

“Good Teachers” with “Good Intentions”: Misappropriations of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

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Abstract

This conceptual work examines the misappropriation of culturally responsive pedagogy by identifying ways in which misappropriations commonly occur in urban teaching and learning environments. They include culturally responsive practices as a smokescreen of good intentions, culture as a hook to gain students' attention, and culturally responsive pedagogy as a tool of assimilation. As teacher educators, we see a need to critically examine pedagogical approaches to specifically identify the perpetuation of historical inaccuracies, harmful stereotypes, and masks of good intentions. Three premises are proposed that reflect a commitment to defining and identifying culturally responsive teacher education practices.

Keywords: *culturally responsive pedagogy, cultural appropriation, urban education, teacher education*

The essence of culturally responsive pedagogy resides in the work of Scholars of Color¹ who reject oppressive systems that perceive students in urban communities as deficient and inherently underachieving. In this work, scholars advance the education of racially and ethnically diverse students through principles grounded in students' experiences and cultural orientations (Banks & Banks, 1989; Gay, 2002, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally responsive pedagogy exists only when all aspects of educational planning, design, and implementation are rooted in students' cultures (Gay, 2014)—cultures that are understood as “a group's knowledge production process that occurs as they understand and respond to their reality and create ways of being to survive or thrive in their everyday lives” (Love, 2019, p. 128).

Although the term *culturally responsive* has gained momentum in the past two decades (Pasternak et al., 2020), the goals of “liberating ethnically and racially diverse students from the shackles of academic, social, personal, civic, and cultural underachievement” (Gay, 2014, p. 368) are longstanding responses to injustices bestowed upon Students of Color (Gay, 2014; Kendi, 2019; Singleton, 2015). For example, many fail to acknowledge the resistance to desegregation that occurred in the decades following the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision in the era of the Civil Rights Movement. The unwillingness of white Americans to integrate schools with Students and Educators of Color resulted in the systematic elimination of Black educators through massive layoffs and demotions (Dougherty, 2004; Haskins & Haskins, 1998). The loss of Black teachers after the *Brown* decision led to a cultural incongruence between teachers and students that remains over a half a century later (Dougherty, 2004; Haskins & Haskins, 1998).

Consequently, the persistent shortage of Teachers of Color over decades has been a devastating blow to good teaching for Students of Color. Prior to the *Brown* ruling, Black educators were highly respected in their communities and central to well-established school systems (Walker, 2000). Frameworks of equity are a response to the chasm not only between educators and their students, but between society and historically marginalized learners. These frameworks seek to capture good (*i.e.*, effective and socially just) teaching,

¹ The nomenclature People/Students/Teachers of Color is used to describe individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and individuals of mixed heritage. This nomenclature is capitalized in order to reclaim the power that has historically been disparaged, denigrated, and stripped from the languages, expressions, histories, lived experiences and cultural heritage of communities of Color. This all-encompassing terminology is used to express the shared experiences of these individuals and groups that stem from systematic racism, which marginalizes these individuals in various facets of society. We acknowledge that all racial and cultural nomenclatures are flawed because the very need for them is predicated on the basis that whiteness is the standard.

specifically in urban education classrooms within complex sociocultural, economic, and racial contexts (Milner, 2012; Milner & Lomotey, 2014). In our work, we rely on Scholars of Color who recognize good teaching as pedagogy framed in the lives of students and their cultural orientations (Gay, 2014; Gonzáles, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Howard, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1994); the socio-historical context of schooling (Haskins & Haskins, 1998; Sleeter, 2012); the nuances of urban education (Milner, 2012; Howard, 2019); and a willingness to confront the policies and processes in educational systems that disregard the backgrounds and needs of learners (Kincheloe 2010; Kozol, 1992)

Over time, there have been many iterations of what constitutes culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies (Au & Kawakami, 1994; Emdin, 2016; Gay, 2002; Hollie, 2012; Kuttner, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lingley, 2016; Lucas, 2011; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Paris, 2012; Pasternak et al., 2020; Sleeter, 2011; Sosa-Provencio et al., 2018). Even so, uncertainty and disarticulation exist between the intent and the reality of bridging student culture to academic content (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Sleeter, 2012; Young, 2010). According to Ladson-Billings (2014), “What state departments, school districts, and individual teachers are now calling ‘culturally relevant pedagogy’ is often a distortion and corruption of the central [original] ideas” (p. 82). Culturally responsive pedagogy is commonly simplified and reduced to celebrations, trivializations, and superficial interpretations of students’ and communities’ cultural practices (Hollie, 2012; Sleeter, 2012). Furthermore, scholarship in urban education indicates teachers may recognize the importance of student culture; yet, they often fall short of consciously anchoring culturally responsive pedagogy to student learning (Paris & Alim, 2017; Sleeter, 2011; Young, 2010). Culturally responsive pedagogy is where learning should be situated, rather than applied as an addendum to the praxis that has been manicured by whiteness. A culturally responsive education *is* the pedagogy [our emphasis], and it is harmful when it functions as “a paradigm that is rooted in a desire for acceptance for those outside of the culture” (Emdin & Adjapong, 2018, p. 3).

As researchers and teacher educators in an urban midwestern university, in one of the most racially segregated US cities, we recognize the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy on academic success and how Students of Color, their communities, and their contributions are perceived and valued within the field of education (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Considering the local and national public school teaching force of over 80% white females (NCES, 2018), we also recognize there are examples of white teachers who embody the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy. However, our concern is that well-

meaning “good teachers” with “good intentions” toward being culturally responsive too often miss the mark and fall into patterns of the misappropriation of culturally responsive pedagogy. As such, the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy has been diminished to satisfy policy, funding, and reform mandates rather than preserved and implemented as a means of establishing critically conscious and highly effective education. If culturally responsive pedagogy is not authentically embodied, then culture is not valued, the implications of racism are ignored, and a long history of unequal treatment is denied (Freire, 2000; Kozol, 1992; Love, 2019). In schools, societal inequities manifest in ways that pathologize Students of Color as evidenced through disparate behavior control (Morris, 2015; O’Brien-Richardson, 2019; Wun, 2016), over-policing (Homer & Fisher, 2020; Weisburst, 2019), disciplinary action (Annamma et al., 2019; Kozol, 2006; Loveall, 2018) and high expulsion rates (Cheng, 2019; Heilbrun et al., 2018). Under these conditions, culturally responsive pedagogies have been appropriated in ways that control and undermine the education of Students of Color.

Exploring the appropriation of culturally responsive pedagogy requires a clear definition of *cultural appropriation*. This also necessitates an interrogation of the impact appropriations have on cultural groups in a society that normalizes the adoption of another group’s traditions, customs, beliefs, actions, and ways of being and knowing (Rogers, 2006). Aligning with Ziff and Rao (1997), we define cultural appropriation as the “act of taking—from a culture that is not one’s own—intellectual property, cultural expressions, artifacts, history and ways of knowledge” (p. 1), especially without the understanding of and deference to this culture.

The problem of “taking” (Ziff & Rao, 1997, p. 1) from another’s culture is the absence of contextual understanding and an overt neglect of the heritage values being represented. When there is no contextual understanding of how cultural heritages are developed and preserved, misappropriations ensue. Young (2005) describes the “profound offense” (p. 135) of cultural appropriation as an affront to the core values or sense of self-worth of an individual or group of people. Our concern is that the core principles of culturally responsive pedagogy are often manipulated and diluted to match conventional mainstream values of white norms. For example, institutions create a racial equity statement to recognize Black Lives Matter, while not taking action to challenge and resist policies and practices that legitimizes the trauma of People of Color (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019). This is just one example of how the state of constant peril within which certain groups live is superficially recognized only to the extent that fits the comfort levels of predominantly white

educators. This and other misappropriations of cultural responsiveness are powerful aggressions enacted toward Students of Color (Emdin, 2016; Freire, 2000).

Misappropriations of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

In moving toward a more authentic activation of culturally responsive pedagogy, we conducted a literature search on culturally responsive practices and the history of equity-based pedagogical frameworks (Pasternak et al., 2020). We reviewed US journals focused on culturally relevant/responsive practices and pedagogy, urban education, equity frameworks, and culturally and linguistically diverse practices. This article documents our critical and reflective conversations held throughout the fall of 2019 as we recounted misappropriations of culturally responsive pedagogy throughout our teaching experiences.

We have identified three ways that misappropriations commonly occur in urban teaching and learning environments. Each one of us presents a narrative describing our first-hand accounts of cultural misappropriation from our work as teachers, teacher educators, and researchers. These examples include culturally responsive practices as a smokescreen of good intentions; culture as a hook to gain students' attention; and culturally responsive pedagogy as a tool of assimilation.

Leanne: The Smokescreen of Good Intentions

In my former practice as a classroom teacher and current work in teacher education, I have observed within myself and in others how responsive practices are laden with good intentions. Well-meaning educators work behind a smokescreen of good intentions without deeply interrogating what they believe about teaching students who do not share the same cultural knowledge, social expectations, and language practices (Diamond & Lewis, 2015; DiAngelo, 2018).

Reflecting on my positionality as a white researcher and teacher educator, I contemplate the words of Bartky (2002) as she asks, "What does (or does not) go on in the minds of 'nice' white people which allows them to ignore the terrible effects of racism, and, the extent that these effects are recognized at all, to deny that they bear any responsibility for their perpetuation?" (p. 151). Smokescreens of good intentions are systemically supported, perpetuating a resistance to know what one should know. To remain complicit is a choice—a position of privilege. In the words of Applebaum (2010), this refusal to recognize complicity is a "relentless readiness to ignore consideration of one's

ignorance” (p. 1). Ignorance, shielded by well-intended facades, is protection from accountability. Individuals can choose to ignore what they do not know, just as they can choose to answer the door when a knock is heard.

I have participated in countless sessions of professional development for teachers on subjects related to culture, language, and achievement. Cultural responsiveness becomes a topic to study and a panacea to raising test scores. As a teacher leader, I would often hear, “Do you have any materials on culturally responsive practice?” I recognize these as good intentions rooted in gross misinterpretations of culturally responsive foundations, which cannot be captured within ready-made activities and packaged curriculum. Even with the best of intentions, culturally responsive practices become overshadowed and diminished in the comfort of established norms and standards of whiteness (Young, 2010).

Subsequently, efforts to enact cultural responsiveness are often shallow, misguided, and result in the misappropriation of culturally-based pedagogies, in which accommodations, interventions, and simplified content require that students still conform to standardized, mainstream ideologies and practices (Blanchett, 2006), as is the case of English language learners and those who speak “nonstandard” English vernaculars. Learners are often pressured to compromise their home languages and cultures to present themselves as competent and intelligent learners in a discriminatory social order in which language has become a proxy for race (Gutiérrez & Jaramillo, 2006; Monzó & Rueda, 2009). In my 15 years of practice, I observed an unrelenting emphasis on “standard” English as the language of assessment and an unwillingness to realize first language and home vernaculars as legitimate sources of academic competency.

Good intentions serve as a cover for a divergent reality that protects and legitimizes a ready narrative for school and community systems (Diamond & Lewis, 2015) (*e.g.*, reporting of test data, achievement gap closing, and suspension/referral reduction). These factors have become the rationale for implementing culturally responsive strategies, rather than centering teaching and learning on students’ experiences and cultural orientations. Misappropriations such as these, obscured by good intentions, cannot be adequately identified until culturally responsive pedagogy is truly understood. Culturally responsive pedagogy exists only when educators understand students’ cultures and confront the biases they hold about Students and Communities of Color. Without this act of culturally conscious engagement, misappropriations thrive in the smokescreen of “good intentions.”

Kelly: Culture as a Hook

As a mixed-race Black woman teaching in a predominantly Black high school, I have witnessed the ways educators commonly attempt to “hook” students into acquiring knowledge. The concept of the hook—which includes motivational energy and linking content to students’ lives to create pathways to new information—has been indoctrinated by teacher education programs, leading teachers to believe that a hook is the first step in expanding students’ minds to the curricular topics that follow (Gonzalez, 2014).

I have questioned whether the practice of hooking students into engaging with a lesson is compatible with culturally responsive frameworks (Gay, 2002; Ladson Billings, 1994), or if using a lesson hook is a method of tapping into students’ cultures to entice, befriend, or lull young minds into a slumber of preconceived units of learning. We argue the latter. Through employing the hook, student culture and culturally responsive pedagogy is often misappropriated in ways that hoodwink students into engaging with their teacher and the learning process.

I reflect on when I regularly used hip-hop within my curriculum while teaching high school social studies. A white colleague took interest in what I was doing and asked to come watch me teach. Upon watching one class period, the teacher attempted to incorporate hip-hop into her English class. The next day the flustered teacher told me, “The hip-hop thing doesn’t work” and that it was “clear the students just do not want to learn.” She explained that she had the students listen to a hip-hop song at the beginning of class, and they were excited about the activity. Following the hip-hop introduction, the teacher asked the students to take out their textbooks to complete a worksheet on a literary device identified in one line of the song. She commented that the class quickly descended into chaos and the students “just stopped wanting to learn.”

This teacher’s attempt to incorporate hip-hop into her curriculum was unsuccessful, even though the students identified hip-hop music as an integral part of their culture. I argue that her attempt failed because she did not perceive the hip-hop aspect of her students’ culture as an avenue for learning and instead used it to maneuver students into engaging with the official curriculum. This cultural misrepresentation appropriated the cultural norms, behaviors, and traditions of students in ways that advanced the aims and standards of the educational system, rather than the interests and experiences of the students.

Beyond hoodwinking students into engaging with traditional school curriculum, using culture as a hook is problematic when students’ cultures are inauthentically

represented. Too often, schools “repackage” the cultures of students and use it to perpetuate routines and academic standards set by the school—reminiscent of how the corporate hip-hop industry has stolen the culture of hip-hop youth to repackage and sell it in a manner that solely feeds the interests of corporate hip-hop (Emdin & Adjapong, 2018, p. 1). We see this repackaging of students’ culture as an incarnation of interest convergence wherein issues of race and equity are only addressed if, and when, they converge with the interests and expectations of white ideologies (Bell, 1980; Milner, 2008). As such, students’ cultures can only exist within the classroom to the extent with which the educator understands and is comfortable.

In another example, a white male teacher invited me to observe an economics class. He explained that hip-hop was an important part of his students’ culture, and he wanted his curriculum to reflect this. At the start of the period the teacher got up in front of his class, loosened his tie, pulled a hat out of his back pocket, placed it on his head, and turned it to the side. He proceeded to sway side to side while beatboxing and rapping about a concept central to that class period. His students stared at him, unamused.

I argue that his attempt to bring the students’ culture into the classroom failed because he only allowed hip-hop to exist within the parameters within which he was comfortable. The educator never considered how his misappropriation of hip-hop culture would further disengage his students from the learning process. Genuine and culturally responsive invitations to learning rely on educators’ capacity to reflect on who they are in relationship to their students (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Noddings, 2013). The power of the hook lies, not in the hook as a strategic teaching tool, rather in the ability of the educator to draw upon the lived experiences of their students with fidelity to activate student learning, identity development, and agentic community engagement (Ladson-Billings, 1994; 2017).

Crystasany: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as a Tool of Assimilation

The third way we see culturally responsive pedagogy misappropriated is in the way culture is positioned as a rationale for assimilationist educational practices. As a Black woman in the field of early education, I have witnessed numerous workshops and training sessions that misconceive the concept of bridging students’ home life to their learning and development. Through my work as a teacher educator and early child care program administrator, I am familiar with the commitment of early educators to “build on each child’s unique set of individual and family strengths, cultural background, language(s), abilities, and experiences” (NAEYC, 2019, p. 16). I am also aware of the importance in

early childhood of using professional knowledge to make general predictions about children's abilities and interests and the approaches that will promote their optimal development and learning. The resolve to engage in cultural responsiveness becomes a misappropriation when children's family and home life are viewed as a deficit or something to overcome. Consequently, instead of integrating children's cultural values, community background, and families to inform curriculum and practice, educators use young learners' home culture as a reason to intervene and promote the assimilation of dominant school norms as the pathway to school success.

For example, assimilationist perspectives often depict Children of Color as vocabulary deficient and language delayed (Hart & Risley, 2003; Payne et al., 1994; van Steensel, 2006). In my recent review of the National Association of the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) statement on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), I noted the inclusion of "vocabulary deficient" as a reason why diverse children of low socioeconomic status and children from "difficult backgrounds" are hindered in their academic success (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 7). The authors emphasized the need to teach children within these ascribed populations the vocabulary and oral language to foster development that is "closer to the developmental trajectory typical of children from educated, affluent families" (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 7), negating the linguistic talents of children who move between the registers of Black Vernacular English and American Academic English.

While re-addressed in NAEYC's recent equity statement (NAEYC, 2019), this assimilationist perspective echoes through early education research, as evidenced in the persistent focus of "poor parenting" or cultural linguistic deficiencies, rather than systemic injustices, as the primary cause of scholastic disadvantage (Raz & Beatty, 2018). The widely regarded work of Hart and Risley (2003), describing the 30-million word gap and a number of other studies (Payne et al., 1994; van Steensel, 2006), suggest deficiencies and deficit within lower socioeconomic families when compared to middle-class families. Consequently, I am often presented with different initiatives to aid the literacy development of the low-income Children of Color within my childcare program, which I believe is a compensatory and interventionist approach. These initiatives often assume that to be prepared for school, children from a non-white, low-socioeconomic background must imitate the way predominately white, middle-class people interact with their children—reading copious amounts of books and asking numerous questions based on middle-class, white experiences.

Access to age-appropriate reading material is beneficial to children in any community. However, the cultural knowledge of Families of Color and how they engage with their children is minimized in comparison to the white, middle-class conception of school readiness (Brown & Barry, 2019; Brown & Brown, 2010; Pérez & Saavedra, 2017). This singular approach to literacy development ignores the oral storytelling prevalent in Communities of Color through religious tradition, cultural discourse, and music. While academic achievement is a primary tenet at the core of culturally responsive teaching, educators and educational researchers have used this aspect of culturally responsive frameworks to rationalize lower performance in non-dominant communities (Matthews et al., 2010). Tactics reasoned through the guise of cultural responsiveness have provided grounds from which educational systems manipulate the perceptions of students and their families; deteriorate their sense of self-value and identity; and encumber their educational experience. When students are framed as *exotic others* (Popkewitz, 1998), deficient in “thought, language, and worldview,” traditional education practices seek to “force all differences into standardized boxes” (Delpit, 1995, p. 66). This practice is rooted in assimilationist principles that pose decontextualized fragments of culturally responsive pedagogy—such as academic success and understanding children’s home culture—as an “intervention” to align the behaviors Children of Color more closely to the status quo.

Discussion

Our emphasis on misappropriations of culturally responsive pedagogy is not meant to overshadow those models of excellent teaching that value and uplift students’ cultures. Rather, the intent is to move toward a clearer understanding of pedagogy that authentically activates the lived experiences and ways of knowing of Students of Color. With this as our grounding, we believe all educators should be strongly supported in their development of culturally responsive pedagogies.

As such, we turn the focus on teacher education programs. We argue teacher education programs diminish what it means to be culturally responsive when pre-service teachers are not adequately prepared to interrogate oppressive systems (Goldenberg 2014; Sleeter, 2012). According to Love (2019), this “Teacher Education Gap” (p. 127) happens when programs reduce diversity studies to one course in which the plight of Students of Color may be studied; yet, the context of whiteness and privilege is passed over, the critique

of the institutional systems of injustice are ignored, and the structures of power are consistently uncontested.

We believe it is the role of the teacher educator to deliberately and critically address what it means to be a culturally responsive pedagogue. We propose three premises in our commitment to define and identify equitable frameworks essential in teacher development. These include culturally responsive pedagogy as (a) much more than good teaching; (b) a foundation to challenge, disrupt, and transform; and (c) the positioning of students and communities as an inviolable nucleus.

Much More Than Good Teaching

First, we acknowledge cultural responsiveness as “good teaching;” yet we believe it is much more, because the notion of good teaching is unreliable and equivocal. While we can illuminate conceptions of what it means to be culturally responsive, as concluded in our review of literature, how culturally responsive teaching is actualized cannot be generalized. The essence of culturally responsive pedagogy is dependent on the cultural context within which the responding occurs. Culturally responsive teaching is defined by its transformative qualities grounded in the cultural orientations and personal experiences of students. Thus, we suggest pluralistic ideologies and pedagogical flexibility (Irizarry, 2011) as cornerstone features of culturally responsive teaching in the urban context. Providing prospective teachers with multiple perspectives and approaches to understanding how profoundly the realities outside of school impact the conditions inside of school is key to grounding the educational process in the cultures of students. Prospective teachers need exposure to critical perspectives of Scholars of Color to foster dispositions that realize culturally responsive teaching is not about shielding oneself in the ignorance of not knowing, hooking students to engage through an inauthentic rendition of a rap song, or attending sporadic professional development sessions.

On the contrary, culturally responsive pedagogical development happens in teacher education when the experiences of future teachers are grounded in urban education frameworks (Kincheloe, 2010; Milner & Lomotey, 2014; Noguera, 2014), abolitionist teaching (Baldwin 2019; Love, 2019), antiracist ideologies (Kendi, 2017, 2019; Zamalin, 2019), conversations centered on race (Coates, 2015; Howard, 2019; Oluo, 2019; Singleton, 2015), and realities of whiteness and white supremacy (DiAngelo, 2018; Hill, 2017; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Culturally responsive teaching embeds these scholarly

perspectives throughout the course of study to support understandings of local conditions as they exist within the larger historical, social, economic, and political context.

A Foundation to Challenge, Disrupt, and Transform

Second, with an understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy as a dynamic and pluralistic construct, we believe courses of study should be challenged, interrogated, and reconceptualized to include racial and cultural knowledge as central and salient. In doing so, it is essential we employ the same theories and reflective methods that we facilitate with teacher candidates (Marx, 2006). Through modeling methods and designing experiences, teacher educators can foster the culturally responsive behaviors that will be successfully eventuated in the future classrooms of the pre-service teachers (Milner, 2010). This begins with a thorough audit of course texts, resources, and syllabi. The syllabus, understood as the blueprint of objectives and expectations of a course, is a suggested first step in the examination and reconceptualization of course content.

We draw from Gorski (2009), who examined forty-five multicultural education course syllabi and found “most of the syllabi did not appear to be designed to prepare teachers to practice authentic multicultural education” (p. 317). Instead, Gorski (2009) found the syllabi were rife with language of otherness and promoted “sensitivity,” “self-reflection,” and “toleration” (p. 314) without any proposition of challenging and disrupting hegemonic practices. These and other reductions of culturally responsive curriculum (Gorski, 2009) create a reality where cultural diversity of the students is the problem, deflecting responsibility away from racialized systems of inequity. As such, teacher educators are preparing pre-service teachers to enact a form of culturally responsive pedagogy that hinges on interest convergence, saviorism, and cultural misappropriation. An entire teacher education department may not be ready to engage in the critical examination of curriculum. As no one is exempt from this work, beginning with a small group of equity-minded colleagues is a start that can create a model for others.

Positioning Students and Communities as an Inviolable Nucleus

Third, we build from the first and second premises to move beyond the university walls and position students and communities as an inviolable nucleus—the most important part of culturally responsive pedagogy that remains honored, unviolated, and unconditionally central. This premise represents the belief that building relationships with students, teachers, and community members will deepen understandings (and reduce misperceptions) of the lived experiences of others, specifically as to how the realities inside

of school are impacted by conditions outside of school. District-university partnerships prefaced on learning about students' abilities and talents; disrupting teacher/student dissonance; and aligning a critical pedagogy between the university and school settings are keys to building authentic interpretations of culturally responsive pedagogy. This transformative vision describes educational spaces where students, teacher candidates, teachers, researchers, and teacher educators work together to critique injustices in the local and global context and critically ask: Why did this happen? Who is most impacted? What action can we take to resist inequities/ignorance/racism?

There is urgency to critically act, as we experience the intersection of racism that has long festered in every aspect of our nation's infrastructure with an unprecedented pandemic that has exasperated systems and resulted in deleterious consequences for impoverished Communities of Color. Genuinely embracing culturally responsive pedagogies challenges both teacher educators and preK-12 educators to critically reflect on the ways they operate within institutionalized systems towards perpetuating the academic marginalization and social disenfranchisement of Students of Color. This task not only takes a significant amount of personal reflection, cultural humility, and emotional vulnerability for a predominantly white teaching force, but challenges educators to dismantle social hierarchies, discourse, and power systems that have favored whiteness for centuries. Facilitating urgency and a willingness to engage in culturally responsive pedagogy is challenging when over 86% of the nation's teachers are white (NCES, 2018) and have the privileged choice to be fully committed to equity/antiracism and consciously forfeit their own social power towards identifying and dismantling oppressive systems.

Through our examples of misappropriation, we contemplate how culturally responsive pedagogy is enacted in our classrooms to perpetuate inequities and undermine educational and life outcomes for Students of Color. As teacher educators, we heed a dire call to critically examine pedagogical approaches, specifically identify the perpetuation of historical inaccuracies, harmful stereotypes, and masks of good intentions—and then critique the institutionalized systems that have been ineffective in preparing teachers to educate Students of Color (Goldenberg, 2014; Love, 2019).

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