ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

A CALIFORNIA COUNCIL ON TEACHER EDUCATION JOURNAL

Issues in Teacher Education

A Journal of the California Council on Teacher Education

Volume 33, Number 1, Spring 2024

Contents

Introduction to Spring 2024 Issue

A Timely Examination of Persistent Issues in Teacher Education

Allison Smith
University of Massachusetts Global

This Spring 2024 issue of *Issues in Teacher Education* delves into the ever-evolving landscape and challenges of teacher education. While many of the challenges addressed in this issue are not new, the authors provide a critical analysis within the context of our current educational climate. The COVID-19 pandemic and the political climate have undoubtedly exacerbated these longstanding challenges, propelling the field of teacher education into a period of necessary adaptation and improvement.

This issue moves beyond simply acknowledging these persistent issues and, instead, offers fresh perspectives by highlighting key themes such as the national teacher shortage, the need for increased diversity and representation within the educator workforce, the insidious nature of implicit racial bias, and the importance of fostering inclusive learning environments.

The issue opens with a series of insightful commentaries that provide community, national, and international perspectives on the state of the teaching workforce and teacher education, then focuses in on the

Allison Smith is an associate professor and director of clinical practice in the School of Education at University of Massachusetts Global, Aliso Viejo, California. She is the editor of Issues in Teacher Education. Email address: allison.smith@umassglobal.edu

need to be responsive, not reactive in addressing these issues, and then moves to specific ways in which change can be actualized.

The commentaries offer a perfect segue into the research. With a particular focus on the nationwide teacher shortage and the under-representation of Black educators, the first article explores efforts in Pennsylvania to empower Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to create positive change in diversifying the teacher workforce within their teacher education programs. The second article takes a deeper look at how racial biases manifest within classrooms, drawing specific attention to implicit biases against Black female students. This research underscores the urgent need for teacher education programs to equip educators with the tools and strategies to identify and address these biases. Building on the theme of representation, the final article explores the importance of anti-bias and inclusive curriculum practices within early childhood special education. It emphasizes the importance of embracing differences in the classroom without stigmatization. The researchers look closely at how classroom picture books represent disability.

Overall, through its blend of thought-provoking commentary and data-driven research, this Spring 2024 issue of *Issues in Teacher Education* offers a valuable resource for educators and stakeholders invested in the future of the field.

The State of Teacher Education

A Commentary

Lynn M. Gangone
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

Introduction

Teacher education is a complicated and nuanced field to study. From the beginning of normal schools to state comprehensives; from "teacher training" to a body of research on the education of teachers, from the Holmes Group to the AACTE Futures Task Force, teacher education is a hotly debated, often criticized topic, and seen as requiring "reform." At AACTE, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the belief in a university or college-based teacher preparation program is at the core of our work, yet that basis for preparing the best teachers is being eroded. Even in California, a state that prides itself on strong university-based teacher education, only 58% of newly-credentialed California teachers in 2020-21 were fully prepared in teacher preparation programs (Patrick, Darling-Hammond, & Kini, 2023).

As President and Chief Executive Officer of AACTE, I develop national and international viewpoints on the state of teacher education here in the United States and throughout the world. My focus is aggregating data from teacher educators, teacher candidates, and deans through AACTE and through my work with the Global Network of Deans of Education (GNDE; https://www.education-deans. org/). Consistent themes emerge related to the current state of teacher education.

Lynn M. Gangone is President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Association of College for Teacher Education, Washington, D.C. Email address: lgangone@aacte.org

For the sake of this commentary, I will focus on four of those specific themes as follows:

> 1. Lack of interest in teaching as a profession: The decline in those pursuing teaching degrees and teacher shortages are worldwide.

> 2. Consequences of federal and state policies: Either intentionally or unintentionally, federal and state policies can create havoc for teacher preparation programs.

> 3. The job for which we are preparing our candidates: In the 21st century, continuing to teach through a one teacher-one classroom model does not serve teacher education, teaching, or our students well.

> 4. The impact of the current political climate: Divisive issues legislation creates a chilling effect on university-based teacher education, teachers, and students alike.

Lack of Interest in Teaching as a Profession

The decline in those pursuing teaching degrees and teacher shortages occurs worldwide. According to the UNESCO International Task Force on Teachers for Education (2023) "this global shortage of teachers is hindering access to education, with a projected deficit of 44 million teachers to achieve primary and secondary universal education by 2030. The result is overcrowded classrooms, diminished teaching quality, and limited learning opportunities, especially in underserved communities" (UNESCO, 2023, p. 1). With global migration "[d]iversifying the teaching force has become a priority in many migrant-receiving jurisdictions worldwide with the growing mismatch between the ethnic backgrounds, cultures, languages, and religions of teachers and those of students and families" (Schmidt & Schneider, 2016, abstract).

Here in the United States, AACTE has thoroughly documented the long-term decline in enrollments in teacher preparation programs in reports such as *Colleges of Education: National Portrait* (2022). However, in the most recent Issues Brief from AACTE, *Data Update: Degrees and Certificates Conferred in Education* (2024) the author notes:

> The enrollment decline that occurred after the Great Recession of 2008 appears to have abated. From a low of 82,600 in 2018-19, the number of bachelor's degrees conferred in education rose to 93,270 in 2021-22, an increase of 13%. This is especially encouraging given that many students suspended enrollment—or dropped out entirely—during the pandemic. (J. King, 2024, p.2)

While the stabilization of enrollments in teacher education is promising, for university-based teacher education there is great caution. In *AACTE Update: Teacher Preparation Program Trends 2010-11 to 2020-21* (2024), the author notes:

> After precipitously declining during the first half of the 2010s, total enrollment in teacher preparation programs has stabilized in recent years at approximately

600,000 teacher candidates annually. However, the distribution of that enroll-
ment across program types has continued to shift as enrollment in non-IHE-
based alternative programs has more than doubled and enrollment in IHE-based
comprehensive programs has declined by 45%. (J. King, 2024, p. 2)

In the non-IHE-based category, which includes "programs run by school
districts, state education agencies, charter schools, local or national nonprofits
(like Teach For America), and for-profit companies. The for-profit sector—most
notably, Teachers of Tomorrow, which operates in eight states, including Texas—
dominates the growth in this category" (Will, 2024, p. 5). In AACTE's report *The
Alternative Teacher Certification Sector Outside Higher Education* (2022), King
and Yin note that "despite growing enrollment, the number of students completing
non-IHE alternative certification programs declined by 10 percent from academic
year 2010-11 to 2018-19, illustrating that the expansion of this sector has not alle-
viated the United States' teacher shortage" (King & Yin, 2022, p.2) . While there
is growth of participation in non-IHE based preparation, which I would argue does
not always fully prepare a candidate for the classroom, those programs are also
falling short of addressing the teacher shortage.

Add to this overall shortage the continued dearth of teachers from diverse
racial and ethnic backgrounds. In the 2020 TNP study, *The Broken Pipeline*, when
2017-18 U.S. Department of Education data were analyzed, the study found that
enrollees at teacher preparation programs were nearly 64% white, with 43 states
having a diversity gap of 10 or more percentage points, 21 states having a gap of
20 or more percentage points, and three states having a gap of 30 or more percent-
age points (TNTP, 2020). These statistics are all the more concerning since only
47% of the nation's public school students are white. Distinct efforts continue to
be made to diversify the teacher candidate pool, such as the U.S. Department of
Education National Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign, developed
in partnership with TEACH.org and One Million Teachers of Color, encouraging
LatinX and African American youth to join the teaching profession (U. S. Depart-
ment of Education, 2023). Yet the lack of diverse candidates and diverse teachers
continues to plague our profession nationally and internationally. How teacher
education can grow and thrive to meet the needs of students worldwide clearly is
a deeply unresolved issue.

Unintended Consequences of Federal and State Policies

Education is the foundation of democracies. An educated population is the
basis for an engaged citizenry. Therefore, how governments invest in education
matters deeply. Historically, teacher education/educator preparation worldwide
has been under consistent, and sometimes invasive, scrutiny by national and inter-
national entities. Given the foundational role of education to uplift each and every
learner and the impact education has on economic growth and societal advance-

ment, governments have a logical interest in the quality of education and those who are preparing to educate.

While governments do have this logical interest in education, often federal and state policies either intentionally or unintentionally create havoc for teacher preparation programs. One example from the AACTE Consortium for Research-Based and Equitable Assessment (CREA), is that while State Education Agencies/ State Departments of Education/State Boards of Education/Professional Standards Commissions set cutoff scores for entrance licensure examinations, the frequency with which the state evaluates cutoff scores is unknown, and that often those scores were set arbitrarily, thus creating an untended barrier to entrance into teacher education programs (Fenwick, 2021).

Another example is the wave across the country of the "new" science of reading. Since 2019, 47 states and Washington, D.C., have passed at least one bill related to reforming reading instruction. The new rules apply to areas like school curriculum, professional development for teachers, screenings for dyslexic students, and requirements for testing (Cohen, 2023; Fensterwald, 2024). In Colorado, The READ Act (https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy) requires that educator preparation programs receive approval by the Colorado Department of Education (https://www.cpr.org/2023/06/13/colorado-teacher-prep-programs-reading/), which was seen by many teacher educators as unduly intrusive into college and university literacy instruction. AB2222 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2222) in California seeks to legislate how to teach reading. According to Fensterwald (2024, p. 1):

> The bill would shift the state's decade-old policy of encouraging districts to incorporate fundamental reading skills in the early grades, including phonics, to demanding that they do so. This would depart from the state policy of giving school districts discretion to choose curriculums and teaching methods that meet state academic standards" and further strengthen the accountability of teacher preparation program in the science of reading.

This perceived intrusion is not limited to the United States. In their paper *Learning is Scotland's Future?* (2023) Chapman and Donaldson identify existing barriers to the progress of educational change and improvement in Scotland, which can be applied beyond the Scottish context:

> 1. National policies that unintentionally encourage schools to narrow educational experiences.
>
> 2. Administrative structures that limit the freedom of practitioners to experiment.
>
> 3. Fragmentation within education systems that inhibit opportunities for sharing expertise; and
>
> 4. Cultures and structures that discourage the sharing of expertise.

This worldwide shortage of teachers, particularly influenced by the global pandemic, has exacerbated the behavior of policymakers and others as they seek to "fix" what is perceived as "broken" in the preparation of teachers. Yet "the history of educational innovation and change cautions against top down, delivery-oriented models of change. Such mechanistic attempts to improve outcomes fail to catalyse significant, sustained success" (Chapman & Donaldson, 2024).

Another example of perceived policy overreach occurs in England. In the book *Teacher Education in Crisis: The State, The Market and the Universities in England,* editor Viv Ellis also warns against what he calls "the state's authoritarian interventions" (Ellis, 2024, p. 213) into initial teacher education (ITE). One example of this is that ITE must deliver the government's core curriculum "with compliance micromanaged nationally by central government" (Ellis & Childs, p. 1).

There are innumerable actors in the work of teacher education. The jockeying that occurs in the federal and state policy space often leaves teacher education in an unenviable reactive mind-set. The ability to strategize and be proactive is curtailed as a result. It is though we are driving using our rear-view mirror instead of the windshield.

The Job for Which We Are Preparing Our Candidates

I have long spoken about the job of the individual teacher in the classroom as being untenable. Even prior to the global pandemic, the job of a teacher in the 21st century has, in my opinion, become far too big for any one human to fulfill. Academic, mental, and physical health needs of students abound. One example—according to the U.S. Department of Education on *Our Nation's English Learners,* "over 4,800,000—10 percent of the total K-12 student population, are English learners" (U.S. Department of Education, 2020, p. 3). The ever-growing needs of students are taxing veteran teachers, never mind those who are just entering classrooms. "Most teachers are prepared and operate in one-teacher, one -classroom models as novices—sometimes with very little classroom teaching experience—and are expected to produce the same student outcomes as their veteran colleagues" (Basile, Maddin, & Lennon, p. xii). Yes, advances have been made in clinical practice, in residencies, and in creating apprenticeships for teacher candidates. Those longer-term experiences with a mentor teacher are effective. However, I would argue that the one-teacher one-classroom model does not serve us well and has become nearly impossible. Just ask any teacher. Our job moving forward is to study the job of the teacher and consider that our challenge may not be one of shortages, but rather the creative restructuring of the work of the teacher.

At the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University, the Next Education Workforce (Basile, Maddin, & Audrain, 2023) seeks to challenge the one teacher-one classroom model. Regardless of enrollment drops in teacher education, the authors argue that "we have the quantity of qualified individuals

that we need. This crisis in the education profession is not a teacher supply prob-lem. The exodus from the profession, as well as the efficacy of the profession, is a function of how we have constructed the education workforce . . . we face a workforce design problem" (p. xii).

The Next Education Workforce asks that those of us in education see the po-tential of building teams of educators with distributed expertise. In the book *The Next Education Workforce: How Team-Based Staffing Models Can Support Equity and Improve Learning Outcomes* (2023), the authors first examine "normal"—ev-erything from one-teacher one classroom to one-size-fits all teacher preparation and professional learning. The authors then outline the components of the Next Education Workforce: teams of educators and distributed expertise; delivering deeper and personalized learning with teams and technology; entry, specialization and advancement; and approaching equity. What follows are three school models in elementary school, high school, and a rural K-8 school.

I believe that the Next Education Workforce can be a catalyst for looking at systems-level change in both higher and K-12 education. Furthermore, by moving teaching from the one-teacher one-classroom model to a team-based approach to educating students, the actual job of a teacher can move from daunting to possible. When our vision for teaching shifts from a singular approach to a team approach, it opens our opportunities to attract more diversity, expand skills, and broaden those engaged with our students. A team approach cultivates creativity and resiliency.

The Impact of the Current Political Climate

The current political climate is creating a chilling effect on teachers and stu-dents alike. Legislation that targets teaching about issues related to civil rights and America's history of systemic discrimination are sweeping across the country. According to PEN America, 17 states have enacted laws or executive orders that restrict the speech of educators in K-12 and/or higher education. Recently, Flori-da passed the first legislation focused directly on educator preparation programs. This new proposed legislation, as seen in newly passed bills HB 1291 and SB 1372, plans to regulate the content of educator preparation courses, explicitly tar-geting the teaching of "identity politics" and perspectives that examine how sys-temic factors such as racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege may be inherent within the structures of American institutions.

The impact on teaching and on students has been chilling. In a 2022 NPR segment entitled "From slavery to socialism, new legislation restricts what teach-ers can discuss," in reviewing the impact of anti-LGBTQ legislation, it is noted as follows:

> So it really puts teachers in an impossible situation. In a contemporary high
> school or middle school, even earlier in elementary school, these sorts of topics
> arise. And in particular, it would put LGBTQ teachers in a really difficult situ-

ation when they're forced, essentially, to disguise their identity or the status of their relationships in order to fend off running afoul of these bills.

Since this 2022 segment the "Don't Say Gay" bill in Florida, HB 1557, there has been a legal settlement on the bill "allows discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity as long as it happens outside instruction" (Najarro, 2024, p. 1). This means, in theory, that an LGBTQ teacher can put a family photo on their desk, for example. Or that any teacher or counselor can place a "safe space" sticker on a classroom wall or window. However, I would argue that regardless of the legal settlement, the chilling effect of HB 1577 remains for those interested in pursuing teaching, current teachers, and certainly LGBTQ+ students.

It gets even more interesting as one tracks legislation or executive orders in other states. For example, Grossman and Young (2023, p. 3-4) write:

> In South Dakota, however, the enforcers of divisive concepts policies are taking no chances: Executive Order 2022-02, issued by Governor Kristi Noem in April 2022, implemented a ban on divisive concepts in K-12 schools and directed the state Department of Education to review its policies and content standards. That review, in turn, led to changes in teacher preparation at the college level . . . The next step for the DOE, according to the report, is to "engage the Board of Regents, private colleges, and tribal colleges, encouraging them to undertake a similar review [of teacher preparation programs] to ensure alignment with the EO." Yes, you read that right: the South Dakota Department of Education wants tribal colleges to remove information about "bias, stereotyping, assumptions, etc." from their Indian Studies curricula for future educators. And they want public and even private colleges and universities to do the same . . .

The long-term implications of these pieces of legislation and executive orders on teacher education, higher education, and K-12 education remain to be seen.

Conclusion

As I began this commentary, I cited four themes that I believe have an impact on the current state of teacher education: lack of interest in teaching as a profession; consequences of federal and state policies; the job for which we are preparing our candidates; and the impact of the current political climate. While there are great challenges described, I do believe that there are rays of hope. There are many high school students throughout the U.S. in pathway programs to teaching like Educators Rising (2024), one form of the increasing growth of Grow Your Own (GYO) programs throughout the country. Another GYO effort, the establishment and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs), are facilitating relationships between school districts, the university/college teacher education program, and the state to broaden the pool of teacher candidates. Examples of positive state and federal support for teacher education are evident in the growth of apprenticeship programs, from the support of First Lady Dr. Jill Biden and the

launch of the Department of Education-Department of Labor investment in registered teaching apprenticeships (AACTE & Pathways Alliance, 2023) to work in states such as Tennessee (Melnick, 2024) that began the first federally registered apprenticeship in teaching. The Biden Administration's commitment to prioritizing education was front and center in the President's recent State of the Union address, where Biden stated, "to remain the strongest economy in the world we need the best education system in the world" (Blad, 2024). The work of the Next Education Workforce continues to expand throughout the U.S. and internationally. And while there has been a great deal of divisive issues legislation passed, so too have many (many) bills been defeated.

As I continue to speak on the state of teacher education worldwide, I want to balance the reality of the challenges we face with much optimism as well. Our nations depend on our ability to innovate and create positive educational experiences for each and every learner. As educators, legislators, and citizens, we must engage in the work of education required by our democracies.

References

AACTE & Pathways Alliance. (2023). *National guidelines for apprenticeships standards.* Retrieved from https://aacte.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Pathways-AACTE-EEP-fact-sheet-1.pdf

Basile, C. G., Maddin, B. W., & Audrain, R. L. *The next education workforce: How team-based staffing models can support equity and improve learning outcomes.* Rowan & Littlefield.

Bill Text -. (n.d.). https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2222)

Blad, E. (2024, March 7). Biden calls for teacher pay raises, Expanded pre-K in State of the Union. *Education Week.* Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/biden-calls-for-teacher-pay-raises-expanded-pre-k-in-state-of-the-union/2024/03

Brundin, J. (2023, June 13). Colorado is named one of the top states for teacher prep programs for reading. *Colorado Public Radio.* https://www.cpr.org/2023/06/13/colorado-teacher-prep-programs-reading/

Chapman, C., & Donaldson, G. (2023, March). *What's next for Scottish education: Learning is Scotland's future?* Retrieved from https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_930286_smxx.pdf

Chapman, C., & Donaldson, G. (2024, March). *Where next for Scottish education: Leading from the classroom.* Retrieved from https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_1055704_smxx.pdf

Cohen, R. M. (2023, August 15). *The new "science of reading" movement, explained.* Retrieved from https://www.vox.com/23815311/science-of-reading-movement-literacy-learning-loss

Colorado READ Act | CDE. (n.d.). https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy

EDUCATION DEANS. (n.d.). EDUCATION DEANS. https://www.education-deans.org/ Educators Rising. (2024). *Homepage.* https://educatorsrising.org/

Ellis, V. (Ed.). (2024). *Teacher education in crisis: The state, the market, and the universi-*

ties in England. Bloomsbury Academic.

Ellis, V., & Childs, A. (2024). In Ellis, V. (Ed.), *Teacher education in crisis: The state, the market, and the universities in England.* Bloomsbury Academic.

Fensterwald, J. (2024, February 7). Setting aside local control, legislation would mandate how to teach reading in California. *EdSource.* Retrieved from https://edsource.org/2024/reversing-local-control-legislation-would-mandate-how-to-teach-reading-in-california/705507

Fenwick, L.T. (2021, August 30). *The history, current use, and impact of entrance and licensure examinations cut scores on the teacher-of-color Ppipeline: A structural racism analysis.* Retrieved from https://www.aacteconnect360.org/viewdocument/the-history-current-use-and-impac

Gross, T. (2022, February 3). *Interview with Jeffrey Sachs: From slavery to socialism, new legislation restricts what teachers can discuss.* Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2022/02/03/1077878538/legislation-restricts-what-teachers-can-discuss

Grossman, J. & Young, J. C. (2023, January 23). The integrity of history education. *Inside Higher Education.* Retrieved from https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2023/01/24/bills-censoring-k-12-teaching-affect-higher-ed-too-opinion

King, J. E. (2024, February 28). *Data update: Teacher preparation program trends 2010-11 to 2020-21.* Retrieved from https://www.aacteconnect360.org/viewdocument/data-update-teacher-preparation-pr-1

King, J. E. (2024, February 28). *Data update: Degrees and certificates conferred in education.* Retrieved from https://www.aacteconnect360.org/viewdocument/data-update-teacher-preparation-pr

King, J. E., & Yin, J. (2022, June). *The alternative teacher certification sector outside higher education.* Retrieved from https://aacte.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Alt-Certification-report-062122-UPDATED.pdf

King, J. E. (2022, March 22). *Colleges of education: A national portrait.* Retrieved from https://www.aacteconnect360.org/viewdocument/colleges-of-education-a-national-p-1

Melnick, H. (2024). *How states can support teacher apprenticeship: The case of Tennessee.* Learning Policy Institute & The Pathways Alliance. Retrieved from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/tennessees-teacher-apprenticeship-program-brief

Najarro, I. (2024, March 12). What's permissible under Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' law? A new legal settlement clarifies. *Education Week.* Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/leadership/whats-permissible-under-floridas-dont-say-gay-law-a-new-legal-settlement-clarifies/2024/03

Patrick, S. K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Kini, T. (2023, May). *Educating teachers in California: What matters for teacher preparedness.* Retrieved from: https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/4031/download?inline&file=Educating_Teachers_in_California_REPORT.pdf

Schmidt, C., & Schneider, J. (2016). *Diversifying the teaching force in transitional contexts: Critical perspectives.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321540755_Diversifying_the_Teaching_Force_in_Transnational_Contexts_Critical_Perspectives

TNTP. (2023, February). *A broken pipeline: Teacher preparation's diversity problem.* Retrieved from https://tntp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TNTP_BrokenPipeline_FINAL.pdf

UNESCO International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. (2024). Retrieved

from: https://teachertaskforce.org/what-we-do/Knowledge-production-and-dissemi-
nation/global-report-teachers

U.S. Department of Education. (2023, November 9). *Biden-Harris administration pre-
miers public service announcement elevating the teaching profession.* Retrieved from
https://urlisolation.com/browser?clickId=5488DB96-D06F-45F9-92BA-3AE285E
E9F31&traceToken=1711368485%3Bcomcast_hosted2%3Bhttps%3A%2Fwww.
ed.gov%2Fnews%2Fpress-rel&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ed.gov%2Fnews%2F-
press-releases%2Fbiden-harris-administration-premiers-public-service-announce-
ment-elevating-teaching-profession

U. S. Department of Education. (2020). *Our nation's English learners: What are their char-
acteristics?* Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/el-characteristics/index.
html

Will, M. (2024, March 22). Some positive signs for the teacher pipeline, but it's not all
good. What 3 studies say. *Education Week,* Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/
leadership/some-positive-signs-for-the-teacher-pipeline-but-its-not-all-good-what-3-
studies-say/2024/03

Responsive Not Reactive:
Addressing Crisis Cycles in Teacher Attrition
Through Systemic Change

A Commentary

Betina Hsieh
University of Washington

> I am incredibly worried about the state of teaching…the overall field is worrying me a lot. We are still in a phase post-Covid where we're having to cover classes much more often than before Covid. I work with undergrad [teacher candidates] too, and I know that they're very concerned…. Our class loads at the university level have been very low. I know that I have a lot of [K-12 teacher] colleagues who are thinking about leaving the field. They talk about it quite often. I'm incredibly worried about the needs of our students. Our district is in disarray.
> —Drea, Middle School teacher and Part-Time Teacher Educator

During the pandemic, as I taught teacher candidates, supported student teachers, and met with cooperating teachers and colleagues online from my home, while concurrently supporting my eighth grader doing remote learning and preschooler, going into kindergarten online, I began to wonder how I could authentically encourage the next generation of prospective teachers to enter a field that seemed only to get more challenging by the day. While I was initially encouraged by the idea that the pandemic might serve as a portal (Roy, 2020) to another possible way, not just for education, but for our world and relationships within them, the cynic in me wondered if it would just make teaching even harder, less support-

---

Betina Hsieh is the Boeing Endowed Professor of Teacher Education in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum of the College of Education at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. Email address: bycheieh@uw.edu

ed, and less sustainable than the conditions that had caused me to leave my own eighth grade classroom almost a decade prior. Unfortunately, the cynic's forecast has seemed to come to fruition.

As schools entered the 2022-23 academic year, a heralded "return to normalcy" (or more similar pre-COVID teaching conditions), not all their teachers returned. Much attention was paid to education as a field impacted by "the Great Resignation," a massive wave of career changes that prompted job shortages in multiple sectors (Garcia et al., 2022; Walker, 2022; Walton & Pollock, 2022). While economists noted that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated or accentuated challenging working conditions (across fields), accelerating existing labor market trends of career shifting, the pandemic alone was not responsible for the elevated number of teachers and other professionals leaving the field (Fuller & Kerr, 2022).

Just as the pandemic itself didn't cause teacher attrition issues, it also did not, in and of itself, cause subsequent working conditions that continue to make teaching an undesirable and unsustainable profession. Nearly two years after "the Great Resignation" captured headlines, multiple crises persist related to teaching. One longstanding crisis pertains to teachers of color, who make up only 20% of the workforce compared to students of color, who comprise 55% of public-school enrollment (Learning Policy Institute, 2023; National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Teachers of color are more likely to teach in more "hard to staff" and diverse school sites (Achinstein et al., 2010) as well as being more favorably perceived by all students (Cherng & Halpin, 2016), yet they often do not stay in teaching. While recruitment of teachers of color has nearly doubled, outpacing the growth in new White teachers entering the field, teachers of color also have a significantly higher turnover rate than their white counterparts, an issue often linked with working conditions (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Mawhinney & Rinke, 2019).

The research reflects my own secondary teaching experiences. As one of two Asian American teachers at the diverse urban public middle school site where I began my career, a site that served many local working class and immigrant families, I was volunteered to sponsor the Asian Pacific Islander Club in my first year, while designing curriculum that was standards-aligned and reflected the diversity of my classroom. I was also the only teacher in my small team of four teachers who successfully stayed in the classroom for the entire academic year. I cried from exhaustion every day when my students were at fifth period PE, wondering how I would face my challenging sixth period class. Despite this first year, I stayed in teaching for a decade, until a student passed away suddenly on campus and neither students nor staff on campus were offered extended support for this collective trauma. Instead, after two days, everyone was expected to return to business as usual and prepare for upcoming state testing. This incident pushed me into full-time university teacher education and out of the classroom, as I sought more systemic solutions that would help other educators in situations like those

I faced. Still, I have struggled with leaving the secondary classroom as a veteran teacher of color and with how, in good conscience, to continue to advocate for a profession that ultimately proved unsustainable for me.

A second longstanding crisis (Little & Bartlett, 2010) is related to equity in the teacher workforce, with less experienced, uncertified teachers more likely to be placed in a school with more working-class students and students of color than in schools with predominantly white students and lower-poverty schools (Learning Policy Institute, 2023). Given that less experienced, uncertified teachers may have the least formal preparation and experience to meet the needs of diverse students, these statistics are important, particularly as research implies lower long-term retention rates for teachers who enter teaching uncertified (or through alternative certification pathways that provide very little teacher support) instead of through more rigorous traditional teacher education pathways (Freedman, & Appleman, 2009; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). I could relate to this as well, having mentored, supported, and worked with numerous colleagues at various stages of certification. Those who entered with less experience and without formal teacher education often struggled the most and left the site (if not teaching altogether) within a few years, if not a few months.

In this commentary, however, I focus predominantly on a third, but related, teaching crisis, that of deprofessionalizing and dehumanizing working conditions that push teachers out of teaching and how teacher educators, educational leaders, and policy makers can take explicit steps to reprofessionalize and rehumanize teaching, and to make teaching a more attractive and sustainable position for current and future teachers. This is a topic based on my own research and experiences like those of educators like Drea (pseudonym), shared in qualitative interviews in Fall 2023 and open-ended survey responses of a national survey of educators and former educators given at the start of the 2022-23 academic year. This research indicated that more than ever, teachers are feeling disrespected, that their professionalism isn't valued, and that their humanity is not accounted for (Hsieh, 2023).

When asked whether they had personally experienced a mental or physical health challenge that they attributed to their work in teaching, 83% of educator-respondents (N=665/796 survey respondents) said yes. These educators named specific mental and physical health concerns including diagnosed depression, anxiety, PTSD, high blood pressure, migraines, respiratory illnesses, kidney/bladder conditions, digestive issues, autoimmune issues, and repetitive pain. They also discussed undiagnosed symptoms of stress, burnout, exhaustion, phobias, disordered eating, addiction, self-harm, suicidality, and challenges within their families based on a sense of conflict between their commitment to their professional responsibilities and those to their own children. Many educators noted that rather than offering support during these challenging times, administrators exacerbated challenges, placing pressure on them to do more with less, failing to support them when parent or student issues arose, and gaslighting them when

they asked for help, saying that teachers themselves should "learn to manage [their] time better."

Educators felt that on every level they were facing disrespect. Societally, "learning loss" was blamed on teachers who were called to accelerate learning without the acknowledgement of collective trauma that students, families, and they themselves had faced. Safety concerns, both related to the COVID-19 virus and gun violence, arose for teachers as they were called to be "first responders" and "on the front lines" in relation to these public safety issues, but were told not to complain or that resources weren't available when they asked for measures to be taken to ensure student safety and their own. One educator reported being told that they should "use books and staplers as defense." Another educator described a close call with a student bringing a gun (which, fortunately, was unloaded) to school with intent to harm others. This educator did not have a properly functioning door to barricade to prevent an active shooter from entering their classroom and reported that they were in the classroom closest to the cafeteria which likely would have been the gunman's first stop. Families often blamed teachers for students not being successful, as teachers struggled to re-engage students in post-pandemic learning, and students themselves struggled to recalibrate to in-person learning, particularly in terms of meaningful interactions in class and work outside of class. On top of this, restrictive curricular pressures due to external challenges by parent advocacy groups, some of whom formalized their challenges after running successful school board campaigns (Sinha et al., 2023), have made many teachers feel like their pedagogical and curricular expertise is also under attack. Teachers, particularly those committed to bringing more diverse and representative texts into the classroom, communicated feeling particularly discouraged by these attacks, often focused on texts that center narratives of (or are authored by authors from) traditionally marginalized subgroups.

Many teachers in the study noted that while they knew teaching would not be a particularly high paying career, the immense stressors, numerous hours of unpaid labor outside of the classroom, and disregard for their professional contributions left them unable to imagine a long-term future in education, even when they had entered teaching with a commitment to a lifelong career in the classroom. Given my research, my work as a teacher educator who cares deeply about P-12 teachers and their well-being, and my ongoing connection to former teacher candidates and P-12 colleagues, the many concerns educators have expressed about their working conditions have been disheartening. In listening to these educators, I've often wondered, "What can I do to help the helpers? What can each of us who is committed to supporting teachers, whether as a researcher, teacher educator, or educational leader, do to make teaching more sustainable?"

As researchers, it is critical to listen humbly, amplify the voices of teachers, and highlight conditions that are making teaching unsustainable. In the research community, through research presentations at professional conferences, commen-

tary pieces like this, and pieces in professional journals (Hsieh, 2023), the voices of teachers should be elevated so that decisions about teaching are informed by research that centers teachers. Research centering teacher voice and experiences is critical in policy and practice conversations with others working on pathways for diverse teacher candidates and with state legislators themselves. It's important that research on timely relevant topics like this be available to others in research, educators themselves, teacher education practitioners, educational leaders, and policy makers.

As teacher educators, preparing teacher candidates for the realities of teaching, maintaining community with teachers in the field, and offering support and strategies when teachers face institutional challenges are of tantamount importance given current contexts. Teacher educators must help prospective teachers and teacher candidates be prepared for current challenges in the field. One way to do this might be through being in regular collaboration with partner P-12 educators who can share from their experiences what the ever-evolving daily realities of teaching are. Teacher educators might also design elements of courses that help teachers to understand the socio-political contexts in which schools are embedded and how curricular decisions are made, while supporting teachers to develop social and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). These forms of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) can empower teachers to advocate for themselves and their professional decision making. Finally, teacher educators and teacher education programs can work with partner districts to co-design induction support around the establishment of professional community. Avoiding isolation and establishing strong professional communities can be a key factor in teacher retention (Koerber et al., 2023).

Administrators and educational leaders, who work most directly with teachers themselves, also have a critical role to play. P-12 educational leaders have a responsibility to listen carefully and respond appropriately, trusting teachers to know their needs and understanding that unsustainability is systemic rather than individual. As such, solutions must also be systemic. Recently, a third-year teacher from a large urban district (at a site with high teacher turnover and predominantly working-class students of color) told me about the well-intentioned but misplaced support her administration gave a brand-new teacher, hired mid-year, who was struggling with curriculum. Instead of individualized mentorship and curricular guides, the administration told all teachers at the grade level to immediately pivot so that the grade-level team could co-plan an entirely new unit and debrief the unit at weekly professional learning sessions. This plan took all grade-level English teachers out of their classrooms during the same block of time each week. Although this administrative team should be acknowledged for trying to respond in a timely manner to the needs of their newest hire, with a strong model of professional collaboration, it did so in a reactive way that interrupted the units of other grade-level teachers and impacted key instructional time for the

same group of students weekly. Instead, individual coaching (through a site or district-based induction mentor) and a short interim unit (which might have already been developed by a grade level team coordinated by a department or grade-level lead) could have provided support for the new teacher in ways that were far less disruptive. This type of intervention would have required investment in ongoing supports for educators but would have allowed for an easier transition for new teachers entering mid-year.

What researchers, teacher educators, and administrators do individually is important but insufficient. Across each of these roles, well-intentioned and thoughtful individuals become reactive when they lack resources. Researcher, teacher educators, and administrators are embedded in systems that fail to understand the intense professional training necessary to support teachers at all stages of their careers and encourage professional learning that is responsive to a changing field. Often their professionalism and expertise are also undermined. Change that centers educators as a key part of student learning will require an extensive restructuring of education itself, and a shift in values in our society, away from efficiency and reactiveness, and towards development, trust, and humanity. While the pandemic did not provide the portal hoped for into a new future grounded in relationality, perhaps there is an opportunity to turn ongoing crisis into systemic reimagining and transformation. However, for this to occur, in each of our roles, we must advocate for a recognition of the root causes of crisis in systemic unsustainability, deprofessionalization, and dehumanization, and fight for an educational system that all students and educators deserve, one which nurtures and affirms them as much as it challenges them, providing fertile ground for growth, learning, and development.

References

Achinstein, B., Ogawa, R. T., Sexton, D., & Freitas, C. (2010). Retaining teachers of color: A pressing problem and a potential strategy for "hard-to-staff" schools. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(1), 71-107.

Cherng, H. Y. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The importance of minority teachers: Student perceptions of minority versus White teachers. *Educational Researcher, 45*(7), 407-420.

Freedman, S. W., & Appleman, D. (2009). "In it for the long haul"—How teacher education can contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, urban schools. *Journal of Teacher Education, 60*(3), 323-337.

Fuller, J. & Kerr, W. (2022, March 23). The great resignation didn't start with the pandemic. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2022/03/the-great-resignation-didnt-start-with-the-pandemic

García, E., Kraft, M. A., & Schwartz, H. L. (2022, August 26). *Brown Center chalkboard: Are we at a crisis point with the public teacher workforce? Education scholars share their perspectives.* Brookings Institute. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2022/08/26/are-we-at-a-crisis-point-with-the-public-teacher-workforce-education-scholars-share-their-perspectives/

Hsieh, B. (2023). A matter of respect. *Educational Leadership, 81*(1), 62-67.

Ingersoll, R. M., May, H., & Collins, G. (2019). Recruitment, employment, retention and the minority teacher shortage. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 27*(37), 1-37.

Koerber, N., Marquez-Mendez, M., Mensah, A., Fasching-Varner, K., & Schrader, P. G. (2023). Sustaining teacher needs: A systematic narrative review exploring teacher retention, attrition, and motivation. *Literature Reviews in Education and Human Services, 2*(2), 1-20.

Learning Policy Institute. (2023). *The state of the teacher workforce: A state-by-state analysis of the factors influencing teacher shortages, supply, demand, and equity* [Interactive map]. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/state-of-teacher-workforce-interactive

Little, J. W., & Bartlett, L. (2010). The teacher workforce and problems of educational equity. *Review of Research in Education, 34(*1), 285-328.

Mawhinney, L., & Rinke, C. R. (2019). *There has to be a better way.* Rutgers University Press.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools. *Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cge

Roy, A. (2020 April 3). The pandemic is a portal. *Financial Times*. https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca

Sinha, S., Zerbino, N., Valant, J. & Perera, R. M. (2023, October 10). *Brown Center chalkboard: Moms for Liberty: Where are they and are they winning?* Brookings Institute. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/moms-for-liberty-where-are-they-and-are-they-winning/

Walker, T. (2022, February). Survey: Alarming number of educators may soon leave the profession. *NEA Today*. https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/survey-alarming-number-educators-may-soon-leave-profession

Walton, A., & Pollock, N. (2022, November 18). Empty classrooms, abandoned kids: Inside America's great teacher resignation. *New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/18/opinion/teachers-quitting-education-crisis.html

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91.

Zhang, G., & Zeller, N. (2016). A longitudinal investigation of the relationship between teacher preparation and teacher retention. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 43*(2), 73-92.

Creating Professional Learning Spaces Through Collaborative Pertnerships to Support Teachers in Teaching Asian American Students

A Commentary

Wenli Jen
Integral Prudence Solutions
Nicole Gilbertson
University of California Irvine
Thuy Vo Dang
University of California Los Angeles
Stacy Yung
Educate to Empower
Nachee Kwun
University of California Irvine

Introdution

While national and state-wide policies have a major impact in American schools, the implementation of policy that provides research-based and relevant teacher support and training is paramount in developing effective pedagogy in

Wenli Jen is a senior consultant at Integral Prudence Solutions. Nicole Gilbertson is director of the UCI Teacher Academy at the University of California Irvine. Thuy Vo Dang is an assistant professor in the Department of Information Studies at the University of California Los Angeles. Stacy Yung is co-founder of Educate to Empower. Nachee Kwun is a teacher network facilitator with the Calteach Science & Math Program at the University of California Irvine. Email addresses: wenlijen@integralprudencesolutins.com, gilbertn@uci.edu, thuyvodang@ucla.edu, stacy.yung@gmail.com, & nkwun@exchange.uci.du

teaching Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) studies. As of March 2022, there were seven states that required AAPI studies to be taught in K-12 schools. Fifteen states introduced bills that require AAPI studies in the K-12 curriculum (Committee of 100, 2022) with more states developing policies to implement AAPI studies (*The Hill,* 2024). At the same time, AAPI studies content must be integrated into Ethnic Studies curriculum. Meanwhile, California, with its racially-diverse student population, is the first state to require all high school students to complete a semester-long course on Ethnic Studies. High schools are required to begin offering these courses in the 2024-2025 academic year. These policies were created in the context of amplified discussions of contrasting perspectives and attitudes about the dearth of AAPI histories and narratives taught in K-12 educational settings. Additionally, it was an active response to the rise of anti-Asian hate, violence towards Asian Americans, an increased need from educators and students demanding schools be conducive spaces for social justice and cultural awareness. In fact, students were found to have increased grade point average and attendance after being exposed to culturally relevant pedagogy in Ethnic Studies (Dee & Penner, 2017).

At the front lines are teachers who will be responsible for meeting these requirements. Teacher professional learning and curricular resources to support learning are vital for educators to receive the support they need to foster positive student learning outcomes. Teacher experience and teacher context are essential in developing teacher self-efficacy (Wray et al., 2022). It is imperative to provide K-12 teachers the content knowledge, pedagogical instruction, resources, and community network to support the instructional shifts required, so they can successfully engage in and implement AAPI studies instruction. In teacher credentialing programs, teachers may have exposure to multicultural education but not necessarily Ethnic Studies. In California, despite the legislation mandating Ethnic Studies instruction, there is no single-subject teaching credential in Ethnic Studies (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2024). Educators responsible for teaching Ethnic Studies and AAPI studies often have to develop their own resources and pedagogical expertise as a result of the lack of infrastructure to support teacher professional learning.

Teaching for Justice

In response to the growing need for pre-service teacher education and continued professional development for K-12 educators, the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Teacher Academy through the Center for Educational Partnerships and School of Education, in collaboration with Educate to Empower and other representatives from California state universities, worked together to create the first two-day conference to provide a learning opportunity for educators interested in deepening their understanding of AAPI Studies. Aptly named "Teaching for Justice," the conference featured the expertise of Asian American researchers,

educators, and community organizers to create a unique learning opportunity for educators, both nationally with our online conference (day 1) and local educators with the in-person conference in Orange County, California in spring of 2022 and 2023. Educators participated in workshops and plenary sessions, and they increased their content knowledge of Asian American history, learned about literature that explored Asian American lived experiences and perspectives, engaged in pedagogical practices that foster student agency, and considered resources to bring into the classroom, such as Asian American biographies.

One of the specific examples of how the conference aimed to be inclusive in its design is by integrating educators and youth presenters in workshop sessions in 2022 and 2023 conference proceedings, modeling the impact of AAPI pedagogy and student agency. In the 2023 closing keynote, the Asian American Youth Leaders (AAYL) 2.0 Program, a collective of AAPI High School students across Los Angeles and Orange counties who are learning to contribute to the social dialogue in developing just and equitable solutions to social challenges and needs in the AAPI community, shared their experiences in the PhotoVoice project. In the "Love in the Time of Hate" PhotoVoice project, they documented the stories and memories of love and care in AAPI communities in Orange County and beyond amid the rise of anti-Asian violence. Workshop session speakers and presenters were from K-12 schools, higher education and community-based organizations. This concentrated effort to be mindful in curating speakers to represent perspectives of educators engaging in leadership in AAPI Studies implementation was an intentional action for the conference committee organizers. Another example is hosting a plenary session at the end of the 2022 conference that sparked discussion about policy and implementation with stakeholders, such as parents and students, in conversation with elected officials. Workshop session speakers also included teachers, Nancy Chung, Maya Le and Staci Yamanishi, who were spotlighted in sharing how they integrated Asian American studies in their grade levels in the workshop titled, "How 3 Teachers Use Storytelling to Incorporate AA Voices in K-8 Classrooms." By doing so, there was an increased buy-in and recognition of effective implementation already taking place. In learning from each other, these teachers who were also workshop speakers were allotted time to share best practices.

Born out of need, and fueled by the organic, positive, working relationships among the conference committee members, the Teaching for Justice conference brought to center stage the issues in teaching Asian American Studies. First, there was a dearth of content knowledge for K-12 teachers, who relied on traditional avenues of accessing information and were not always prepared from their teacher credentialing programs for specifics in Ethnic Studies instruction. In many American history books, one paragraph stood lonely and insignificant in the pages of history taught to American schoolchildren. In fact, the same teachers, currently working in classrooms, did not obtain the knowledge about AAPI studies when they were in primary and secondary school. In comparison, Ethnic Studies pro-

fessors at the collegiate level were specialized in their respective fields and concentrated in AAPI studies and Ethnic Studies. Even then, the number of academic degree programs for Asian American studies were few and far between across the nation with less than 100 colleges and universities offering Asian American studies programs (Association of Asian American Studies, 2023). The connection to be made between K-12 teachers and college professors would certainly enhance the sharing of content to develop dynamic and integrated lessons. Third, teachers needed to be trained and provided the necessary support in order for them to successfully integrate and implement policy changes. In doing so, the community-at-large had an abundance of resources, mainly those that served the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, also needed to be a part of the conversation in support of teachers who are teaching AAPI studies in K-12 schools.

For many of the conference committee planning members who met solely on Zoom every two weeks, they built a community of practitioners, researchers, and educators. The first year of the conference yielded more than 200 attendees, who exhibited their deep, emotional reactions to the conference workshops and sessions. The resulting evaluation and feedback proved true that the conference was much needed. Many workshops resonated with attendees, and the call to act and plan for a second year was highly anticipated. The coordinating, planning and debriefing sessions for the conference committee was often described as "magical" because of the sense of purpose, solidarity, and commitment to service among its members.

Extending the Magic

In its second year, the theme of community and sense of belonging were introduced. The momentum of the conference committee's charge to produce the conference yielded the natural direction of the second year's theme, where educators would have a shared space to discuss lesson plans, learn content and pedagogical knowledge, and engage in conversations about implementation and evaluation. A concerted effort was made to increase the focus on Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian populations. It was also a clear directive for the committee members to ensure that ethnicities that were not highlighted in the first year were highlighted in the second year. The commitment to be more conscientious and thoughtful was important to all committee members.

Parallel processes of community building (Minkler, 2012), networking, and resource sharing were important to the conference's core objectives. In order to build community with those who are already teaching AAPI studies, the conference committee invited stakeholders, university professors and community educators into the space where interactive and experiential learning exercises can be unpacked for implementation in K-12 settings.

The feature of virtual and in-person conferences allowed for geographically and culturally responsive practices in the context of COVID-19 pandemic times.

Accessibility and availability were discussed with the two modalities. The approach to changing mindsets begins with the recognition that AAPI studies were not traditionally integrated with intention and easily accessible content. The new approach was bridging the technological advances of emerging research and getting the resources for AAPI studies into K-12 educators' hands, all the while creating and fostering a community of like-minded educators. This was particularly important in pandemic times, where the return to the new "normal" proved to be challenging and exciting with virtual and in-person formats.

Connecting Policy, Practice, and Research

Conference committee members Wenli Jen, Nicole Gilbertson, Thuy Vo Dang, Stacy Yung, and Naehee Kwun saw the need for a mixed methods study that included K-12 educators in Southern California school districts as a way to enhance the practical applications by conducting research for self-efficacy in teaching Asian American studies among K-12 educators. The *Teaching for Justice: Increasing Teacher Self-Efficacy in Teaching Asian American Studies* research study aimed to bring a new model of understanding the intertwined research and practice for teacher support and training. While there are studies about teacher self-efficacy, there is little known about self-efficacy in teaching Asian American studies among K-12 educators, particularly in response to the new California state and federal policies requiring Ethnic Studies in school curriculum. The study addresses teacher support needs that increase teacher self-efficacy when teaching Asian American studies. As we review the data, initial themes emerge, such as challenges of preparation, limited integration of AAPI Studies, and lack of content knowledge. It is vital that professional development for teachers in a multicultural space increases teachers' self-efficacy, resulting in more relevant, crafted lessons for students (Choi & Lee, 2020). In addition, educators rely on support from peers at their school site and in the community to successfully implement AAPI Studies and we seek to foster belonging among educators and their students through the Teaching for Justice conference in a variety of methods. This includes community participatory action research (Burns et al., 2011). The research team engaged 2023 conference participants in collecting community knowledge, feedback, and analysis in the process of the study. By providing a way to assess and evaluate the feedback from the 2022 conference and centering the research around teacher support, the research team hopes to explore the aspects that will enhance, modify and uplift the existing and future programs for teacher support and training.

Uncovering the Hidden Histories

AAPI studies are at a pivotal moment in American education, where the general acceptance of the once-invisible histories are now seen or can be seen through intentional efforts to ensure Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Ha-

waiians are recognized for their roles in the making of America. In resisting erasure and silence, AAPI studies presents our heterogeneous communities in their full complexity, through their hardships and exclusions from the mainstream as well as through their agency and mobilizations for justice and equity. More AAPI history is unfolding with more shared narratives that were previously dismissed, disregarded or shortchanged. As the single, lonely paragraph about AAPI in a history book is in the rearview mirror, the future course that drives authentic change will be in the hands of school leaders and educators to fill the pages of history books with the hidden histories among Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiians with purpose, intention, and collaboration. With the policies implemented in K-12 schools, it is important for teachers, administrators, staff and community leaders to note that this is an opportunity to do more than just meet federal and state policy requirements. It is imperative to support teachers in their work to address attrition and promote retention (Kim & Cooc, 2021). Much like how progressive educators in higher education believe that "another university is possible," we also believe that another, more democratic public education is possible and we are continuing to support those positioned at the front lines of this work—the teachers.

References

AB 331, California Legislature, Reg. Sess. (Calif. 2020). https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB331

Association of Asian American Studies. (2023, July 18). *Asian American Studies Programs & Centers*. https://aaastudies.org/

Burns, J. C., Cooke, D. Y. & Schweidler, C. (2011). A short guide to community based participatory action research: A community research lab guide. Advancement Project. Editors: Bonilla, T. & Farris, T. (Eds.). Los Angeles, California.

Choi, S., & Lee, S. W. (2020). Enhancing teacher self-efficacy in multicultural classrooms and school climate: The role of professional development in multicultural education in the United States and South Korea. *AERA Open*. doi:10.1177/2332858420973574

Committee of 100. (2022, September 12). *Committee of 100 publishes new research on the status of K-12 AAPI curriculum adoption across the United States.* https://www.committee100.org/press_release/committee-of-100-publishes-new-research-on-the-status-of-k-12-aapi-curriculum-adoption-across-the-united-states/

Committee of 100. (2022, September 12). *K-12 Asian American and Pacific Islander and ethnic studies in the United States.* https://www.committee100.org/initiatives/aapi-curriculum-project/

Cruz, R. A., Manchanda, S, Firestone, A. R., & Rodl, J. E. (2020). An examination of teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, *43*(3), 197-214. doi:10.1177/0888406419875194

Dee, T. S., & Penner, E. K. (2017). The causal effects of cultural relevance: Evidence from an ethnic atudies curriculum. *American Educational Research Journal*, *54*(1), 127-166. doi:10.3102/0002831216677002

Kim, G. M., & Cooc, N. (2021). Recruiting and retaining Asian American and Pacific Islander teachers. *Urban Review, 53*, 193–217. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-020-00571-1

Kolluri, S., & Edwards, L. (2022). Ethnic studies: From counternarrative to curriculum. *Urban Review*, *55*(1), 50-69. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-022-00640-7

Minkler, M. (2012). *Community organizing and community building for health and welfare* (3rd ed.). Rutgers University Press.

Stop AAPI Hate. (2023, June 8). *Data and research.* https://stopaapihate.org/

Wray, E., Sharma, U., & Subban, P. (2022). Factors influencing teacher self-efficacy for inclusive education: A systematic literature review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *117*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103800

A Call to Action:
Diversifying the Teacher Education Workforce,
a Look at One State's Efforts

Katherine E. L. Norris
Howard University

Donna-Marie Cole-Malot
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

Ronald W. Whitaker II
Arcadia University

Abstract

Over the last few years, much attention has been focused on the nationwide teacher shortage. As teachers begin to retire in record numbers, and the number of students entering teacher education majors continues to decline, concern around the teacher shortage heightens (US Dept. of Ed., 2016). The numbers are even more dire when looking at Teachers of Color entering the profession (US Dept. of Ed., 2016). To address this TOC shortage, Pennsylvania's Department of Education called for Institutions of Higher Education to create programs aimed at attracting and retaining students of color in their teacher education programs. The Aspiring to Educate (A2E) program was Pennsylvania's intentional attempt to diversify the teacher workforce. This

Katherine E. L. Norris is an associate professor and chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education at Howard University, Washington, DC. Donna-Marie Cole-Malot is an assistant professor in the Department of Professional and Secondary Education at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. Ronald W. Whitaker II is a visiting associate professor of education at Arcadia University, Glenside, Pennsylvania. Email addresses: katherine.norris@howard.edu, dcolemalot@esu.edu, & drrwwii@gmail.com

paper describes the work of three Black educators, as they examine their positionality and work independently and collectively to answer PA's call to action through the implementation of start-up Grow Your Own programs.

*Key words***:** teacher education, teacher workforce, teacher education pipeline, Grow Your Own (GYO), teachers of Color, reflexivity, positionality, Black teacher pipeline

Introduction

Research shows that diversity in schools, including racial diversity among teachers, can provide significant benefits to students (United States Department of Education, [US Dept. of Ed.] 2016, 2023; Stohr et al., 2018). When students of color have teachers of color, they are more likely to attend college and more likely to be held to higher expectations. Increasing the diversity in the teacher workforce not only benefits students of color, but their White counterparts also have notable benefits (Stohr et al., 2018; Swisher, 2023). There is a need for teacher education programs to produce quality teacher candidates of color that are prepared to enter the teacher workforce.

In 2016, the United States Department of Education published a report on the *State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce*. This report highlighted the immediate need to increase diversity in our nation's teacher population and placed the focus on the issue. While the overall number of teachers of color has seen a slight increase, teachers of color in our nation's schools are not representative of the populations of students of color (US Dept. of Ed., 2016, 2023). A closer look at the teacher of color numbers shows that while overall there is a slight growth, the numbers for Black teachers have declined (US Dept. of Ed., 2016, 2023; Swisher, 2023).

When looking at the data by state, Pennsylvania's data points to a huge lag in the number of teachers of color in the classroom. According to the Education Trust Report (2018-2019) in the state of Pennsylvania, 53% of schools report having no teachers of color and 43.3% of students in schools have no teachers of color (2018-2019). Some 93.6% of teachers in the state of Pennsylvania are White, while more than 35% of the students are students of color. "Without question, when the majority of students in public schools are students of color and only 18 percent of our nation's teachers are teachers of color we have an urgent need to act" (US Dept. of Ed., 2016). Students of color are expected to make up 56 percent of the student population by 2024, the elementary and secondary educator workforce is still overwhelmingly White" (US

Dept of Ed., 2016). This report highlighted the critical need to have teachers of color in our nation's classrooms.

There was a time when teacher education was an attractive option for middle class Black college bound students. In the 1950s one-half the African American professionals in the U.S. were teachers (Lash & Ratcliffe, 2014). Teaching was a profession often selected by Blacks with a college background. In recent years, there has been an overall decline in students moving into teacher education, and more noticeably a decline among teachers of color more specifically Black teachers. According to Lash and Ratcliffe (2014), "[b]etween 1971 and 1986 the percentage of African American educators declined from 8.1% to 6.9%" (Foster, 1996, p. 329). There are many factors that have led to less students of color entering the teaching profession. Students have more options than in the past. They are seeing themselves in varying majors across our universities and colleges. While this is progress, it does serve to tap the education majors.

Although this article does not fully address this historic point, to understand the contemporary lack of Black teachers and Black students who are pursuing education degrees, it is imperative that we explore the profound racism and professional obstacles that Black educators endured, post *Brown vs. Board of Education* (Stewart, 2013; Tillman, 2004). Specifically, as Hudson and Holmes (1994) noted:

> In 1954, the year of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, approximately 82,000 African American teachers were responsible for the education of the nation's two million African American public-school students. A decade later, over 38,000 Black teachers and administrators had lost their positions in 17 southern and border states. Between 1975 and 1985, the number of students majoring in education declined by 66% and another 21,515 Black teachers lost their jobs between 1984 and 1989. (p. 388)

Relatedly, contemporary efforts to diversify the teaching profession also need to understand the larger historical narrative for Black educators. It is crucial to acknowledge the parallels between the obstacles encountered in EC-Pre-K and higher education, where a significant majority of faculty members are of Caucasian descent. There is also a shortage of Black faculty with 27% of faculty members representing people of color, with less than 6% faculty Black (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). This issue deserves attention, especially considering the presence of Black faculty members who are actively involved in reshaping our teacher preparation programs, both in Pennsylvania and beyond. These efforts take place within an environment

where the majority of our colleagues are white, and our institutions are predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

Not only are the percentage of teachers of color entering the teaching profession not representative of the students of color in our classrooms, but many are also leaving the profession at a higher rate than their White counterparts (Heubeck, 2020). Teachers of color have noted common experiences of microaggressions and racial tensions in many schools which have long term impacts on teacher retention (Mawhinney & Rinke, 2019). In addition, TOC are often in higher concentrations in higher poverty schools resulting in more stressful situations which impact teacher retention. The COVID-19 pandemic hit Black and Brown communities hardest with children and families suffering from the effects of COVID and schools in low-income areas being challenged by the sudden switch in modality, the lack of access to technology and internet, and the gap in learning since the pandemic (Coleman-King et al., 2023). These factors add to teachers of color, more specifically Black teachers, leaving the classroom at a faster rate than their White counterparts post pandemic (Coleman-King et al., 2023).

We are three Black educators who, at the time of the project, were all working at PWIs. While at these institutions, we were working to: bring awareness to the need for educators of color, dismantle structural inequities in our Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), and diversify the teacher educator workforce. Our positionality came with a level of understanding and connectedness that guided our work.

This paper examines Pennsylvania's collective efforts to diversify the teacher workforce, and it takes a closer look at the reflexive work of three Black educators as they create Grow Your Own programs in an effort to support sustainable diversity teacher education pipelines.

Background

Teacher of Color Shortage

Over the last few years, more media attention is being brought to the teacher shortage happening across the nation in our K-12 schools. Parallel to those conversations are the discussions surrounding the lack of diversity in the teacher workforce. As the numbers of students of color in K-12 classrooms continue to rise, the number of teachers of color has not kept up with the student diversity in the classroom, but in some cases the number of teachers of color has declined (Swisher, 2023; US Dept. of Ed, 2016). In addition to the need for teachers of color, to keep up with student populations, there is a need for multilingual teachers (Swisher, 2023). This TOC shortage has implications for all students.

Impact of Teachers of Color

When students have teachers of color there are clear and documented benefits. Regardless of racial background, all students benefit from having a teacher of color, however, the benefits for students of color are magnified (Carver-Thomas, 2018; US Dept. of Ed., 2016). Students of color generally perform better in school when they are taught by a teacher of color at some point in their academic career (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Ingersoll & May 2009).

> Teachers of color are more likely to (1) have high expectations for students of color (as measured by higher numbers of referrals to gifted programs), (2) confront issues of racism, (3) serve as advocates and social brokers, and (4) develop more trusting relationships with students, particularly with those with whom they share a cultural background. (US Dept. of Ed., 2016)

Despite the clear benefits, every state has a disproportionately low number of teachers of color with larger disparities typically in more diverse regions (Carver-Thomas, 2018; US Dept. of Ed., 2016).

Barriers and Hidden Challenges in the Teacher Education Pipeline

At the high school level, high school students report that they are not encouraged to enter into the teaching profession (Swisher, 2023). This coupled with negative school experiences can lead to students of color not entering the teaching profession (Swisher, 2023).

Teacher education programs have both obvious and hidden barriers to program completion and program success. The certification testing requirements serve as a challenge to some students. Students are required to take and pass the Praxis Basic Skills exam as well as the content area exams for their particular program of study. Students of color pass the licensure exams at a much lower rate than their White counterparts (Daniels, 2022). While the difficulty in passing the exams is frequently discussed, what is not discussed is the cost of testing. The financial cost of testing is often a hidden cost that may be overlooked as a barrier to teacher education. Teacher education majors are required to obtain clearances in order to engage in field experiences and student teacher internships. Many programs require child abuse clearances, fingerprinting and FBI clearances along with tuberculosis (TB) testing. Costs also come with obtaining clearances.

Some teacher education programs are rich with field experiences. Field experiences can enrich a program and give preservice teachers an opportunity to have hands-on experiences in teaching and work-

ing with children. The students are often expected to have their own transportation to and from these schools. The lack of transportation and costs associated with it frequently impacts students of color and students from a lower SES at a higher rate.

The rising cost of a college degree, coupled with low earning potential for graduating teachers, leave graduating teacher education candidates with a profession that is less attractive that other college majors (Daniels, 2022).

Another significant challenge to recruiting students of color into the major ironically is the lack of students of color in the major. Many teacher education programs lack diversity. With very few students of color and faculty of color in teacher education programs, incoming teacher candidates may not feel welcome or a sense of belonging in teacher education programs. The lack of faculty of color in education programs can also serve as a barrier to recruiting and retaining a more diverse body of students in teacher education programs.

Frameworks

Reflexivity and Positionality. The need to diversify the teacher educator pipeline has been magnified over the last few years as data reports the critical underrepresentation of teachers of color in our nation's classroom. This is especially true as it relates to Black teachers. As three Black educators in Pennsylvania, engaged in diversifying the teacher educator pipeline, reflexivity allows us to identify what we are bringing to the work and how that impacts our decisions and choices. Reflexivity generally suggests an awareness that the researcher's background influences the research (Probst, 2015). Reflexivity guides us to identify our positionality.

Positionality describes an individual's view on the world and the position that one adopts as they take on a research task. The individual's worldview concerns ontological (an individual's beliefs about the nature of social reality and what is knowable about the world) and epistemological assumptions (an individual's beliefs about the nature of knowledge) (Holmes, 2020). "These are colored by an individual's values and beliefs that are shaped by their political allegiance, religious faith, gender, sexuality, historical and geographical location, ethnicity, race, social class, and status, (dis) abilities and so on" (Holmes, 2020, p. 2). Positionality reflects the position that the research adopts. Self-reflection and reflexivity (looking inward to identify one's standpoint) are necessary in allowing a researcher to identify their positionality. "Reflexivity is the concept that researchers should acknowledge

and disclose themselves in their research, seeking to understand their part in it, or influence on it" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 359).

Grow Your Own Models. The work discussed in this paper has a foundation based in Grow Your Own (GYO) models. GYO frameworks are designed to recruit, prepare, and place community members in schools in their communities. These programs partner with Institutions of Higher Education to create programming geared at preparing and supporting community members through program completion (Gist, 2022). "Grow Your Own programs, developed in partnership between university-based teacher education programs and local high schools, encourage high school students to consider becoming a teacher" (Texas Comprehensive Center, 2018, p. 3).

Institutions create viable pipelines and pathways in an attempt to increase teacher diversity in our nation's schools through homegrown Grow Your Own Programs. Grow Your Own Programs are not new but are now being re-envisioned to support the teacher diversity efforts in our nation. There are many different models of Grow Your Own (GYO) programs; community leader, paraprofessional, and high school pipeline programs (Gist, 2019). Homegrown pathways to the teaching profession often enable long time school community workers, parents, and paraprofessionals to enter the teaching profession (Gist et al., 2019).

Community Cultural Wealth Model. Recognizing that TOC that have strong cultural and linguistic connections with their students tend to build stronger relationships (Gist et al., 2019), the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model frames the GYO recruitment models discussed in this paper. Dr. Tara J. Yasso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model recognizes the cultural capital that students of color bring with them to college. Community Cultural Wealth Model examines six forms of cultural capital that students of color bring with them to college; aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance (DaGraca & Dougherty, 2015; Yosso, 2005). These forms of cultural wealth are appreciated and embedded into college programming in an effort to build on diverse students' strengths. Drawing from the local communities, the GYO programs discussed in this paper focus on the pre-collegiate recruitment efforts as well as recruitment efforts from the school community.

The Call to Action:
Diversity as an Imperative for Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

Pennsylvania has one of the highest disparity rates between students and teachers of color in the Nation (Stohr et al., 2018; US Dept.

of Ed., 2016). The data that highlights the importance of educators of color has been meaningful. Having one Black teacher in elementary school increases a Black child's graduation rate by 13% and the probability that they will go to college by 19% (Gershenson et al., 2022). With such data concerning Black achievement, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) could not ignore the need for teachers of color. Sharif El-Mekki, a long-time proponent of diversity in education, had advocated for diversity in schools for more than a decade before the department took notice of the crisis. And, by the time Pennsylvania's Department of Education recognized, in 2019, and took steps toward addressing the need for educators of color, nearly half of all school districts in Pennsylvania had zero teachers of color. Furthermore, over 109,102 students of color and 521, 422 white students were enrolled in schools with zero teachers of color (Shaw-Amoah et al., 2020).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education was partially responding to this diversity crisis when it decided to launch the Aspiring to Educate Program (A2E) in 2019. They needed a program that would allow them to symbolically kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand, they needed a strategy to address the overall teacher shortage that was plaguing not only Pennsylvania but the entire nation. While on the other hand, they needed an initiative that specifically allowed them to address the challenge of educator diversity—That program was Aspiring to Educate (A2E). The program's premise rested on the idea of collective action, common agenda, and short-term outcomes. The strategy was to fund six institutions of higher education (IHE's), and the Center for Black Educator Development (CBED) in Philadelphia. Each of these institutions would work together to develop specific tools that would allow them to not only recruit students from local school districts but also retain and support them as they move through the teacher preparation pipeline.

Aspiring to Educate (A2E):
One Approach to the Problem

When the A2E program was developed as a GYO initiative, there were no other nationwide models for addressing educator diversity in the country or at least none with a proven track record. Many states and organizations were in the early stages of developing state-led initiatives, so PDE had no specific model to emulate. Therefore, they developed a program that paired culturally relevant and sustaining education (CRSE) approaches to diversity while using a collective approach to address the problem. In their 2021 Report, Research for Ac-

tion (RFA, 2021) captured the milestones, successes, and challenges of the A2E program. The report provides an opportunity to see what it was like to tackle a large-scale problem through a collective approach.

The A2E program had three unique categories, each of which centered on three specific demographic groups—youth from local school districts, adults who were already working in education but needed to move toward certification, and post-baccalaureate and paraprofessionals who were closer to entering the pipeline. Each funded institution and the CBED focused on one area and worked together to move individuals toward completion. Below is a description of each of these areas and the individuals served.

Youth Apprenticeship for Aspiring Educators. Under the youth pre-apprenticeship model, students would begin the A2E program during their junior year of high school with a path into a partnering institution of higher education (IHE), that is prepared to offer them the support they need to effectively complete the program. Under this model, students would enroll in a series of dual enrollment courses with upwards of 30 credits available, putting them ahead once they are officially admitted to an IHE.

◆ Juniors and Seniors from the School District of Philadelphia (SDP).

◆ Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Adult Apprenticeship for Aspiring Educators. Under the adult apprenticeship model, students who meet satisfactory academic requirements and have at least 30 credit hours that count toward a teacher certification program can enroll and will be given hiring priority and financial support (contingent upon multiple funding sources) throughout the duration of the program. Adults who qualify for this program include Youth Apprenticeship program completers, SDP teacher apprentices, and individuals in good academic standing.

◆ Youth Apprenticeship program completers.

◆ Individuals working as teacher apprentices at SDP.

◆ Students who have at least 30 hours of credits that count toward the teacher certification program.

◆ Students who meet satisfactory academic progress requirements.

Post Baccalaureate and Continued Development for Aspiring Educators. The A2E program also considers non-traditional candidates who may have already earned a bachelor's degree and are

interested in becoming teachers. These post-baccalaureate candidates can enter the program once they meet the satisfactory program requirements and are given the same benefits of other adult candidates. Such benefits include (but are not limited to) hiring priority by the local school district, mentorship, financial incentives, and scholarship possibilities.

◆ Adult Apprenticeship program completers.

◆ Students who meet satisfactory academic progress requirements.

◆ Students who have completed a BA.

Collective Impact:
The Common Agenda

To address educator diversity and the lack of culturally relevant and sustaining educators in Pennsylvania, PDE used a collective impact approach. When A2E began, they didn't name it collective impact. Still, according to Kania and Kramer, (2011), collective impact "requires many different players to change their behavior to solve a complex problem" (p. 38), and that's what they were doing. For the first time in Pennsylvania, the Department of Education was offering grants to institutions in Pennsylvania for them to work together to create collective outputs. The grant to each of the six institutions and the CBED rested on their ability to develop toolkits that addressed, Retention, Recruitment, Mentorship, & Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education (CRSE). The work to develop the toolkits was important because as individual institutions were engaged in their own version of A2E, they could use and share best practices in the toolkits. The funded institutions were Arcadia University, Cabrini University, Cheyney University (the oldest HBCU in the country), Drexel University, Temple University, West Chester University & the Center for Black Educator Development.

While A2E found great success in its pilot year, COVID-19 presented grantees with challenges as they began their programs. The funded institutions had to pivot significantly to meet the needs of learners during the pandemic. However, while COVID-19 changed the dynamics and direction of each program, it allowed us to see more explicitly how diverse communities and schools were severely underserved. This mobilized and motivated not only the funded institutions but many institutions across the Commonwealth to collective action. Consequently, by the time the grant period had ended, A2E had morphed into something bigger than anything PDE had imagined; it had become the

Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium (PEDC). Furthermore, when the grant period ended, PEDC became an independent entity no longer owned by the Department of Education. The growth of the collective work, which began under A2E, was bolstered during the pandemic and continues today. Kania & Kramer, (2011), posit that,

…There is scant evidence that isolated initiatives are the best way to solve many social problems in today's complex and interdependent world. No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it. (p. 38-39)

Consequently, we work together to address challenges that cannot be solved by any individual organization—including PDE. Today, our common agenda continues to be workforce diversity, culturally relevant and sustaining education and education systems in Pennsylvania. While this goal may be perceived as only relevant to diverse learners and educators, this is in service to all students of every background in Pennsylvania and beyond (see Figure 1).

Two Pennsylvania Programs

Six institutions of higher education and the Center for Black Educator Development were funded in this call from the Pennsylvania

Figure 1
Aspiring to Educate Framework
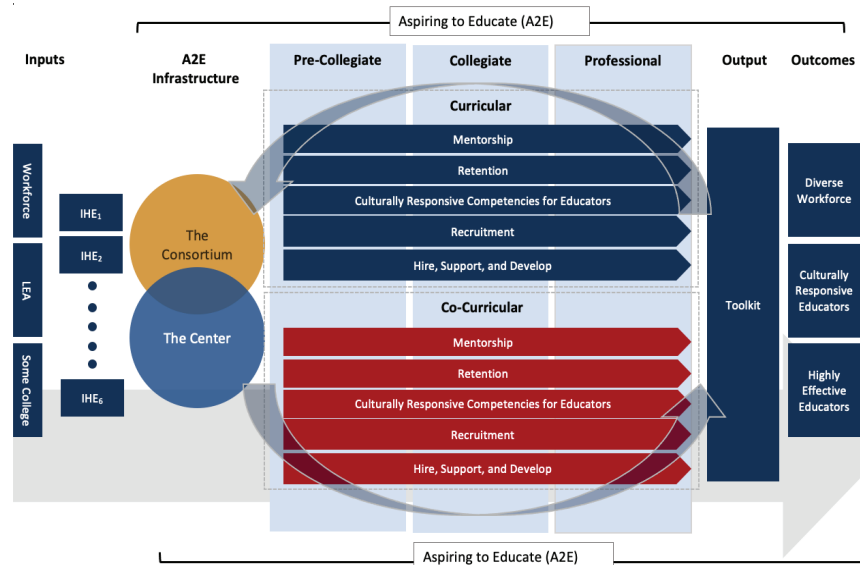
Department of Education Aspiring to Educate Grant. This paper examines two of the IHE's programs that were funded, one from a mid/large-sized public institution and the other a smaller private institution. As Black educators in predominantly White spaces we were intentionally reflexive while planning and carrying out these teacher educator pipeline projects. How does our identity drive and inform our work as we create programming to diversify the teacher pipeline? The self-questioning led to the creation of programs that were culturally responsive and that focused on recognizing the cultural capital that students brought to the table. For the purposes of this article, the two universities will be referred to as University I (the public institution) and University II (the private institution). IRB was not needed for the purposes of this article. This article is a program review.

Program 1:
Multicultural Teacher Education Early Pathways at a Public Institution

University I is a mid-large sized public research university located in Southeastern PA, approximately 20 miles from Philadelphia. University I began as a normal school educating teachers and is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and classified among R2: Doctoral Universities, as a High research activity. With 17,719 undergraduate and graduate students as of 2019, it is the largest of the 10 state-owned universities belonging to the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and the sixth largest university in Pennsylvania. It also maintains a Center City Philadelphia satellite campus on Market Street. University I has seven academic colleges: College of Arts and Humanities, College of Health Sciences, College of Business and Public Management, College of the Science and Mathematics, College of Education and Social Work, University College, and Wells School of Music.

While the public state IHE has a large number of education majors, they, like most EPP's, have numbers of Students of Color that are not representative of the population. The Pennsylvania Department of Education reached out to the EPP's teacher education program about the Aspiring to Educate Program and the intention of creating a partnership.

Planning: Program Description and Purpose. The initial intent was to begin working with high school students beginning their first year of high school. Parkway West was a Career and Technical Education (CTE) high school in Philadelphia. The student body was over 90% Black. Students enrolled in the Early Childhood program were

targeted to participate in this program as they had already expressed an interest in teaching. The intent was to begin with first year high school students and partner with them through their matriculation in high school. However, the first inaugural/pilot year the program began with 11th graders. Because the grant period was only for three years, it made sense to start with the juniors. As rising seniors, it seemed critical to begin the program with them as they begin to embark on their final year leading to college. The piloted teacher pipeline program was divided into 3 phases.

In phase 1, University I partnered with the high school to provide an all-day *Why Teach—Teacher Education Symposium* where students visited the college campus to learn more about college enrollment and teacher education programs. This program went a little further than the typical high school student college visit, providing the 11th graders with workshops on financial aid, the college admissions process, introduction to teacher education programs and majors, a Black male educator panel, and conversations and mentoring with current students of color in teacher education majors.

Phase II had selected rising seniors from a High School in Philadelphia were invited to participate in a summer dual enrollment program which focused on mentorship, basic skills prep, and other college readiness activities, social justice, and a teacher education introduction course. If additional funding was obtained, during their senior years, these students would have an opportunity to participate in two more dual enrollment courses, giving them a total of 9 college credits that will count toward a teacher education program. Students will be supported as they apply to the University I's teacher education programs and complete their required FAFSA. The goal was for ten summer dual enrollment students, once accepted into University I for fall 2021, to receive financial assistance to supplement state and federal grants to cover tuition costs at University I. If accepted into University I following graduation, all students from the Teacher Education Academy will receive intentional advising and academic support throughout their time at the university.

Phase III consisted of support and mentoring for students in their senior year. Students continued with SAT prep and helped with the college application process. This phase consisted of another opportunity to visit the campus, this time with their families.

Program Goals (review goals)

◆ Conduct a *Why Teach* Teacher Education Symposium for 11th graders.

◆ Create mentoring opportunities for high school students.

◆ Enroll high school students in a dual enrollment program in the summer taking a 3-credit child development course.

◆ Retention and persistence through dual enrollment, financial support, academic support, mentorship and a critical community cultural wealth approach.

◆ Success through graduation of a portion of those students in teacher education programs at University I.

◆ Up to five students that successfully complete the Teacher Ed pipeline program but not accepted traditionally into University I will have an opportunity to enter the university through the Academic Discovery Program—a bridge program aimed at supporting students that may not have met all admissions requirements but have potential for college success.

◆ Create a multicultural advisory board of current undergraduate students to serve as mentors.

◆ Incorporate Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) and Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Pedagogy into Teacher Education Programs.

The grant allowed the program to run for two cohorts beginning January 2020. The unfortunate start of the COVID pandemic greatly impacted the scope and modality of the program. After each phase of the program, an informal questionnaire was given to participants, students and teachers alike to find out what worked and what challenges existed. In addition, program directors offered reflections on their experiences running the programs.

Program 2:
Going Deeper About Diversifying Teacher Education at the Private Institution

University II is a private institution of higher education dedicated to operationalizing its mission. Located 20 miles from Philadelphia, the university embraces diversity from Philadelphia and the surrounding area. University II is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the University serves approximately 1,400 undergraduates and 900 graduate students.

University II has established four academic schools: School of Education, School of Business, Arts, and Media, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and School of Natural Sciences and Allied Health. The University offers undergraduate degree programs in over 40 majors, pre-professional programs, concentrations, and minors, six master's

degree programs, and two doctoral programs in educational leadership and organizational development.

University II is one of Pennsylvania's top private institutions in terms of the number of teachers certified. Through active recruitment and new programing, University II's full-time undergraduate minority enrollment (41%) has more than doubled in the past five years, and over a quarter (27%) of 2 students are considered first generation college students with neither parent graduating from a higher education institution. University II's education programs are identified as a thought- and social justice-leader by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, PreK-12 partners, and other educational organizations.

The Vision. The School of Education at University II is committed to developing a diverse educator pipeline to serve Pennsylvania's teacher education workforce. Thus, the School of Education facilitated an initiative titled: Diversity and Equity, Within the Education Profession (DEEP IMPACT) to focus on the recruitment and development of a diverse teacher education workforce. The name of DEEP IMPACT symbolizes the project's mission of ensuring that there will be diversity & equity within the education profession that will impact the educational experiences of all students and communities. DEEP IMPACT seeks to shift the national lack of educator diversity, by intentionally focusing on increasing the representation of teacher candidates from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, with a specific focus on African American and Latinx teacher candidates.

Specifically, the national lack of educator diversity continues to be a problem in public education (USDE, 2016), thus, constructing innovative pathways for diverse candidates is in alignment to University II's commitment to equity and social justice. University II's commitment to social justice and equity is exemplified in practice and in its mission statement. Specifically, University II's conceptual framework clearly states that: "We envision a School of Education that creates inclusive communities where equity and justice flourish. Central to our vision is engaging in culturally sustaining and restorative practices to make a difference in people's lives." In working with a team from Enrollment Management and Marketing, the School of Education envisions the rollout of the DEEP IMPACT Project to capture a diverse group of teacher candidates and provide the needed resources to support them. The A2E initiative catapulted the DEEP IMPACT project into existence and would allow University II to create pathways for these students and gain a strong reputation as a leader in the field.

Program Description and Purpose. University II's collaborated with several K-12 charter schools, private institutions, and community colleges in their development of a pipeline program for Educators of color. Specifically, University II collaborated with their partners to identify participants with some college credits, who were looking to become teachers and earn their Bachelor of Science in Education at University II. The initial cohort was composed of 23 African American and Latinx teaching candidates, who aspired to work in urban settings. During their time in the DEEP IMPACT program, participants took a course that focused on pedagogical techniques, which centered the importance of culture and context. Additionally, through specialized symposiums, and mentors from the field (e.g. teachers and educational leaders), candidates were exposed to opportunities for professional growth and networking. Further, some of the individuals that participated in the initial cohort, also participated in a teacher candidate think tank session, which ultimately influenced some of the themes in the Pennsylvania Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education competency document (Cole-Malott et.al, 2021).

Program Highlights and Successes

With the implementation of both GYO programs, we were responsible for the planning, the implementation, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Here we report on directors' reflective perceptions of program highlights and program challenges of their respective GYO programs.

Program 1:
Multicultural Teacher Education Early Pathways at University I

Program Highlights

Awareness. One of the biggest successes that came out of the A2E program at University I was the awareness of the issue of the Teacher of Color shortage and the urgent need to recruit and retain teacher candidates of color. Hearing the call from lone Black faculty in the department is one thing, but hearing a nationwide call from the US Department of Education and from Pennsylvania's Department of Education moves the issue from being a "personal" issue that a faculty cares about to a nationwide call for action.

Why Teach Symposium. Phase I of the program, the *Why Teach Symposium* was indeed the highlight of the A2E Pipeline Initiative. The high school students, their teachers, and the university faculty

and students all reported that the day-long program was beneficial and proved helpful in introducing students to the field of teaching. Phase I took place directly before the onset of COVID-19 in February of 2020. The day-long symposium was unaffected by the global pandemic.

The day went further than just being a day of fun, it was a working day where the high school students heard first-hand about the importance of teaching and were able to hear directly from teacher candidates and Black males in education. In addition, the college prep workshops were helpful for the high school juniors giving them critical information they need about college admissions and matriculation. The focus was to allow the high school students to really envision the need for Black teachers and to see current teacher candidates of color and hear their stories.

Dual Enrollment Course. Summer of 2020 there were nine students enrolled in the dual enrollment course, and summer of 2021 there were eight students enrolled. While the numbers were much lower than projected, the students enrolled in the program successfully completed the course which was moved online due to COVID-19. The students were engaged and successfully earned three college credits in an education course.

Program Challenges

While there were elements of the program that were very successful, as with many large projects, especially projects with a short planning period, challenges are sure to arise. Here, some main challenges are highlighted noting how they impacted the program. The intention is to think about challenges to consider these and/or similar challenges moving forward and to also consider what circumstances contributed to program impact.

Grant Administrative Challenges. One of the problems detected early in the implementation was administrative challenges dealing with the carrying out of the grant. The state-wide programs were initiated with the understanding of a short turn around and quick start time. The short turnaround time (Request for Proposals (RFP) came out in October and the program was to begin in January) left little time for proper planning. Also, the program was set to begin January and the funds weren't released at the start of the program which meant money had to be secured by the institutions to run the program. This created additional hardship for the program director and the IHE.

Worldwide Pandemic (COVID-19). Immediately after Phase

I, as the program moved into Phase II, the recruitment of students for the summer dual enrollment program, COVID-19 began to impact schools across the country. While students had indicated an interest in participating in the summer dual enrollment program initially and teachers were excited and engaged, the onset of the pandemic shifted the recruitment efforts. Schools were scrambling to shift to emergency remote instruction and this dual enrollment program and focus on teacher education was moved to the back burner. It is believed that this contributed to the reduced number of participants. It also reduced the contact and planning time with our partner school.

The pandemic impacted Phase II's modality. Students were not able to come to campus as first anticipated, so the summer program was moved to an online remote modality brought about further challenges. This was a challenge as the students were just getting their laptops from the school district and encountered many technology issues as they learned their device and had to interact with the Learning Management System. Some of the issues that were encountered further highlighted the digital divide and demonstrated that it is beyond access. The digital divide showed a lack of familiarity with some basic functions—creating files, uploading files to folders, and other general uses of computer programs.

Program Sustainability Concerns. Whenever a new program is implemented with grant funds, a question arises, how do we ensure that the program is sustainable once the grant funds run out? Getting full commitment from IHE" s in the form of financial and human resources is necessary in sustaining diversity led programing long term. It would benefit IHE's to weave programming in regularly scheduled programs in an effort to ensure they will last. Having a program run as a separate silo makes sustainability a real challenge.

Program 2:
Going Deeper About Diversifying Teacher Education at University II

Program Highlights

The DEEP IMPACT program at University II was able to recruit a cohort of 22 BIPOC students, who aspired to teach in urban schools, and urban school districts. Aspects of preparing students for the profession included mentorship, leadership development, professional development. Regarding professional development, students were challenged to explore the importance of culture, in the co-learning exchange, the salience of implicit biases, and anti-racism courses, that are rooted in

practice. Additionally, many of the initial DEEP IMPACT students were able to participate in think tank sessions, with the research team for the Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education (CRSE), competency report. Thus, these students were able to add commentary of dispositions, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, approaches, and skills needed for student teachers to facilitate CRSE practices.

Program Challenges

From a methodological approach, the DEEP IMPACT program was being guided by Improvement Inquiry (Bryk et.al, 2015). The Six Core Principles of Improvement Inquiry are:

1. Make the work problem-specific and user-centered.
2. Variation in performance is the core problem to address.
3. See the system that produces the current outcomes.
4. We cannot improve at scale what we cannot measure.
5. Anchor practice improvement in disciplined inquiry.
6. Accelerate improvements through networked communities.

Given the various processes that align with operationalizing Improvement Inquiry, the primary challenge that we had with the DEEP IMPACT program is profound modality changes that occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, our program was designed to assist our cohort in-person. Thus, we did not have the technology infrastructure to redesign our program to meet the needs of our participants. Additionally, as a result of the pandemic, many of our participants could no longer continue in the program for various reasons (e.g. mental health challenges, health challenges, financial challenges), therefore, cohesion within the program was greatly impacted.

Lastly, like many of the other funded programs, confusion and broken promises of the distribution of the funds caused profound budget challenges, and mistrust about the "authenticity" of the grant, with both our internal and external stakeholders.

Results

Since the start of the Aspiring to Educate program, Pennsylvania's teachers of color have seen a slight increase from 5.4% to 6.6% (Fuller, 2024). Between 2013-2014 the teachers of color in PA increased by .8%, however, 37% of students are students of color (Cabrail et al., 2022). The Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium will hold its 5th annual Diversity Summit in June providing culturally responsive professional development to educators across Pennsylvania.

The multicultural dual enrollment program at University I began

in 2020 with 48 students participating in the "Why Teach" Symposium. Year 1 and year 2 both saw six students completing the dual enrollment summer course gaining 3 college credits while still in high school. Although those students did not enter into University I's teacher education program, in 2024, the program is now the Prize Program. The program has five phases: Early Exposure, Continued Exposure and Engagement, Admission into University I, Matriculation, and Graduation (West Chester University, 2024). Four years later, the program continues to grow and thrive.

The Deep Impact program at University II engaged 22 BIPOC students wishing to become teachers. The students were engaged in co-curricular activities to strengthen their probability of being successful going into teaching, however, with the recent announcement of the closure of University II, the program halted.

Conclusion and Implications

Our country is at a critical time for the teaching profession. The ongoing nationwide teacher shortage coupled with a rapid increase of a diverse student population and the abysmal numbers of teachers of color entering the field, Educator Preparation Programs are scrambling to brainstorm ways to diversify the teacher educator pipeline.

With most states (US Dept. of Ed., 2016, 2023) falling short of proper representation of teachers of color, top state officials should lead the charge and put out a call of urgency for IHEs to do the work while setting aside money to support IHEs in their efforts. IHE leaders should recognize the need and support the work of diversifying the teacher workforce by providing ongoing funding and human resources to focus on the work in addition to support for teacher diversity educators often working in silos. With state backing and funding, more opportunities can be created for IHEs to collaborate and support each other in this charge. Educators focused on diversity, working collectively, coming together across the state to develop policies and practices that can be adapted across the state for all IHEs puts everyone on the same page and allows for consistency and productivity.

With intentionality and collective thought, states can galvanize researchers at colleges and universities and related institutions to begin to collectively plan to create and strengthen the diverse teacher educator pipeline. The collective gathering of like-minded individuals focusing on the work of teacher diversity gave us an affinity space - a space to collect and gather our thoughts, share ideas, and pull together resources and programming. Working collectively allows us to

have greater impact and allows us to move the needle of the work. Connecting teacher educators that focus on diversity issues in teacher education can move the educators out of their silos and allow them to collectively move an agenda and accomplish goals. With states being intentional and centering teacher diversity, there is a likelihood that working together can impact change.

Teacher educators could benefit from being reflexive in their thought and by identifying and naming their positionality when thinking about their research and/or program creation. Recognizing your standpoint and position in this work can allow researchers/teacher educators to identify specific knowledge or stance as multiple perspectives are gathered.

At the federal and state level, diversity work must not be an afterthought. Proper thought-out planning must be in place well enough in advance so that it allows for proper phasing in and carrying out the diversity work. Frequently, in our haste to begin a program, we may rush to start without spending time to think through and carry through the running of our programs. Often grants are offered and there is a short turnaround to plan and write the grant and once funded, there is a short time to begin the program without consideration for planning and phasing in time. In all programming efforts, including teacher diversity efforts, time needs to be allocated to allow for proper planning, recruitment efforts, and implementation of the newly designed programs.

When creating Grow Your Own programs, creating alternative pipelines for educator diversity tackles the issue on more than one front. Speaking with students in early high school programs and talking to them about the critical nature of teaching is key. Identifying high school students that have already expressed an interest in teaching and supporting them in the process is critical. Also critical is identifying paraprofessionals that are already in school settings and providing support structures.

References

Carver-Thomas, D. (2017). *Diversifying the field: Barriers to recruiting and retaining teachers of color and how to overcome them*. Equity Assistance Center Region II, Intercultural Development Research Association. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED582730.pdf

Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Learning Policy Institute. https://doi.org/10.54300/559.310.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education.*

Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203720967

Cabral, L., Eddins, M., Lapp, D., & Nelson, S. (2022). *The need for more teachers of color*. Research for Action.

Cole-Malott, D., Parker Thompson, K., Whitaker, R., & Peterson Ansari, R. (2021). *Pennsylvania culturally relevant and sustaining education competencies*. Pennsylvania Department of Education & the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium.

Coleman-King, C., Rosser, B. D. & Sanford, C. M. (2023). Beyond the institution: An informal partnership endeavored toward understanding and addressing Black teacher recruitment and retention. *Urban Review 55*, 433–455. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-023-00656-7

Da Graca, M., & Dougherty, L. (2015). *First generation college students: Navigating higher education*. https://scalar.usc.edu/works/first-generation-college-student-/index

Daniels, K. N. (2022). *Identifying barriers to recruiting and retaining a diverse teacher workforce*. The Hunt Institute. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED626474.pdf

El-Mekki, S. (2021, September 9). To achieve educational justice, we need more Black teachers. *Edsurge News*. EdSurge. https://www.edsurge.com/news/2021-09-09-to-achieve-educational-justice-we-need-more-black-teachers

Gershenson, S., Hart, C., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C., & Papageorge, N. W. (2022). The long-run impacts of same-race teachers. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 14(4), 300-342*. https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20190573

Gist, C. D. (2022). *"Grow your own" programs: Examining potential and pitfalls for a new generation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color community teachers*. National Education Policy Center. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED620546.pdf

Gist, C. D. (2019). For what purpose?: Making sense of the various projects driving grow your own program development. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *46*(1), 9–22. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26558179

Gist, C. D., Bianco, M., & Lynn, M. (2019). Examining grow your own programs across the teacher development continuum: Mining research on Teachers of Color and nontraditional educator pipelines. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *70*(1), 13–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118787504

Goodwin, A. L. (2023). Enduring problems, rethinking process, fulfilling promises: Reflections on the continuing shortage of teachers of color. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *74*(2), 167–170. https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871231160372

Heubeck, E. (2020). Recruiting and retaining teachers of color: Why it matters, ways to do it. *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/leadership/recruiting-and-retaining-teachers-of-color-why-it-matters-ways-to-do-it/2020/06

Hudson, M. J., & Holmes, B. J. (1994). Missing teachers, impaired communities: The unanticipated consequences of *Brown v. Board of Education* on the African American teaching force at the pre-collegiate level. *Journal of Negro Education*, *63*(3), 388-393. https://doi.org/10.2307/2967189

Ingersoll, R., & May, H. (2016). *Minority teacher recruitment, employment and retention: 1987 to 2013*. Learning Policy Institute. https://repository.upenn.edu/handle/20.500.14332/35266

Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, *9*(1), 36–41. https://doi.org/10.48558/5900-KN19

Mawhinney, L., & Rinke, C. R. (2019). *There has to be a better way: Lessons from former urban teachers*. Rutgers University Press. https://www.philasd.org/

Lash, M., & Ratcliffe, M. (2014). The journey of an African American teacher before and after *Brown v. Board of Education*. *Journal of Negro Education*, *83*(3), 327-337. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.83.3.0327

Probst, B. (2015). The eye regards itself: benefits and challenges of reflexivity in qualitative social work research. *Social Work Research*, *39*(1): 37–48.

Research for Action. (2021). *Final report, evaluation of the Aspiring to Educate Pilot Philadelphia Pilot*. Research for Action. https://www.researchforaction.org/research-resources/k-12/final-report-evaluation-of-the-aspiring-to-educate-philadelphia-pilot/

Shaw-Amoah, A., Lapp, D., & Kim, D. (2020). *Teacher diversity in Pennsylvania from 2013-2014 to 2019-2020*. Research for Action. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED611656.pdf

Stewart, A. (2013). *First class: The legacy of Dunbar, America's first Black public high school*. Chicago Review Press.

Stohr, A., Fontana, J., & Lapp, D. (2018). *Patching the leaky pipeline: Recruiting and retaining teachers of Color in Pennsylvania. A PACER Policy Brief*. Research for Action. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED589381.pdf

Swisher, A. (2023). *State of the states 2023: Policies to increase teacher diversity*. National Council on Teacher Quality. https://www.nctq.org/publications/State-of-the-States-2023:-Policies-to-Increase-Teacher-Diversity

Texas Comprehensive Center. (2018). *Grow your own teachers initiatives resources* [PDF]. American Institute for Research. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED594981.pdf

Tillman, L. C. (2004). (Un)intended consequences?: The impact of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision on the employment status of Black educators. *Education and Urban Society, 36*(3), 280–303. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124504264360

The United States Department of Education. (2016). *The state of racial diversity in the teacher educator workforce*. https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf

Veltri, B. T. (2008). Teaching or service?: The site-based realities of Teach for America teachers in poor, urban schools. *Education and Urban Society, 40*(5), 511–542. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124508319281

West Chester University (2024). *The prize*. West Chester University. https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/prize/program.aspx

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), pp. 69–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006

She Did It on Purpose:
Teacher Education Students'
Interpersonal Attributions
of Black Girls' Behavior
and Classroom Disciplinary Decisions

Alexandra D. Bloshenko
Hunter College

Nicole L. Lorenzetti
The City College of New York

Abstract

Black youth overwhelmingly experience excessive discipline and exclusionary practices in schools, which contribute to the growing achievement and opportunity gaps between Black and White students. This study examined 915 teacher education students' (TES') interpersonal attributions of classroom behaviors of elementary age Black and White girls, using sets of vignettes and questionnaires to analyze the impacts of student race on TES' interpersonal attributions and consequent discipline decisions. The findings indicate that TES attribute a more internal locus of control and controllability to the behaviors of Black girls than White girls displaying comparable behaviors. TES' more often refer White girls to school psychologists and more often ignore the classroom misbehavior of White girls than Black girls at statistically significant rates. Incorporating explicit, anti-racism classroom management into teacher education curricula could address TES' racially biased interpersonal attributions of stu-

Alexandra D. Bloshenko is a graduate of the Master's Program in Educational Psychology of the School of Education at Hunter College and Nicole L. Lorenzetti is a Doctoral Lecturer in the School of Education at the City College of New York, both in New York City, New York. Email addresses: sasha.bloshenko@gmail.com & nlorenzetti@ccny.cuny.edu

dent behaviors, and create more equitable and safe educational spaces for Black students.

Key Words: discipline gap, racial bias, attribution theory, interpersonal attributions, teacher education students

Introduction

Society touts education as the "great equalizer" that opens doors to new opportunities, the key to success. For so many families, education is trusted to be a shot at upward mobility in socioeconomic status, offering a brighter future for their children. Despite such widely advertised assurances from the education system that are meant to bring hope and promise to all, the "achievement gap", which Ladson-Billings (2006) has pointed out to actually be an opportunity gap between Black students and their White counterparts, prevails and is connected to the discipline gap (Morris & Perry, 2016). This discipline gap sees Black students receiving exclusionary discipline at rates often three times those of their White counterparts (Gregory et al., 2010). Excessive disciplinary policies that overwhelmingly target Black youth create educational spaces that are systematically othering Black students instead of cultivating equality, safety, and learning opportunities, especially in urban landscapes (Skiba et al., 2014). While countless studies have examined the effects of racial bias against Black boys in educational settings (Caldwell et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2010; Battey & Leyva, 2016), there is a significant gap in the literature when it comes to the effects of racial bias against Black girls in educational settings (Carter Andrews et al., 2019).

Research suggests that teachers play a role in the discipline gap (e.g., Gregory et al., 2016). Evidence of teachers' racial biases has been studied across various grade levels, and biases against Black students are present as early as preschool (Yates & Marcelo, 2014; Gilliam et al., 2016). Disturbingly, research indicates that regardless of their race, gender, or language(s) spoken, teachers possess a racial bias against Black students that is on par with the general public (Starck et al., 2020). Starck et al. (2020) ran two studies comparing implicit and explicit bias, respectively, in teachers compared to the general public. They found that the differences in implicit racial bias measures between teachers and nonteachers were statistically significant but inconsequential (likely due to high statistical power), and no statistically significant differences were found in explicit bias measures between the two samples (Starck et al., 2020). This means that the racialized socialization of teachers' thinking, attitudes, dispositions, and even be-

haviors occurs long before they become teachers and likely throughout the entire duration of their lives. While teachers cannot eliminate all of their implicit biases just as no other professional can, teachers can and should be trained and held accountable to ensure that their subconscious biases are not harming the students and the communities that they serve through the decisions they make at the classroom level.

As student populations continue to grow and become increasingly racially diverse, student achievement rates are continuing to plummet, and new teachers are entering the field with fewer qualifications than ever before thanks to fast tracked and alternative certification pathways (Wilson, 2015). As a result, less qualified teachers are systematically funneled into school districts within communities of lower socioeconomic status, which are already lacking critical resources (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Wilson, 2015). To compound existing issues in these communities, Black children are more likely than White children to receive inadequate instruction from inexperienced and perfunctorily trained teachers who are predisposed to project their biases surrounding "race, class, gender, and family backgrounds" onto their students (Cooper, 2003, p. 102). Urban schools notoriously have the highest rates of such teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019) and studies have found that "the difference in teacher quality may represent the single most important school resource differential between minority and White children [that] … explains at least as much of the variance in student achievement as socioeconomic status" (Cooper, 2003, p. 105).

If teachers are under the false impression that hard work is all it takes for anyone to succeed, which is the clarion song of a meritocratic belief system, then they are more likely to make cultural deficit-based attributions rooted in racist and classist stereotypes to the disproportionately low achievement rates of Black students (Cooper, 2003, p. 103). These biases, in turn, are manifested in teachers' instructional practices such as "unfair judgment and discipline, watered down curriculum, or blatant neglect," which negatively affect students' self-efficacy and motivation (Cooper, 2003, p. 103 & p. 113). Furthermore, teachers' misplaced interpersonal attributions of student behavior can impact how students are labeled and, consequently, determine whether or not they are able to access the appropriate and often necessary educational services and supports (Cooper, 2003). Less qualified teachers are also more likely to blame students for their failures rather than take responsibility and reexamine the effectiveness of their own instruction (Cooper, 2003). Such teachers project their biases onto Black students by making disciplinary decisions that are informed by their

own racially biased interpersonal attributions (Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2022). disciplinary decisions that can negatively alter a Black girl's entire educational trajectory, especially when they are made early on in her academic career.

Behavioral Beliefs about Black Girls in Schools

From birth, Black girls are subjected to images of their adultification in all forms of media, within their communities, and in major public systems such as the education and juvenile systems (Carter Andrews et al., 2019; Epstein et al., 2017; Morris, 2016). Adultification is the "assignment of more adultlike characteristics to the expressions of young Black girls," which is "a form of age compression" that renders them vulnerable to be viewed as hypersexual, disorderly, and conniving (Morris, 2016, p. 34). Data from a report published by the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality in 2017 shows that adults perceive Black girls to be less innocent, more adult-like, and needing less nurturing, protection, support, and comfort than their White peers, especially in the age range of 5–14 (Epstein et al., 2017). This poses many issues for Black girls both in and out of school because their behaviors are easily misattributed by those who assume that they are acting with intent even when they are not. Such misattributions lead to increased chances of misunderstanding between teachers and their Black students, which contribute to disproportionate rates of punitive treatment of Black students, specifically Black girls (Carter Andrews et al., 2019; Epstein et al., 2017). Schools do not recognize nor honor the adaptive behaviors that Black girls have learned in response to oppressive conditions in their lives that are defined by "race, sexuality, class, and gender" and, instead, schools punish them (Morris, 2016, p. 35). This begins in classrooms with teachers who first make assumptions about the roots and nature of these behaviors, consciously or not, and then follow them up with disciplinary decisions. Attribution theory can be used as a framework that may explain these decisions.

Teachers' Attributions of Student Behaviors

One avenue of research through which teachers' implicit biases can be addressed is attribution theory. Attribution theory of motivation stemmed from social psychology in the 1950's and has evolved over the last several decades (Weiner, 1979, 1986, 2018). It describes the human tendency to "search for the causes of our successes and failures," which directly impact self-efficacy and expectations for future circumstances and serve as a motivational stimulus for action or lack thereof

(Hunter & Barker, 1987, p. 51). Perceptions of others' responsibility for their actions are connected to a multitude of interpersonal reactions including negative ones such as hostility, stigmatization, and racial stereotyping (Graham, 2020).

Attribution theory can be used as a lens to examine racial violence, which begins in the school setting – in the classroom, to be exact. As a vastly understudied group (Carter Andrews et al. 2019), Black elementary age girls are the first and the earliest to bear the brunt of the racial biases that they will continue to be subjected to throughout the course of their lives. This study will examine the relationship between teacher education students' interpersonal attributions of student behavior and the consequent disciplinary action decisions that teacher education students make as a function of female elementary students' race.

In attribution theory, success and failure are attributed to native ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck, with native ability and effort being the most dominating factors in teachers' perceived attributions of student behavior (Hunter & Barker, 1987; Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023). All four attributions exist at the intersection of three spectrums—locus of causality, stability, and controllability (Hunter & Barker, 1987; Weiner, 1979). This study focuses on interpersonal attributions of locus of causality and controllability.

Interpersonal attributions are perceived attributions of others' behaviors; locus of causality refers to one's "perception of the location of the cause" for a behavior or outcome (Hunter & Barker, 1987, p. 51). An internal locus of causality indicates a level of responsibility and maneuverability such that behaviors or outcomes are a direct result of a student's conscious decisions pertaining to areas such as effort or native ability. The locus of causality of a student's behavior does not only assume the vantage point intrapersonally of the student themselves, but also interpersonally by way of their teacher (Weiner, 1979; Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023). While attributions of success to an internal locus of causality can raise a student's self-esteem and illicit praise from their teacher, attributions of failure to an internal locus of causality result in frustration and anger from their teacher (Hunter & Barker, 1987; Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023).

Controllability refers to the degree to which a student is in control of their behavior - whether they could influence their behavior by controlling the cause of it, which would ultimately lead to their success or failure (Hamilton & Lordan, 2023; Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023). Similar to the effects of attributions of failure to an internal locus of causality, attributions of failure to internal controllability also result in feelings of anger and indignation from their teacher (Hunter & Bark-

er, 1987; Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023). Having both moral and control facets, teachers' evaluations of students yield responses and emotions that are akin to benevolence, support, criticism and blame (Weiner, 1979). The way that a teacher responds to their students' behaviors, therefore, sends strong messages to the students about their ability and effort in the classroom (Graham, 2020). In distinguishing between locus of causality and controllability, one could say that locus of causality refers to where the behavior is originating from and controllability is an interpretation of the degree to which the behavior is static or dynamic, or whether it could be changed by the student.

It is crucial to recognize that perceived attributions are not necessarily reality because these perceptions are constructed with the heavy influence of personal biases that the observers of the behaviors are not fully aware of (Hamilton & Lordan, 2023; Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023). Differences in racialized culture between teachers and their students can lead to teachers making biased attributions of student behavior since their views of what constitutes "normal" and "abnormal" behavior may conflict with what students understand it to be (Hosterman et al., 2008). Despite this liability, students' recommendation for services and placement in special education programs, for example, heavily rely on teacher ratings, which are based on accumulated observations of student behavior that are by no means free of bias (Hosterman et al., 2008).

When a teacher is annoyed with their student's performance, this can signal to the student that they are responsible for their unsatisfactory behavior and should have been able to control it even if that is not possible (Graham, 2020). Conversely, when a teacher displays understanding and sympathy for their student despite the student's performance, this can signal to the student that they would not have been able to improve their unsatisfactory behavior because it is outside of their control (Graham, 2020). Figure 1 shows the progression from attribution to emotional response and, finally, to action (Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023).

In addition to sending nuanced signals to students about their ability and effort, teachers' interpersonal attributions of student behaviors may impact the disciplinary decisions that teachers make in response to student behavior (Hunter & Barker, 1987; Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023).

Teacher Decisions about Student Behaviors

Teachers make hundreds of second-by-second decisions every day, which include disciplinary decisions that impact their students both in the short term and the long term. According to Cameron (2006),

School discipline is defined as school policies and actions taken by school personnel with students to prevent or intervene with unwanted behaviors, primarily focusing on school conduct codes and security methods, suspension from school, corporal punishment, and teachers' methods of managing students' actions in class. (p. 219)

While all schools have disciplinary policies that encompass some combination of these methods, it is becoming more and more apparent that such exclusionary discipline methods may do more harm than good to the students subjected to them (Skiba et al., 2014; Gregory et al., 2010). Teachers' methods of managing classroom behaviors can be particularly problematic as they reflect discriminatory practices that overwhelmingly refer Black students to administrators for disciplinary action even when their White counterparts display comparable behaviors (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Both socioeconomic status and race have been found to be statistically significant predictors of suspension rates as school disciplinary practices, including individual teacher disciplinary decisions, reflect racist and classist biases (Cameron, 2006; Crenshaw et al., 2015). Without any conscious and structured efforts to reflect and reform, school disciplinary practices often end up having negative effects on the most vulnerable students who heavily rely on

Figure 1
Teacher Reactions to Interpersonal Attributions Toward Student Classroom Behavior
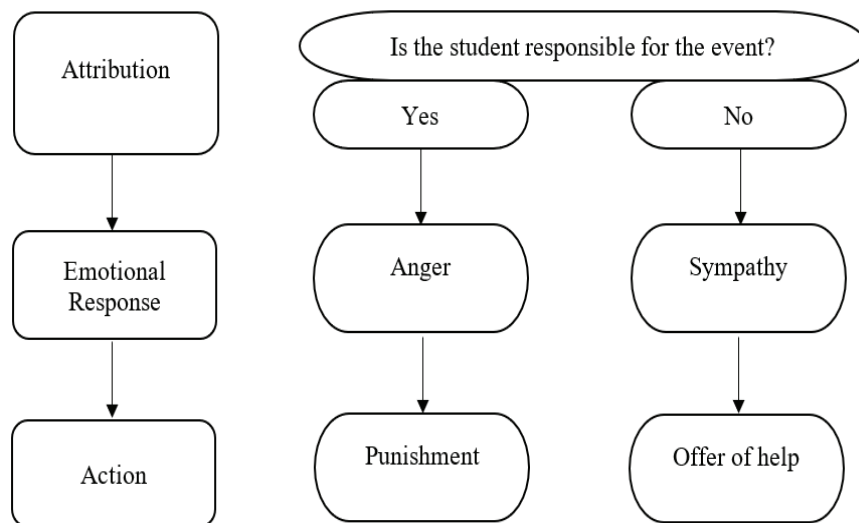
education as a vehicle to escape from a cycle of maximally maintained inequality (Cameron, 2006). Conventional disciplinary actions promoted by and used in schools are detrimental to students' short term and long term healthy development and well-being (Cameron, 2006).

Most of the teacher workforce in urban cities tends to be predominantly White and female with little to no experience serving Black children and their communities (Husband & Bertrand, 2021). Unsurprisingly, this poses problems in how teachers perceive, interpret, and react to the classroom behaviors of Black girls, especially if the teachers implicitly perceive Black girls to be more behaviorally challenged than their White counterparts (Husband & Bertrand, 2021). Black girls in urban cities like New York and Boston are disproportionately affected by extreme school discipline policies such as suspensions, which remove students from the classroom and adversely impact the academic, social, and emotional wellbeing of these students (Crenshaw et al., 2015). Disproportionate suspension rates are not only an issue in urban areas- a 2021 study of suspensions across 15 school districts in Ohio, for example, found that 67% of the suspensions involved Black girls and only 20% involved White girls (Husband & Bertrand, 2021). Other states have performed similar analyses. Schools are a place where Blackness is policed and punished rather than understood and embraced (Morris, 2016).

Justification for Research and Research Questions

The research presented thus far has shown that teachers' interpersonal attributions of student behavior influence disciplinary decisions, and that teachers' disciplinary decisions reflect discriminatory practices that disproportionately refer Black students to administrators for disciplinary action (e.g., Cameron, 2006; Crenshaw et al., 2015). Since Black girls first encounter these trends in the classroom with teachers, it is vital to investigate whether teachers' disciplinary decisions are influenced by racially biased interpersonal attributional beliefs even earlier, when they are teacher education students in teacher preparation programs. This brings forth the following research questions:

1. Do teacher education students attribute more internal causality and controllability of behaviors to Black elementary age girls than to their White peers?

2. Do teacher education students' disciplinary decisions disproportionally remove more Black elementary age girls from the classroom than their White peers?

3. Do teacher education students make different disciplinary decisions in response to student behavior based on interpersonal attributions for Black elementary age girls compared to their White peers?

Since schools are such dangerous places for Black girls, it is vital to examine if corrective measures could be taken to prevent the aggressive encounters that Black girls have with the public education system. To do so, it is necessary to assess the extent to which teacher education students' (TES) interpersonal attributions of elementary age girls' behaviors vary by student race. Research shows that teacher performance and classroom decisions are affected by their conscious and subconscious beliefs about their students' "intelligence, character, and potential," which can fluctuate based on student characteristics such as race (Cooper, 2003, pp. 101-102). Teachers of all races and even those with good intentions can be susceptible to racial stereotypes and their associated beliefs in consequences for students they hold personally responsible for their actions (Graham, 2020). *The first hypothesis is that TES attribute more internal causality and controllability of behaviors to Black elementary age girls than to their White peers.*

Research also indicates that racialized disciplinary decisions made by teachers are, *inter alia*, contributing to the achievement gap between Black and White students by removing Black girls from the classroom (Husband & Bertrand, 2021). Exclusionary disciplinary action results in reduced access to instructional time that is critical for education (Gregory et al., 2016). Disproportionate rates of suspension put Black girls at an educational disadvantage compared to their White counterparts by serving as a physical barrier to academic success with far reaching effects. *The second hypothesis is that the disciplinary decisions that TES make disproportionately remove Black girls from the classroom more than their White peers.*

The intersection of interpersonal attributions and the disciplinary decisions made by TES is worthy of exploration. If the findings indicate that there are disparities between interpersonal attributions and consequent disciplinary action choices made by TES for Black elementary age girls and their White peers, then there is strong evidence that racism will manifest itself when these TES enter real classrooms and work with real children. Such findings would demonstrate a dire need for a fundamental overhaul of teacher education programs to preserve the social, emotional, and academic well-being of Black elementary age girls. *The third hypothesis is that TES make different disciplinary decisions in response to student behavior based on interpersonal attributions for Black elementary age girls compared to their White peers.*

Methods

This correlational study is an extension of previous work, which found that TES were more likely to believe that Black elementary age boys held more internal causality and controllability than their White peers with similar behavior (Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2023). The goal of the current study was to extend measures of interpersonal attributions of student behavior into the population of Black elementary age girls and to gain insight on how TES' interpersonal attributions of student behavior influence their disciplinary decisions as a function of student race.

Sample

The participants in this study are 915 TES in an urban public university network of schools in the northeastern United States. The sample in this study is representative of the U.S. public school teacher population in terms of gender but not necessarily race. Of the participants in this study, 79% are female and 47.9% are White. Of all public school teachers in America, 77% are female and 80% are White (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Despite the study sample of teachers being more racially diverse than the national public school teacher population, it is important to note that the teaching force remains predominantly female and White both in this study and in public schools across the country. Participant demographics are shown in Table 1.

Recruitment

This study recruited 915 TES from an urban public university network of schools in the North-Eastern United States to complete a survey that was split into two sections: a set of classroom behavior vignettes, and a demographic questionnaire. TES were recruited through their respective departments' research systems, and they received a research credit for one of their courses in return for study completion.

Overview of Instruments

Classroom Behavior Vignettes Survey. The survey used to collect data included four pairs of vignettes with pictures of girls approximately 8-12 years of age (one Black and one White in each pair) with analogous behavioral pathologies. The students represented in odd number vignettes (1, 3, 5 and 7) are White elementary age girls while the students represented in even number vignettes (2, 4, 6 and 8) are Black elementary age girls. Vignette pair 1 includes students represented in vignettes 1 and 2, vignette pair 2 includes students rep-

resented in vignettes 3 and 4, vignette pair 3 includes students represented in vignettes 5 and 6, and vignette pair 4 includes students represented in vignettes 7 and 8. The behaviors briefly described for students in each of the four vignette pairs are characteristic of disorganization, disruptive behavior, ADHD, and internalization, respectively, operationalized using the ICD-11.

Table 1
Participant Demographics

Characteristics	n	%
Age (n = 906)		
<20	42	4.6
20-29	625	68.1
30-39	154	16.9
40-49	59	6.3
50-59	25	2.6
60-69	1	0.1
70-79	0	0
80-89	1	0.1
No response	9	1
Gender (n = 909)		
Female	723	79
Male	171	18.7
Other	15	1.6
No response	6	0.7
Race/Ethnicity (n = 909)		
White	435	47.9
Hispanic or Latinx	239	26.3
Black	106	11.7
Native American	9	1.0
Asian	171	18.8
Other	48	5.3
No response	6	0.7
# of semesters completed (n = 892)		
1-2	770	84.2
3-4	81	8.8
5-6	32	3.5
7-8	5	0.5
9-10	4	0.4
No response	23	2.5

Note: When asked for their Race/Ethnicity, participants were instructed to check all that applied, so N will total more than 909 and percentage will sum to more than 100%.

To more closely examine TES' interpersonal attributions of student behavior, a survey question pertaining to causality and controllability is included. For each of the eight vignettes, the question asks respondents, "On a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being 'not at all' and 6 being 'completely,' in this situation, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?" The first statement is, "The student's behavior is due to circumstances outside [her] control." TES who report a lower rating on this statement believe that the student in the vignette has a more internal locus of causality. The second statement that follows this question is, "The student's behavior is due to choices [she] makes." TES who report a higher rating on this statement believe that the student in the vignette has more internal controllability for her actions and, therefore, is responsible for the amount of effort she puts forth to mitigate her behavior.

Following the attribution measures, the survey requires TES to rank five disciplinary action choices in response to the student's behavior described in each of the eight vignettes: institute a warning system with a consequence, modify the classroom to accommodate the behavior, develop a behavioral plan with the student's input, refer the student to the school psychologist, and ignore the behavior. Participants had the option of leaving any question blank.

These vignettes were developed in partnership with in-service teachers and other educational professionals to assess the clarity in reading and answering the survey questions, and to assess the validity of the vignettes using male protagonists (Lorenzetti & Johnson, 2022). There is research supporting the use of vignettes to examine racism in educational settings; in a meta-analysis of educational research on racism, "vignette experiments are the most frequently utilized in research on racism in U.S. education," making up 61.4% of studies reviewed in the meta-analysis (Janssen, 2023, p. 11).

Demographic Questionnaire. Upon completing the survey questions in the classroom behavior vignettes instrument, participants completed a demographic questionnaire in which they provided data about their ages, genders, races/ethnicities, and other background information pertaining to the nature of and their progress within their teacher education programs. Participants had the option of leaving any question blank for this instrument as well.

Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were performed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. First, descriptive statistics about

the sample were determined. Next, paired samples t-tests were used to analyze whether there is a statistically significant difference in TES' interpersonal attributions between Black and White elementary age girls in each of the four vignette pairs - one set of tests was used for causality and another set of tests was used for controllability. Each pair of vignettes represented the same behavioral pathology criteria.

Additional paired samples t-tests were used to analyze whether there is a statistically significant difference in disciplinary decisions to remove students from the classroom via referral of the student to the school psychologist between Black and White elementary age girls in each of the four vignette pairs. In order to run these comparisons, it was necessary to dummy code the ranked-choice options for disciplinary decisions to represent choices that either kept the student in the classroom (institute a warning system with a consequence, modify the classroom to accommodate the behavior, develop a behavioral plan with the student's input, and ignore the behavior) as 0 or that removed the student from the classroom (refer the student to the school psychologist) as 1.

Finally, binary logistic regression models were used to analyze whether TES make different disciplinary decisions in response to student behavior based on interpersonal attributions for Black elementary age girls compared to their White peers. For these regressions, causality and controllability were used as predictor variables of disciplinary decisions that either keep or remove students from the classroom for each of the eight vignettes. The same dummy coded variable that was used in the analysis of data for the second research question was also used in the analysis of data for the third research question.

Exploratory analyses consisted of binary logistic regression models to analyze the effects of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and number of semesters completed in the current education program on TES' disciplinary decisions that remove students from the classroom via referral of the student to the school psychologist and that ignore the student behavior. For these tests, it was necessary to dummy code ranked-choice options for disciplinary decisions. Wilcoxon signed rank tests were used to analyze differences in the means of two binary variables for each vignette pair: keeping students in the classroom (institute a warning system with a consequence, modify the classroom to accommodate the behavior, develop a behavioral plan with the student's input, and ignore the behavior) or removing them from the classroom (refer the student to the school psychologist), and choosing any form of disciplinary action in response to student behavior (institute a warning system with a consequence, modify the classroom to accommodate the behavior, develop a behavioral plan with the student's input, and refer

the student to the school psychologist) or choosing to ignore it. Additionally, using the same dummy coded variable as described above, paired samples *t*-tests were used to analyze whether there is a statistically significant difference in disciplinary decisions to ignore student behavior between Black and White elementary age girls in each of the four vignette pairs.

Results

This section describes the results of the statistical analyses, which were used to answer the three research questions in this study. For all analyses, a probability value of $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Locus of Causality

The results of the paired samples *t*-tests for interpersonal attributions reveal that overall, TES attributed a more internal locus of causality of behaviors to Black elementary age girls than White elementary age girls, which supports the first study hypothesis. The mean scores on the causality question, which asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree with the statement that "the student's behavior is due to circumstances outside [her] control," were lower for Black students than White students in three of the four vignette pairs and indicate a more internal attribution of causality for Black students. The second pair of vignettes, which represents students displaying disruptive behavior, was the only pair for which the mean scores on the causality question are higher for Black students, indicating less internal attribution of behavior for these students. The difference in the mean scores on causality for each vignette pair was statistically significant. The results of the locus of causality paired samples *t*-tests are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Locus of Causality Paired Samples t-tests

	Behavioral Pathology	t	p
Pair 1	Disorganization	4.581	<.001***
Pair 2	Disruptive Behavior	-8.820	<.001***
Pair 3	ADHD	4.982	<.001***
Pair 4	Internalizing Behavior	4.162	<.001***

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Locus of Controllability

The results of the paired samples *t*-tests for interpersonal attributions also revealed that overall, TES attributed a more internal locus of controllability of behaviors to Black elementary age girls than White elementary age girls, which supports the first research question hypothesis. The mean scores on the controllability question, which asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree with the statement that "the student's behavior is due to choices [she] makes," were higher for Black students than White students in three of the four vignette pairs and indicated a more internal attribution of controllability. The second pair of vignettes, which represented students displaying disruptive behavior, was the only pair for which the mean scores on the controllability question were lower for the Black student, indicating less belief in Black students' internal controllability. The difference in the mean scores on controllability for each vignette pair was statistically significant. The results of the locus of controllability paired samples *t*-tests are shown in Table 3 below.

Disciplinary Decisions

The results of the paired samples *t*-tests used to determine whether TES' disciplinary decisions disproportionately remove more Black elementary age girls from the classroom than their White peers do not support the second research question hypothesis. Since the dummy coded variable in these tests used 0 to represent disciplinary decisions that keep students in the classroom and 1 to represent the disciplinary decision that remove students from the classroom, a higher *t*-score indicated more frequent decisions to remove students from the classroom. Contrary to the predictions made in the second research question hypothesis, the means are higher for White students than Black students in three of the four vignette pairs and show an overall more frequent removal from the classroom for White students than Black students.

Table 3
Locus of Controllability Paired Samples t-tests

	Behavioral Pathology	*t*	*p*
Pair 1	Disorganization	-12.919	<.001***
Pair 2	Disruptive Behavior	8.865	<.001***
Pair 3	ADHD	-4.712	<.001***
Pair 4	Internalizing Behavior	-5.847	<.001***

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

For the second pair of vignettes, once again, the opposite holds true. The difference in the mean scores on removal from the classroom for each vignette pair is statistically significant. The results of the removal from the classroom paired samples *t*-tests are shown in Table 4 below.

Attributions and Disciplinary Decisions

To explore whether TES make different disciplinary decisions in response to student behavior based on interpersonal attributions for Black elementary age girls compared to their White peers, binary logistic regression models were run for each of the eight students presented in the vignettes using causality and controllability as predictor variables of disciplinary decisions that either keep or remove students from the classroom. The results of these tests show that TES' interpersonal attributions of causality and controllability made a statistically significant difference in their disciplinary decisions for some, but not all the students. The adjusted odds ratio is used to examine the nature of the statistically significant relationships between TES' interpersonal attributions and the race of the elementary age girls. In this context, the adjusted odds ratio indicates that, compared to keeping the student in the classroom, the likelihood that a TES would remove a student from the classroom changes based on the participant's interpersonal attributions of causality or controllability to the student's behavior.

Locus of Causality. There are five statistically significant relationships between interpersonal attributions of causality and TES' disciplinary decisions: for Student 3, Student 4, Student 5, Student 6 and Student 8. The results of the binary logistic regressions for interpersonal attributions of causality are shown in Table 5 on the next page.

The reference for the binary dependent variable (keeping the student in the classroom versus removal from the classroom) was keep-

Table 4
Removal from the Classroom Paired Samples t-tests

	Behavioral Pathology	t	p
Pair 1	Disorganization	3.217	<.001***
Pair 2	Disruptive Behavior	-4.573	<.001***
Pair 3	ADHD	3.626	<.001***
Pair 4	Internalizing Behavior	14.103	<.001***

*Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001*

ing the student in the classroom. For all students who showed significant relationships, the odds of participants recommending them to the school psychologist (i.e., removal from the classroom) instead of keeping them in the classroom increased significantly as the degree to which participants rated their behavior as being due to an external locus of causality increased: Student 3 (OR=1.518, *p*=.012); Student 4 (OR=1.348, *p*=.013); Student 5 (OR=1.261, *p*=.002); Student 6 (OR=1.207, *p*=.024); and Student 8 (OR=1.226, *p*=.016).

Locus of Controllability. Regarding attributions of controllability, there were seven statistically significant relationships between interpersonal attributions of controllability and TES' disciplinary decisions: for Student 1, Student 3, Student 4, Student 5, Student 6, Student 7, and Student 8. The results of the binary logistic regressions for interpersonal attributions of controllability are shown in Table 6 on the next page.

Once again, the reference for the binary dependent variable (keeping the student in the classroom versus removal from the classroom) was keeping the student in the classroom. For all students who showed significant relationships, the odds of recommending them to the school psychologist (i.e., removal from the classroom) instead of keeping them in the classroom decreased significantly as the degree to which participants rated them as being in control of their behavior increased: Student 1 (OR=.513, *p* <.001); Student 3 (OR=.695, *p*=.029); Student 4 (OR=.681, *p*=.003); Student 5 (OR=.718, *p* <.001); Student 6 (OR=.639, *p* <.001); Student 7 (OR=.686, *p* <.001); and Student 8 (OR=.784, *p*=.009).

Table 5
Interpersonal Attributions of Causality Binary Logistic Regression

	Student Race & Behavioral Pathology	Adjusted Odds Ratio	*p*
Student 1	White, Disorganization	.958	.691
Student 2	Black, Disorganization	1.063	.673
Student 3	White, Disruptive Behavior	1.518	.012*
Student 4	Black, Disruptive Behavior	1.348	.013*
Student 5	White, ADHD	1.261	.002**
Student 6	Black, ADHD	1.207	.024*
Student 7	White, Internalizing Behavior	1.104	.093
Student 8	Black, Internalizing Behavior	1.226	.016*

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Exploratory Analyses

The results of the binary logistic regression models, which analyzed the effects of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and number of semesters completed in the current education program on disciplinary decisions that remove students from the classroom via referral of the student to the school psychologist and disciplinary decisions that ignore the student behavior, showed that the aforementioned demographic factors did not play a major role in TES' disciplinary decisions.

For Black students in vignettes 4 and 6, race/ethnicity and number of semesters completed in the current education program of the respondents, respectively, made a statistically significant difference in TES' disciplinary decisions to keep or remove the students from the classroom. For the White student in vignette 7, race/ethnicity also made a statistically significant difference in TES' disciplinary decisions to keep or remove the students from the classroom. While there are statistically significant differences in the three instances described above, none of the demographic dimensions of TES made a statistically significant difference for students in the remaining vignettes regarding disciplinary decisions to keep or remove the students from the classroom. Demographic dimensions of TES also made no statistically significant difference regarding disciplinary decisions to ignore student behavior in any of the vignettes. Therefore, TES' age, gender, race/ethnicity and number of semesters completed in the current education program are not significantly related to disciplinary decisions made by TES overall in this study.

Ignoring the Behavior. One of the five disciplinary action choices included in the classroom behavior vignettes was ignoring the stu-

Table 6
Interpersonal Attributions of Controllability Binary Logistic Regression

	Student Race & Behavioral Pathology	Adjusted Odds Ratio	p
Student 1	White, Disorganization	.513	<.001***
Student 2	Black, Disorganization	.748	.061
Student 3	White, Disruptive Behavior	.695	.029*
Student 4	Black, Disruptive Behavior	.681	.003**
Student 5	White, ADHD	.718	<.001***
Student 6	Black, ADHD	.639	<.001***
Student 7	White, Internalizing Behavior	.686	<.001***
Student 8	Black, Internalizing Behavior	.784	.009***

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

dent behavior. Since this disciplinary decision is the only one general-ly characterized by TES' inaction in the classroom, it was a choice of particular interest for this study. Ignoring student behavior is a choice that TES make based on several factors, including their interpersonal attributions to student behavior.

The results of the paired samples t-tests that were used to analyze whether there is a statistically significant difference in disciplinary decisions that ignore the student behavior between Black and White elementary age girls indicated that TES choose to ignore the behavior of White girls more frequently than the behavior of Black girls at sta-tistically significant rates. Since the dummy coded variable in these tests uses 0 to represent all disciplinary decisions other than ignoring student behavior and uses 2 to represent the disciplinary decision to ignore student behavior, higher means indicate more frequent deci-sions to ignore student behavior. For these tests, the mean scores of the White students were higher than the mean scores of Black stu-dents for all four vignette pairs. The difference in the mean scores on the disciplinary decision to ignore the student behavior for each vi-gnette pair is statistically significant. The results of the Disciplinary Decision to Ignore Student Behavior paired sample t-tests are shown in Table 7 below.

Discussion

This study examined the effects of teacher education students' interpersonal attributions to student behavior on their disciplinary decisions as a function of student race. To achieve this, teacher edu-cation students' interpersonal attribution measures and disciplinary decisions in response to theoretical behaviors described in vignettes of Black and White elementary age girls with identical behavioral pa-thologies were analyzed. This study aimed to answer three research questions. The first hypothesis was that teacher attributes to Black

Table 7
Disciplinary Decision to Ignore Student Behavior Paired Samples t-tests

	Behavioral Pathology	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Disorganization	3.639	<.001***
Pair 2	Disruptive Behavior	2.125	.034*
Pair 3	ADHD	2.202	.028*
Pair 4	Internalizing Behavior	6.894	<.001***

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

elementary age girls than to their White peers more internal causality and controllability of behaviors. The second hypothesis was that the disciplinary decisions that teacher education students make disproportionately remove Black girls from the classroom more than their White peers. The third hypothesis was that teacher education students make different disciplinary decisions in response to student behavior based on interpersonal attributions for Black elementary age girls compared to their White peers.

The results of the paired sample t-tests used to answer the first research question indicated that overall, teacher education students in this study believed that Black elementary age girls' behavior was due to circumstances within their control and was due to choices they made whereas White elementary age girls' behavior was due to circumstances outside of their control and was not due to choices they made. These findings support the first research question hypothesis. Such a polarized perspective on the locus of causality and controllability for student behavior can be interpreted, for example, as teacher education students believing that Black girls are displaying their behaviors on purpose while White girls are doing the same things by accident. This ascription of greater responsibility for one's actions to Black elementary age girls is, perhaps, a manifestation of Morris's (2016) "adultification" of Black girls and a reflection of internalized racist beliefs. This pattern holds true for three of the four vignette pairs; however, the second pair of vignettes shows the opposite relationship such that teacher education students attributed a more external locus of causality and controllability to the Black girl than the White girl.

According to the results of the paired samples t-tests used to address the second research question, teacher education students chose to remove the White girls from the classroom more frequently than they chose to remove the Black girls. These findings refute the second research question hypothesis. While removal from the classroom of any kind has detrimental effects on student learning due to missed instructional time, it is important to note that removal from the classroom in this study entailed referring students to the school psychologist rather than any sort of referral to school administration for punishment (Ginsburg, Jordan, & Chang, 2014). In future studies, options that include recommending students to the administration for discipline should be included to address this limitation. The pattern of teacher education students' choosing to more frequently remove White girls than Black girls from the classroom holds true for three of the four vignette pairs, but the second pair of vignettes, once again, shows the opposite relationship such that teacher education students chose to remove the

Black girl from the classroom more frequently than they chose to remove the White girl from the classroom. While there is no apparent reason for the reversed trends observed in the second pair of vignettes, there are two possible explanations that may be worth exploring. First, in alignment with teacher emotions towards "misbehaving" students as described by the attribution theory literature, TES may have elected to remove the Black girl from the classroom due to increased feelings of anger and frustration towards her. Alternatively, the wording used to describe disruptive behavior in the second pair of vignettes could be responsible for the reversed trends. In particular, the use of the phrase "talks back," which is coded language often used with Black students, could have evoked an unintended emotional response or a more extreme interpretation of the described behavior. An analysis of the qualitative data collected for these survey questions could potentially provide some clarity about TES' selected disciplinary decisions for the girls in the second vignette pair in comparison to the others.

The results of the binary logistic regression models used to answer the third research question showed that teacher education students' interpersonal attributions of causality and controllability to student behavior influence their disciplinary decisions to keep or to remove students from the classroom. These findings support the third hypothesis. Interpersonal attributions of causality affected teacher education students' disciplinary decisions in response to student behavior for five out of the eight students in this study. For all five statistically significant relationships, the odds of participants removing students from the classroom by recommending them to the school psychologist instead of keeping them in the classroom increased significantly as the degree to which participants rated their behavior as being due to an external locus of causality increased. One interpretation of these results is that teacher education students may have greater sympathy for and a greater willingness to help students who they believe are not responsible for their behavior (Weiner, 1979). When teachers feel that a child is behaving a certain way because they can't help it, they are more likely to withhold reprimand, not condemn, help, and not retaliate against the child (Graham, 2020). Interpersonal attributions of controllability affected teacher education students' disciplinary decisions in response to student behavior for seven out of the eight students. For all seven statistically significant relationships, the odds of participants removing students from the classroom by recommending them to the school psychologist instead of keeping them in the classroom decreased significantly as the degree to which participants rated students as being in control of their behavior increased. These results

can be interpreted as teacher education students having less sympathy and a lesser willingness to help students who they believe are displaying their behaviors due to conscious choices they make (Weiner, 1979).

According to attribution theory, teachers are more likely to feel anger and frustration towards students who they believe are misbehaving on purpose, which explains why teacher education students would be less likely to refer such students to a school psychologist (Graham, 2020). In their eyes, the student does not need help because they are misbehaving by choice, which is a problematic viewpoint for any educator to have. It is concerning, but essential, to note that for three out of the four vignette pairs, teacher education students attributed more internal causality and controllability to Black girls' behaviors and, consequently, chose to keep them in the classroom despite choosing to refer their White counterparts with identical behavioral pathologies to the school psychologist. Such disparities in consequences for virtually the same classroom behaviors provide White girls with support and, if appropriate, could lead to the institution of mandated accommodations. Black girls, on the other hand, are less likely to experience that privilege.

The findings of the exploratory analyses established that the demographics of teacher education students do not significantly impact their disciplinary decisions. In other words, teacher education students make the kinds of race dependent disciplinary decisions described above regardless of their age, gender, race/ethnicity, and number of semesters completed in their current education program. Interestingly, the findings of the exploratory analyses also indicate that teacher education students have a higher tolerance for the misbehavior of White girls than they do for the misbehavior of Black girls since they chose to ignore the behavior of White girls more frequently than the behavior of Black girls at statistically significant rates. Considering that teacher education students also attribute more external causality and controllability to the behaviors of White girls, it is reasonable to conclude that teacher education students have a higher tolerance for the misbehavior of White girls than Black girls because they believe that the White girls cannot control their behaviors while the Black girls can.

Limitations

One limitation of this study, discussed previously in this section, is the lack of disciplinary decision choices on the survey instrument that would remove students from the classroom without helping them in some way, such as removal from the classroom for a school suspension.

The survey instrument should be revised slightly to reflect additional disciplinary decision options of a punitive nature.

Another limitation is that all participants in this study are teacher education students in the same urban public university network of schools in the northeastern United States and the sample is, therefore, only representative of teacher education students from this network of schools. It would be interesting to see how differences in teacher education students' interpersonal attributions and disciplinary decisions would vary if the sample were more representative of a larger area, such as the tri-state area or east/west coasts, or even the United States as a whole. If follow up studies are conducted, researchers would benefit from administering an updated version of the instrument to teacher education students in other state and city public university networks.

While Type 1 error may be a concern with the number of t-tests and regressions performed on a sample of this size, most of the results are still statistically significant even with a Bonferroni correction. All the paired samples t-tests for locus of causality (see Table 2), controllability (see Table 3), and removal from the classroom (see Table 4) remain the same when Type 1 error is accounted for. With the Bonferroni correction, all five statistically significant binary logistic regressions for interpersonal attributions of causality (see Table 5) appear to be a product Type 1 error. Only three of the seven statistically significant binary logistic regressions for interpersonal attributions of controllability (see Table 6) appear to be a product of Type 1 error.

Lastly, further investigation is necessary to understand why teacher education students showed opposite relationships for interpersonal attributions of causality and controllability as well as disciplinary decisions for the second vignette pair, which represented disruptive behavior, in contrast to all of the other vignette pairs. Qualitative data collection in the form of participant interviews post-survey completion may yield additional information for analysis to understand the reason for these reversed trends.

Significance of Findings and Conclusion

Despite being enrolled in programs that are supposed to prepare them for working with real students in real classrooms, teacher education students' interpersonal attributions of student behavior in elementary age girls in this study appeared to be racially biased and led to race-dependent disciplinary decisions even in response to hypothetical student behaviors.

When Black elementary age girls display behaviors characteristic

of disorganization, disruptive behavior, ADHD or internalizing behavior, they are held responsible for their actions and are less likely to be referred to the school psychologist by their teachers than their White counterparts. When White elementary age girls display the same behaviors, they are not held responsible for their actions and, instead, they are referred to the school psychologist or their behavior is ignored by their teachers. In other words, Black girls are met with accountability and a lower tolerance for their classroom behaviors from their teachers while White girls are met with support and a higher tolerance for the same classroom behaviors from their teachers.

Considering the possibly supportive and caring intention behind the removal of the student from the classroom via referral to the school psychologist, purportedly some help to the student, this difference in disciplinary decisions could be interpreted as teacher education students responding to elementary age White girls' behavior with a greater desire to help them. This interpretation is supported by attribution theory, which posits that teachers are more likely to respond to students with sympathy if they believe that the students cannot help their behaviors (Graham, 2020). These patterns should not continue to prevail in our schools. School districts must be held accountable via equity audits so that teachers and administrators alike can actively work to maintain equitable and appropriate disciplinary practices (Husband & Bertrand, 2021). Without these and many other immediate actions, schools remain as—simply put—dangerous places for Black girls.

To combat such disturbing trends, teacher education programs must train preservice teachers to become social justice educators who are cross-culturally competent and understand the needs of the communities they serve (Cooper, 2003). Showing up just to teach is not enough. Educators must show up to teach *and* to work as agents of political activism. Schools improve when teachers reflect on their beliefs, acknowledge their biases, and work to better their teaching practices accordingly (Cooper, 2003). Teachers who blindly believe that society is meritocratic are likely to think that schools are, too (Cooper, 2003). Such teachers are oblivious to the ways in which their students' more privileged counterparts are better positioned for success by being privy to the knowledge, skills and cultural capital of the dominant middle class White society (Cooper, 2003).

The influence that teachers have on students is one of immense proportions and, therefore, requires teachers to be extremely cognizant of it; to use it to maximize benefits for their students and eliminate any possible abuse or harm (Cooper, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner, 2010). Purposeful, consistent, and lifelong learning and self-re-

flection must take place to sustain the required cross-cultural competence for responsible wielding of the power that teachers possess. Teacher preparation programs must be revolutionized in a way that fosters critical reflection and cross-cultural competence for teachers to view and conduct themselves as the professional agents of change that they are (Cooper, 2003). While culturally responsive frameworks for teaching are being introduced into teacher education programs, the examination and application of these frameworks is not being sufficiently taught to or internalized by in-service and pre-service teachers. Restructuring teacher education programs to include explicit anti-racism curricula would address issues of racial bias *before* teachers ever step foot in a classroom and cause irreparable damage to vulnerable students. Black girls must be protected and prioritized. Redesigning teacher education programs to adequately prepare future teachers for a diverse classroom is a very small price to pay for higher quality and truly culturally responsive teachers. As a result, states and educational institutions would aim directly at the deeply ingrained roots of systemic racism in the public education system rather than providing temporary and superficial solutions that are performative in nature.

The findings of this study do not merely reflect the results of a hypothetical thought exercise—they reflect the racial biases of teacher education students who are being trained to go into classrooms in urban environments where they will be serving primarily students of color; students who will undoubtedly be affected by the choices their teachers make for them, be they low or high stakes. The findings of this study represent real-world thought processes of current and future teachers that have real-world consequences for Black girls across the country. So long as the racially biased interpersonal attributions of teacher education students are not addressed, schools will remain a dangerous place for Black girls.

The most important takeaway of this study is that teacher education programs in higher education institutions are in dire need of close, critical examination of how they are preparing teacher education students to address classroom behavior in race-conscious ways. Making teacher education students aware of their attributions through explicit training could help alleviate some of the concerns that arose in this study. However conscious or subconscious, teacher education students' interpersonal attributions of elementary age girls' behavior play a role in the race dependent disciplinary action choices they make. The data in this study points to the need for mandatory explicit training for both pre-service and in-service teachers for them to actively acknowledge and address their biases, and to ensure a more equitable and qual-

ity education for students of all races. "Recognition of the role that teachers' political perspectives play in shaping pedagogy" is essential to combating the "passive acceptance of ways of teaching and learning that reflect biases, particularly a White supremacist standpoint," which plagues modern day schools even in urbanized areas (hooks, 1994, p. 37).

References

Battey, D., & Leyva, L. A. (2016). A framework for understanding Whiteness in mathematics education. *Journal of Urban Mathematics Education*, *9*(2), 49-80.

Caldwell, L. D., Sewell, A. A., Parks, N., & Toldson, I. A. (2009). Guest editorial: Before the bell rings: Implementing coordinated school health models to influence the academic achievement of African American males. *The Journal of Negro Education, 78*(3), 204-215.

Cameron, M. (2006). Managing school discipline and implications for school social workers: A review of the literature. *Children & Schools*, *28*(4), 219–227.

Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). The trouble with teacher turnover: How teacher attrition affects students and schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 27*(36), 1-32.

Carter Andrews, D. J., Brown, T., Castro, E., & Id-Deen, E. (2019). The impossibility of being "perfect and white": Black girls' racialized and gendered schooling experiences. *American Educational Research Journal, 56*(6), 2531-2572.

Cooper, C. W. (2003). The detrimental impact of teacher bias: Lessons learned from the standpoint of African American mothers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *30*(2), 101–116.

Crenshaw, K. W., Ocen, P., & Nanda, J. (2015). Black girls matter: Pushed out, overpoliced and underprotected. Retrieved from https://www.cityofboston. gov/images_documents/BlackGirlsMatter%20Pushed%20Out%20Overpoliced%20and%20Underprotected_Report_tcm3-51856.pdf

Downey, D. B., & Pribesh, S. (2004). When race matters: Teachers' evaluations of students' classroom behavior. *Sociology of Education*, *77*(4), 267–282.

Epstein, R., Blake, J., & González, T. (2017). Girlhood interrupted: the erasure of black girls' childhood. Retrieved from https://www.law.georgetown. edu/poverty-inequality-center/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2017/08/girlhood-interrupted.pdf

Gilliam, W. S., Maupin, A. N., Reyes, C. R., Accavitti, M., & Shic, F. (2016). Do early educators' implicit biases regarding sex and race relate to behavior expectations and recommendations of preschool expulsions and suspensions. *Yale University Child Study Center*, *9*(28), 1-16

Ginsburg, A., Jordan, P., & Chang, H. (2014). Absences add up: How school attendance influences student success. Retrieved from http://www.attendanceworks. org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Absenses-Add-Up_090114-1-1.pdf

Graham, S. (2020). An attributional theory of education. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 3,* 5-39.

Gregory, A., Hafen, C. A., Ruzek, E., Mikami, A. Y., Allen, J. P., & Pianta, R. C. (2016). Closing the racial discipline gap in classrooms by changing teacher practice. *School Psychology Review*, *45*(2), 171–191.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin?. *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 59-68.

Hamilton, O. S. & Lordan, G. (2023). Ability or luck: A systematic review of interpersonal attributions of success. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1-22. https//doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1035012

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress.* Routledge.

Hosterman, S. J., DuPaul, G. J., & Jitendra, A. K. (2008). Teacher ratings of ADHD symptoms in ethnic minority students: Bias or behavioral difference? *School Psychology Quarterly*, *23*(3), 418–435.

Hunter, M., & Barker, G. (1987). "If at first…": Attribution theory in the classroom. *Educational Leadership*, *45*(2), 50.

Husband, T., & Bertrand, S. (2021). The inequitable consequences of school disciplinary policies on Black girls in Ohio. *Journal of Global Education and Research*, *5*(2), 175–184.

Janssen, J. (2023). A Meta-Analysis of Experimental Examinations of Racism in US Pre-K-12th Grade Educational Contexts (Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University).

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice*, *34*(3), 159-165.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Researcher*, *35*(7), 3-12.

Milner IV, H. R. (2010). What does teacher education have to do with teaching? Implications for diversity studies. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *61*(1-2), 118-131.

Morris, M. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools*. The New Press.

Morris, E. W., & Perry, B. L. (2016). The Punishment Gap: School Suspension and Racial Disparities in Achievement. *Social Problems, 63*(1), 68–86.

Okonofua, J. A., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2015). Two strikes: Race and the disciplining of young students. *Psychological Science*, *26*(5), 617-624.

Skiba, R. J., Chung, C. G., Trachok, M., Baker, T. L., Sheya, A., & Hughes, R. L. (2014). Parsing disciplinary disproportionality: Contributions of infraction, student, and school characteristics to out-of-school suspension and expulsion. *American Educational Research Journal*, *51*(4), 640-670.

Starck, J. G., Riddle, T., Sinclair, S., & Warikoo, N. (2020). Teachers are people too: Examining the racial bias of teachers compared to other American adults. *Educational Researcher, 49*(4), 273–284. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20912758

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School

Teacher Data File," 2020–21; and Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education," 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 203.65 and 209.22.

Weiner, B. (1979). A theory of motivation for some classroom experiences. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *71*(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.71.1.3

Weiner, B. (1986). *An attributional theory of motivation and emotion.* Springer-Verlag.

Weiner, B. (2018). The legacy of an attributional approach to motivation and emotion: A no-crisis zone. *Motivation Science, 4*(1)*,* 4–14.

Wilson, C. M. (2015). Refusing Detroit's public school failure: African American women's educational advocacy and critical care versus the politics of disposability. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 23*(125). http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v23.1777

Yates, T. M., & Marcelo, A. K. (2014). Through race-colored glasses: Preschoolers' pretend play and teachers' ratings of preschooler adjustment. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *29*(1), 1-11.

Reading Classroom Stories That Reimagine Disibility in Early Childhood Settings

Sara Ucar
*San Francisco State University
& University of California, Berkeley*

Amber Friesen
San Francisco State University

Abstract

Children and adults are frequently engaging in shared reading activities and storytelling within early childhood settings. This includes children with varying abilities and intersecting identities learning in inclusive or special education settings. Researchers recognize the importance of representation in children's stories, and stories that reflect young readers, their families, and broader community (Bishop, 1990; Bishop, 2012; Oxley, 2006). However, minimal empirical evidence of disability representation in children's literature exists (Tondreau & Rabinowitz, 2021). Thus, this empirical study investigates favorite classroom picturebooks in active early childhood special education (ECSE) classrooms. The study aimed to gain insight about the frequency and quality of inclusive literature, by investigating disability representation in active ECSE classrooms. The research surveyed active ECSE teachers to generate a data corpus of 50 unique favorite classroom stories. Using qualitative semiotic analysis, the study analyzed the texts and visuals for elements of inclusion, to discern elements of inclusion within each story. Within the data corpus, 7 out

Sara Ucar is a doctoral student in the joint program between San Francisco State University and the University of California, Berkeley. Amber Friesen is a professor and chair of the Department of Special Education in the Graduate School of Education at San Francisco State University. Email addresses: saraucar@sfsu.edu & afriesen@sfsu.edu

of 50 favorite stories included disabled and non-disabled characters. This analysis highlighted the absence of disability within the data set, and variations between strong, some, and limited disability representation. The data suggests a need to increase young children's exposure to inclusive stories and strength-based representations of disability.

Keywords: early childhood literacy, early childhood special education, representation, disability studies in education, children's literature, anti-ableism

Introduction

Social justice approaches to early childhood education place tremendous agency and value on the role of the educator to "disrupt ideologies about normalcy through the curriculum they teach and the pedagogies they use" (Lalvani & Bacon, 2019, p. 89). To build upon inclusive, anti-bias, and anti-racist values, including ableism (Lalvani & Bacon, 2019), early childhood practitioners may select books and use shared reading time as opportunities to engage with social justice themes. These behaviors can represent active choices to resist the established trends of reading stories that reproduce dominant perspectives and systemic ideologies, including disproportionate overrepresentation of White and non-disabled characters (Crisp et al., 2016).

One of the key lessons from picturebook research over the last decade is to use "a critical lens to examine how narratives and representations construct inclusion and diversity" (Arzipe, 2021, p.68). However, stories that include characters of Color and stories that represent underrepresented and marginalized communities are currently heavily debated and sometimes banned in certain parts of the United States. Consequently, teachers, librarians, and other members of the school community have been attacked, and threatened with criminal charges in certain states, including Texas, South Carolina, and Florida (Vissing & Juchniewicz, 2023). Vissing and Juchniewicz (2023) explain the significance of this censorship:

> It oppresses the stories and experiences of especially marginalized groups in favor of a narrative that supports the status quo. Those who wish to censor information have consistently labeled their actions as virtuous and in the best interest of society. The current banning of information is no different; the focus on sexuality, gender, race, religion, and immigration status are labeled as bad for children when these are actually relevant life experiences and topics of interest for youth. (p. 198)

These policies impact young children and families, including those

who receive early intervention (EI) or early childhood special education (ECSE). EI/ECSE settings are often diverse, including children with and without disabilities, children of Color, and children and families with varying intersecting social identities (Beneke & Park, 2019). These children benefit from seeing stories for and about them, inclusive of their intersecting identities. More broadly, all early childhood educational settings benefit from a range of stories and characters to read. As educators select curricula and classroom artifacts, they must integrate knowledge about complex social identities intersecting, including race, ability, language, gender, culture, and socioeconomic status (Friesen et al., 2022). Curricular choices, including shared reading activities, represent one way to intentionally support inclusion and belonging in EI/ECSE classrooms. EI/ECSE professionals may use social justice curriculum as one of many ways to create more inclusive classroom environments. Book selection within early childhood classrooms represents one area to connect curricular goals with pedagogical orientations towards inclusion and social justice.

Currently, little research exists regarding the stories frequently used in EI/ECSE classrooms. Within children's stories in early childhood settings, there is a scarcity of books with disability representation (Hughes, 2012). Previous research has investigated disability representation in children's literature, yet not specifically in early childhood special education classrooms. For example, scholars examined disability representation in award-winning picturebooks from North America (Brenna, 2013), disability and diversity in Caldecott Books (Koss et al., 2018), disability in Newberry award-winning books (Leiningeretal et al., 2010), and other investigations of disability in published children's literature in North America (Dyches & Prater, 2005; Emmerson & Brenna, 2015; Hayden & Prince, 2020). However, to our knowledge, research has yet to investigate how ECSE classroom stories represent disability, or how disabled characters with intersecting identities are depicted during storytime in EI/ECSE settings.

This study investigates stories in 15 early childhood special education classrooms, and their portrayal of disabled characters. It was conducted using a social model of disability stance to analyze representations of disability and inclusion. The social model affirms that the identity and experiences of disability and impairment are strength-based and positive identity markers, as opposed to the medical model pathologizing disability and impairments (Berghs et al., 2016). Additionally, it recognizes that impairments do not cause disability, but rather the physical and social environments can isolate and exclude disabled people from participation and access (Berghs et al., 2016).

This study aims to gain more awareness about disability representation in classroom stories, recognizing the value of inclusive stories for all young children. The research conducts semiotic analysis of the picturebooks and interprets findings from the perspective of inclusive, justice-driven, and anti-ableist pedagogies (Lalvani & Bacon, 2019; Beneke & Park, 2019). This research used semiotic analysis of the text and pictures to analyze disability representation and inclusion within favorite classroom stories. Using a data corpus of favorite books generated from 15 ECSE teachers' favorite stories, the research asked: *In inclusive stories, how do the text and visuals of disabled characters' participation indicate evidence that the picturebook shows strong, some, or limited inclusion?*

The Importance of Inclusion and Belonging in Early Childhood Education

For early childhood educators supporting young children with a range of abilities, goals for the classroom environment include creating spaces that foster inclusion and belonging. Additionally, aspirations for policy and practice of early childhood inclusion are inextricably connected to cultivating a sense of belonging for all young children and families (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Lee & Recchia, 2016; Odom et al., 2011; Mitsch et al., 2022). Johansson and Puroila (2021) describe belonging as a fundamental human need, building upon one's sense of connection with others and places, and "worldwide curricular goal in early childhood education" (p.2). Experiencing belonging is increasingly important for children growing up in pluralistic societies, and for early childhood inclusion. This study investigated representations of inclusion with goals to raise awareness about how inclusive representation in curricula may promote a greater sense of belonging and be more inclusive of young children receiving EI/ECSE services.

Recommended policies and practices orient early educators towards creating inclusive classroom spaces, which center "belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning" (Lee & Recchia, 2016, p.1). Thus, practitioners must continue to invest in children's inclusion and belonging. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) (2009) explain early childhood inclusion:

> Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activi-

ties and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. (p.2)

Accomplishing these goals requires elements of early education settings, including materials, curriculum, the structure of the classroom, instruction, and the environment, as all impact young children's access and participation. To facilitate meaningful, high-quality inclusion, practitioners benefit from continuously revising their practices, which includes material selection and curricular choices. Just as the classroom environment may need adjustments to become more accessible, the curricula may need changes to become more inclusive.

The Importance of Representation in Picturebooks

In picturebooks and classroom stories, the representations of characters can profoundly impact young readers. For example, character depictions and representation can "foster social imagination by helping readers learn how to better live in the world beyond the book" (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 570). Recognizing the influence of representation on young children, researchers underscore the importance of text selection for young children. Texts and stories can influence inclusion and belonging in early childhood. The relationship between young children and the stories they read is important to consider. For example, McClung (2018) emphasizes the limitations of normative representations of families, as they reinforce the narrative of "two-parent, cohabitating families that are white, cisgender, able-bodied, and heterosexual… Collectively, such texts marginalize the reader whose life does not conform to the dominant view of a proper childhood" (McClung, 2018, p. 402). For reading to empower young children and affirm their identities, young children benefit from a range of consciously inclusive books that reflect their diverse social identities (Möller, 2016). Multicultural children's literature has long advocated for more diverse and inclusive children's literature. It provides a powerful foundation to generate understanding about diversifying representation, strengthening the classroom community, and conveying inclusive values.

One area of research investigating children's literature in the classroom focuses on identifying areas to improve book selection for inclusion and belonging. For example, Gomez-Najarro (2020) applied an intersectional framework to explore social identity markers in Common Core State Standards (CCSS) book exemplars, finding that few CCSS books:

> … raise questions about power at the intersection of *multiple* social identity markers. Indeed, many elements of identity—such as sexual orientation and ability—are not represented at all in the books. Echoing the historically disproportionate representation of culturally diverse characters in children's books, the second and third grade fictional stories in Appendix B of the CCSS suggest a need for more complex portrayals of social identity, reflecting the reality of today's K-12 students. These text exemplars continue a longstanding tradition in which children's literature fails to reflect the diverse body of students it is designed to serve [emphasis in original]. (p.406)

This illuminates absences and space for a variety of stakeholders to move towards more inclusive representation of all children and families.

To cultivate equitable and inclusive early childhood classrooms, Souto-Manning (2019) argues that educators must historically contextualize power, understanding that "Historically, minoritized children have been positioned as biologically inferior, deficient (when compared with White, middle-class, ableist ways of being and behaving" (p.65). This rhetoric existed in picturebooks. However, when children read stories that dehumanize others, or take deficit-based or exclusionary depictions, these stories hold the power to influence or inform children's understanding of the social constructs and realities they depict. For example, children are learning about race and gender from picturebooks, in addition to other messaging throughout their education (Buescher et al., 2016). These messages can exist in contrast to the values of EI/ECSE professionals and other service providers that actively devote time, energy, and resources to creating inclusive spaces.

Revisiting classroom libraries and traditional stories can generate deeper understanding of how implicit biases present themselves in children's literature. For example, classic stories may have nostalgic appeal and strong cultural presence, but those attributes may prevent people from exploring how stories might reflect oppressive social norms such as racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, sexism, and ableism (Yenika-Agbaw, 2011). From this vantage point, there is a need for corrective action that intentionally reflects inclusion and belonging, including through showing characters with intersectional identities, including disabilities.

Disability Representation in Stories

Researchers have indicated a need for greater representation of disabled characters from strength-based perspectives (Brenna, 2013; Golos & Moses, 2011), promoting more participation (Dyches & Prater, 2005), greater agency (Aho & Alter, 2018), and active problem-solving

within children's stories. Furthermore, critical assessments of disabled characters should address evidence of character resilience, self-efficacy, varying levels of independence, and rich identities and personalities (Hughes, 2012).

Developing a foundational understanding of depictions of high-quality inclusion can better support educators to identify inclusive stories that better reflect their students' intersectional identities and varying abilities and align with an inclusive pedagogy that is relevant for all students. Hayden and Prince (2020) provide an example of how educators may use classroom stories to reflect inclusive policies, explaining:

> Because the inclusion of students with disability in general education classrooms is increasing (U.S. Department of Education, 2020), their participation should be reflected in classroom books, and reflections should represent strength-based views if we are to counteract limiting, ableist views. (p.6)

Inclusive stories can be interpreted as one way for educators to create alignment between inclusive pedagogies and inclusive policies, to cultivate classrooms that promote all children's experience of inclusion and belonging.

Within inclusive children's stories, educators must also develop critical awareness to recognize the limitations of stories that may appear inclusive because they depict disabled and non-disabled characters sharing space on the page. Unfortunately, many "inclusive-seeming texts" exist, which Kleekemp and Zapata (2019) argue:

> benevolently perpetuate deficit narratives of characters worth pitying by positioning characters with disabled bodies as mascots or characters with disabled minds as class pets. It is not uncommon to encounter characters with disabilities who appear to lack agency or are victimized by other, "able" characters. (p.589)

This underscores the need for critical readings of disability representation within children's stories, as it is possible to unintentionally reinforce deficit perspectives of disabled characters. This is relevant for early educators selecting and reading children's stories. The act of selecting inclusive stories does not guarantee that the values within the stories are anti-ableist, inclusive, or aligned with social justice perspectives. Critical analysis of the meaning and representation is necessary for educators to assess not only the presence of disability representation, but the quality of inclusion within the story.

Inclusive stories that reflect a sense of belonging require high-quality depictions of disabled characters. They may be portrayed in a positive, realistic, and multi-faceted way, while being given active choice

and participation, prosocial relationships, and equal rights (Dyches & Prater, 2005). Practitioners must intentionally analyze these stories, as they can model inclusion in ways that align with inclusive policies and practices. Kleekamp and Zapata (2019) define high-quality inclusive children's literature in strength-based and inclusive ways, explaining "characters with agency and multidimensional lives who happen to carry disability labels" (p. 589). This advocates for thoughtful selection of stories. This is critical for all early childhood professionals, and requires understanding about how ableism manifests within traditional, nostalgic, and more current children's stories (Hayden & Prince, 2020; Yenika-Agbaw, 2011).

Methodology

Qualitative Semiotic Analysis

This study conducted semiotic qualitative analysis of picturebooks based on the early childhood special educators' answers sharing three to five of their favorite children's picture books. The analysis addressed the following research question: *In inclusive stories, how do the text and visuals of disabled characters' participation indicate evidence that the picturebook shows strong, some, or limited inclusion?*

This analysis investigated characters with varying abilities in picturebooks through systemic exploration of the image-text relationship, seeking out representations of inclusion. It examined inclusive stories to gain insight about how the stories showed evidence of inclusive values by using qualitative semiotic analysis of picturebooks. Semiotic analysis is a multimodal analysis of the image-text relations in picturebooks (Wu, 2014). Semiotic analysis is an appropriate way to investigate picturebooks, as children construct meaning from the story using the interplay between words and images together. This research systematically investigated the interplay between the written language and visual imagery on each page.

The study conducted empirical research about early childhood classroom picturebooks because picturebooks are considered artifacts of the classroom, home, or early childhood experience, and they hold sociocultural value. Children learn meaningful lessons from picturebooks, yet limited research regarding ECSE classroom stories exists. This research aimed to investigate stories with depictions of disabled characters from a corpus of favorite stories in ECSE classrooms. This investigation of picturebooks considers the educational and sociocultural impact, as inclusive classrooms hold sociocultural, and educational implications. Sociocultural analysis of picturebooks investigates

and advocates for culturally relevant stories, and stories that intentionally represent underrepresented and marginalized communities (Arzipe, 2021).

While less attention has been devoted to the representation of disabled characters in picturebooks, scholars are investigating disability in picturebooks from the sociocultural perspective (e.g., Hayden & Prince, 2020; Souto-Manning et al., 2019), and advocating that all of their students, disabled and non-disabled, may see themselves reflected in the classroom. This includes non-White characters with disability labels, as even within the limited disability representation in children's picturebooks, there is a "persistent overrepresentation of white male disability experiences in the existing literature" (Kleekamp & Zapata, 2019, p.596). These analyses speak to the ways that sociocultural studies of inclusive picturebooks often overlap with educational investigations of inclusive picturebooks (e.g. Pennell et al., 2017; Tondreau & Rabinowitz, 2021). The focus on inclusion aligns with the four core goals of anti-bias education: identity, diversity, justice, and activism (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019). Anti-bias educational focus recognizes the ways that social identities can marginalize or privilege, and the need for educators to explore ability and disability, in addition to other identities.

Data Corpus

The list of picturebooks was collected using a self-administered online Qualtrics survey sent to 26 early childhood special educators working in a large urban environment in California. All teachers contacted held master's degrees and teaching credential for early childhood special education and graduated within the last five years. In total, 15 educators participated in this voluntary and anonymous survey. Additional demographic data for participations was not taken. Surveys were the most applicable data instrument to create the data corpus because of the ease of contact and ability for participants to self-administer surveys at their convenience (Fowler, 2013). This was particularly important due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which required social distancing measures and limited in-person interactions.

The survey included several questions related to classroom literacy practices, and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. However, the data corpus used to conduct this research emerged from one question, which was the first question in the survey: "Please name 3-5 of your favorite children's picture books." The answers culminated in a data corpus with 50 unique picturebooks to analyze (see Appendix A for

the master list of all 50 picturebooks). The additional questions were wide-ranging and exploratory. For example, questions asked about how teachers acquire classroom stories, how frequently they receive new classroom books, resources to support their classroom libraries, and diverse character representation in their classroom libraries. As this research aimed to analyze the text and images in ECSE picturebooks, the additional information was not used in this study.

Data Analysis Plan

The first stage of data analysis required determining inclusive stories within the data corpus. Access to the stories for analysis occurred through both online videos, physical books from public libraries, and electronic books that were accessible through the public library service. Online read aloud videos were also accessed to investigate some of the picturebooks multiple times, as were the physical books in the local libraries. The online content was particularly helpful early in the data analysis plan for both convenience and the limitations to public spaces early in the COVID-19 pandemic. An excel spreadsheet was used to determine which stories clearly did not show evidence of disability, possibly showed evidence of disability, and definitely showed evidence of disability. Stories that possibly showed evidence of disability were reviewed by both authors and an additional expert, and consensus was reached to discern which stories met the inclusion criteria.

The second stage of data analysis included semiotic qualitative analysis of the inclusive stories identified. To systematically investigate the representation of characters with varying abilities, the rubric in Table 1 was utilized. Analysis exclusively focused on how disabled characters were represented in stories using six categories (communicator, addressed listener, unaddressed listener, bystander, and figure). Each story was read multiple times, and the rubric was used to explain the frequency and relevant context each time a character with varying abilities was present. Within each story, double-page spreads represented one unit of analysis, as the reader would see the double-page spread as one complete scene. Each double-page spread was analyzed, or single page if the story did not use the double-page spread to illustrate one large scene.

After finishing the page-by-page analysis, we assigned each book to one of the three categories: strong, some, or limited representation of inclusion. The justification for this categorization was included based on the roles of the characters with varying abilities throughout the story. Strong representations of inclusion were characterized as showing disabled characters depicted with a range of participant roles, such

as active roles as the communicator, addressed listener, or central figures in narrative stories. Stories characterized as depicting some representation of inclusion included disabled characters with supporting roles in less than half of the story. Stories with limited representation of inclusion were characterized as bystanders or unaddressed listeners with minimal representation or added value to the story.

This analysis is limited to investigate participation among disabled characters from the participant role of (1) the communicator, (2) the addressed listener, (3) the unaddressed listener, (4) the bystander, and (5) the figure. These are inspired by Goodwin & Goodwin's (2004) participation framework. In this analysis, the communicator refers to the character using active utterances or other forms of active communication. The addressed listener refers to the character the communicator intentionally communicates with, and the unaddressed listener refers to characters in proximity of the communicator, without discernible textual or visual cues to indicate the character is actively addressed as a hearer in the communication exchange. The bystander is visually present on the page for the scene, although they are not referenced in the text. Their positioning is distant from the communicator and addressed or unaddressed listeners. This positioning communicates the character is not participating actively in the scene. Finally, the figure represents a character referenced as the subject or content on the page. The figure may be referenced in a communication exchange, visually, or in narration.

In inclusive stories, disabled characters were categorized as either the communicator, addressed or unaddressed listener, bystander, or figure. The level of participation was quantified to interpret the role of characters with varying abilities, and the intentionality for the theme of inclusion with active participation and agency. Finally, the data was organized to include stories with strong, some, and limited representations of inclusion.

Table 1
Data Analysis Rubric

Page-by-Page Analysis Assessing Representation
of Characters with Varying Abilities Picturebook:

Participant Role	*Frequency*	*Additional Notes:*
Communicator		
Addressed Listener		
Unaddressed Listener		
Bystander		
Figure		

Inter-rater Reliability

Data analysis first required a close reading of each story to determine whether the story included characters with varying abilities. For each story, the texts and visuals were closely examined for evidence of disabled characters. Within the data corpus, stories without characters of varying abilities were excluded from analysis. Stories that may have represented characters with disabilities were reviewed by two experts in early childhood special education, and required consensus regarding whether the stories were inclusive of disabled and non-disabled characters. Additionally, each rubric was completed by the first author and reviewed by the second author for interrater reliability. Where any discrepancy arose, the authors discussed and reanalyzed the story to gain consensus.

Findings

This research focused on ways that inclusive stories utilize the text and visuals of disabled characters, and their roles within each story. Based on the roles of disabled characters in the story, we garnered evidence of disabled characters' participation, and categorized participation in terms of strong, some, or limited inclusion. To study this, the research conducted semiotic analysis of the text-picture relationship to identify and assess inclusive stories. To determine which stories would meet the qualifying criteria for semiotic analysis of inclusion, the story needed to have text or visual representations of characters with disabilities. This required reading through each of the 50 stories, often multiple times, to discern which stories possibly included disabled characters and their roles. For stories that did not clearly evidence disabled characters, the authors analyzed the picturebooks alongside another professor in Early Childhood Special Education to reach consensus regarding the representation. Shared consensus was reached regarding the texts and visuals that represented disability in some form. Ultimately, within the data corpus of 50 stories, 7 picturebooks discernably included disabled and non-disabled characters. These seven stories were considered inclusive stories, and semiotic analysis was conducted to gain understanding of strong, some, or limited inclusion within each story. Two stories were categorized as having limited representation of inclusion, as disabled characters appeared only once and twice, and the roles were bystanders. Two stories were categorized as having some representation of inclusion, as the disabled characters were central figures yet only present in one and two pages. Three stories were characterized as showing strong representations of

inclusion, as the disabled characters were figures prominently represented in more than half of each story or communicators with equal representation as other central characters throughout the story. Table 2 details the findings regarding strong, some, or limited inclusion in the 7 picturebooks analyzed.

Semiotic Analysis of Inclusive Stories

Each inclusive story was read several times. Physical copies of books and online copies were accessed through the public library, and through online read aloud videos of the story, which showed the text and pictures. While reading and analyzing the pictures and text in each story, a rubric was completed to systematically assess visual or text representation of disabled characters' roles each time disabled characters were present in the story.

Limited Representation of Inclusion

Two picturebooks were inclusive of disabled and non-disabled characters, *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* (Engle & López, 2015) and *Ambitious Girl* (Harris & Valdez, 2021). Analysis of the text and visuals led to the assessment that the stories showed limited evidence of inclusive values, or limited inclusion. This was defined as having disabled characters as bystanders or unaddressed listeners with minimal representation or added value to the story.

Table 2
Results of Qualitative Semiotic Analysis in Inclusive Stories

Analysis of Inclusion in Each Inclusive Story

Strong, Some, or Limited Inclusion	*Picturebook*
Limited Inclusion	*Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* (Engle & Lopez, 2015)
Limited Inclusion	*Ambitious Girl* (Harris & Valdez, 2021)
Some Inclusion	*It's Okay to Be Different* (Parr, 2001)
Some Inclusion	*Be Who You Are* (Parr, 2016)
Strong Inclusion	*You Matter* (Robinson, 2020)
Strong Inclusion	*The Animal Boogie* (Blackstone & Harter, 2000)
Strong Inclusion	*All Are Welcome* (Penfold & Kaufman, 2018)

Drum Dream Girl:
How One Girl's Courage Changed Music (Engle & López, 2015)

Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music (2015) was written by Margarita Engle and illustrated by Rafael López. The book has won the Pura Belpré medal, in addition to other notable book lists and awards. It depicts the true story of a girl who overcame widespread social and cultural gender bias to pursue her dream as an immensely talented drummer. She persevered to become a renowned drummer, and she helped to break barriers regarding gender discrimination for female musicians in Cuba and beyond.

This important message shares a valuable story with rich cultural and historical knowledge for children. However, there was limited evidence that inclusion of disabled and non-disabled community members was a central focus or theme in the story. There was one page that included an elderly community member sitting on a park bench, watching as the main character danced through the park. This character was considered a bystander, and can be interpreted as disabled as they are using a cane. Considering the illustrator and author's intentions, the inclusion of a character with a cane can be interpreted as inclusion of an elderly person with a mobility impairment. The visual inclusion of this bystander was not elaborated upon in the text, and there was no reference to this character throughout the rest of the story. The scene is depicted in Figure 1.

Based on the categories defined in the methodology, the role of the disabled character was a bystander. The brief and limited visual inclusion of one disabled character in a park, only represented on one page, did not indicate that the story meaningfully engaged with disability as a strong theme to support inclusion in the story. Due to this limited evidence, the text and visuals aligned with limited inclusion because of minimal representation throughout the story, and limited value added by the disabled character's presence in the story. It was not central to the plot, and text did not explicitly reference inclusion of people with varying abilities. Rather, it focused mostly exclusively on gender discrimination of the main character, and her persistence and ultimate success in being a musician.

Ambitious Girl (Harris & Valdez, 2021)

The second inclusive story with limited inclusion is *Ambitious Girl* (2021), written by Meena Harris and illustrated by Marissa Valdez. This book also explicitly rejects gender biases and discrimination. It also takes an intersectional approach to representation to center the

Figure 1
Excerpt of Drum Dream Girl (Engle & Lopez, 2015, p.11-12)

experience of Black women and girls. The main character is a powerful Black girl with a strong and supportive family, and she is educated about how women were historically and continuously described in disempowering ways, like too ambitious, too confident, or too proud. However, she has a loving and supportive family to uplift her and highlight her strengths and values. This story takes an intersectional approach to uplift girls and women, and to promote empowerment. It also can be an important addition to classrooms seeking to promote anti-bias curricula for young children, as themes touch upon the four core goals of anti-bias education (Identity, diversity, justice, and activism; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019).

Regarding disability representation, the text did not explicitly address disability, and two pages visually included a disabled character. The creators intentionally illustrated a wheelchair user as a community member participating as a bystander or audience member as the main character speaks to the crowd. Figure 2 focuses on the main character standing at the podium, with family and community behind her. They can be interpreted as supportive and engaged community members. Figure 2 represents the first of two inclusive scenes, as a White disabled girl with orange hair and overalls is using a wheelchair that has a yellow and orange heart flag. There is another White character with blonde hair and glasses, positioned behind the wheelchair user, with one hand on the wheelchair's push handle.

These characters were again present in one other scene, in a crowd listening to the main character speak. Both times this disabled person was represented, they were not main characters, but rather present in a larger audience and an outdoor community space. This book was characters as depicting limited inclusion because both pages that included the wheelchair user included visual representations of the characters without text references that indicated inclusive values of disabled and non-disabled people. The character was also present only in the crowd in both instances, and their presence was not a focal point for the page or the story. The representation was interpreted as minimal and not adding significant value to the message or visuals within the story. Like *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* (Engle & López, 2015), *Ambitious Girl* (Harris & Valdez, 2021), shared a meaningful and relevant message. However, semiotic analysis of the text and visuals in the stories did not indicate that inclusion of disabled and non-disabled people was a central component of the story or its theme.

Some Representation of Inclusion

Two out of seven of the inclusive stories were characterized as showing some representation of inclusion after conducting semiotic analysis of the text. Some inclusion was defined as showing characters

Figure 2
Excerpt of Ambitious Girl (Harris, 2021, p.21-22)

participating with supporting roles in less than half of the story. The two stories characterized with some inclusion were both by Todd Parr, renowned children's author and illustrator. The stories were *It's Okay to Be Different* (Parr, 2001) and *Be Who You Are* (Parr, 2016).

It's Okay to be Different (Parr, 2001)

In Parr's (2001) *It's Okay to be Different*, the visuals and text both reflect inclusion through depicting disabled characters alongside non-disabled characters, and explicitly referencing aspects of disability in the text. For example, Figure 3 includes the text and visual references to disability, as the page reads: "It's okay to need some help" and depicts a visually impaired woman with yellow skin, red hair, a purple sweater, and blue pants, as she stands with one hand holding the harness of a service dog. The dog is yellow, has one red ear and one blue, and a green circle around one eye. The dog is smiling and has freckles, and the woman is also smiling. The text and visual reference both indicate intentional inclusion of disabled people, and it explicitly states the fact that it is okay to need help.

Furthermore, the story includes another disabled character and the visuals and text again both intentionally reference disability, as seen in Figure 4. This page reads "It's okay to have wheels" and shows a wheelchair user with dark teal skin, wearing a red shirt and blue pants, smiling while one hand is positioned near the back wheel of the

Figure 3
Excerpt from It's Okay to be Different (Parr, 2001, p. 2)

wheelchair. In both instances, the characters were identified as figures in the story because they were referenced in the text and visuals, as the story narrated to the readers. These figures were central to the messages on the page, and these pages stood out as intentionally inclusive in both the visuals and text. They were interpreted as indicating inclusion through both text and illustration, as they communicate to the reader about disabled people and inclusion of disabled people. When stories show images of inclusive characters in the background without textual references, the reader may not gain clear understanding of messages of inclusion within the story. However, in this picturebook, two pages highlighted disabled characters as central in the story, and the text also explicitly engaged with the characters identity as disabled people in need of some help or wheels.

This story was coded as some representation of inclusion because it clearly and intentionally depicted two disabled characters in the story and message about recognizing individual differences. It was not coded as a strong representation of inclusion because disabled characters were present in the visuals and text of two pages out of 30 unique pages and images, which included many types of characters, such as animals, people, a snowman, and an invisible friend. The story promotes inclusive values in the text and images and shows strong inclusion within the pages that disabled characters are present. As a complete picturebook, it shows some inclusion only due to its limited representation in two pages. This book represents a valuable addition to the classroom library.

Figure 4
*Excerpt from It's Okay to be Different (Parr, 2001, p. 5)*

Be Who You Are (Parr, 2016)

Todd Parr's (2016) *Be Who You Are* also showed some evidence of inclusive values through the text and illustrations. There is one page which can be interpreted as showing an intentional commitment to inclusive values. Figure 5 says: "Learn in your own way", with a cat smiling. There are red, blue, and green question marks over the cat's head as the cat reaches towards the dog bowl with one paw. The reader sees that the bowls have DOG and CAT written on them, and it shows that the cat is intentionally reaching towards the dog bowl, an area that is not typical for cats. As this unique cat curiously reaches for the dog food, the illustration highlights that there are different ways of learning, just as there are different ways of being and experiencing the world. The character was coded as a figure, as they were central to the plot while the text narrated to the reader.

Although there is only one clear depiction of learning differences, this is still somewhat inclusive because it is intentional and a central character with supporting texts to reinforce the theme of the entire story regarding being uniquely oneself. This page adds a new element of the story, as other pages do not reference or normalize learning differences. The image and the text are contributing and expanding on this message in a unique way, which is adding value to the story and message. Therefore, although this inclusive message is only present in one page of the story, the text and visual representation of learning differences support the characterization of this story as showing some representation of inclusion.

Figure 5
Excerpt of Be Who You Are (Parr, 2016, p. 7)
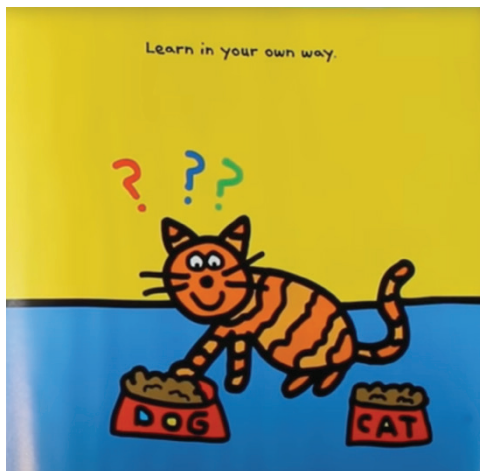
Strong Representation of Inclusion

Three of the seven inclusive stories showed strong representations of inclusion. Strong representations of inclusion were characterized as showing characters depicted with a range of participant roles across several pages, including active roles as communicator and addressed listener. For these stories, all the stories were narrative stories. However, characters with and without disabilities were central characters and active participants throughout the stories, and the creators of these picturebooks ensured that the main characters received similar dedicated space and attention on each page.

All Are Welcome (Penfold & Kaufman, 2018)

This story follows a group of students attending school within a diverse community. Students live with their families, and both families and students are a very diverse group of people. This can be seen through the different customs, dresses, flags, and other indicators throughout the visuals in the story, as well as the text in the story, which explicitly highlights diversity within the community. In the story, two of the students are illustrated as disabled. One student uses a wheelchair, and another student has a mobility impairment. The format of the story is narrative, and it includes many pages focused on routine activities throughout the school day. The text consistently affirms that while routine activities are occurring, all students are welcome at the school, and there is a shared sense of belonging in the school community. Friendships and relationships are depicted through closeness with peers, smiling, sharing, and being inclusive of students with varying abilities.

Figure 6 shows one example of the students all together outside on the playground, and the text references inclusive values through affirming that all students belong, and diversity is a source of strength. While the text did not explicitly reference disability or varying abilities, it continuously referenced that all students were welcome in school. It positioned school as a safe place and community for all. Furthermore, in terms of the frequency of inclusion, the students depicted as disabled were included in at least half of the story. They were coded as figures given that the story narrated to the reader as opposed to depicting conversations among characters within the school and community.

Most of the pages included groups of multiple students together, and they were included within the core classroom group. There were some pages that focused on a few children or families at a time, and the disabled children were present in some of those scenes. There were

Figure 6
Excerpt from All Are Welcome (Penfold & Kaufman, 2018, p. 15-16)

no characters that were considered main characters present in every scene. The illustrations were interpreted as thoughtfully inclusive, and the pages depicted inclusive interactions. The characters were depicted as sharing meaningful friendships, and the depictions showed inclusive classrooms, outdoor spaces, experiences at the gymnasium, art, lunch and other activities throughout the day. This book is categorized as showing strong inclusion, as the disabled and non-disabled classmates were all central characters, and active members of their classroom community frequently and consistently throughout the book.

The Animal Boogie, (Harter, 2000)

The final story with strong evidence of inclusion was Debbie Harter's (2000) *The Animal Boogie.* This story is unique because it includes an animated video for a multimodal experience, found on the publisher's website and on YouTube. The publisher, Barefoot Books, offers several multimodal singalong stories. The Barefoot Books Singalongs are series of animated videos of picturebooks for young children and classrooms to watch and sing along. These are often well-loved stories and songs for young children, as they are very engaging. These stories are also often accessible for teachers and families to use their electronic devices to enhance the storytelling.

This story follows a group of children through the jungle as they encounter various animals and move together. It is inclusive because one of the main characters uses a wheelchair. The character has shoul-

der-length black hair, brown skin, a short pink dress, pink shoes, and she is sitting in a wheelchair. In the story, each main character investigates their own animal over the course of four pages. For example, Figure 7 shows the main character with disabilities with a bird, holding feathers in her hands and flapping her arms to mimic the bird. This is consistent with the behavior of the other main characters, as they explore animals and use their bodies to find commonalities between the animal behavior and their own physical expression. At the end of the story, the children reconvene and 'boogie' together. Like in Figure 7 and throughout the story, the disabled main character is centered and engaged, and her mobility impairments do not seem to be limiting participation or ability to explore the jungle with her friends.

This story was categorized as strongly representing inclusion, as one of the main characters was represented as a central communicator, and this character was disabled and actively present throughout the story. They were not in half of the pages, as the format of the story highlighted each main character alone with an animal. Only in the end of the story were all the main characters together. Given the format and the role of the disabled character as a main communicator and figure, this story is interpreted as showing strong representation of inclusion. The text was focused on animals in the jungle and experiencing the jungle, and there were no text references to inclusion or disabilities. However, the intentional participation, engagement, and depiction of a main character as a wheelchair user

Figure 7
Excerpt of The Animal Boogie (Harter, 2000, p.15-16)

contribute to the categorization that this story shows strong inclusive representation.

You Matter (Robinson, 2020)

The children's picturebook *You Matter* (2020) was written and illustrated by Christian Robinson. It has since won multiple awards and gained notoriety for its ability to communicate an important message that each person matters, even if they feel lonely, lost, unsupported, or otherwise isolated. The text explores how people matter regardless of the circumstances, and highlight the importance of valuing oneself, particularly when experiencing difficulties. The illustrations reflect the theme of inclusion through the story's embrace of differences without stigmatizing. The text does not explicitly address disability and inclusion, although the illustrations and visual representations show evidence of disability and inclusion. For example, pages include disabled and non-disabled children and adults depicted as part of the community, which can be interpreted as showing disability as a valued form of human diversity. Furthermore, one of the main characters is a disabled child using a wheelchair.

The main characters can be seen on the front cover of the book, and throughout the story. Each main character has pages focused on them as they move through their life and community. Some pages are illustrations that do not include people but focus on nature and the environment from different scales. For example, there is a depiction of what one see's looking through a microscope, waves at the beach, animals walking along the sand, a T-Rex and other dinosaurs, views of planets in space and an astronaut looking down on Earth, and more. There is a variety of rich images and the use of the children in an urban environment juxtaposed with the other images of natural and fictional scenes. Furthermore, readers can see each of the main characters, all children, within the urban environments. For example, Figure 8 shows two main characters together standing on the curb on the right side of the page. It looks like they are waving for their dog, alone on the other side of the street. The following pages also show these two main characters reunited with their dog as they go through the park together. The disabled characters were coded as figures given the narrative style of the story.

The visuals reflect an intentional decision to be inclusive. The text is not explicit about disabilities and inclusion, yet the messaging is inclusive about the value of all human beings, regardless of their circumstances. It is very affirming of human diversity, which includes peo-

Figure 8
Excerpt of You Matter (Robinson, 2020, p. 23-24)

ple with varying abilities. These ideas are foundational to inclusion. Furthermore, visually, the text included the main disabled character alongside a friend and companion throughout the story, even when pages were more intimate and showed a few characters at a time, as opposed to larger community scenes. This choice of pairing the main disabled character with another main character ensured that the reader would not depict the disabled character as isolated possibly due to disabilities. There was not isolation or exclusion, but rather friendship and companionship. Therefore, this story was categorized as showing a strong representation of inclusion. The main character with disabilities was depicted with a range of participant roles, and active with friends and community members. They were present throughout the story, and the text references were consistently affirming that they, like the reader and other characters, matter.

Discussion

The findings from the research question evoke curiosity about the barriers or obstacles that ECSE teachers face to create more inclusive libraries. This is not to place the responsibility on the ECSE teacher, but rather a place to explore the structure, experience, and other factors that contribute to their work environment, and available resources to enhance their teaching.

In early childhood, adults can use children's stories to advance equity, including antiracist teaching and learning (Spencer, 2022). Additionally, inclusive early education with commitments to anti-bias work continues to integrate disability, race, and disability studies in education into early childhood pedagogy and practice (Erwin et al., 2021; Lalvani & Bacon, 2018, Love & Beneke, 2021). Furthermore, as early educators continue to cultivate inclusive educational spaces, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) reflect guiding tenants to disrupt forms of institutional discrimination. One way to contribute to inclusion and belonging in schools includes curating text sets that better reflect population diversity among students, and provide windows, mirrors, and doors for students to see themselves and others reflected (Bishop, 1990; Möller, 2016).

The findings also indicate a need for more inclusive early childhood stories that explicitly engage with disability in their text and visuals. As Tondreau & Rabinowitz (2021) explain, "there is little empirical scholarship that examines the teaching of children's literature that represents individuals with disabilities" (p.63). Additional research is necessary to investigate what stories are read throughout a range of early childhood settings, and how educators and classrooms engage in conversations about disability during these storytelling routines.

Limitations

Limitations were present based on the methodology used. For example, when surveying teachers to create the data corpus for qualitative analysis, the surveys were limited by the lack of opportunity to clarify or gain further information regarding some of the survey responses. Many participants did not share authors, illustrators, or publication dates. In instances where the author or year were not cited, the authors and publication year were identified online. In instances with multiple possible authors or editions, the authors collectively determined which storybook to analyze. For stories with multiple editions, the original editions available for each of the stories were selected to provide context about when the texts and illustrations were created. However, this also represents a limitation, as some educators may have new versions of stories and the stories may have updated texts and illustrations. Given the voluntary and anonymous nature of the survey, there was no way to discern which edition the participant identified as a favorite ECSE classroom story.

Furthermore, the surveys were anonymous and voluntary, and they did not include additional data regarding the participants. For

example, gender, the number of years teaching, master's degree type, and age were not included in the data about participants. This would have been valuable information, and future studies can incorporate this additional participant data. Additionally, the survey was restricted as an English-only survey. This represents a limitation for participants with favorite classroom stories in languages other than English. While non-English books would have been welcomed, the survey did not explicitly encourage or prompt participants to share favorite books in any language they use.

Limitations in analysis also exist. The analysis attempted to systematically investigate the text and illustrations through multiple, comprehensive reviews of the stories. However, there could be evidence of disability and interpretations of disability that we failed to discern. Additionally, this qualitative study would have been enhanced with more naturalistic observational approaches during classroom storytime. This study was unable to conduct classroom-based observations, interviews, or focus groups with ECSE teachers. Observations or discussions about the ways that educators read with young children may have generated additional insight.

Future Research

Future empirical research may investigate how educators engage young children during storytime. Research has yet to discern how strategies during shared reading of inclusive stories may facilitate or impact inclusion. Researching shared reading practices using inclusive stories may generate insight about how educators use inclusive stories to support classroom inclusion. Additionally, interviews with educators, families, and other stakeholders that read with young children with varying abilities may also provide insight about the curricula, materials, and experiences related to the act of shared reading with inclusive stories. Furthermore, research may consider the availability of resources for teachers to purchase or acquire books, and to cultivate inclusive classroom libraries.

Furthermore, more surveys could provide additional information about inclusive stories from a range of early educators. Information about the practitioner's role (early childhood inclusion teacher in preschool, early childhood toddler teacher, early interventionist, early childhood special educator), age group (toddlers, preschoolers), and personal demographic information (race, ethnicity, languages spoken) may provide additional insight about inclusive stories in a range of early childhood settings.

Regarding the analysis of disability in children's stories, future research may also highlight systematic ways to investigate disability from intersectional perspectives. Educators and families may benefit from information and resources about intersectional representation, and applications to identify inclusive and intersectional stories for young children.

Conclusion

This research sought to build on the limited scholarly knowledge of this topic, by exploring if disabled characters are represented in the corpus of favorite stories in ECSE classrooms. The data suggest that disabled characters are not present in most of the stories considered favorites by ECSE teachers. These findings also generate questions about the strategies, policies, and practices about the impact of disability representation (or the lack thereof) in children's stories. It also raises curiosity about other classroom curricula and materials, and how they include or exclude disabled characters.

It begs the question, how might EI/ECSE classrooms reimagine normative practices in daily practice, evoke critical thinking skills, or make classroom repairs if they notice limited or problematic representation? How do inclusive EI/ECSE classrooms represent inclusion? Are young children exposed to inclusive stories on a regular basis? Are they high-quality? These questions may reflect future areas of research, as inclusive EI/ECSE professionals consider classroom stories that reflect their students and families. In conclusion, the simple and powerful insight remains: "*what* children read makes a difference" [emphasis in original] (Oxley, 2006, p. 554).

References

Aho, T., & Alter, G. (2018). "Just like me, just like you": Narrative erasure as disability normalization in children's picture books. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies, 12*(3), 303-319. https://doi.org/10.3828/jlcds.2018.24

Arizpe, E. (2021). The state of the art in picturebook research from 2010 to 2020. *Language Arts, 98*(5), 260-272.

Berghs, M., Atkin, K., Graham, H., Hatton, C., & Thomas, C. (2016). Implications for public health research of models and theories of disability: a scoping study and evidence synthesis. *Public Health Research (Southampton, England), 4*(8), 1–166. https://doi.org/10.3310/phr04080

Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom, 6*(3), ix-xi.

Bishop, R. S. (2012). Reflections on the development of African American chil-

dren's literature. *Journal of Children's Literature, 38*(2), 5-13.

Beneke, M. R., & Park, C. C. (2019). Introduction to the special issue: Anti-bias curriculum and critical praxis to advance social justice in inclusive early childhood education. *Young Exceptional Children, 22*(2), 55-61. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250619833337

Blackstone, S. (2000). *The animal boogie.* (Harter, D., Illus.). Barefoot Books.

Brenna, B. (2013). Mindful portrayals: Using fiction to create awareness, understanding, and support for people with Autism and developmental disabilities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 48*(4), 514-521.

Buescher, E. M., Lightner, S. C., & Kelly, R. H. (2016). Diversity of authors & illustrators in first grade core reading series. *Multicultural Education, 23*(2), 31-37.

Crisp, T. M. (2016). What's on our bookshelves? The diversity of children's literature in early childhood classroom libraries. *Journal of Children's Literature, 42*(2), 29.

Derman-Sparks, L., & Edwards, J. O. (2019). Understanding anti-bias education. *Young Children, 74*(5), 6-13.

Division of Early Childhood and the National Association for Education of Young Children. (2009). Early childhood inclusion: A joint position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). *Young Exceptional Children, 12,* 42-47. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250609344935

Dyches, T. T., & Prater, M. A. (2005). Characterization of developmental disability in children's fiction. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 40*(3), 202-216.

Emmerson, J., & Brenna, B. (2015). Characters with exceptionalities portrayed in contemporary Canadian children's books. *Canadian Journal of Education, 38*(4), 1-28.

Emmerson, J., Fu, Q., Lendsay, A., & Brenna, B. (2014). Picture book characters with disabilities: Patterns and trends in a context of radical change. *Bookbird, 52*(4), 12-22. https://doi.org/10.1353/bkb.2014.0147

Engle, M. (2015). *Drum dream girl: How one girl's courage changed music.* (López, R., Illus.). Clarion Books.

Fowler Jr, F. J. (2013). *Survey research methods.* Sage Publications.

Friesen, A., Mitsch, M. K., & Du, K. (2022). Advancing equity and inclusion in early childhood education: Introduction to a special issue. *Issues in Teacher Education, 31*(2), 3-8.

Golos, D. B., & Moses, A. M. (2011). Representations of Deaf characters in children's picture books. *American Annals of the Deaf, 156*(3), 270-282. https://doi.org/10.1353/aad.2011.0025

Gomez-Najarro, J. (2020). Children's intersecting identities matter: Beyond rabbits and princesses in the common core book exemplars. *Children's Literature in Education, 51*(3), 392-410. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-019-09390-9

Harris, M. (2021). *Ambitious girl.* (Valdez, M., Illus.). Little, Brown Books for

Young Readers.

Hayden, H. E., & Prince, A. M. T. (2020). Disrupting ableism: Strengths-based representations of disability in children's picture books. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *0*(0), 1-26.

Hughes, C. (2012). Seeing blindness in children's picturebooks. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies, 6*(1), 35-51. https://doi.org/10.3828/jlcds.2012.3

Johnson, N. J., Koss, M. D., & Martinez, M. (2018). Through the sliding glass door: #EmpowerTheReader. *The Reading Teacher, 71*(5), 569-577. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1659

Johansson, E., & Puroila, A.-M. (2021). Research Perspectives on the politics of belonging in early years education. *International Journal of Early Childhood, 53*(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13158-021-00288-6

Kleekamp, M. C., & Zapata, A. (2019). Interrogating depictions of disability in children's picturebooks. *The Reading Teacher, 72*(5), 589-597. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1766

Koss, M. D., Johnson, N. J., & Martínez, M. Á. (2018). Mapping the diversity in Caldecott books from 1938 to 2017: The changing topography. *Journal of Children's Literature, 44*(4), 4-20.

Koss, M. D. (2015). Diversity in contemporary picturebooks: A content analysis. *Journal of Children's Literature, 41*(1), 32-42.

Lalvani, P., & Bacon, J. K. (2018). Rethinking "we are all special": Anti-ableism curricula in early childhood classrooms. *Young Exceptional Children, 22*(2), 87-100. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250618810706

Lee, Y.-J., & Recchia, S. L. (2016). Early childhood inclusion. *YC Young Children, 71*(5), 79-84.

Leininger, M., Taylor, T., Prater, M., & Heath, M. (2010). Disabilities in Newbery Books Newbery Award Winning Books 1975–2009: How do they portray disabilities? *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 45*(4), 583–596.

Love, H. R., & Beneke, M. R. (2021). Pursuing justice-driven inclusive education research: Disability critical race theory (DisCrit) in early childhood. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 41*(1), 31-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121421990833

Matthew, N., & Clow, S. (2007). Putting disabled children in the picture: Promoting inclusive children's books and media. *International Journal of Early Childhood, 39*(2), 65-78. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03178225

McClung, N. A. (2018). Learning to queer text: Epiphanies from a family critical literacy practice. *The Reading Teacher, 71*(4), 401-410. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1640

Mitsch, M. K., Du, K., & Friesen, A. (2022). Calling authentic leaders: Promoting equity and anti-bias curriculum for all young children and their families. *Issues in Teacher Education,* 31(2), 122-131.

Möller, K. J. (2016). Creating diverse classroom literature collections using Rudine Sims Bishop's conceptual metaphors and analytical frameworks as guides. *Journal of Children's Literature, 42*(2), 64.

Moreillon, J. (2017). The mighty picturebook: Providing a plethora of possibilities. *Children & Libraries, 15*(3), 17-19. https://doi.org/10.5860/cal.15.3.17

Odom, S. L., Buysse, V., & Soukakou, E. (2011). Inclusion for young children with disabilities: A quarter century of research perspectives. *Journal of Early Intervention, 33*(4), 344-356. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053815111430094

Oxley, P. (2006). Rudine Sims Bishop: Making a difference through literature. *Language Arts, 83*(6), 552.

Parr, T. (2016). *Be who you are*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Parr, T. (2001). *It's okay to be different*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Penfold, A. (2018). *All are welcome*. (Kaufman, M., Illus.). Knopf Books for Young Readers.

Puroila, A. M. (2019). Who am I? Shaping young children's identities through everyday narratives. *Story in Children's Lives: Contributions of the Narrative Mode to Early Childhood Development, Literacy, and Learning*, 55-75. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-19266-2_4

Robinson, C. (2020). *You Matter*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Souto-Manning, M., Rabadi-Raol, A., Robinson, D., & Perez, A. (2019). What stories do my classroom and its materials tell? Preparing early childhood teachers to engage in equitable and inclusive teaching. *Young Exceptional Children, 22*(2), 62-73. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096250618811619

Spencer, T. (2022). Using children's literature to advance antiracist early childhood teaching and learning. *Issues in Teacher Education, 31*(2), 9-31.

Tondreau, A., & Rabinowitz, L. (2021). Analyzing representations of individuals with disabilities in picture books. *The Reading Teacher, 75*(1), 61-71. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2017

Vissing, Y., & Juchniewicz, M. (2023). Children's book banning, censorship and human rights. *Globalisation, Values Education and Teaching Democracy* (pp. 181-201). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15896-4_12

Yenika-Agbaw, V. (2011). Reading disability in children's literature: Hans Christian Andersen's tales. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies, 5*(1), 91-108. https://doi.org/10.3828/jlcds.2011.6

Appendix A
List of Stories Created by 15 ECSE Teachers

Participant responses of favorite classroom picturebooks

Participant   Favorite Picturebooks

1	*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin Jr., 1967)
	The Empty Pot (Demi, 1990)
	There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly (Adams, 1972)
2	*Brown Bear Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin Jr., 1967)
	The Very Hungry Caterpillar (Carle, 1969)
	The Feelings Book (Parr, 2009)
3	*The Very Hungry* Caterpillar (Carle, 1969)

Brown Bear Brown Bear, What Do You See? (Martin Jr., 1967)
Planting a Rainbow (Ehlert, 1988)
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom (Martin Jr. & Archambault, 1989)
4   T*he Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1969)
Brown Bear Brown Bear, What Do You See? (Carle, 1969)
Snowy Day (Keats, 1962)
Be Who You Are (Parr, 2016)
5   *In a Jar* (Marcero, 2020)
Its Okay to Be Different (Parr, 2001)
Lost and Found (Jeffers, 2005)
6   *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Martin Jr. & Archambault, 1989)
Pete the Cat: Rocking in School Shoes (Litwin & Dean, 2011)
Shape Song Swingalong (Songs, 2011)
7   *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin Jr., 1967)
Pete the Cat and the Perfect Pizza Party (Dean & Dean, 2019)
The Feel Good Book (Parr, 2002)
We All Go Traveling By (Roberts, 2003)
Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush (Kubler, 2001)
Dragon on the Doorstep (Blackstone, 2006)
If You're Happy and You Know It (Cabrera, 2003)
8   *Pete The Cat: I Love My White Shoes* (Litwin et al., 2010)
Animal Boogie (Harter, 2000)
9   *All Are Welcome* (Penfold & Kaufman, 2018)
Giraffes Can›t Dance (Andreae & Parker-Rees, 2001)
Ambitious Girl (Harris & Valdez, 2021)
Drum Dream Girl (Engle & Lopez, 2015)
The Peace Book (Parr, 2009)
10   *I Take Turns* (Linde, 2014)
Clean Up Everybody (Sparks, 2014)
Be Patient (Smith, 2014)
Are You Listening, Jack? (Garcia, 2014)
I Can Follow the Rules (Smith, 2014)
I Can Be Kind (Pippin, 2014)
11   *The Piggie and Elephant Series*
Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes (Litwin et al., 2010)
Rex Wrecks It (Clanton, 2014)
12   *You Matter* (Robinson, 2020)
Be Who You Are (Parr, 2016)
I Am Every Good Thing (Barnes & James, 2020)
13   *Hug* (Alborough, 2000)
Baby Beluga (Raffi & Wolf, 1997)
Brown Bear Brown Bear, What Do You See? (Martin Jr., 1967)
Mo Willems Pigeon or Elephant and Piggie books
14   *Freight Train* (Crews, 1978)
From Head to Toe (Carle, 1997)
Brown Bear Brown Bear, What Do You See? (Martin Jr., 1967)

Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes (Litwin et al., 2010)
Any mo and piggie
15   *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin Jr., 1967)
The Very Hungry Caterpillar (Carle, 1969)
The Very Busy Spider (Carle, 1984)
Goodnight Moon (Wise Brown & Hurd, 1947)
We All Go Traveling By (Roberts, 2003)
If You›re Happy and You Know It (Cabrera, 2003)
T*he Journey Home from Grandpas* (Lumley, 2006)
Driving My Tractor (Dobbins & Sim, 2012)
Up, Up, Up! (Reed, 2011)
The Animal Boogie (Harter, 2000)
Wheels on the Bus (Zelinsky, 1990)
Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes (Litwin et al., 2010)
Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons (Litwin & Dean, 2012)
Sneezy the Snowman (Wright, 2010)
Go Away Big Green Monster (Emberley, 2005)
The Mitten (Brett, 1989)

Issues in Teacher Education

Guidelines for Submissions

Issues in Teacher Education (ITE) is a peer-reviewed journal published twice yearly by the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE). The journal publishes original manuscripts focusing on topics, concerns, and methodologies for improving the quality of teacher education, broadly conceived to include pre-service preparation, the induction years, and the professional development of career teachers. The journal welcomes submissions in a variety of genres, including empirical research, philosophical or theoretical investigations, reports by practitioners in various field settings that ground teacher preparation (e.g., descriptions of innovative practices/curriculum situated in the literature), and book reviews related to the theme. All submissions must be scholarly in nature and demonstrate substantive knowledge of teacher education as a field of study. Submissions should be between 5000-7000 words (exclusive of references).

Manuscripts are reviewed year-round. To submit a manuscript for publication consideration, please click on the submission portal on the journal's website (www.itejournal.org) to begin the electronic submission process. ITE uses Open Journal Systems (OJS), a user-friendly online manuscript submission and review interface that allows authors to track the review process in real time. If you are a new user, click on "Register" in the upper right corner of the screen and follow the prompts to complete the registration process. You will receive a confirmation email with your user name and password. Login to the website again and follow the steps for Author and/or New Submissions. Additionally, please consider signing up to serve as a reviewer at this time, as well. A pool of responsive and active reviewers is crucial to maintaining the rigor and quality of publications, as well as to the health and well-being of the journal as a whole.

Manuscripts should follow the style outlined in the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* and should be submitted in Microsoft Word. Submitted files should: be "blind" (all identifying information removed, including in Word's "properties"); have "track changes" turned off; use 12-point font; be unlocked; and not exceed 2 MB in size (including embedded graphics, if any). If your submission includes graphics, you may need to consult your institution's electronic media department for assistance in re-sizing them to assure they do not make the Word document in which they are embedded too large. Graphics should be camera ready at the time they are embedded in the Word document, and if published, will be reproduced in the journal in black and white. *Issues in Teacher Education* will not consider manuscripts that do not meet these style or electronic file standards.

Please send editorial correspondence to:

Allison Smith, Editor
Issues in Teacher Education
University of Massachusetts Global
allison.smith@umassglobal.edu
editor@itejournal.org

Information
on the California Council
on Teacher Education

Founded in 1945, the California Council on Teacher Education is a non-profit organization devoted to stimulating the improvement of the preservice and inservice education of teachers and administrators. The Council attends to this general goal with the support of a community of teacher educators, drawn from diverse constituencies, who seek to be informed, reflective, and active regarding significant research, sound practice, and current public educational issues.

Membership in the California Council on Teacher Education can be either institutional or individual. Colleges and universities with credential programs, professional organizations with interests in the preparation of teachers, school districts and public agencies in the field of education, and individuals involved in or concerned about the field are encouraged to join. Membership entitles one to participation in semi-annual spring and fall conferences, complimentary subscriptions to *Issues in Teacher Education* and *Teacher Education Quarterly*, newsletters on timely issues, an informal network for sharing sound practices in teacher education, and involvement in annual awards and recognitions in the field.

The semi-annual conferences of the California Council on Teacher Education rotate each year between sites in northern and southern California, feature significant themes in the field of education, highlight prominent speakers, afford opportunities for presentation of research and discussion of promising practices, and consider current and future policy issues in the field.

For information about or membership in the California Council on Teacher Education, please contact: Alan H. Jones, Executive Secretary, California Council on Teacher Education, Caddo Gap Press, 3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118; telephone 415/666-3012; e-mail alan.jones@ccte.org; website www.ccte.org.

The next semi-annual conference of the California Council on Teacher Education will be the Fall 2024 Conference, October 17-19, which will be held in-person at the Kona Kai Resort in San Diego, as well as virtually. For details see the CCTE website (see above).

Join the

California Council
on Teacher Education
and Help Shape
the Profession

The primary benefits of membership in the California Council on Teacher Education are:

● Involvement in Spring and Fall Semi-Annual Conferences;

● Subscriptions to two CCTE-sponsored journals, *Issues in Teacher Education* and *Teacher Education Quarterly*, plus *CCNews*, a periodic on-line newsletter, and other mailings and e-mailings;

● Participation in ongoing deliberations about teacher education policy in California and nationally;

● Linkages through CCTE to national organizations in the field;

● Awareness of issues and developments in teacher education research and practice;

● Opportunities to meet, exchange information, and socialize with other California teacher educators.

— —

Please enroll me as an individual member of CCTE

Name_____

Address_____

City, State, & ZIPcode_____

Telephone _____   E-mail_____

Check appropriate dues category: ☐ Regular member at $150 per year; ☐ Retired member at $100 per year; or ☐ student member at $75 per year.

Send this completed form with your check payable to "CCTE" to:
Alan H. Jones, CCTE Executive Secretary, Caddo Gap Press,
3145 Geary Boulevard PMB 275, San Francisco, CA 94118
e-mail alan.jones@ccte.org — website www.ccte.org

Call for Proposals for CCTE Conferences

The California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) invites submission of proposals for each of its semi-annual conferences which address: (1) Research related to teacher education, including policy issues, classroom-based issues, teacher effectiveness, or other related topics; (2) Projects or programs reflecting best practice; and (3) Other innovative sessions related to teacher education. While proposals specifically related to the theme of each conference are desired, other topics within teacher education are always considered and often accepted. Proposals are invited for several diverse formats: presentations, roundtables, demonstrations, interactive sessions, and poster sessions.

General Procedures: CCTE is interested in receiving proposals from faculty directly involved in teacher education programs, school district personnel engaged in teacher development efforts, and graduate students conducting research related to teacher education.

How To Submit Proposals: Go to the CCTE website (www.ccte.org), under the "conferences" page locate the next upcoming conference, and click on the call for proposals link to complete the online proposal submission which involves the following information: proposal title; lead author name; affiliation; address; work and home telephone numbers; and email addresses; along with an indication of whether the proposal focuses on research, practice, or policy analysis; and the preferred session format. Then attach your blinded proposal as a Word file.

Content of the Proposal: Include the following: A brief overview of the study/project/program session including purpose/objectives, theoretical framework, methods, data source, results/conclusions/points of view, and significance to the field of teacher education.

Criteria for Selection: The criteria are: the proposal contributes to the knowledge base of preservice and inservice teacher education; the proposal is methodologically or theoretically sound; the proposal format is well organized and clearly described; and the proposal clearly states its significance for teacher educators.

Deadlines: The deadline for proposals for spring conferences is January 15 of the year of the conference. The deadline for proposals for fall conferences is August 15 of the year of the conference.

Questions: Questions may be addressed to the co-chairs of the CCTE Research Committee, Kimiya Sohrab Maghzi and Marni Fisher. e-mail:

kimiya_maghzi@redlands.edu & mfisher@saddleback.edu

Issues in Teacher Education
Subscription Form

Issues in Teacher Education, a semi-annual journal of the California Council on Teacher Education, focuses on topics, concerns, and methodologies for improving the quality of teacher education, through publication of empirical research, philosophical or theoretical investigations, reports by practitioners (e.g., descriptions of innovative practices/curriculum situated in the literature), and book reviews. The journal is emailed each spring and fall to all members and delegates of the California Council on Teacher Education, and subscriptions are available to other interested individuals or institutions.

To subscribe to future issues of *Issues in Teacher Education*, please use this form:

Name _____

Address _____

_____ (include ZIP)

E-mail address _____

Please enter my subscription to *Issues in Teacher Education* for the next year (next two issues) in PDF format

☐ $50 (individuals) or ☐ $100 (institutions and libraries)

☐ Check enclosed payable to Caddo Gap Press

Issues in Teacher Education is published in PDF format.
Please indicate whether you wish issues:
☐ Mailed to your address above on disk
  (if requesting mail please add $30 for portage) or
☐ Sent as an e-mail attachment to your e-mail address above.

Mail form and check to Caddo Gap Press,
3145 Geary Blvd., PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118 U.S.A.
Phone 415/666-3012
E-mail info@caddogap.com
Web www.caddogap.com