BOOK REVIEW

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As Black educators with decades of combined experience in the K-12 education setting, we
appreciate seeing a book depicting the unique obstacles and struggles that teachers of Color face,
and greatly empathize with the stories and experiences provided to serve as counterstories. Kohli
spends a great deal of time attending to the disparities that teachers of Color face in the education
sector, and she delineates tangible ways in which to disrupt the inequities. As such, *Teachers of*

Color: Resisting Racism and Reclaiming Education unapologetically confronts the lack of diversity within the teaching profession, and provides a strong foundation and framework for readers to begin to unpack the intersection of racism and education. Kohli (2021) skillfully weaves the experiences of over thirty teachers of Color to serve as counterstories to the whitewashed assumptions and expectations of teachers of Color in the K-12 public school sector. Kohli (2021) argues that "To understand and address the diversity crisis of the teaching force, it is necessary to move beyond discussions of racial representation" (p. 4). Simply recruiting teachers of Color is not enough. In an attempt to authentically explore the obstacles and barriers that teachers of Color face, Kohli (2021) divides the book into three major categories – racialization, resistance, and reimagination.

Racialization

Identifying racialization as a common experience for teachers of Color, Kohli (2021) critically examines the racial hierarchy embedded in educational systems of practice and unpacks the impact that these systems and expectations have on teachers of Color. Kohli asserts that "To sustain a diverse teaching force, teacher education programs, schools, and districts must first acknowledge the entrenched systems of oppression that make school a hostile place for People of Color" (p. 28). Many of the teachers of Color who contributed their stories to this text detailed accounts of being perceived as a threat, being silenced or shut out, and facing racial microaggressions in the workplace. The disrespect teachers of Color experienced was a common thread in many of the accounts that were shared. When thinking about how to attract and support teachers of Color to the education profession, we must first recognize that "Teachers of Color have been navigating the racial climates of schools since they were students and continue to confront racism in their professional lives" (p. 28). As such, Haddix (2016) poses the question "What does it mean for students of Color to become teachers within contexts largely created for preparing white, English-monolingual teachers?" (p. xiii). Acknowledging the potential harms caused in their K-12 experiences combined with their racialized experiences as educators, we must recognize the impact of a hostile racial climate and the toll it has on teachers of Color.

While "Teachers of Color offer a great deal in realizing a rigorous, culturally sustaining, and humanizing education for students of Color" (Kohli, 2021, p. 13), racism embedded in the educational system and environment often impedes their efforts. Consequently, many teachers of Color shared feelings of isolation, stress, anxiety, and frustration as a result of working in a hostile racial climate. In an attempt to further understand the impact of a hostile racial climate and the toll it has on teachers of Color, Kohli (2021) identifies racial stress and battle fatigue as some of the consequences of being in such environments. To illustrate how racial stress and battle fatigue materialize for teachers of Color, Kohli (2021) expertly infuses the voices and stories of various teachers of Color to provide concrete, real-life examples that serve as counterstories. Additionally, "The counterstories also confirm that the presence of teachers of Color alone does not ensure a healthy racial climate" (Kohli, 2021, p. 71). Despite wanting to disrupt the status quo and teaching

in more culturally sustaining ways, teachers of Color often feel pressured to abandon their pedagogical practices and ideologies, which was the case for all teachers included in this text.

Resistance

Regardless of the struggles and obstacles teachers of Color face entering and remaining in the educator workforce, Kohli (2021) identified "resistance" as a common experience for many teachers of Color. As a means of unpacking what supports the retention of justice-oriented teachers of Color, Kohli (2021) identifies three tools that are foundational to their success. These tools include: racial literacy, communities of resistance, and organizing for change (Kohli, 2021). Recognizing racial literacy as the understanding that racial injustices are real, Kohli (2021) shares the stories and experiences of various teachers of Color who work to dismantle racial injustices to serve as a counterstory. Kohli (2021) found that teachers of Color who persisted with their careers as educators identified developing communities of resistance to be essential to their abilities to "resist oppressive conditions and reclaim their power" (p. 95). In addition to racial literacy and communities of resistance, Kohli (2021) identified organizing for change to be a powerful tool for teachers of Color to utilize when making educational changes within their communities when faced with adversity. The utilization of the aforementioned tools allows teachers of Color to "refuse the dehumanization and cultural disregard of schools, and to collectively fight to reclaim education" (p. 111).

Reimagination

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that racism is a large factor in the racial inequities that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) face; therefore, the ways in which schools have operated must be examined and reimagined. As Kohli (2021) states, "It is essential to consider a life beyond opposition and resistance" (p. 114). Teachers must focus on what they are *fighting for* as opposed to what they are *fighting against* (Kohli, 2021, p. 115). For instance, educators should think about what a racially just classroom and corresponding pedagogies look like to ensure that learning is meaningful and connected to students' lives. "This type of dreaming – of what communities of Color want, need, and deserve for their youth – is foundational to realizing something different and better" (Kohli, 2021, p. 115). By focusing on topics that inspire and uplift, educators can reimagine their classrooms as "holistic, dynamic, creative spaces where students, and they themselves, can heal and grow in multidimensional ways" (Kohli, 2021, p. 130-131). Moreover, teachers of Color must focus on the world of possibility by centering their pedagogical practices around the notion of moving beyond antiracist education to a community of empowerment. An important step towards the reimagined classroom that allows teachers of Color to thrive and dream big is dismantling the racial hierarchy embedded within the structure of many current teacher education programs.

Recommendation

Teachers of Color: Resisting Racism and Reclaiming Education is a necessary and timely addition to the scholarship regarding teacher education. As rhetoric and efforts to recruit more teachers of Color continue to permeate the educational landscape, Kohli (2021) reminds us that simply recruiting teachers of Color for the sole purpose of representation is not enough. The lack of teachers of Color currently in the field of education, in addition to the recruitment and attrition of teachers of Color, is a far more complex issue that deserves the time and attention to fully understand all of its complexities. As such, Kohli (2021), elegantly weaves research and personal accounts together for a solid glimpse into the experiences of teachers of Color in a predominantly white profession. The infusion of the stories and experiences of teachers of Color throughout the book, serving as counterstories, is a critical component of the text because it works to disrupt assumptions and beliefs commonly held about the experiences of teachers of Color. As Milner and Howard (2004) argue, counterstories provide space for us to "reinterpret, disrupt, or to interrupt pervasive discourses that may paint communities and people, particularly communities and people of color, in grim, dismal ways" (Kohli, 2021, p. 18).

As a standalone, the text is a necessary resource for educators, administrators, and teacher educators as it dives into lived experiences of teachers of Color. Not only did the text speak to the injustices that teachers of Color experience daily, but it also provided actionable steps that educators can take to create real change. For those looking for more direction in ways to support teachers of Color, we suggest pairing this text with *Cultivating Racial and Linguistic Diversity in Literacy Teacher Education: Teachers Like Me*. Like *Teachers of Color*, *Teachers Like Me* acknowledges that the field of education is a white, English-monolingual, middle-class-dominated space. As such, the text explores the ways in which preservice and practicing teachers of Color navigate predominantly white spaces while creating powerful arguments for support, inclusion, and change. Each of these texts, as standalones or paired together, work to offer valuable insights and to deepen readers' understandings of the experiences and obstacles teachers of Color face entering and/or remaining in the education workforce.

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