches of time and participating appropriately in the service. In those instances I ask students to think about the nature of the service and how it might contrast with the school setting. Typically the students point out the interactive nature of the church service (p. 144).

Ladson-Billings goes on to further discuss the differences between this cultural setting and the classroom setting, such as the “call and response” structure of the church service and small children ushering adults to their seats and passing the collection plate. She argues that these behaviors are often discouraged in school, as children are usually not allowed to leave their assigned seats or “talk back” during a lesson. Witnessing firsthand the disparities between ways of being in school versus ways of being in students’ communities can help pre-service teachers understand why traditional classroom structures may not be culturally sustaining to many of their students, and make choices about how to incorporate CSP into their own classrooms. This third space learning can be an important first step in dismantling existing knowledge hierarchies, implementing CSP, and democratizing classroom spaces.

The restructuring of epistemological hierarchies should also be done in the relationships between university-based teacher education programs and K-12 classroom sites, which can help teacher education programs close the existing gap between university-based teacher education pedagogy and the actual practice of teaching in a classroom. Zeichner et al. assume that “the knowledge and expertise needed by teacher candidates is located in schools, colleges, and universities, and in and among communities, and that the key problem of teacher education is to figure out how to provide teacher candidates with access to and mediation of this needed

expertise from these different systems” (p. 4). The authors recommend drawing upon “horizontal expertise” as one component of closing this gap through the use of third spaces. They differentiate this from “vertical notions” of learning which create and perpetuate knowledge hierarchies, arguing that horizontal expertise “recognizes the unique knowledge and understanding that each professional brought to the collective activity and treats the knowledge as equally valuable, relevant, and important” (p. 4). One example of horizontal expertise that some teacher education programs have utilized is the relocation of university methods courses to K-12 classrooms. However, Zeichner et al. emphasize that the relocation of these courses alone is not enough to ensure that K-12 practitioners’ voices are valued on an equal plane with university knowledge, and that considering the democratic qualities of these collaborative partnerships is essential (p. 6).

Other researchers have emphasized the importance of reflective practices in ensuring that practicing teachers’ voices hold value within these partnerships. Flessner (2014) explains his reflection process throughout a study which brought university methods courses into an elementary classroom: “The notion of hybridity allowed me to document the strengths each space had to offer, to examine the ways in which each space could be re-imagined, and to reflect upon the nexus between the two spaces. ...The final piece to the puzzle was returning to classroom practice (at the university and/or within the elementary classroom) to enact change” (p. 11). Flessner raises a point that should not be overlooked in the construction of relationships between teacher education programs and K-12 schools. While it is important to examine the democratic elements of these relationships and reflect on how the connections between spaces work to deepen pre-service teachers’ understanding of the practice, what is most critical is to follow reflection with action. This process should involve not only teacher educators within the

university, but also K-12 instructors and other practitioners in the second and third spaces.

Utilizing these partnerships between K-12 schools and university teacher education programs will help these programs harness the power of horizontal expertise, which Zeichner et al. argue “expands individuals’ learning as they appropriate new tools and work languages that they could not have created on their own with access only to their particular languages, rules, and systems” (p. 4). This inclusivity will ensure not only a more thorough process of change, but will also help teacher education programs continuously engage in the deconstruction of epistemological hierarchies which value university knowledge over second and third space knowledges.

The relationship between second and third spaces and university-based teacher education programs has specific implications for preparing a more diverse and culturally sustaining teacher workforce. Pre-service teachers who spend time in community-based third spaces and then re-enter the first space of the university methods course to critically reflect on those experiences receive not only a foundation for rethinking epistemological hierarchies, but also concrete ideas for how their own pedagogy and classroom space can be revised to sustain students culturally. Additionally, utilizing horizontal expertise in relationships between university-based teacher education programs and second and third spaces of learning can also deconstruct hierarchies of knowledge. Ensuring that programmatic changes in teacher education are made with this horizontal expertise in mind, and with the inclusion of expert voices outside of the university, is a crucial component of democratizing teacher education as a whole.

Conclusion

Preparing a teacher workforce that is both diverse and culturally sustaining is a multifaceted task. This work involves the dismantling of neoliberal influence on education, addressing issues of teacher recruitment and retention, bolstering traditional university-based teacher education

programs, implementing culturally sustaining pedagogies, and democratizing teacher education through practices such as democratizing relationships between university-based teacher education programs, K-12 schools, and community-based third spaces of learning.

Examining the current literature on teacher diversity, neoliberal influence in education, and CSP captures the complexity of diversifying the teacher workforce and the problem of preparing a teacher workforce that is more culturally sustaining. In order to create long term change in teacher education to achieve this goal, each of the aforementioned areas must be consciously addressed. My analysis of the DOE's current policy approach to diversifying the teacher workforce reveals that the federal government is unwilling to fully address the complexity of this issue, instead focusing on avenues of privatization and "quick fixes" to recruit more teachers of color, without carefully attention to issues of institutionalized racism and solutions that address long term retention of a diverse teacher workforce. Further research on this issue should examine diversification efforts and policies both at the state and university levels to determine whether these organizational bodies both understand the complexity of diversifying the teacher workforce and demonstrate efforts to disrupt the neoliberal status quo in order to do so.

Racial demographics of the teacher workforce are centered as the focus of this thesis because of the pervasive and problematic racial mismatch between teachers and students nationwide. However, diversification of the teacher workforce should also account for gender and socioeconomic diversity. While these elements are outside of the scope of this thesis, they may have a significant impact on student learning as well as labor relations within the teacher market. Further research on the diversification of the teacher workforce should consider how the feminization of teacher labor has impacted economic mobility for teachers and the relative attractiveness of the teaching profession to those who are entering the labor market. Researchers

should also examine how socioeconomic diversification of the teacher workforce could impact student learning, and how teacher education programs can support low-income educators through all stages of the educator pipeline.

Lack of diversity within the teacher workforce has negative implications for K-12 students' learning, both academically and socioemotionally. It also has a detrimental impact on democracy and social justice within education as a whole. While existing research focuses on the recruitment of a more diverse teacher workforce, it does not fully address how teacher education programs can create long term retention of a diverse teacher workforce. This thesis fills a gap in the research by examining opportunities for teacher education programs to contribute to the diversification of the teacher workforce through CSP and a commitment to democratization of teacher education. It puts the role of teacher education programs in conversation with larger political forces which create and perpetuate the inequities associated with the lack of diversity of the teacher workforce nationally. While teacher education programs have a responsibility and a multitude of opportunities in diversifying the teacher workforce, these programs cannot accomplish this independently. Broader support for a model of teacher education that is culturally sustaining and explicitly resistant to institutionalized racism and neoliberal influence must be provided by policymakers in order to create significant and enduring change.

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