THE SLIPPERY WORK OF TEACHING ABOUT WHITENESS AND PRIVILEGE: TWO LATINX PROFESSORS' TESTIMONIO

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ABSTRACT

Using *testimonio* (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012), two Latinx instructors examine their experiences and thought processes with the kinds of resistance faced from White or White-aligning students constantly "slipping away" from doing the work of reflecting on Whiteness and their privilege. Analyzing the data through a critical race-grounded theory approach (Malagón, Pérez-Huber, & Velez, 2009), we theorize a pattern of self-removal and deflection that White students engage in to maintain their privilege and Whiteness invisible. In our discussion, we consider the role of pedagogy and ideology for teacher educators working with resistance from White students.

Keywords: Testimonio, critical race theory, ideological clarity, student resistance, dominant ideologies, pedagogical moves

An important focus of the conversation about achieving equity in schools has to do with the ideological and pedagogical development of White teachers. In a field that is still mostly White, we need to have better knowledge of the kinds of understandings White teachers have about race, equity, and privilege (Matias et al., 2014; Matias, 2016). As more teacher education programs are incorporating anti-racist and CRT-influenced curricula in their classes, the need arises to document how instructors are dealing with resistance, implicit or explicit, to discussions of structural racism,

the hidden curriculum, an invisible structure that socializes students to accept ideologies of power, knowledge, and social stratification (Anyon, 1981; Apple, 2004; Giroux & Purpel, 1983) privilege and institutional oppression. Resistance to these tenets may not always come from students who align with a conservative agenda or values, but also are a part of the learning process for progressive White students (DiAngelo, 2021).

Using *testimonio* (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012) two Latinx instructors name and analyze their experiences of student resistance toward the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT) taught in our courses. *Testimonio* is an intentional "first-person oral or written account drawing on experiential, self-conscious, narrative practice to articulate an urgent voicing of something to which one bears witness" (Reyes & Rodríguez, 2012 p. 525). Analyzing our *testimonios* through Critical Race Grounded theory (Malagon et al., 2006) revealed both micro and macro dimensions of resistance. At the micro level students resisted with what we call *deflection*, *silence,* and *downplaying their advantages*, behaviors that then we theorize as acts of *self-removal* to not acknowledge and examine Whiteness and privilege. To address these behaviors, we testify about using pedagogical moves to counter these behaviors and move students toward ideological clarity, or the "ongoing process that requires individuals to compare and contrast their explanations of the existing social order with those propagated by the dominant society" (Alfaro and Bartolomé, 2017, p.12).

Importantly, our continuous data analysis on the macro levels of impact revealed that our pedagogical moves were also met with new kinds of resistance, leading us to theorize that addressing these kinds of resistance is "slippery work." Even after having carefully selected and implemented many pedagogical moves, students keep "slipping away" from doing this work. We see these slips as a strategy, conscious or unconscious, to avoid talking about Whiteness and privilege. Despite numerous attempts to make Whiteness visible in our courses, students keep "slipping away" from confronting their racial positions and privileges in a direct and honest manner. By 'slipping away' from doing the work, students keep Whiteness invisible and maintain the status quo. At the end of the article, we discuss implications for teacher preparation programs and call attention to the necessity of exploring White privilege, Whiteness, and White normativity in-depth when discussing dominant ideologies and how they play out pedagogically.

Theoretical Framework: A Critical Race Theory Perspective

We start from the stance that in working with White students or those aligned with Whiteness in higher education, we will encounter internalized notions of race and racial superiority that will shape our interactions in the classroom. Thus, we use CRT to provide a clear analysis of the ubiquity of Whiteness in educational institutions (Ladson-Billings, 1998), clarifying how it plays a role in educational policy, curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy. Critical Race Theory has five tenets that acknowledge the centrality of race, stating that (i) racism is a defining feature that is prevalent and endemic in US social relations and in the institutions of education; (ii) dominant ideologies in education, such as meritocracy, colorblindness, objectivity, and race neutrality, must be challenged; (iii) there must be an intentional commitment to social justice; (iv) we must center the experiences and voices of the marginalized; and (v) do not limit ourselves to

one discipline or area of expertise (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). These tenets give shape and form to the way we crafted our thinking in this study, starting from the idea that racism is normal and entrenched in the day-to-day operations of higher education institutions and teacher education programs. Specifically, it affects relationships between faculty and staff in pedagogical spaces. Thus, we call on CRT to name and expose how racism plays a role, but also mutates and changes, in classroom interactions and institutional practices (Evan-Winters & Twyman-Hoff, 2011).

Alfaro and Bartolomé (2017) recognize that in order to prepare mainstream teachers to work with low-income and linguistically minoritized students we have to help teachers develop ideological clarity at the same time that we develop pedagogical knowledge. Many times, teacher education programs are rife with pedagogical tools but do not do the work of imparting ideological clarity to their students in understanding who their students are and how dominant ideologies affect schools and teaching. Bartolomé (2002) explains that ideological clarity refers to the ongoing process that requires individuals to compare and contrast their explanations of the existing social order with those propagated by the dominant society. The expectation is that, by consciously juxtaposing ideologies, teachers will understand if, when, and how their belief systems uncritically reflect those of the dominant society and support unfair and inequitable conditions (p. 168).

Some examples of developing ideological clarity are demystifying deficit views of students of color, unmasking White assimilationist ideas, and clarifying meritocratic ideological positionings (Alfaro, 2008, 2015; Bartolomé, 2008, 2010). We acknowledge that it is not only White teachers that can hold deficit views of low-income and low-SES students. Teachers or literacy leaders who are in the same cultural group as their students can also reproduce deficit views of their students' language and culture. We agree with Alfaro and Bartolomé's (2017) explanation that developing ideological clarity requires ongoing work. We contend that ideologically clear educators begin by taking an inward look to examine themselves and develop self-awareness of privilege and the benefits of dominant ideologies that have either benefited or oppressed them. Ideologically clear educators also engage in critical analysis of themselves in relation to the curriculum. They can name systemic inequities of schooling and they do the work to unlearn harmful practices that maintain dominant ideologies. Finally, ideologically clear educators consider their self-knowledge and the impact this has as they define and create an equitable culture in their classrooms.

Also taking from CRT, we use storytelling, narratives, and *testimonio* to center the experiences of the marginalized in society. *Testimonios* are "intentional first-person oral or written accounts drawing on experiential, self-conscious, narrative practice to articulate an urgent voicing of something to which one bears witness" (Reyes & Rodríguez, 2012, p. 525). *Testimonio "*challenges objectivity by situating the individual in the community with the collective experience marked by marginalization, oppression or resistance" (Delgado-Bernal et al., 2012, p. 363). In this case, we recount our experiences as Latinx instructors, one male, and one female, with over 20 years of experience teaching literacy and reading courses in elementary, high school and higher education. All in all, this article provides insight into how Latinx instructors face, make sense and work through, pedagogically, cases of White resistance to a counter-hegemonic curriculum.

Resistance to Counter-Hegemonic Pedagogies

Literature in education has addressed the resistance of historically marginalized populations against hegemonic practices in schools (Delpit, 1996; Fine, 1991; Freire, 1973; McLaren, 1989), detailing how they resist indoctrination, lack of funding, and unprepared teachers, and school personnel. Less attention has been paid to resistance by White students, or those that align with Whiteness, against the deconstruction of systems of oppression. We agree with Evan-Winters & Twyman Hoff's (2011) claim that this kind of resistance is often unacknowledged and does not receive enough critical analysis, often "presumed to be innocent and non-threatening" (p. 465). At the heart of our study is the kind of resistance we encounter from White or White-aligning candidates and the pedagogical moves we devise to move students' further toward ideological clarity.

King's study (1991) employs the term 'dysconscious racism' to explain White students' internalization of uncritical perceptions, beliefs, and values that maintain unequal racialized power relations; this form of racism is often expressed as guilt and hostility. Tatum (1997), in this vein, offers a developmental model that explains White middle-class students' passive internalization of racial stereotypes. In spaces of higher education, Evan-Winters & Twyman Hoff's (2011) study of pre-service teachers' evaluations of Black instructors in CRT-infused social foundation course describes the kinds of resistance White students use in order to disengage with the topic: silence and labeling the instructors themselves as racist, incompetent, or limited by their racial background. Overall, the authors find that White student evaluations of Black faculty in these courses are a form of structural violence institutionalized in faculty assessment.

Noted author and social scientist Robin DiAngelo (2011) uses the term *white fragility* to describe how Whites often become defensive in discussions of race or when their privilege is pointed out. While Whites are used to discussing other people when talking about race, she argues that the role of Whiteness in race discussion often goes unacknowledged. She offers a full repertoire of ways that White progressives react to conversations about race and the 'moves' they make in order to maintain the status quo, block any kind of engagement towards expanding their worldview and perpetuate daily forms of racial harm (DiAngelo, 2021). Among them, she describes credentialing, the "attempts white progressives make to prove they are not racist" (p. 58), such as denying that they see color (*color deny*) or claiming that they are close to people of color in some way (*color celebrate*) by explaining that they work with a person of color or have a niece or nephew that is a person of color. With "objectifying", the author explains the "white tendency to overemphasize the race of BIPOC people" (p. 64), asking people of color to be the authority on race while not considering White supremacist systemic structures.

DiAngelo's (2011; 2021) points illustrate the ways that the role of Whiteness has been obscured in discussions around education; we have to analyze the way that White progressives, many of them our candidates in a master's program in the state of California, make complex discursive moves to resist going deep into these conversations. Furthermore, she points out how racism has come to be seen as an individual issue; white nationalists are named as racists, but forms of systemic and structural racism – such as segregation, school funding, or policing-are

ignored. Importantly for pedagogical spaces, she refers to the tendency of White individuals to employ moves such as "downplaying their advantages", "feeling unfairly accused", and "silence" (DiAngelo, 2021) that distract from a useful conversation about the role of White people in working to end racism.

The work of Cheryl Matias (2016) has furthered our understanding of White emotionalities and how they impact race relations in teacher education. In particular, we look at her co-authored study (Matias et al., 2014) of White teacher candidates' views of the white imagination. Through survey responses from teacher candidates, the authors found common themes that informed the white imagination. Among them, White teacher candidates were disinvested in racial justice, acknowledged they were white but did not go deeper into its significance, felt guilty, and engaged in hegemonic Whiteness. Alarmingly, the teacher candidates interviewed talked about how "learning about racism in their program reinforced their normative beliefs of how race and racism are a non-white problem" (2014, p. 11), while at the same time not seeing the role of their Whiteness and privilege when it comes to social justice.

While many of these studies theorize resistance and explain some of the shapes it takes, they do not account for or describe how this resistance takes shape in class in pedagogical spaces, or what instructors can do to counter it. Therefore, in this article, we seek to answer the following questions: a) What kind of resistance do students have toward CRT? and b) What kind of pedagogical moves can faculty employ to counter resistance? We highlight and analyze the experiences of two Latinx instructors facing resistance to CRT-influenced courses by analyzing their lived experiences, naming the kind of resistance encountered and then sharing how we dealt with it through pedagogical "moves". By analyzing our *testimonios*, we offer a unique perspective to teachers and teacher educators who are interested in building ideological clarity for their students.

Methodology
Testimonio

As two Latinx scholars working in academia, we rely on *testimonio* as a critical race methodological tool (Perez Huber, 2009) to reveal injustices caused by oppression in our classrooms, challenge dominant Eurocentric ideologies, and validate our own lived experiences (p. 645). Informed by Critical Race Theory, we validate our experiences of encountering Whiteness, and White resistance, in our classes and carve a space outside the "apartheid of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002) that is usually embedded in the production of knowledge. Doing so, we testify about our teaching practices as we create lesson plans, teach in zoom sessions, interact with students, and review assignments. We offer these *testimonios* as a narrative (see findings) that allows us to name and describe how Whiteness plays out in pedagogical spaces.

Testimonio is an intentional "first-person oral or written accounts drawing on experiential, self-conscious, narrative practice to articulate an urgent voicing of something to which one bears witness" (Reyes & Rodríguez, 2012, p. 525). By using different forms of texts narrative, letters,

journals, poetry, song lyrics, video, performance, cultural boxes, or audio, *testimonio* recover *papelitos guardados* or previous experiences otherwise silenced or untold to name issues or events to inform others, raise critical consciousness (Freire, 1973), and inspire corrective action. This makes *testimonios* different from oral histories, autobiographies, and descriptive discourse because the *testimoniante* (participant) takes part in a critical reflection on their personal experience within particular sociopolitical realities and engages its audience to "understand and establish a sense of solidarity as the first step toward social change" (Delgado-Bernal et al., 2012).

Testimonio has a long and varied history originating with liberationist roots in Latin America and it is both a methodology and a pedagogy (Delgado-Bernal et al., 2012). As a methodology, *testimonio* discloses tensions, contradictions, and possibilities for investigating how research is used to uncover and understand inequities in a particular context (Huante-Tzintzun, 2020). Chicanx activists, for example, use *testimonio* to document the lived experiences of Chicanx/Latinx communities in the US to express and document their experiences with marginalization resulting from race, gender, and sexuality (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Similarly, education scholars and authors use *testimonio* as a pedagogy to document, give voice to, and address issues of inequity in the field of education (Delgado-Bernal et al., 2012; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012) by contesting "what" counts as knowledge and "whose" knowledge counts (Delgado-Bernal & Villapando, 2002). *Testimonio* pedagogy is a communal process of teaching and learning because it "legitimizes organic knowledge(s) and an organic method of merging theory and practice" (El Ashmawi et al., 2018). For example, Welborn and Lindsey (2020) investigated the experiences of school leaders' journey to become a culturally proficient district. Their case study revealed that implementing a Cultural Proficiency Framework which assesses cultural knowledge of the community, values diversity, and institutionalizes cultural knowledge, amongst other essential elements, caused a shift in the school district's leadership and teachers from a deficit-based to an asset-based mindset about their students. In this article, we use *testimonio* as a methodology, but also as a method to collect and analyze our experiences.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously during this study. Our *testimonios* of our experiences with student resistance is our data. We shared our testimonios with each other, read them individually, and discussed our experiences to analyze our data and find common themes. Thus, our data collection and analysis occurred in four stages: (i) first instance data collection; (ii) preliminary collaborative data analysis; (iii), subsequent data collection; and (iv) final collaborative data analysis.

(i) First instance of Data Collection

This study was born out of conversations between the authors at the end of a department meeting when both of us were interested in talking about the experiences of our students in the program. One of us commented on the level of resistance posed by some students in the class, and a longer conversation ensued about how we tackled integrating CRT themes in our classes. Since

then, we convened regularly over *virtual pláticas*. Fierros and Delgado-Bernal (2016) define *pláticas* as a "practice that develops from a goal to honor researchers' and research participants' epistemological position" (p. 107). *Pláticas* includes the sharing of ideas, experiences and stories, and relationship building that requires openness and vulnerability (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2008). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we took these definitions and applied them in a virtual setting. Our weekly *virtual pláticas* began by sharing our pedagogical practices, planning, and assessing student work. As these progressed, we shared experiences of particular students who were resisting the material in different ways and decided to document these experiences of student resistance in a methodical way. We agreed to use *testimonio* as a method to give voice to our lived experiences and shared a folder on Google Drive to house our testimonios.

(ii) Preliminary Collaborative Data Analysis

We organized weekly meetings using Zoom to discuss our experiences. Before our meetings, we agreed to read each other's *testimonio* and make comments about any similarities we found. We also asked each other questions using the comment feature in Google. During our *virtual pláticas*, we reviewed our comments and began a line-by-line descriptive coding of our experiences (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Each week, we continued to collect our data, read each other's *testimonios*, and make comments that would be discussed during our *virtual pláticas* until we found saturation. This approach helped us create focused codes of the emergent categories we were finding around the types of resistance we were experiencing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). We started to name some of these instances as silence, disengaging, opposition, seeing learning experiences as irrelevant, etc. This level of analysis validated our own experiences and showed us we were not alone in noticing these patterns.

(iii) Subsequent Data Collection

As we continued to collect and analyze our data using the focused codes we found, we decided to use a critical race grounded theory approach (Malagón, Pérez-Huber, & Velez, 2009) that allowed us to simultaneously analyze the data and advance theory development, strategies primarily used in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967). Analyzing what these specific patterns meant and examining the conditions or context in which these patterns were emerging led us to compare and name our observations of how students remove themselves from the class in order to oppose reflecting on their privilege. We found instances of this behavior in the literature (DiAngelo, 2021), but not in pedagogical spaces. Thus, we named and described this behavior as 'self-removal' as our theoretical code and decided to further explore it in our *testimonios*.
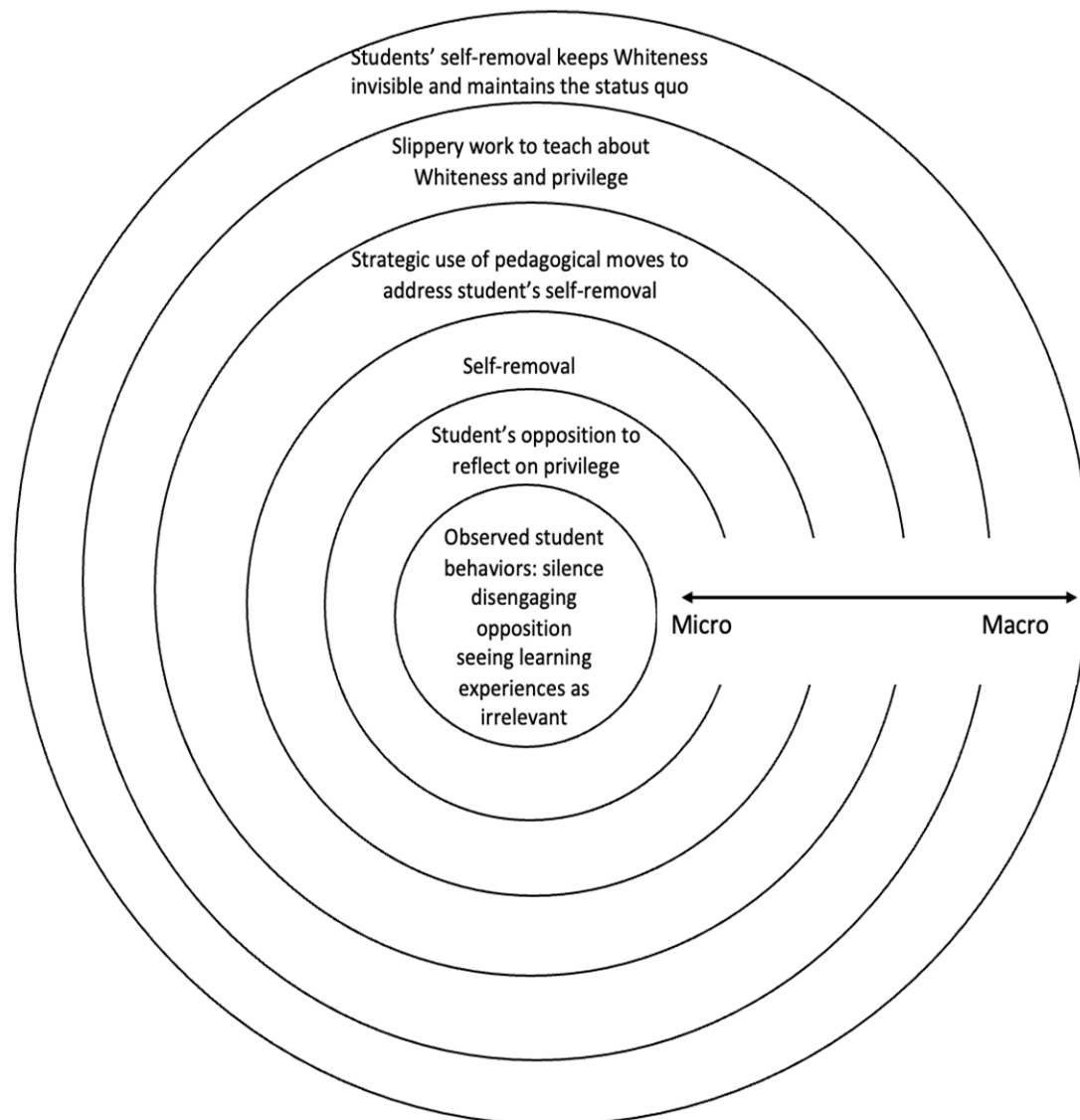
(iv) Final Collaborative Analysis

We continued to write our *testimonios* to dive deeper into the kinds of self-removal as a form of students' resistance, implicit and explicit, that we found in our classes. Our *testimonios* began to function as memo writing and kept us involved in our analysis as well as accountable to

one another, checking ourselves individually and collectively for our own biases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During our *virtual pláticas* we asked each other critical questions and recounted events in our classrooms to closely examine our students acts of self-removal and continue to draw upon critical race grounded theory (Malagon et al., 2009), we also reflected on the kind of strategic pedagogical moves we made to counter the resistance we were experiencing.We created a conditional matrix to visually contextualize and make links between the intra-personal (micro-level) and the social (macro-level) dimensions of our data (see Figure 1 below). The matrix helped us examine and understand students' actions, interactions, and emotions, as well as the consequences of their behavior toward our courses. This led us to identify students' behaviors of silence, disengagement, and seeing the learning experiences we provided as irrelevant, as micro dimensions of opposition to reflect on their privilege, which also led us to name these behaviors as acts of self-removal and deflection. The visual matrix also helped us clarify the relationships between the students' behaviors we observed and the pedagogical moves we strategically selected to counter said behaviors. This process required a continuous inquiry of our data that prompted us to continuously ask: What is happening here? This iterative process helped us capture the macro dimensions of these interactions.

Figure 1

Conditional Matrix: The Micro and Macro Dimensions of Students' Resistance

Students' self-removal keeps Whiteness invisible and maintains the status quo

Slippery work to teach about Whiteness and privilege

Strategic use of pedagogical moves to address student's self-removal

Self-removal

Student's opposition to reflect on privilege

Observed student behaviors: silence disengaging opposition seeing learning experiences as irrelevant

Micro   Macro

Over the next few months, we continued our dialogue and started construing this article. In this way, our *testimonios* led the trajectory of our research process and our abductive mode of data analysis guided us to theorize this pattern of self-removal and deflection that White students engage in to maintain their privilege and Whiteness invisible (see findings). We categorized the kinds of resistance we found and identified the kind of pedagogical moves we used, referencing the literature on some and creating our own when we did not find it elsewhere. Finally, we chose to highlight the examples that had a common thematic element, favoring cases where the resistance from students was pronounced and long-term.

Findings

As Latinx professors, we use *testimonio* to examine our teaching experiences and bear witness to the White-middle class students' resistance toward Critical Race Theory and anti-hegemonic curriculum. Using critical race grounded theory led to an iterative analysis of our *testimonios,* which helped us identify how students were responding to the material in our courses; abductively, we found common themes of resistance. By naming students' resistance, our *testimonios* also led us to reflect upon the pedagogical moves we selected to address how students were resisting the curriculum and move them toward ideological clarity. Our analysis also revealed that our pedagogical moves were met with new kinds of resistance, leading us to theorize that teaching about Whiteness and privilege is "slippery work." When students resist and 'slip' away from engaging in critical reflection about Whiteness, keeps their privilege invisible and maintains the status quo.

We organize our findings by sharing our positionalities. We include our individual *testimonios* and our analysis of our *testimonios* to highlight the micro and macro dimensions of students' resistance. Following our analysis, we discuss the implications of our findings for teacher preparation programs and call attention to exploring in-depth White privilege, Whiteness, and White normativity when discussing dominant ideologies and how these play out pedagogically.

Julián

My teaching practice is guided by my experience as a bilingual, first-generation Latino immigrant who spent fourteen (14) years navigating life in the United States as undocumented. In many other aspects of life in the United States I encounter privilege: being predominantly raced either as White, mixed or White Latino by other people, as a male, able-bodied and from a middle-class background. In the White spaces in the United States, however, I feel like a foreigner. Whether it is the schools or universities where I have taught, I have an outsider perspective on Whiteness and the way it takes shape in the United States. This perspective has shaped the way I see my work as an educator and how I strive to name and make Whiteness visible in my work. *"My upbringing is very boring…" and other resistances in Julián's class*

We start the semester with a reflection on our own positionality in society regarding race, language, and social class in education. I have assigned a written reflection for students to "*give us an introduction on your own upbringing in relation to socio-cultural, economic and linguistic factors.*" I have fielded a few emails from students who share with me that "*[they] didn't have any obstacles to overcome,*" or that they grew up in an English-speaking community, so they do not have much to report. One of them mentions that their "*sociocultural, economic, and linguistic factors in my childhood seem very boring…*" I recognize these messages immediately as coming from students that have identified as monolingual, monocultural White students. I respond that I am not expecting that they have overcome obstacles in the past and that this exercise is not a judgment on whether their life experiences are boring or not. In doing so, I make sure to talk about Whiteness, a term they might not have heard very often, especially linked to themselves. I point them toward articles and examples from our course that critically reflect on Whiteness, asking

them to consult the McIntosh (2003) article on White and Male Privilege, and Candace Kuby's (2013) own example of an auto-ethnography of a White person.

I am reading the first draft of the assignment I described above. I find that one student is still avoiding the assignment's directions. Instead of reflecting on their own upbringing, culture, language practices and socio-economic situation, they are writing about the experiences of an Asian-American friend and two of the characters in the book we are reading. They are avoiding talking about themselves. As I craft my feedback, I remind them of the assignment, but I also want to see if they can now recognize this behavior as them resisting this assignment. "*This auto-ethnography is yours, not your friends' or [the characters in the book]. There will be a chance to engage with the characters of the book in the future, but this assignment is about your own experiences. If writing about your own experiences makes you uncomfortable or you feel you have nothing to say, I would go deeper into this. Why is this? Maybe you can use that space to delve deeper into White Privilege (McIntosh, 2003), or White Normativity (Kuby, 2013)?*" As I write the last two sentences, I wonder if I should schedule a Zoom meeting with the student, since this may be something better explained in person.

We have our second synchronous Zoom meeting. For today, students have read Peggy McIntosh's list of statements that help students reflect on the advantages that White and males take for granted from their gender or racial identities ("White and Male Privilege," 2003). We discuss the article's implications and engage in a synchronous "privilege walk" to help them further reflect on their own privileges and oppressions. In this exercise, students respond to nearly fifty (50) statements such as '*Have you had to take on a job because someone in your family was either sick or fired due to COVID-19?*', or '*Have you been followed while shopping in a store*'? With each yes, the quiz moves them a step forward. I have also added statements relating to social class, ethnicity, colorism, language, and ableism. The idea is that they can quantify for themselves the areas where they have privilege and where they do not. The goal of the exercise is for students to reflect deeply and intersectional about everyday situations where they may experience privilege or oppressions.

After students complete the walk, I have them discuss some takeaways in groups for fifteen minutes: *What was their experience doing the quiz? What did they learn about themselves? How did it make them feel?* I ask them to list two areas of privilege and two areas where they experienced oppression. Next, we come back to the class discussion for students to share. Class discussion begins with two students of color recognizing privilege in themselves and stating areas of their lives where they experienced oppression. White students are usually the first to share in class discussions, but none have shared today. I allow a significant wait time so that I give an opportunity for as many students to share as possible. Pedagogically, I feel this is an important moment for all students to engage in self-reflection because it will help them recognize their own identities as teachers. Still, there is no participation from White students.

In order to encourage participation, I model my own responses to these questions, making connections to my week 1 presentations about my own positionality as a middle-class Latino male, who can be raced as White, and whose experiences being undocumented opened my eyes to

oppression. After my share, a White male student raises their hand to share and starts talking about his own students' experiences of being raced. After he finishes sharing, I thank him for sharing and clarify that we are talking about our own experiences with privilege and oppression, not others. We are keeping the focus on ourselves. Again, two more students of color share their experiences of privilege and oppression, while White students remain silent. Next, and in order to have everyone participate, I decide to implement a written reflection so that everyone engages in this reflection.

For the next week, students are asked to reflect on their own privileges and oppressions from an intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 1995), using the same discussion questions. As I read the responses from White students, I cannot help but think that many of them do not engage honestly with the assignment. Some comment about how bad they feel about having these privileges, some downplay their privilege and talk about personal struggles related to divorce and family separation. One student talks about not really wanting these privileges. Another student downplays the role of race, arguing that negative racial dynamics are not so prevalent in California.

I employ various pedagogical moves through the first weeks of class in order to have students reflect honestly about their raced position in society. When I sense an instance of self-removal and deflection, I attempt to <u>reframe</u> the interaction towards seeing and reflecting critically on their White culture. I do this by reminding them of the assignment directions and signaling examples in our literature of White intellectuals who have themselves reflected on their race and privilege. This is a strategic move that lets the students know that it is not only me, the instructor, who is asking them to do this, but it is also something that key figures in the field have done in the past. During instances of silence and when students are downplaying their advantages, it is important to find alternative ways to have them engage in this much needed self-reflection. When doing sessions synchronously, I make sure to use enough <u>wait time</u> to encourage students to participate in these uncomfortable and awkward conversations. Letting minutes go by without anyone saying anything in a class is certainly uncomfortable, but I remind them these topics and issues are not comfortable and that we have to get away from our comfort zones in order to make progress. One valuable pedagogical move during instances of continued resistance is to point out to students explicitly when they are resisting these concepts (recognizing their own resistance). Thus, I will make a point of <u>naming self-removal and deflection</u> and provide examples of these moves, asking students to consider why they are resisting the assignment. Whatever shape it takes, these pedagogical moves are intended to stop students "slipping away" from doing the counterintuitive work of deconstructing Whiteness and privilege in society.

Analysis of Julián's Testimonio - The Slippery Work of Addressing Whiteness and Privilege

In this sequence, we can see a variety of techniques that White students employ in the class to resist reflecting on their own privilege and naming their own race and culture. The first kind of resistance we call "self-removal": when students remove themselves from the assignment and reflection immediately by saying they do not have enough to report, that their experiences were "normal," or "boring." In some instances, they will share that they did not have obstacles to

overcome, assuming that I, the instructor, am looking for a narrative with obstacles and challenges in their upbringing.

Students also engage in what we call "deflecting," or talking about somebody else's experience instead of focusing on their own. It is common for teachers to talk about their students' experiences in order not to talk about themselves, as did the student in the Zoom session and the student who wrote about the experiences of an Asian-American friend and the characters of the book instead of her own.

Silence is another technique that students use. DiAngelo (2021) calls attention to how complex conversations about race and inequality are in the United States, where people are so careful about making a mistake or offending someone that they end up "engaging disingenuously" (p. 103). As most Americans have internalized cultural values of fairness and justice for all, while at the same time "breathing the smog of racial biases and stereotypes [...], it leaves many Whites feeling uneasy, uncomfortable (Tatum, 1997 in DiAngelo, 2021, p. 103). Thus, they will become silent in discussions about race and Whiteness. While this silence can sometimes mean students are giving space for others to share or aiming not to dominate the conversation, silence can also mean they are not able to engage in the conversation when it is not comfortable, or when it varies from the way they are used to talking about the subject.

In their writing, I observed instances of students downplaying their advantages by commenting on how they wished they did not have those advantages, feeling bad about them or downplaying the role of race and social class by highlighting other markers such as gender or ability. As DiAngelo (2021) points out, this is another technique used by White people that "comes across as disingenuous and not helpful to the cause, [...] and prevents acknowledgement of unearned advantage by providing "victim" social capital" (p.75). By "victim" social capital, the author refers to the discursive moves that White people make to continuously position themselves in the victim role. This kind of work takes away authenticity from anti-racist work and does not let students take full responsibility for and awareness of unearned advantages.

We describe the work of addressing these kinds of resistances as "slippery" to acknowledge what White students do in a classroom over the period of many weeks, even after I have implemented many pedagogical moves. It seems "slippery" because we feel, as instructors, that students keep "slipping away" from doing this work. We see these slips as a strategy, conscious or unconscious, to avoid talking about Whiteness and privilege. Despite numerous attempts to make Whiteness visible in the course, the students keep "slipping away" from confronting their own racial positions and privileges in a direct and honest manner.

This kind of resistance reveals a set of assumptions from White middle-class students that are worth exploring. It signals that even though we have reflected on White privilege (McIntosh, 2003), given examples of it, and talked about its connection to education, White students still have trouble "seeing" their own Whiteness, "seeing" their privilege and understanding the limitations that it has given them to become ideologically literate. Even though they do not have trouble seeing people of color as raced individuals, they continue to see themselves as "normal," "boring," as "having no culture," as individuals who are "race neutral" and not part of the United States racial

order. This positioning signifies that for White students, ideologies of meritocracy and colorblindness have a stronghold in how they see themselves in society, making it difficult for them, as teachers, to reflect on their own raced and classed status in society. Importantly, it blocks them from acknowledging structural advantages in the major institutions in this country.

These resistances also show that when White students see their upbringing as "boring," they assume the instructor is looking for students to describe challenges and suffering in education in order to get a good grade. This is problematic at many levels, since it points to the fact that the students equate the "problem" in education as one concerning students of color or low-income students, not themselves. They have internalized that students of color are the ones that need help, but do not see themselves as part of the problem. They do not see that White privilege and social class entitlement are barriers to becoming a qualified teacher, or understand that a monolingual, ethnocentric and colorblind philosophy is an obstacle to being an educator. White students both see their dominance as "non-existing and as the natural deserving order… the self-deceived premise that one's power is acquired by being deserved and has no machinery of enforcement" (Schulman, 2013, p. 27). This quote highlights a key issue: students find it difficult to see their unearned advantages and at the same time see themselves as superior because of their advantages. Importantly, this position justifies that they do not see anything in themselves that needs to change, stunts their ideological development, and presents great challenges for instructors working to have deeper conversations and impact.

Madeleine

My focus, as a teacher educator, is to prepare K-12 teachers to engage in critical thinking and self-reflection to find and stay in spaces that bring dissonance to how they experience the world and to search for answers that uphold justice and equity. I recognize that as an able-bodied, middle-class, light-skinned, and biliterate Latina, I experience daily advantages and privileges across various spaces that afford me many benefits. I also acknowledge that these advantages are not available to everyone. Having worked alongside K-12 teachers in varied classroom settings (e.g., public, private, juvenile hall), I have witnessed watered-down curricula taught to students of color and have heard deficit-laden comments about students who look like me and who's potential and talent are waiting to be uncovered. This is what motivates me to include CRT in my courses. I acknowledge that having colleagues as partners in this effort makes a difference in *how* we define what it means to be equity literate, *what* it looks like to be ideologically clear, and *why* we use these fundamental practices to prepare effective teachers.

Resistance to redress the hidden curriculum in Madeleine's class

Today, I teach about the hidden curriculum. Since I have experienced some students feeling discomfort and resistance when learning about this topic, I decided to assign Chimamanda Adichie's TED talk "The Danger of a Single Story." I select this TED talk because Adichie eloquently explains that single stories are created by those who are in power. She warns us about believing a single story of a person or a culture because these shape misinformed ideas and create

identities for others based on stereotypes. This talk will help me foreground the consequences of the hidden curriculum.

At the beginning of the semester, we all agree to keep our cameras turned on to get to know one another and to build a positive community in a virtual setting. Therefore, I find it strange when a student logs in and after we greet each other, immediately turns off their camera upon seeing my title slide: The Hidden Curriculum. I remind the class to turn on their cameras, the student tells me that their camera stopped working. I suggest logging out and logging back in; the student does this, but their camera is still turned off. I think that perhaps this is a technical issue, and I begin class.

I discuss the purpose and impact of curricula on student learning and share the intentionality behind my course design. I explain that during the first four weeks of the semester we read specific articles and participated in discussion boards to define our role as literacy teachers– to provide access to the tools of knowledge and teach the critical thinking required to navigate and make meaning of a specific content (Moje, 2007). I emphasize "tools of knowledge" and "critical thinking" as keywords and I highlight these on my slide. I explain that as literacy teachers, we need to teach our students critical thinking skills. Students nod their heads in agreement. I continue by referencing our readings and discussion from week 2. I remind students that culturally relevant teachers do three things: 1) they know how to vet the curriculum; 2) they ask what the curriculum is supposed to accomplish; and 3) they teach students to critique the curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2008). Students continue to nod their heads in agreement.

Now that I have activated their prior knowledge, I divide the class into breakout groups made up of three students to ensure everyone has sufficient time to discuss their takeaways from Adichie's TED talk. I want students to reflect upon Adichie's warning about single stories in the curriculum and provide these guiding questions: *What are the parallels between single stories about certain student populations and deficits points of view?* and *Are there any single stories that you know and that you need to reject, counter and disrupt?* In the breakout rooms, students' conversations are rich with reflections about single stories, stereotypes, lack of knowledge of other cultures, prejudice, etc. When the students return to the main room, the conversation is equally rich and filled with takeaways about the power of stories. Students discuss the importance of diverse perspectives and experiences that are affirming and that value different cultures. Some students bring up the importance of stories about people of color that celebrate joy as opposed to stories that perpetuate stereotypes.

I want to anchor these ideas and proceed to summarize the class's comments. I state, *"We need to teach our students counter-narratives and not buy into the single stories of our curriculum."* Then, the student who had their camera turned off joins the conversation and states that they have been teaching "*for a very long time, a few decades*" and that we "*need to be realistic about other constraints*" like parents becoming upset if the curriculum is changed. I think to myself, is it not realistic to teach about counter-narratives? Adichie's talk was the precursor to the overall content of the class. I have yet to teach about the hidden curriculum, and I wonder if this is the reason their camera is turned off.

Since this resistance arose earlier in my lesson than I anticipated, I employed several pedagogical moves to counter it. First, I use wait time. I wait for the student to reflect upon their comment and to see if there is anything else they want to add. I also use wait time to physically show the pause the comment gives me and to create a space for the rest of the class to take in what was said: that teaching about counter-narratives is impractical and that parents become upset when this happens. Then, I reframe the learning objectives for the class and restate that teaching students to become critical thinkers and learn how to ask questions is our role as literacy experts. I referenced my first slides from class, and I couple this statement by asking: *As reading teachers, do we need to have courage to teach our students critical thinking? Do we need to have courage to teach them how to ask questions?* I emphasize the word, courage. Then, I ask the student who commented: *Which parents become upset?* And I wait. I want to provide the space for students to think about the weight of that comment. The student does not respond. To further accentuate my reframing, I make the following explicit: *"My goal in this course is to provide you with the tools and resources for you to teach your students how to think critically and learn how to ask questions. Plus, my role as a teacher is to not withhold knowledge from your education. I also prepare you to think critically."* My reframing is intentional. I want to guide students to think about the content of their curricular materials and the decisions we make as teachers.

Now that I have reframed our lesson, I contextualize the hidden nature of the hidden curriculum. I spend time describing four majoritarian stories (Mitchell, 2013) to reinforce the impact of this systemic structure that exists in schooling. I explain the first majoritarian story: *there is no story about race* as an ideology that promotes colorblindness and that neglects systemic racism, White privilege, and White normativity that affects schooling. The second majoritarian story: *difference is deficit* which ascribes to students who are different from White, mono-lingual English speaking, middle class as "problems" that need to be solved, rather than accepting the rich knowledge they bring and the contributions they make to our society. Third, *meritocracy is appropriate*. I explain that this concept is a myth because while meritocracy promotes hard work and perseverance, it overlooks the disparity in resource distribution to students of color. I also refer to the curriculum in schools that privileges certain knowledge and perspectives over others. Finally, I explain *English is ALL that matters,* which only values the English language and stigmatizes other languages. I describe the benefits of being multilingual and explain that by placing the value only on the English language, native languages become unwelcomed. I problematize the use of labels such as English language learner or Limited English Proficient and explain this as an example of deficit ideologies because these terms position multilingual learners according to a "lack" of English proficiency.

While I have always taught about majoritarian stories when I teach the hidden curriculum, I make sure to accentuate how these majoritarian stories are part of a system: the school and that knowing how these function in schooling makes the hidden curriculum visible. I provide many examples of classroom practices that maintain these stories as normative, everyday practices and problematize how we are socialized to accept these as truth. I use a third pedagogical move and provide two guiding questions for students to discuss in their break-out rooms: *1) Have you*

observed or experienced any of these majoritarian stories? and *2) Are any of these majoritarian stories "normalized" in your schools?* I use these questions for students to think critically as they analyze how the hidden curriculum has remained hidden in their schools and normalized in their teaching practice.

After the break-out room discussion, I ask students to share the outcome of their conversations. My goal is to bring the group to a collective analysis of their experiences with majoritarian stories and to situate the permanence of the hidden curriculum. Many students share their own experiences and reflect upon the impact of the hidden curriculum on teachers' ideologies. These comments extend the conversation and work as a second form of <u>reframing</u>. I call this student-reframing. First, students' comments reaffirm that, in schools, we have an instruction gap, not an achievement gap (Milner, 2012). Second, students label the resistance expressed earlier as negative and lacking critical analysis. Students comment that teachers need to engage in critical self-reflection to identify their uninformed beliefs. I recognize this second form of reframing and I reiterate that critical analysis is the work of literacy leaders. I know this is the perfect segue to make a connection to dysconsciousness. I explain that someone is dysconscious when "they do not have a complete analysis of social reality, which does not call into question the status quo, and cannot anticipate or leave any possibility for a change in the status quo" (Joyce, 1991 in Brandon, 2006, p. 199). I also use this quote to address any resistance that was not voiced by other students.

I conclude the class with a final pedagogical move to help students anchor the core concepts of the class. I use <u>concept mapping</u> and ask students to select a word or phrase that represents a takeaway from class. Students type in the chat feature of Zoom: single stories, humanizing pedagogy, hidden curriculum, critical thinking, etc. I introduced the Summarizing Tic-Tac-Toe strategy on a slide deck with a grid with three squares by three squares and I copy students' words onto the grid. Students in small groups select three words either up, down, across, or diagonal, and find the relationships between each word or phrase to create a sentence that summarizes their learning, and which also serves as their call to action. I emphasize that we now have the language to name what has been missing in the curriculum. Before sending the students to the breakout rooms, I <u>ask</u>: "*What is your stance on teaching and learning and your role as a literacy leader?* My goal is to prompt their thinking once again about what they want to do now that they have gained this new knowledge. I want to help them develop new ideas about their teaching practice and in essence, begin to develop ideological clarity. The student who expressed resistance at the beginning of class states wanting to feel "*self-efficacious*" and powerful about what they can change in their classroom. When the assignment to critically analyze a unit from their curriculum is due, the analysis of their curriculum is vague. Some students use bullet points to summarize a lesson plan. I provide feedback and redirect these students to revise their papers. I also ask them to meet with me one-on-one via Zoom to review their analysis.

Analysis of Madeleine's Testimonio - Keeping Whiteness and Privilege Invisible: Self-Removal and Defending the Status Quo

The comment the student made during class serves as an example of the resistance I sometimes experience when I teach about the hidden curriculum, and it tends to come from White, middle-class students. The resistance is usually a self-removal from the conversation or challenging the content in two ways: a lack of substance in their assignments or expressing their opinions during class. When the student keeps their camera turned off, they create a distance between themselves and the content of the lesson. This is a form of self-removal from engaging in the conversation that the curriculum is a system that maintains the status quo that privileges some and not others. Self-removal is also seen in assignment submissions that require students to critically analyze their curriculum. Students, who resist doing this work, submit papers that include a superficial analysis of their curriculum and instead focus the content of their papers on their students' lack of knowledge and experience. Statements such as: "*this story is about a big house and a pool*" or "*this is a picture of a boat and paddle*" and *"my students don't have experience with this and cannot relate*" constitute their analysis of their curricular materials. Another type of resistance is challenging the content of the lesson during class. Most of the time, when students voice their resistance, they situate their comments in the number of years they have been teaching, which calls attention to a "practical knowledge" of sorts that positions White students to dismiss the content as idealistic or impractical.

It is important to critically examine these examples of resistance as they uncover some suppositions about White, middle-class students. Removing themselves from class or submitting superficial work points to students' unwillingness to accept and name schools as the larger structure that perpetuates inequities in the educational opportunities and attainment for students of color. Their disinclination removes White students from challenging the dominant ideologies of the curriculum, White histories, White privilege, and White normativity that are present in school curricular materials.

Critically analyzing the curriculum is a difficult task for White students because it requires them to recognize and accept their role, whether unconscious or not, in the differential education, access, and opportunities afforded to students of color. Accepting curriculum without a critical analysis helps White students "slip away" and in turn, deny the benefits of having their race predominantly represented in curricular materials and the marginalization of single stories maintained through schooling. This denial is a means to dismiss the existence of their positionality and privilege. Their unwillingness to engage in these conversations also helps students "slip away" from examining their biases reflecting an ideology of assimilation that functions in two ways: 1) maintains the social structures of the status quo and, as a result, 2) maintains their privilege as invisible. Referring to parents becoming upset at changing the curriculum also functions as another strategy to "slip away" from taking responsibility to do this work. Parents, in this case, function as an outside source, a buttress that maintains the social order and one that continues to defend the status quo. Finally, this comment also works as a roadblock for others, especially newer teachers, who upon hearing about parents becoming upset may also disengage from committing to self-

reflection of their positionality. Resisting to do this work negates the development of self-knowledge and prevents acquiring the critical consciousness required of an equity literacy leader.

Conclusion

Through our *testimonio,* we analyze the various forms of resistance we experienced from White middle-class students toward CRT and the pedagogical moves we selected to counter their resistance. Using Critical Race Grounded theory (Malagon et al., 2006), we analyzed the micro and macro dimensions of resistance and their implications on the work to develop teachers with ideological clarity. At a micro level, our analysis of our *testimonios* led us to identify and name the forms of student resistance of *deflection, silence,* and *downplaying advantages* to theorize these behaviors as acts of *self-removal*. Students who engage in these behaviors of resistance "remove" themselves from examining and critically reflecting upon Whiteness and privilege.

We also testify about selecting and implementing specific pedagogical moves to counter these behaviors. Yet, chiefly among our analysis, we find that students also resist these moves, or how we counter their acts of self-removal. Thus, helping us theorize that addressing students' resistance is "slippery work." We describe this as 'slippery' because we found that White students resist and react to a pedagogical move with different resistance 'slipping' away from the point of vulnerability toward a space that is familiar and comfortable for them. Students resist and "slip away" from acknowledging their racial positions and the privileges that they afford them in society. This finding also reveals the macro dimension of student resistance: resistance is not a single incident, instead it is continuous, takes many shapes and forms, and is encountered in different spaces. Our ongoing critical analysis and dialogue also led us to acknowledge that pedagogical moves are a response to resistance. Although we carefully crafted our courses, curated readings, and designed specific learning experiences aimed at developing students' ideological clarity, the reactions of White middle-class students are still very problematic. Resistance to these topics is always shifting. This finding is important because teacher educators need to know how to recognize and counter student resistance. They need to be aware of the ways in which White students evade from engaging in topics about White privilege and Whiteness and how these tactics, if not countered, keep Whiteness invisible and maintain the status quo.

We want to acknowledge that the pedagogical moves we described in this article – reframing, wait time, recognizing their resistance, asking questions, and concept mapping – are not novel in teaching spaces, but our teaching context and our selection and use of these practices were strategic. Our intentional use of these "moves" was aimed at helping White students see their Whiteness, acknowledge the myth of meritocracy, the danger of colorblindness, assimilationist, and deficit-laden ideologies–in essence, to become ideologically clear (Bartolomé, 2002) about who they are and how their self-knowledge impacts their teaching decisions and teaching practice.

The work ahead

We bring attention to our lived experiences and highlight these findings because ideology informs pedagogy and developing ideological clarity requires ongoing work (Bartolomé, 2002).

As teacher educators, we recognize our role in the preparation of K-12 teachers. We want to bring attention to teacher educator programs and the need to prepare pre-and in-service teachers to move beyond finding the "right" teaching method to improve the academic achievement of students, particularly students of color (Bartolomé, 2004). When the focus is solely on methods without first defining ideology, Bartolomé argues, is a form of "managing cultural differences while de-emphasizing learning" and this approach makes teachers complicit in maintaining dominant ideologies (Macedo & Bartolome, 2004, pg. 118). Our instruction in teacher preparation programs needs to begin with ideological clarity and move from theory to practice. The examples of student resistance analyzed here are part of a system - a system that maintains hegemonic ideologies invisible and that works within the context of the larger system that perpetuates inequities for students of color. This type of resistance can remain present if ideologies of oppression (e.g., colorblindness, assimilation, meritocracy, deficit-thinking) and how these function in schools are not explicitly taught in teacher preparation programs. By making these visible, we can prepare K-12 teachers to critically analyze their beliefs and understand the impact of these oppressive ideologies on the educational outcomes for students of color. What we are arguing for is an in-depth preparation for those who seek to become teachers. This requires removing the space that 'politeness' takes up around the topics of dominant ideologies, race, White privilege, and White normativity that silences these conversations and learning.

Our recommendations for teacher educators calls for specific action: include readings about ideological clarity, the hidden curriculum, and anti-racist education in their courses. Revise assignments that require students to write about their "philosophy of teaching" to in-depth exploratory assignments that require an examination of ideologies of oppression from an inner and outer perspective: who we are and the social structures of schooling and society. We propose using a set of critical guiding questions, based on Alfaro and Bartolomé's (2017) work, that all educators need to use as they reflect upon their beliefs and how these are enacted in schools. Table 1 below outlines the ideologically clear educators' commitment to consistently ask and answer these questions to acknowledge their role in the education of students of color.

Table 1

Guiding Principles of Ideologically Clear Educators

Ideologically Clear Teachers…	• Reflective Questions that Guide Ideological Clarity
Explore their own biases by centering their own experiences (Self)	• What are my privileges and oppressions? • What is the role of dominant ideologies (e.g., color blindness, assimilation, meritocracy, Whiteness, deficit-laden views, English-only) in justifying inequalities in society? • How have my experiences shaped my response to dominant ideologies? • How have I benefited from structural and systemic oppression? • What kind of resistance have I engaged in when thinking about my own privilege from an intersectional perspective? • How do I keep acknowledging my privileges, biases, and oppressions on a regular basis, acknowledging that this work does not end?
Examine their own biases and experiences in the context of their teaching practice (Self-and-curriculum)	• How do I use dominant ideologies as a lens to critically analyze the curriculum provided by my school? • How do I interrupt dominant ideologies that exist in my curriculum? • How does my self-knowledge and positionality (race, gender, ethnicity, social class, etc.) shape and guide the decisions I make about my instruction? • How often do I reflect upon my teaching practice to uncover any biases I may have?
Create a culture of equity (Self-and-students)	• How do I create an equitable culture in my classroom? • How do I positively represent my students' cultures and identities in my lessons? • How are my students' language repertoires accepted, valued, and used in my lessons? • How does school feel for my students?

Finally, it is important to address that preparing ideological clear teachers requires partnerships amongst colleagues and close collaboration and communication between teacher-educators. One professor alone cannot accomplish this work. Instead, this work requires a collective commitment from teacher educators and teacher preparation programs because developing teachers' ideological clarity is on-going work. Establishing a direct vertical alignment between courses and learning objectives ensures that ideological clarity and dominant ideologies are introduced in one course and revisited and extended in the next course. This type of spiral curriculum prevents students from "slipping away" from doing the work. We argue that teacher preparation programs need to have a stronger and more visible vertical alignment around these topics.

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