The Racialization of Self and Others

An Exploration of Criticality in Pre-Service Teacher Self-Reflection

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Abstract

This qualitative case study examined exit-credential papers from a teacher preparation program to explore how pre-service teachers discussed racial positionality in relation to teaching for social justice. Framed by a Critical Whiteness perspective, the pre-service teachers' papers revealed that out of the cohort of twenty-four, only seven White PSTs identify their race. These seven do so within the context of racializing their students. This study has implications for teacher preparation programs, as important arenas for teachers to commit to developing a consciousness of their social positionality and bring a critical lens to structures of power.

Keywords: teacher education; race; identity; Whiteness; positionality

Introduction

Teacher education programs seek to prepare teachers by developing knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical practices, which are considered essential in the preparation of future teachers (Darling-Hammond & Oakes, 2019; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Shulman, 1986).

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However, as pre-service teachers prepare to enter the classroom, how well are they expected to know themselves? Furthermore, how are the systems that take part in shaping knowledge of the self being examined? The 2015-2016 school year was the first time that students of color were the majority (51%) in the United States K-12 population and yet the teacher workforce has remained mostly homogenous with 89% of elementary teachers identified as female and 80% identified as White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). This is significant because the consequences of racial discrimination are less prevalent for White teachers; they are less likely to be aware of the harm caused by racial stereotypes that permeate U.S. culture and thus may more frequently engage in a deficit framing of their students of color (Hambacher & Ginn, 2021; Sleeter and Zavala, 2020; Varghese et al., 2019). Given the racially different make-up of the U.S. teaching and student populations, it is imperative for pre-service teachers to understand their own social and cultural backgrounds and how they are positioned in contexts of power and dominant ideologies in American society (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Daniels & Varghese, 2019; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Kohli et al., 2021; Sleeter, 2001; Utt & Tochluk, 2016).

A main impetus for criticality in reflection on individual and systemic positionality is the persistence of racism and maintenance of White supremacy through colorblind ideology. As Bonilla-Silva (2003) outlines in his book *Racism without Racists*:

> Color-blind racism serves today as the ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system in the post-civil rights era. And the beauty of this new ideology is that it aids in the maintenance of White privilege without fanfare, without naming those who it subjects and those who it rewards. (p.15)

The notion of colorblindness is appealing to well-intentioned White people because it assumes everyone is equal and deserves equal treatment indicated by the sentiment *we are all the same*. By avoiding a discussion of race, White people believe they are being polite and that to see racial difference is to admit that we are not all the same. And yet, the reality is that while race and racialization are socially constructed, those who are racialized in the United States have a markedly different experience due to systemically engrained practices that confer power and privilege to White people.

Some progressive teacher education programs (TEPs) seek to develop racial consciousness in their teachers by bolstering social and cultural competence and combatting notions of colorblindness (Co-

chran-Smith, 1995; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Hambacher & Ginn, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2001; Varghese et al., 2019). In particular, examining "teacher identity" is a means to reflect on teaching practices and on how one's biography and positionality influence the lenses through which one teaches. Various methods of critical reflection on social identities (race, class, gender) are utilized in progressive teacher education such as developing culturally relevant pedagogical practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995), conducting autoethnography and autobiography projects, and critically analyzing multimedia and historical artifacts (Hambacher & Ginn, 2021). Due to the importance of teacher positionality and its potential influence on future K-12 students, this study examines if and how multi-subject pre-service teachers critically self-reflect on their racial identities particularly in relationship to equity and social justice in schools. Consequently, the research questions that guide this study include:

1. How do pre-service teachers talk about their positionality in regards to race?

2. How do pre-service teachers describe the process of self-examination around their social identities?

Theoretical Framework

This article is guided by literature from Critical Whiteness studies (Castagno, 2014; Picower, 2009; Philip & Benin, 2014; Twine & Gallagher, 2008) and theory on teacher education as mediator (Philip & Benin, 2014) which inform an analysis of the narratives and constructions of Self presented by the pre-service teachers in this study.

Critical Whiteness Studies

Pre-service teachers are not the only homogenous group in teacher education. In 2017, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that out of 1.5 million full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, 76% were White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). Thus, the chances that most instructors are White in a teacher education program are quite high. While the implications of Whiteness are often examined in K-12 teachers and classrooms, teacher education programs are also racialized organizations (Ray, 2019) that rely on dominant (white) norms. Considering the role that state systems and institutions have in shaping and categorizing identities (Goldberg, 2002; Philip & Benin, 2014), the presence of Whiteness as an ideology and norm in teacher education cannot be ignored, which is why I chose

to use perspectives from Critical Whiteness studies as a theoretical lens for this study. Throughout this article, I rely on the following definitions of Whiteness, White supremacy, and White privilege:

> Whiteness is a sociohistorical form of consciousness, given birth at the nexus of capitalism, colonial rule, and the emergent relationships among dominant subordinate groups. Whiteness constitutes and demarcates ideas, feelings, knowledge, social practices, cultural formations, and systems of intelligibility that are identified with or attributed to white people and that are invested in by white people as 'white'... As a lived domain of meaning, whiteness represents particular social and historical formations that are reproduced through specific discursive and material processes and circuits of desire and power. (McLaren, 1998, p. 66)

According to McLaren (1998), Whiteness functions both as an ideology that informs and shapes identity, *as well as* it provides the foundation for institutions and societal systems. White privilege refers to the economic and social advantages White people receive due to their Whiteness (McIntosh, 1992), while White supremacy describes the systemic and institutional maintenance of those advantages (Lipsitz, 1998). Whiteness as an invisible default impacts all aspects of education, where hegemonic values such as meritocracy are given more weight than the recognition that racial construction is a political project creating an uneven playing field.

Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) offer a field of scholarship that centers the invisible structures that uphold White supremacy, the privileges afforded to White people, and its ties to racism. Twine and Gallagher (2008) provide a comprehensive account of the development of CWS, beginning with W.E.B DuBois into the present and the "third wave". Particularly of note in regards to this project is the shift from viewing Whiteness primarily through an identity lens to focus on the "nuanced and locally specific ways in which Whiteness as a form of power is defined, deployed, performed, policed and reinvented" (Twine & Gallagher, 2008, p.5).

There have been many studies that explore White identity construction in teacher education. As a way to assess the work addressing Whiteness in teacher education and to suggest what future directions this line of research should take, Jupp et al. (2016) provide a robust compilation of scholarship regarding White teacher identity, specifically from 2004-2014. They have coded the articles from this time period into two categories: (1) White identity race-evasive studies, and (2) White identity race-visible studies. White identity race-evasive refers to the observed avoidance and resistance that White preservice teach-

ers partake in when confronted with issues of race, racism and White supremacy. Race-visible studies acknowledge White identity and White preservice teachers as having varying degrees of recognition of "race, class, culture, language, and other differences in students and themselves and understood differences as having potential for teaching and learning" (Jupp et al., 2016, p. 1168).

Frequently cited White identity race-evasive studies include Applebaum (2005), Castagno (2008, 2014), Garrett and Segall (2013), Gay and Kirkland (2003), Ohito (2016), and Picower (2009), all of whom examine different ways that White teachers engage in resistance and avoidance of discourse in race, racism and White domination. Whether through silence (Castagno, 2008), powerblindness (Castagno, 2014), maintained ignorance (Garrett & Segall, 2013), moral responsibility (Applebaum, 2005), or tools of Whiteness (Picower, 2009), these researchers demonstrate the varied ways White identity is constructed in order to avoid issues of race and racism.

Conversely, race-visible studies such as Crowley (2016) and Lensmire (2010) work towards complicating White identity with the purpose of revealing White preservice teachers to be a heterogenous group that is capable of varying degrees of recognition and awareness of race, racism and White supremacy. Lensmire (2010) adds to (and is indeed a part of establishing) the literature on White teacher identities that serves to "describe and theorize White identity and Whiteness in ways that avoid essentializing them, but that also keep in view White privilege and a larger White supremacist context" (p. 159). Lensmire's (2010) work serves as an example of a race visible study in that it seeks to explore the complexity of White identity. Researchers involved in this work posit that understanding the White racial identity as nuanced and messy may aid in the use of critical pedagogy with White students and social justice efforts in teacher education.

Teacher Education as Mediator

The research described above indicates the need for White teachers to critically reflect on their identities and suggests that teacher preparation programs are an integral place for this awareness to develop and transformation to occur. Hambacher and Ginn (2021) provide a helpful literature review that describes the various instructional methods teacher educators use in order to make race visible and salient for pre-service teachers. These practices include, but are not limited to, race-reflective writing assignments, digital storytelling and examining historical documents for critical family history exercises. The ma-

jority of the studies the authors reviewed found PSTs resisting deep engagement with topics of race and racism, whether through relying on meritocracy to explain racial inequality, avoiding race talk yet embracing topics of "culture," or distrusting and discrediting the teacher educators who taught about racism and Whiteness in their courses. They also describe some teacher educators bringing attention to the emotionality brought up by discussions of race, as well as to the complexities of grappling with Whiteness in antiracist work, which alludes to some of the messiness that Lensmire (2010) posits that it is necessary for negotiating White identities. Ultimately, the authors call for an approach that moves beyond "simplistic white privilege pedagogies to grapple with complex and at times paradoxical aspects of race-visible teacher education" (Hambacher & Ginn, 2021, p.339) and centers both individual and structural analyses of power and oppression.

With Hambacher and Ginn's (2021) conclusion in mind, it is important to consider the affordances and constraints provided by the environment of teacher education itself. While teacher education programs maintain some autonomy in their day-to-day functioning, like all systems connected to the federal government, they are expected to adhere to standards developed and mandated by the state. When state formation is intimately entangled with racial formation as it is in the United States, state institutions preserve and disseminate the construction and categorization of racial hierarchies.

Goldberg (2002) comprehensively outlines the relationship between racial formation and state formation, bringing pertinent global examples and drawing on theorists such as Stuart Hall, Antonio Gramsci, and Michel Foucault. While it is often thought and implied that racism is as American as apple pie, Goldberg outlined exactly how the state creates racial categories and hierarchies, illustrating how racialized subjects are in fact *essential* to capitalist state formation and the maintenance of power. However, in the interest of maintaining an "apolitical" stance, the state creates distance from the "racist state." By maintaining separation, the state can appear as a fair and objective entity, which forces any discriminatory actions to be seen as contained in the individual citizen rather than the system. For example, urban schools with a high percentage of Black and Brown students may be designated as low-performing largely in part due to a lack of federal and state funding, yet the students and families will be blamed as not caring enough about their education.

The invisible nature of a racist state connects deeply with the exploration of identity negotiation in teacher education programs as state institutions that could promote an environment of political neu-

trality while reproducing colorblind and racially hierarchical norms. Goldberg's (2002) theory helps identify the role of state apparatuses such as the university and education systems and the invisibility of the perpetuation of inequitable racial configurations without being implicated as racist institutions.

Between the entanglement of racialization at the institutional (macro) and individual (micro) level, Ray (2019) suggests that racialized organizations (meso level) are in a position to reproduce or transform policies of the racial state and individual prejudice. A primary concern for Ray (2019) is that race is considered as constitutive of organizations, rather than identified as race-neutral. Furthermore, organizations have the opportunity to transform cultural schemas and distribution of resources through influencing agency, motive and action. Teacher education functions as a racialized organization in that it can participate in reflecting and reproducing the racial hierarchy of the state and enhance prejudice in individuals, or alternatively, teacher education can reshape cultural schemas and provide access to resources that reject the racial hierarchy. Identifying teacher education as a racialized organization, rather than race-neutral, centers the necessity to transform the environment in which racial identity and structures are explored.

Similarly, Philip and Benin (2014) developed a model illustrating how teacher education programs can act as a mediator, giving a space for future teachers to negotiate and explore their racial identities. In their qualitative case study of a social justice-oriented teacher preparation program, the authors address the role of local contexts as mediators of White racial identity, with particular attention to the dimensions of Whiteness, ideology, and agency. This study seeks to align with the work of Philip and Benin (2014) by bringing attention to the programmatic structure of teacher education as a racialized organization (Ray, 2019) and considering how the examination and awareness of racial identity can be developed in that context.

Methods

As the literature suggests that most exploration of social identities takes place in multicultural education and around notions of social justice, a program with a focus on justice and equity seemed an ideal environment to explore if and how pre-service teachers engaged in critical reflection around their social identities. This qualitative case study draws data from a 15-month Master's and Teaching Credential (MA/C) program located in a research university. The program was selected due to the claim in its mission statement that it prepares teachers to

be change agents and social justice advocates. The Office of Research Compliance determined that this study did not need a formal IRB review number because it only de-identified papers from the teacher candidates and analyzed them after the critical reflection was submitted as part of candidates' regular program-related homework.

Sample and Data Sources

There are three main areas where this master's teacher credential program encourages pre-service teachers to critically reflect on their positionality: (1) through a social foundations course; (2) the master's thesis entitled the Developing Teacher Project (DTP) as a self-reflection tool at the end of the program; and (3) and evaluating the progress of pre-service teachers by utilizing Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs), which are developed by the program but aligned with the state expectations for beginning teachers. This qualitative research study primarily examines the DTP but also considers the Teaching Performance Expectations.

As a representation and culmination of the experiences of pre-service teachers in a teacher education program, the DTP provides an opportunity to gain perspective on how the MA/C program has influenced participants' identities and ideologies. The DTP is comprised of four sections: (1) Setting the context; (2) Principles and Commitments; (3) Instructional and Curricular Practices; and (4) Developing as a Self-Reflective Professional. The sections are the product of four prompts given to the pre-service teachers (PSTs) in one of their final courses where they develop responses to each prompt, and receive feedback from their peers, the graduate student readers and the instructor (see Appendix).

Lastly, the Teaching Performance Expectations are adapted by the MA/C program from the state expectations to illustrate what beginning teachers are required to know before entering the teaching profession. The TPEs are organized by six domains: (1) Engaging and supporting all students in learning; (2) Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning; (3) Understanding and Organizing subject matter for student learning; (4) Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students; (5) Assessing student learning; and (6) Developing as a professional educator. The program director of the MA/C program shared the program version of the TPEs with me during an informational interview centering on the purpose of the DTP and its development.

While this research project primarily examines the DTPs, it is supplemented with additional information from an informative interview

with the program director on the usefulness of the DTP and the TPE documents outlining the expectations for teacher preparation. The future teachers are required to successfully complete the DTP in order to finish and graduate from the teacher preparation program. I have limited this exploration of positionality and critical reflection in the DTPs to the 24 multi-subject pre-service teachers (N=24) who plan to teach elementary school. I am particularly interested in how the logics of Whiteness emerge when teachers discuss race in the DTPs. In this paper, I chose to center the projects of the seven White pre-service teachers who identify their race in their DTPs because White teachers are more likely to rely on dominant and stereotypical conceptions of race and difference (Picower, 2009). I have chosen pseudonyms for these seven teachers, illustrated in Table 1. The program director of the MA/C program at UCSC redacted the names from the papers prior to giving them to me for analysis and provided demographic statistics on the racial and gender identities of the multiple-subject cohort. The self-reported demographics reflected a cohort that was 67% White, 23% Hispanic/Latinx, 7% Black/African American, and 3% who chose to not identify, with 85% of students identifying as women and 15% identifying as men. The composition of this cohort, which is two-thirds White and majority female-identified, is reflective of the majority of teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher learning across the United States (Sleeter, 2001).

Analysis

The present research uses narrative analysis (Linde, 1993) as a method to identify themes around positionality and critical self-reflection that emerge in the DTPs. In particular, analysis focuses on how pre-service teachers utilize narrative as a way to construct the racialized self and how they seek to represent themselves in regards to becoming social justice teachers. Drawing on the notion of identity as narrative outlined by Linde (1993), I considered how the pre-ser-

Table 1
Teachers Addressing Racial Tension

Pedagogical method	*Provide culturally responsive pedagogy*	*Build social and cultural consciousness*	*Engage in critical reflection*
White teachers	Linda Kylie Alexa	Megan Kate	Ashlyn Hannah

vice teachers discussed their social and cultural positionality. Linde (1993) describes three characteristics of the Self: "Continuity of the self, particularly continuity of the self through time; relation of the self to others; and reflexivity of the self, or treatment of the self as other, including moral evaluation of the self" (p. 100). It seemed appropriate to analyze the DTPs using these categories given the nature of the paper as an exit credential focusing on how the PSTs have developed and grown throughout their program in order to "become" an educator. Thus, their narratives will likely reflect a process of becoming and subsequently provide a reflection on their identities.

In addition, as this study is framed by a Critical Whiteness lens, throughout the analysis of the DTPs, I conceptualized the narrative as a construction of Self with consideration to the role and pervasiveness of Whiteness in order to explore how White pre-service teachers use criticality in reflecting on their racial identities and positionalities.

This analysis used top-down coding as described by Erickson (2004), paying particular attention to areas in which PSTs discussed their identities and/or self-reflection, or where I would expect them to acknowledge their positionality. In other words, I also considered omitted items or those that "can be identified because they never appear, even though researchers might think it reasonable that they would" (Lecompte, 2000, p.148). Throughout the analysis, I wrote theoretical code memos (Emerson et al., 2011) indicating the meanings and themes I found in the papers. I returned to the memos and the papers frequently in the analysis to sort out and check what I was gathering in my exploration. I consulted colleagues and mentors on my codes and coding process, including showing them the raw data in an effort to maintain credibility and confirmability in the analysis process (Shenton, 2004).

Findings

There is not a prompt in the DTP that specifically refers to positionality and race, however, the last section is entitled "Developing as a Self-Reflective Professional." Given that self-reflection was incorporated into this final prompt, I assumed I would find most discussion of positionality and racial identity in this section, and yet, this was not the case. Almost all instances of a PST referring to their racial identity occurred in the first section, "Setting the Context," in which PSTs discuss the current social context of the education system at large, as well as the specifics of their school districts (if they had already been offered a job). Out of the twenty-four multiple subject pre-service teachers whose DTPs were analyzed, only ten explicitly refer to their

racial identity in their papers. Out of the ten teachers that state their racial identity, seven identify themselves as White and three as teachers of color. All ten PSTs state their racial identity in relation to their future students or their student communities. The teachers of color seek to highlight that their becoming educators is important in order for the students of color to be seen and heard without stereotypes or biases. They indicate that they intend to see students *because* of their race, rather than in spite of it. On the other hand, White teachers tend to focus on specifying racial difference between themselves and their potential students by identifying the difficulty that a racial mismatch might present. Their suggestions for easing this tension include development of social and cultural consciousness, use of culturally relevant curriculum, and critical reflection. In this article, I focus on the DTP papers of the seven White teachers.

White Teacher Expression of Racial Difference

The seven White teachers identify their race directly in relation to their future students and their communities and do so in a way to illustrate the racial mismatch between teacher and students. The PSTs recognize an issue with the fact that as White teachers, their racial identity differs from the majority of students they will be teaching and they are working out how to ease this tension. Within the statement that they reveal their racial identity, each White PST identifies a pedagogical method of ameliorating the tension that may arise due to the racial mismatch between teacher and students. These methods fall into three categories: building social and cultural consciousness, providing culturally responsive pedagogy and engaging in ongoing critical reflection (see Table 1).

The following sections include examples from the data that describe how these statements regarding racial identity were made in the context of the papers.

Provide Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Three of the White PSTs point to instructional methods of incorporating funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) or culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) into the curriculum as a way to address the racial mismatch between teacher and students. Linda describes the possible dynamics of her future dual-immersion Spanish/English classroom:

> In this classroom, which will consist of a diverse group of twenty-two eight-year-olds and I, there will be boundless opportunities for me to

> facilitate culturally relevant lessons, as well as many opportunities to open up space for difficult conversations of the role of race, family and caretakers' cultural and national identities in relation to each student's identity in the larger context of schooling and society itself.

Kylie discusses what she anticipates struggling with in her first year of teaching:

> The fact, plain and simple, regardless of charter or public, is that I am not my students… In coping with these tensions, I look to my own commitments and principles for guidance and accountability... I believe in whole-child-based learning, in representational, relevant material as a part of culturally relevant pedagogy, and in the constructivist idea of teacher as student and student as teacher.

Alexa links her White racial identity to the curriculum by stating:

> As a White teacher in California, there is no way I can reflect the ethnicity of the majority of the students in my classroom. In addition to these changing and mismatched demographics, the historically White curriculum makes it difficult for students to see themselves represented in their education, textbooks/novels, and so often, the teacher's lesson plans.

Each of these three teachers have identified their own (White) racial identity as racially different from their students; they have each recognized that there is a tension in this racial mismatch and have suggested incorporating culturally relevant lessons as a pedagogical method of ameliorating this tension.

Develop Social and Cultural Consciousness

Two White teachers mention their racial identity in connection to the need for developing a greater social and cultural consciousness particularly of the cultures represented by the students in their future classrooms. Megan specifies that:

> Although I will never truly understand what it means to be a person of color or an EL going through the education system, the best thing that I can do to support these students is to continually learn about cultures which differ from my own.

This statement suggests that Megan recognizes how her background and experiences will likely differ from those of her students and conceptualizes learning about the cultures of her students as a way to bridge the gap in lived experiences. Similarly, Kate considers that:

> In order to break past the stigmas that surround White women teaching children of color, I intend to do my best to learn about my students'

> community and cultures. I hope to incorporate these unique factors into my classroom and my teaching.

Megan and Kate have identified their own (White) racial identity as racially different from their students; they have each recognized that there is a tension in this racial mismatch and have suggested developing social and cultural consciousness about their students and their communities as a pedagogical method of addressing this tension.

Engage in Critical Reflection

The last two White teachers discuss committing the time it takes to critically reflect on one's positionality and identify that it is a lifelong process. They indicate in their explanation of their racial identity that examining one's positionality and race requires commitment through "constant reflection on myself in the context of my community" and "to question and investigate my privilege on a daily basis, to fight heartedly against my own deep-seated teacher bias, bias that took root as a privileged White member of U.S. society." Ashlyn makes connections between racial identities and power: "I will consistently need to situate my identity within the systems of power and oppression", and Hannah describes her struggle with her role as a White educator in this system:

> I worry that if I ignore these critical and tangible contexts, that I will perpetuate oppressive structures within my classroom. I worry that those who are already marginalized will be doubly marginalized at my hand, a teacher, expected to look out for my students' wellbeing. I worry that I will not be able to do justice to my students, to bring equity in the small-scale classroom level.

These two teachers have identified their own (White) racial identity in terms of racially different from their students or communities; they have each recognized that there is a tension in this racial mismatch and have suggested the need for ongoing critical reflection, recognition and awareness of power and how their identities might be implicated in order to mitigate this tension.

Based on these examples, the White PSTs are constructing a self in relation to others and engaging in reflexivity of the self. As Linde (1993) describes "the second property of the self that is created by narrative is the distinguishability of the self from others, such that it is different and unique but at the same time related to others" (p.101). The seven White teachers who hope to ameliorate the racial mismatch between teacher and students by developing social consciousness around the cultures of their students and incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms are defining themselves in relation to others

(their students) while also seeking out ways to be connected and "related" to their students (through culturally relevant pedagogy). Furthermore, due to the fact that the DTP papers are written and the PSTs have the opportunity to edit and rewrite their narratives, Linde's property of the reflexivity of self is relevant in the DTPs, particularly in her description of the moral value of self. She specifies that "the very act of narrating creates the occasion for self-regard and editing. The most pervasive way in which the self is treated as an other is in the determination of the moral value of the self" (Linde, 1993, p.105). In terms of the PSTs in this study, in the process of writing their narratives on what is important in becoming an educator, they describe themselves as moral human beings. For example, the seven White teachers who explicitly state their racial identity are illustrating their moral values: they understand the tension in a racial mismatch between the teacher and their students and the moral action to take is to ease that tension. In other words, in addressing the racial mismatch between teacher and students, they are putting their best foot forward and show that they as "the narrator knows what the norms are and agrees with them" (Linde, 1993, p.123). These White PSTs show that they know there is a tension to pay attention to and the five PSTs who suggest social/cultural consciousness and culturally relevant curriculum (see Table 1) illustrate their moral value by demonstrating what they have been taught will improve the circumstances of the racial mismatch.

The moral value of Self can be compared to the notions of niceness and goodness described by Castagno (2014) from a critical Whiteness perspective. Castagno (2014) describes niceness as central to the maintenance of Whiteness as a dominant ideology, particularly in the ways it is connected to neutrality, equality, and compassion in education and teaching. In regards to colormuteness, Castagno (2008) defines the term by quoting Pollock (2004): "*Race talk matters.* All Americans, every day, *are* reinforcing racial distinctions and racialized thinking by using race labels; but we are also reinforcing racial inequality by refusing to use them (Pollock 2004, p.4, emphasis in original). Thus, avoidance of using racialized language also solidifies racial distinctions and inequity because the status quo is not troubled but rather maintained and unquestioned. If you do not talk about race, you do not talk about racism (DiAngelo, 2018). While the five PSTs mentioned above illustrate their niceness through an acknowledgment of diversity and appeal to the readers' sense of fairness through incorporating "other" cultures into the classroom, there were fourteen multiple subject PSTs who did not explicitly state their racial identity, which could also be considered a form of niceness in not discussing race at all, remain-

ing "colormute" because race is a difficult and not-nice topic. Castagno (2008) refers to Johnson (2001) when she describes colormuteness: "most (White) people are "put off" by words such as race, racism, and even White, because they assume that the words are imbued with personal and individual blame and guilt" (Castagno, 2008, p.319). The lack of over half of the PSTs identifying their racial identity as important in becoming an educator points to niceness and colormuteness working as tools of Whiteness, ultimately reifying Whiteness as dominant and maintaining the status quo.

Teaching Performance Expectations

During an informational interview on the purpose of the DTP as well as how the prompts are developed, the program director shared the program adaption of the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) which function as a method of assessment of the teachers throughout the program. The expectations outlined in the TPEs are based on the state teacher preparation expectations, however, the program director informed me that the TPEs for the university give further detail and divide expectations into each quarter of the program. The overarching expectations that the teachers are assessed on are the same as the six state expectations described in the methods section.

While the TPEs assess for culturally relevant instruction, making connections between subject matter and real-life contexts, promoting critical and creative thinking and reflection on teaching practice in order to improve student learning, at no point is there an assessment on how pre-service teachers have developed a critical consciousness or awareness of their historical, social and cultural positionality. In fact, in this teacher education program's adaptation of the TPEs, race is not mentioned at all. In other words, the program expectations of beginning teachers do not require them to develop a racial consciousness. While the program could be encouraging critical awareness through courses such as social foundations where PSTs may engage in critical reflection around their racial identities, the expectations from the program do not reflect the necessity of producing racially-conscious teachers. Thus, from an assessment standpoint, while teachers will be rigorously evaluated on their content and pedagogical competence, it is possible for a social-justice program to produce teachers that are racially illiterate.

These findings suggest the pervasiveness of Whiteness even in programs that seek to be social justice-oriented. The teacher education program encouraged the development of social and cultural consciousness but it did so mainly by focusing on understanding the cultures of

the K-12 students rather than the social and cultural positioning of the teacher. In addition, because the program's Teaching Performance Expectations side-step race as an essential topic of study, colorblindness becomes the default, solidifying Whiteness as the norm.

Strengths and Limitations of Study

The DTP presents both strengths and limitations as a data source for examining positionality and critical reflection in regards to pre-service teachers. Its strengths include that it is the final assignment and represents the culmination of field experience and coursework for the PSTs in this program. This assignment requires future teachers to intentionally reflect on the larger context of education and to consider how they will fit in as new teachers as well as how to implement various theories and philosophies that they have been exposed to in the program. In addition, the DTPs provide an opportunity to examine how issues of equity and social justice influence pre-service teachers.

Limitations of the study include that the DTP is a mandatory assignment and, due to this, students may engage in the performativity of reflection, meaning their papers will illustrate what they perceive the instructor wants to hear or the students' belief of what is expected. This assignment comes at the very end of their program and must be completed in order to graduate, thus, many students may be suffering from fatigue and not writing up to their highest potential. In addition, many students already have jobs and are completing this as a compulsory assignment, not an opportunity for meaningful reflection. A possibility for future research would include exploring pre-service teacher reflection on racial identity and becoming a social justice teacher through interviews interspersed throughout their program as well as interviews and observations of the same teachers during their first years in the classroom.

Discussion and Implications

Teacher education programs are charged with a number of vital tasks when preparing teachers. Philip et al. (2018) warn of the risk of reproducing the status quo when teacher preparation primarily focuses on developing teaching practices geared towards meeting the requirements of standardized testing and furthering the neo-liberal agenda rather than solidifying the historical, social and cultural theoretical foundation of future teachers. While developing core practices is essential, the authors suggest three principles for teacher preparation programs to abide by:

> 1. Take a public stance on how market-based reform efforts undermine the ideals of public education and act on that stance accordingly and transparently.
>
> 2. (Re)emphasize the social, cultural, political, and situated dimensions of teachers' practices and how they stand to reproduce, challenge, and/or transform systems and hierarchies of power in classrooms and society.
> 3. Center justice, with a recognition of and willingness to address historical and contemporary systems of oppression; consider If, How, and When core practices might mis/align with this commitment to justice. (Philip et al., 2018, pp. 9-10)

It is with these principles in mind that I consider the findings of this study.

The teacher preparation program on which this study focused defined consciousness as a development of cultural and social consciousness, a commitment to learning about students, their families and communities so that they can build on prior knowledge. Furthermore, the program's Teaching Performance Expectations (based on the state standards) only require students to reflect on their instructional practices and develop culturally relevant instruction techniques. This intention of the program and the TPEs is especially evident in the responses from PSTs who identified their racial identities in their DTPs, where each White teacher focuses on a pedagogical method that will mitigate the tension generated by the racial mismatch between teacher and students. The attention to racial identity is mainly linked to pedagogical methods and content knowledge: understanding more about students' cultures in order to provide culturally relevant pedagogy. However, as scholars have pointed out (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Daniels and Varghese, 2019; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Utt & Tochluk, 2016) limiting cultural understanding only to others may ignore the racial and culture identity of the pre-service teacher, which is imperative because White PSTs may not "recognize that they have a cultural identity" (Boyd & Noblit, 2015, p.443). This omission of cultivating consistent critical reflection for (especially White) PSTs reifies Whiteness as dominant and encourages a powerblind perspective.

> Whereas colorblindness refers to our reluctance and avoidance of race and the role race plays in our everyday lives, powerblindness refers to our reluctance and avoidance of race, social class, language, gender, sexuality, and other aspects of identity that are linked to power (or lack thereof) and the distribution of resources in the United States. (Castagno, 2014, p.50)

When pre-service teachers and/or teacher preparation programs exclude critical reflection on positionality, the PSTs risk becoming powerblind, unaware of the context of their identities and the historical power inherent in those positions. While PSTs have background knowledge and experience that they arrive with when entering into teacher preparation, the teacher education program shapes the learning environment through its policies and expectations of beginning teachers. An area for further research might examine the role of teacher education policies such as the Teaching Performance Expectations and their connection to pre-service teacher engagement in developing a racial consciousness.

Conclusion

I argue that teacher preparation programs are an incredibly important arena for teachers to commit to developing a consciousness of their historical, social and cultural positionality in order to bring a critical lens to the power structures in place. Teacher education programs have an opportunity to serve as an environment for teachers to negotiate and make meaning out of their racialized identities through local interactions, rather than assuming racialization to be static and decontextual (Philip and Benin, 2014). While seven White teachers found it important to discuss their racial identity in the Developing Teacher Project, only two of those White teachers critically reflected on the messiness of Whiteness and power dynamics in the K-12 classroom (Castagno, 2014; Daniels & Varghese, 2019; Lensmire, 2010). Employing teacher preparation programs in deep engagement around racial identity and positionality has the potential to bring critical awareness to power structures at play in our education systems and provide pre-service teachers the agency to navigate becoming a transformative teacher for social justice.

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Appendix

Developing Teacher Project Prompts

PROMPT 1/ SETTING THE CONTEXT

What are some key features of the current state and national educational contexts that you will encounter as a new teacher? This may include attention to demographic (i.e. language or race), policy (i.e. standards or school structures), and/or economic factors. Think about particular factors that will likely interact with the principles and practices you will be writing about throughout this essay.

PROMPT 2/ PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS

What are the broad principles, understandings, and commitments that shape your conception of teaching and that act as the frame on which you will hang your teaching practices? How do these principles, understandings, and commitments link the promotion of academic excellence for students to the establishment of democratic learning communities in linguistically and culturally diverse settings? In what ways are these principles related to the current educational contexts that you addressed in Part 1?

PROMPT 3/ INSTRUCTIONAL AND CURRICULAR PRACTICES

What is your concrete vision of learning and teaching in the classroom? How will it address standards-based subject-matter content and disciplinary practices through instruction informed by sound theory and research? What actual instructional practices will you implement in your work—and how do those practices connect to broader theories, readings, and other program experiences you have had this year? In other words, 'paint a picture' with your writing of what your future classroom and its learning and teaching will look like.

PROMPT 4/ DEVELOPING AS SELF REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL

Reflecting on the entirety of your teacher education experience, what kinds of tensions and contradictions did you encounter between the ideal and the real practices of teaching? What resources and experiences have helped you develop as an educator thus far and how might you draw from those resources to continue to thrive in the future as an educator? How will you challenge yourself intellectually, creatively, and professionally going forward in order to foster the commitments, principles, and understandings that you have discussed in this essay?