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Fight the Powers That Be: Challenging White Supremacy Through the Cultivation of Cultural Humility Amongst Preservice and Practicing Educators

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Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences
June, 2019

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INTRODUCTION

As a result of globalization, the United States is more diverse than ever, with Students of Color[1] predicted to be in the majority in public schools by the year 2035 (Bell, 2002). However, the problem is that about 90% of teachers are white, middle-class, and monolingual English speakers who often come to the classroom without sufficient training in a culturally responsive, social-justice oriented approach to teaching. This is also true of those in other leadership positions like principals and superintendents (Sleeter, 2016). This suggests that instructional decisions, policies and practices reflect systems of oppression that benefit white children and families. Additionally, a majority of preparation programs continue to turn out roughly 80% white cohorts of teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Thus, there are many forces at play when discussing the maintenance of white supremacy in K-12 schools. When the term "white supremacy" is mentioned, it often invokes images of Neo-Nazis or men in white hoods burning crosses. However, this thesis seeks to reframe the traditional view of white supremacy, to suggest that it often presents itself in more nuanced, subtle ways. Race scholars use the term to capture the "pervasiveness, magnitude, and normalcy of white privilege, dominance, and assumed superiority" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 143). White supremacy is reflected in the various ways that white privilege and power combine to oppress Communities of Color. This worldview, which seeks to affirm the superiority of white people over racial minorities, became firmly established in this nation through the conquest, mass murder, enslavement, language erasure, and dehumanization of

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[1] Within this paper, I chose to capitalize "Black" and "People/Students of Color", while keeping terms such as "white," "whiteness," and "white supremacy," lowercased, in order demonstrate respect for traditionally marginalized communities. One could claim that "equality" would elicit that both Black and white are capitalized, but until equality exists in our society, language should be used as a tool to reclaim power for minority groups.

African and Native people by the white Europeans who colonized the United States (Keisch & Scott, 2015). Because the privileges associated with "whiteness" endure and adapt over time, they become invisible to many of those who directly benefit from racist systems (The Aspen Institute, 2017). The issue of racism in schools, combined with a lack of cultural and linguistic awareness amongst the predominantly white populous of preservice and practicing educators, led me to the question: *How can we use teacher preparation and professional development to move towards the eradication of racism in schools and effectively educate our students to be part of the global citizenry?*

Due to the diversification of the student body, there has arisen a desire amongst K-12 schools to be able to identify themselves as "culturally competent." Cultural competence tends to focus on creating an environment where practitioners are more comfortable interacting with those from other cultures, so that they can provide a higher quality of care. It does not, however, ask them to be self-aware of power differentials or the assumptions they are bringing with them to the work environment (Purnell, 2005). By relying on cultural competence as a guide, practitioners can default to practices that inadvertently reinforce the racist status quo (Jani et al., 2011). If teachers do not address the presence of racism in their classrooms and schools, it is unlikely that a transformative agenda to prepare students to be active global citizens will emerge, especially for Students of Color. Recognizing the potential short-comings of cultural competence, a concept known as *cultural humility* emerged from within the medical education field. It was developed by two physicians who are both Women of Color. The three main tenets of cultural humility are: 1) a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique, 2) a desire to fix power imbalances, and 3) a dedication to developing partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Cultural humility asks for more than just passive self-

reflection, it insists on *action*. However, developing cultural humility is not a simple process – it requires a change in overall perspective and way of life (Foronda et al., 2016).

Whereas cultural competence addresses individual viewpoints, cultural humility is focused on individual *and* systemic forms of racism. Over two decades after its creation, cultural humility has still not gained the same recognition as its counterpart, especially in the field of teacher education. Because of its potential to serve as a foundation from which to shift our thinking about cultural competence within education and provide a deeper understanding to our work around the globe (Hockett et al., 2012), there needs to be an increase in research on the topic. This thesis argues that cultivating cultural humility amongst preservice and practicing educators would challenge the racist underpinnings of this nation's K-12 public school system, help prepare students for global citizenry, and result in the empowerment of Students of Color.

METHODOLOGY

Before discussing the process I used to reach my conclusions, it is crucial that I position myself in this work. I am a white, middle-class, cis-gender female who was born in the United States. As such, I come to this discussion with my own set of privileges. Holding these various dominant identities means that I first had to address my own implicit biases that may have affected my research process. I did this by writing down different examples of the ways in which I myself have perpetuated or benefited from the existence of white supremacy. I was then able to compare these to the examples I found in the literature. I was exposed to the concept of cultural humility through an education class at my university. During my time in this course, I noted that the term was not just introduced once and then never revisited, but rather was embedded within the curriculum. This allowed for deep reflection on the part of the student body, especially for those who hold racially privileged positions. This topic of using cultural humility as a way to eradicate

racism and foster a global citizenry of students is important to me because I believe that school should be a place where real learning takes place. This means expanding beyond the racist Euro-centric curriculum that silences Voices of Color. It requires a complete restructuring of the way that teachers are educated for this type of work. Based upon my research, I believe once teachers have been introduced to the concept of cultural humility, it will be easier for them to inspire empathy and global-thinking amongst their student body, especially for Students of Color.

This thesis proposes a viable solution for dismantling the oppressive pedagogy of the K-12 education system, through a critical analysis of current literature. The method used was a critical literature review, in which existing research on cultural humility and cultural competence were discussed (Jesson & Lacey, 2006). When investigating this topic, it was also necessary to explore literature on the present-day manifestations of racism in schools. Over sixty sources were analyzed for this critical literature review, spanning from 1991 to 2018. This includes literature written before the emergence of the cultural humility model. Some of the sources included articles and books that discussed Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT was used as a lens to examine racism in education. Moreover, it supports the argument that cultural humility is preferable to cultural competence, which does not address structural racism. This particular framework was chosen because it identifies that power structures are based on white privilege and white supremacy. One key aspect of cultural humility is dedicated to fixing these power imbalances. Using CRT as a framework for analyzing the benefits of cultural humility, also helps us better understand the problem and then produce solutions that will have significant relevance for Students of Color.

From my analysis of the literature, the explicit connection between cultural humility and CRT has not been made before. Since this thesis is arguing for the integration of cultural humility into teacher preparation and professional development, it was important to first outline the

strengths and limitations of the current model: developing cultural competence. Then, cultural humility is reintroduced as a holistic solution to the limitations of cultural competence in teacher preparation and education. Although cultural humility has not been explored in depth within the education field, I found five articles that linked the concept with teacher preparation. I critically assessed the content of these five articles to determine the strengths and limitations of these empirical studies examining cultural humility in teacher preparation. The final section focuses on the empirical, practical, and global implications of my findings.

RACISM IN SCHOOLS

Like many nations, the United States was founded through the destructive acts of colonization and slavery, which in turn, shaped all of its institutions. The United States and its burgeoning economy relied on this socially-constructed hierarchy that deemed the lives of Black and Brown people disposable (Keisch & Scott, 2015). This led to "whiteness" being upheld as the dominant frame, while generations of Indigenous and enslaved peoples suffered at the hands of laws that were created to prevent their forward progress in society (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). American Indian boarding schools tore children away from their families and stripped them of their language and cultural traditions. Slavery made it illegal to teach a slave to read and relegated them to the role of property (Keisch & Scott, 2015). Over the past few decades, in decisions like *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the U.S. public school system seems to have made significant progress towards racial equity. However, due to re-districting and gentrification, schools are actually more segregated than they were before the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Mullins, 2013; Rothstein, 2013; Strauss, 2014). This is important because, as mentioned earlier, a majority of teachers and administrators are white. Although a school may have a diverse student body, the individuals educating children are often

times coming from a privileged dominant position. In addition, the current desegregation practices that do exist require children of color to assimilate to and model the behaviors, values and appearances of middle-class white America (Comissiong, 2009). Even if mandates are followed, the threat of structural racism continues and equality of outcomes remain elusive.

The U.S. educational system, in particular, is one of the most unequal in the industrialized world. The learning opportunities that students receive, vary dramatically in relation to economic status and race. Whereas European and Asian nations fund schools centrally and equally, the wealthiest 10% of school districts in the United States spend nearly 10 times more than the poorest 10% (Bell, 2002). As Judge Robert L. Carter (1968), the man who presented part of the oral argument in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, explains, "Few in the country, Black or white, understood in 1954 that racial segregation was merely a symptom, not the disease; that the real sickness is that our society in all its manifestations is geared to the maintenance of white superiority" (Crenshaw, 1995, p. 247). The same white supremacist ideals that shaped our schools in the mid 20th century, are still very alive today. They just tend to present themselves in more nuanced, covert ways – a concept coined as "new racism" (Kohli et al., 2017). More obvious and violent manifestations of racism, like the 2015 video of a white security guard slamming a young Black girl to the ground for texting in class, also bring to light the subtler examples of racism which have been part of schools since the inception of the U.S. educational system (Kohli et al., 2017). For example, Wayne Au (2016) argues that high-stakes, standardized testing policies like No Child Left Behind and Race to the top, increase racism by centering on individual achievement without any structural analysis. Masked as an accountability narrative for achieving racial equality in schools, corporate-driven testing practices actually affirm racial hierarchies of student success (Au, 2016). Furthermore, the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI)

demonstrated that teachers often do not have the training needed to create a positive, inclusive environment for students, so they instead resort to degrading treatment of certain groups. NESRI's report documented that higher rates of discipline are associated with the racial and ethnic background of the students (Brittain & Kozlak, 2007). These teachers may believe that they are "keeping the order", but they are really just acting on their prejudices. Sometimes, white supremacy presents itself as benevolent. White teacher racism is often upheld through colorblind or race-neutral approaches to their interactions with Students of Color (Chandler, 2009; Stoll, 2014). Although masked in equity discourse, colorblind ideology (i.e. the idea that one "does not see race") actually erases the contemporary, lived, and systemic oppression of Students of Color (Kohli et al., 2017). For many educators, it may feel uncomfortable to talk about past and present examples of racism in their classrooms. We can certainly acknowledge the difficulty of tackling this subject with an audience of young people, but it does not compare to the daily discomfort that Students of Color feel within an education system that is centered on whiteness and designed to maintain white supremacy. Although Students of Color are holders and creators of knowledge, they often feel as if their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal educational settings (Bernal, 2002). This unrelenting devaluation of Students of Color often results in internalized racial oppression. This term describes the way in which, over time and as a result of the negative representation or invisibility of their race, a Person of Color comes to believe that they are less valuable. This feeling sometimes manifests in that young person acting out through self-defeating behaviors, which white teachers and faculty use to support their misconceptions of students of color as "more difficult" (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017). So, when white educators attempt to manipulate students with their myths of meritocracy and colorblindness, it is crucial to provide counter-narratives that emphasize the

culturally and systemically embedded factors that keep Communities of Color oppressed within this country's institutions, while also recognizing the many assets that Students of Color bring to the classroom, such as linguistic and aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005).

CRITICAL RACE THEORY: A LENS

Having demonstrated the existence of white supremacy in this nation's K-12 education system, a framework is needed to help us better understand the effects of teacher racism and the transformative potential of cultural humility as a tool to combat it. Critical Race Theory (CRT) sprang up in the mid-1970s with the early work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman, both of whom were deeply distressed over the slow pace of racial reform in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Because of its major tenets, it serves as an excellent lens for examining racism in schools (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001)

The four main tenets are:

1. A belief in the social construction of race (i.e. the "social construction" thesis)

2. Critique of liberalism (i.e. embrace of colorblindness)

3. Interest convergence

4. Storytelling/Counterstorytelling (*experiential knowledge*)

This section will discuss these four main tenets of CRT with examples from education to illustrate.

CRT focuses on changing the relationship between race and power, suggesting that white supremacy is maintained over time and that racism is an ordinary, everyday part of our systems (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Critical Race Theory analyzes law and legal traditions through the history and lived experiences of racial minorities, constantly questioning what the legal landscape would look like if People of Color were the decision makers (Brooks, 1994). Although CRT began as a movement in the field of law, it has rapidly spread beyond that discipline. An entire body of

scholarship termed "Critical Race Theory in Education" has emerged to critique the ways in which this nation's schools systemically oppress Students of Color. Today, many in the field of education consider themselves critical race theorists who use CRT's ideas to understand issues of institutional racism like school discipline policies, tracking, controversies over curriculum and history, and IQ and achievement testing (Delgado and Stefanic, 2001; DiAngelo, 2015). All of these are ways in which schools reproduce racial inequities. CRT in education, critiques both the status quo and ineffective reforms like those listed above (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Just like in all other societies, the U.S. public education system was designed to serve as the primary institution for reproducing dominant customs and beliefs (Keisch & Scott, 2001). This then makes schooling a function of capitalism and white supremacy with their intrinsic restraints on democracy and social equality.

CRT also emphasizes the point that race is not biologically grounded, but rather socially constructed and functions as a means to maintain the interests of whites who constructed it (Keisch & Scott, 2015; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Although race may be a social construct, it has real world implications that are both local and global in scope. After researching preservice teachers' views of cultural diversity, Antonio Castro concluded that "First, white preservice teachers failed to recognize the pervasiveness of racial inequity. Second, white preservice teachers held deficit views about and lower expectations for Students of Color. Third, preservice teachers adopted a colorblind approach to teaching, denying the very significance of race in their practices" (Castro, 2010, p. 198). CRT directly challenges liberalist claims of race neutrality and colorblindness made by white teachers (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Solórzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001). While colorblindness sounds good in theory, in practice it is highly problematic. As humans, we do in fact see race and construct meaning based on these categories. Despite attempts to equate

colorblindness to equity, studies demonstrate how silence around race, maintains racism and constructs hostile learning environments for Students of Color (Castagno, 2008; Chapman, 2013; Love, 2014). The truth is that many of the racist messages we receive on a daily basis are subtle and invisible, especially to whites (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). For those who benefit from their whiteness, it is difficult to understand the implications of racism on this nation's institutions, especially schools. It is also difficult to want to change a system that you directly benefit from.

Another key feature of Critical Race Theory is called *interest convergence*. Due to the fact that racism advances the interests of both white elites and white working-class people, large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it unless they see a benefit for themselves. For example, CRT scholar Derrick Bell proposed that *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which is considered a landmark decision in the Civil Rights movement, may actually have been a result of the self-interest of elite whites as opposed to a true desire to help Blacks. Bell hypothesized the decision was motivated by U.S. desires to improve their global image in the midst of the Cold War, which was centered on the struggle for the loyalties of the uncommitted Third World, much of which was Black, Brown, or Asian (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). The *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision led to the brief convergence of white and Black interests as Students of Color began being admitted into previously all-white schools and white leaders were able to claim that the United States was, in fact, an empathetic and accepting country.

In terms of education, CRT sees the official school curriculum as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a white supremacist master script in which stories of racial minorities are erased as soon as they challenge dominant authority and power (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Because of this, CRT values counternarratives by People of Color, which call into question majoritarian stories (Solóranzo & Yosso, 2002). Counterstorytelling falls under the tenet of

experiential knowledge which suggests asking who gets to define quality teaching and appropriate teacher education. Experiential knowledge seeks to highlight those voices that are routinely unheard (Sleeter, 2016). In the K-12 education system, Students of Color are often silenced by racist curriculum and white educators/staff who view them from a deficit lens. Thus, it is crucial that we redefine "quality teaching" as instruction that seeks to include the perspectives of *all* students, not just those coming from privileged social positions.

Ultimately, CRT seeks to highlight the fact that racism is an institutional problem. Because of this, attempts to combat racism must focus on both individual *and* systemic factors. As the next section will explain, cultural competence fails to do this in many ways while cultural humility offers a path to address both types of factors.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: THE TRADITIONAL MODEL

Although this thesis critiques the limitations of cultural competence, it is important to note that the model itself is not completely futile. Cultural competence has, in fact, acted as a starting point for conversations around providing quality care to traditionally marginalized groups. Without its creation, it is unlikely that the concept of cultural humility would ever have emerged. However, with its heavy focus on self-awareness, cultural competence fails to account for present systemic inequalities, one of which is racism in schools (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015). The three major dimensions of cultural competence that have been outlined by scholars are: (a) awareness of and sensitivity to workers' own values, biases, and power differences with their clients; (b) knowledge of the practice environment, the helping methods, and the client's culture; and (c) skills in verbal and nonverbal communication (Green, 1999; Lum, 1999: McPhatter, 1997). In this model, the prescription of use of *self* suggests that practitioners can control their culture, but clients cannot (Yan & Wong, 2005). Dominant groups (e.g., white people) learn about non-dominant

groups (often People of Color) to characterize behavior in the name of understanding. With this orientation, learning a group's history is seen as sufficient, with little need to strive for social justice to eliminate systemic oppression (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015). Another core critique of cultural competence involves the explicit goal of competence itself (Dean, 2001; Kumagai & Lypson, 2009). "Competence" suggests that knowing broad descriptions of various group identities can translate into knowing the life experiences of the individual you are working with (Castro, 2010). The danger of the cultural competence strategy is that it presupposes 'culture' is monolithic and knowable, which may create stereotypical composites of various group identities (Betancourt, 2004; Dunn, 2002). Assuming that you understand what someone's culture is and how to best interact with individuals from that racial or ethnic group, is highly problematic. After all, culture is a unique expression for each individual. Because it does not ask for critical self-reflection or an assessment of current structural imbalances, cultural competence runs the risk of perpetuating racial stereotypes and promoting white supremacy.

CULTURAL HUMILITY: THE TRANSFORMATIVE MODEL

As explained earlier, cultural humility is a relatively new idea in the field of education. Still, there is an emerging body of literature which suggests that it is preferable to the widely accepted cultural competence model. Research has demonstrated that current ways of thinking about and promoting cultural competence could be considered limiting in the ways practitioners partner, collaborate, and interact with people who are different than themselves. Thus, cultural humility could serve as the foundation from which to shift our thinking and practices about cultural competence within education and provide a deeper understanding to our work as educators around the globe (Hockett et al., 2012). The movement towards cultural humility implies that the practitioner must strive for *transformation* rather than expertise (Mezirow, 1991). This is

transformation of both the self and larger systems of oppression. This self-work does not have a perceived endpoint like cultural competence. Instead, cultural humility is a lifelong process, as is the commitment to fixing power imbalances.

So, what is cultural humility *not*? Some of the antonyms that have been listed are prejudice, oppression, intolerance, discrimination, stereotyping, exclusion, inequity, marginalization, labeling, and misunderstanding (Chang et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2011; Kutob et al., 2013; Loue, 2012; Ortega & Coulborn, 2011). The issue with cultural competence is that is allows for the existence of these deficit terms. In many ways, cultural competence relies on the stereotyping and labeling of other cultures so that methods can be developed for best "dealing" with them. This leaves room for individuals, like white educators, to undermine their Students of Color because they are playing into general assumptions that those students are less capable of learning the material or are more likely to misbehave (Bell, 2002). This unequal treatment has lasting effects on traditionally marginalized groups who often begin to internalize the oppression (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). In this multicultural world where power imbalances still exist, cultural humility is a process of openness, self-awareness, and being egoless. Some of the common results of achieving cultural humility are mutual empowerment, respect, partnerships, and lifelong learning (Foronda et al., 2016). Fostering cultural humility in teacher candidates can be seen as a lifelong process that involves self-reflection and self-critique, learning from and actively listening to racially/culturally diverse students, building partnerships with students and communities, and a willingness to negotiate mutually acceptable alternatives to communication, engagement, and education (Lund & Lee, 2018). In terms of the shared desires for professional education, this approach offers a promising way to reframe problematic notions of cultural competence models and address racism in schools. It also holds the potential for preparing students to be part of the

global citizenry as they develop skills such as empathy, cross-cultural communication, and self-reflection.

CULTURAL HUMILITY IN TEACHER PREPARATION

Having briefly described the transformative potential of cultural humility, this section will examine existing literature that discusses strategies for cultivating cultural humility amongst preservice teachers (PST). In my research, I found just five articles that focus on cultural humility in teacher preparation. Three of the articles focus on service learning as a strategy (Lund & Lee, 2018; Tinkler & Tinkler, 2016; Vesely et al., 2017). One of the studies examined outcomes of a community-based service learning requirement of the teacher preparation program at the University of Vermont (Tinkler & Tinkler, 2016). The teacher education program at this college embedded service-learning experiences working with English learners in three courses in the required sequence of coursework. It is important to note that one of the studies was conducted in Canada, not the United States. This article is still relevant, however, as both Canada and the U.S. are nations that were built on settler colonialism and the labor of Peoples of Color. All of this labor was given for very little if any financial remuneration, authority, or ownership of the national infrastructure and wealth that was built on it (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). This systemic oppression of minority groups has similarly shaped the Canadian education system. Canada is now home to 6.2 million immigrants and growing, so this article focuses on creating ways for preservice teachers to connect with children and youth of immigrant families by placing them in after-school, tutoring, mentoring, recreation, and family literacy programs (Lund & Lee, 2018). In the other service-learning focused article, the use of experiential learning via home visits with families from diverse backgrounds are examined (Vesely et al., 2017). In this study, preservice teachers engaged in critically reflective practices to uncover and challenge their implicit biases while simultaneously

discovering the Community Cultural Wealth held by their home visit families (Vesely et al., 2017). This builds on Tara Yosso's work, which discusses the types of cultural capital that Students of Color bring with them to the classroom (Yosso, 2005). The two other articles found do not focus specifically on service-learning. One of the articles is a doctoral dissertation which, much like this thesis, critically analyzes the concepts of cultural competence and cultural humility, then reflects on new opportunities for preservice teacher training using cultural humility (Nolan, 2016). The final article is titled "Unpacking Biases" and essentially describes ways to do this with preservice teachers. The authors share activities used in their university classrooms to support the development of cultural humility (Brown et al., 2016). There are both strengths and limitations to this small body of work, which are described below.

Strengths

The first strength of these studies is that they are effective in expanding cultural humility and understanding of a multicultural pedagogy amongst teacher candidates. Acknowledging the development of cultural humility as a process, the activities discussed in the article "Unpacking Biases" provide preservice teachers with opportunities to transform their skills and abilities for working with diverse children and their families (Brown et al., 2016). Preservice teachers enrolled in the "Engaging Families of Diverse Young Learners" course gain general knowledge regarding family demographics, structures, functions, and theories, as well as instruction on how families' unique identities intersect to situate each child and their family in terms of access to societal resources. This knowledge equips preservice teachers to critically reflect from a strengths-based perspective on their own experiences as well as on children and families' needs and experiences (Brown et al., 2016). Likewise, in the study that focuses on cultivating cultural humility via home visits, PST (preservice teachers) built compassion towards families when they learned about the

nuanced complexity of their daily routines and discovered similarities between their own lives and that of the families. PST then reflected on how they planned to incorporate this experience into their future practice as teachers (Vesely et al., 2017). Although Elizabeth Nolan's dissertation did not involve working directly with preservice teachers, it does provide a long list of ideas for developing cultural humility amongst this group. By looking through studies conducted by other scholars, Nolan found that many PST feel unprepared to teach to students whose cultural values and beliefs differ from the mainstream. These PST commented that more practicum was needed throughout the program, rather than packing it all into the final year (Nolan, 2016). Ensuring that cultural humility is present in all four years of curriculum, would give PST more time to reflect on their privilege and implicit biases they are bringing with them to university. This could be done through journaling, another suggestion put forth by Nolan. By journaling, preservice teachers discover their prejudices and by sharing their entries, they learn how those thoughts deny them the opportunity to fully understand those whose cultures differ from their own (Nolan, 2016). This act of self-reflection falls within the first tenet of cultural humility which asks for a lifelong commitment to self-reflection and critique.

Another strength of this literature is that it connects to Tara Yosso's idea of Community Cultural Wealth, which she introduces through a Critical Race Theory framework. Yosso (2005) explains, "CRT identifies various indicators of capital that have rarely been acknowledged as cultural and social assets in Communities of Color. These forms of capital draw on the knowledges Students of Color bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom" (82). Too often, white educators ignore the Community Cultural Wealth of Students of Color, viewing them from a deficit lens. Making service-learning in community organizations a requirement of teacher preparation programs, can help PST develop cultural humility by expanding and shifting

their views on Students of Color. This was the case in Lund and Lee's study: "Our analysis of the data shows that the community placements contributed to relatively privileged preservice teachers' ability to see beyond the challenges of children and youth of immigrant families, and to begin to identify and appreciate their strengths" (Lund & Lee, 2018). Yes, Students of Color from immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds may be coming to the classroom with their own unique set of challenges, but these should not be used as an excuse to ignore their strengths. According to Yosso, one of the cultural assets of Students of Color is *linguistic capital,* which includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language or style. The issue is that schools often treat this as a disadvantage, assuming that those whose first language is not English need extra assistance (Yosso, 2005). However, this is not always the case. For example, Vesely et al (2017) describes the transformative experience of a PST after visiting the home of a family. The PST admitted that their view of the bilingual student had changed dramatically: "Initially, I assumed that if a child spoke a foreign language more frequently than English, he or she was struggling with his or her English- speaking skills and needed additional help... Rather than assume a child who speaks a foreign language must be in an ESL class, I [will] evaluate their language skills" (Vesely et al., 2017). This PST came to the class with a deficit view of students who tended to utilize their home language more often. Through this assignment, they learned that their initial assumptions were unwarranted, and that they should view the student's bilingual status as a strength.

An additional source of capital outlined by Yosso is *aspirational capital,* which refers to the ability of Students of Color to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers (Yosso, 2005). In Tinkler and Tinkler's study, the appreciation and respect for the students' capabilities led preservice teachers to recognize student abilities. This

university embedded service learning experiences within their program. The study observed the effects that working with students labeled "English learners," had on teacher candidates. In one instance, a preservice teacher had observed a youth in a school setting prior to working with them in the community setting. Reflecting on this experience, the preservice teacher noted she had a better understanding of the student through her work with the student at the community center: "I would have never even known that he wanted to do anything with his life from how he behaved in the classroom, so just knowing that he had aspirations [to be a translator] made me want to work with him" (Tinkler & Tinkler, 2016, p. 197). Because the student acted out in class, the PST assumed that the student lacked aspirational capital. The reality is that school can be a very hostile place for Students of Color, which can trigger misbehavior. Seeing the student in a setting outside the classroom, allowed the PST to transform their deficit view.

Limitations

My analysis also identified limitations of the studies examining cultural humility in teacher preparation. A majority of the articles emphasize home visits or service-learning. The issue with this is that if cultural humility is only incorporated *outside* the university classroom, in a service-learning capacity, it may not be as effective. Teacher educators also will need to find ways to incorporate cultural humility back into the university setting, including course work and field practicums. Only one of the five articles provide a good example of connecting cultural humility activities inside and outside the university setting. In Brown et al (2016) the authors conduct cultural humility-specific activities within the classroom *and* provide candidates with direct experiences with diverse families. Each preservice teacher is required to conduct a home visit with a family whose socio-cultural context is different from their own. These home visits are an effective way to engage and build partnerships with families in addition to the coursework they

are already completing in the university setting (Brown et al., 2016, p. 86). By selecting a family who is marginalized by U.S. society in a way that the student is not, these home visits present the possibility of candidate transformation as the preservice teachers' full immersion within the home, could reconcile preconceived biases they had coming into the experience.

Another major limitation of this small body of literature is that it contains no information on cultivating cultural humility amongst practicing educators - all articles focus on preservice teachers and the places that educate them. By focusing only on preservice teachers, the research is failing to acknowledge the importance of practicing educators' influence. Many teachers across this country have never been exposed to the concept of cultural humility, anti-racist pedagogies and culturally responsive curriculum. If a school district tries to push for this without first having intensive, reflective conversations with their staff, progress will be difficult. Considering that cultural humility is just emerging within the field of teacher preparation and education, it is important to discuss the implications of these findings and what they mean moving forward.

IMPLICATIONS (NEXT STEPS)

1. Empirical

One finding of my research that stands out is the lack of literature on the topic of cultural humility within the field of education, specifically within teacher education. There were only five articles that discussed the use of cultural humility in their teacher preparation programs, but I could find none that explored the use of this model within professional development activities for practicing teachers. Thus, it is clear that we need additional studies that explore cultural humility within teacher professional development. Future research should study the views of current teachers and see what their schools and districts are doing to support them in educating a diverse student body. Just as the five articles I found discussed specific examples of cultivating cultural

humility amongst preservice teachers, there needs to be literature that suggests ways in which current educators can do this as well.

As always, I call for other white people to engage deeply with this type of work, which seeks to highlight the present-day existence of white supremacy and inequity in our social institutions, to begin dismantling the systems of oppression that we maintain and directly benefit from. At the same time, it is crucial that voices of People of Color (i.e. scholars, educators, and students) are at the forefront in conversations about culturally responsive, anti-racist pedagogies. In his groundbreaking book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire suggested that it is the oppressed who must commit themselves to "the expulsion of the myths created and developed in the old order" (Freire, 2000, p. 55). As dominant ideologies and knowledge systems based on white worldviews deny or mask racism, CRT theorists assume that those who understand racism best are not its perpetrators but rather those who are routinely victimized by it (Sleeter, 2016). So, it is those who are victimized by racism that must set forth the type of transformative agenda they would like to see. There must be more studies that highlight these traditionally marginalized voices. Those who are in privileged positions should work with these groups in partnership to move towards the eradication of racism.

2. Practical

Although cultural humility may be gaining popularity in university-level curriculum, it is absent from most K-12 teacher vocabulary. Because they have never been forced to reflect on their privilege, white educators often position themselves as "good teachers," while simultaneously resisting an awareness of racism. Being skilled at teaching content is inadequate if those educators have no structural or social analysis for inequality (Kohli et al., 2017). By perpetuating the myth of racial minorities as biologically inferior, society has long ensured that whites feel justified in

maintaining their prejudices against this group: "If we are white, we receive constant messages that we are better and more important than Peoples of Color, regardless of our personal intentional or beliefs" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Because most K-12 teachers have not been exposed to the concept of cultural humility, it will be the current generation of incoming teachers who will need to help educate their veteran colleagues. This means creating partnerships between universities and K-12 schools. Preservice teachers can meet with principals and ask about how the school can deepen their opportunities to learn culturally responsive practices. Using university-based examples as a model, school districts can begin incorporating the tenets of cultural humility into their professional development activities. There also needs to be more time set aside for professional development amongst current educators. Since cultural humility is a lifelong commitment, a single training will not suffice. There may need to be one initial workshop in which teachers are exposed to these ideas, but then monthly check-ins should follow, where teachers reflect on the ways in which they've utilized cultural humility in their work.

In order for *preservice* teachers to be adequately prepared to do this type of work, responsibility falls to the university to guide them through the historical, social, and political factors that lead to the exclusion of People of Color from an equitable education (Nolan, 2016). Curricular content of teacher education programs tends to reflect white sensibilities. Virtually every program now includes coursework related to racial, cultural, or language diversity. But in most programs, that coursework takes the form of one or two separate courses, with the rest of the program giving only minimal attention to race, ethnicity, language and culture (King & Butler, 2015). Thus, cultural humility must be deeply embedded into the curriculum for preservice teachers. Just as the individual teacher must engage in critical self-reflection, so too should the institution and higher education faculty responsible for their education. Universities should

consider how cultural humility can be incorporated within their policies, procedures, and decision making. In order to do this, universities must seriously reflect on the following questions: "What is the demographic profile of the faculty? Is the faculty composition inclusive of members from diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and sexual orientation backgrounds? Are faculty members required to undergo multicultural trainings as are the youngest students of the profession?" (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998, p. 122). In most cases, the answer to the second question would be no. A 2007 study showed that about 78% of teacher education faculty are white (Milner et al., 2013). So, one solution would be to recruit and hire more non-white faculty to teach education courses at universities. This would be an example of the colleges themselves demonstrating cultural humility, dedicating themselves to fixing power imbalances. This method could also extend to the admissions process. If we want a more diverse populous of teachers, it is necessary that People of Color are supported in pursuing a higher education. Another option would be to draw on social contacts and community resources to help students identify and obtain college scholarships. This support system is identified by Tara Yosso as *social capital* or networks of people and community resources. These networks may help a student in preparing the scholarship application itself, while also reassuring them that they are not alone in the process of pursuing higher education (Yosso, 2005). An important aspect of racial justice is the ability of all students to see higher education as an option for themselves.

Since part of cultural humility is the development of mutually beneficial partnerships with communities on behalf of traditionally marginalized groups (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998), universities should also form relationships with advocacy groups and help foster relationships between these organizations and K-12 schools. This might mean a partnership between universities and local elementary, middle, and high schools. If university professors and preservice teachers

are educated in the concept of cultural humility, they could go out and lead workshops in nearby schools, as well as invite students to tour their campuses, like the University of Washington Tacoma already does. This would expose students to a college setting and inspire them to strive for that goal. Developing community-based reciprocal relationships, which are founded on mutual trust are pivotal because they can lead to shifting thinking and practices toward cultural humility (Hockett et al., 2012). Inviting advocacy groups to schools would help students feel like they are not alone.

3. Global

Although the concept of cultural humility originated in the United States, its main tenets are universally relevant. Globally, teacher education is something that we need to pay attention to because racism is not endemic to this country. Not only are many countries still suffering from the lasting effects of European colonization, but white supremacist ideals are also able to circulate around the world through movies and mass media. In these forums, People of Color are portrayed as villains or oversexed lovers (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This type of commonly repeated narrative, keeps People of Color trapped in the role of "other," making it is easier for whites to uphold their dominant positions in society. By "othering", whiteness remains the standard to measure all else against (Wear, 2003). This is true within the public-school system as well. Because public schools are government entities, they are grounded in the state. So, no matter where you are in the world, schools will reinforce the dominant hierarchy. The widely-shared view of the U.S. as the model of success, contributes to the global uniformity of national curricula (Spring, 2008). Thus, if cultural humility becomes central to the preparation of U.S. teachers, and the professional development of existing ones, other countries will inevitably follow suit. Since U.S. curriculum is frequently exported, an increase in cultural humility related

literature, could lead to its adoption by other countries whose social institutions have been shaped significantly by racism and white supremacist ideology. The hope would be for other countries to apply the tenets of cultural humility to fit the unique experiences of their own students, rather than try to conform to a U.S.- centric framework.

When thinking about the global implications of cultural humility, we must also keep in mind the current and future cohort of students in the U.S. public school system. Cultivating cultural humility amongst preservice and practicing educators, will ensure that this type of thinking is also passed on to their diverse student body. Teacher training within the U.S., must support educating a global citizenry of students. As globalization continues to influence every area of our lives, it is crucial that we develop an approach that will honor and respect all citizens of our world. However, cultural humility is a relatively new idea that has not been explored much within the realm of education (Hockett et al., 2012). Since this nation's K-12 student body are being educated primarily by white teachers, using Euro-centric curriculum, they are getting a very limited perspective of history and the current socio-political landscape. The reality is that once they graduate high school, these young people will be going out into the world as global citizens. Therefore, it is imperative that they have the tools to approach intercultural exchanges with an open-mind. Cultural humility along with Critical Race Theory, would encourage minoritized communities to produce counternarratives of their lived experiences.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I argue that that cultivating cultural humility amongst preservice and practicing educators would allow us to move towards the elimination of racism in schools, help prepare students for global citizenry, and result in the empowerment of students of color. Through a critical review of the literature, I found that the traditional cultural competence model

is inadequate for preparing preservice and practicing educators to teach to a rapidly diversifying student body. Although cultural competence provided a starting point for conversations surrounding diversity, it still has not resulted in a transformative agenda. By focusing only on self-reflection, this model fails to account for the systemic factors that keep People of Color oppressed in this country's institutions. On the other hand, cultural humility has the potential to move us towards the eradication of racism in schools, as it asks for transformation of both the self *and* larger systems of oppression.

My findings suggest the need for an increased focus on cultivating cultural humility in teacher education. In order to "fight the powers that be," white teachers need to understand the ways in which their race positions them above People of Color within this country's various social systems. The first step in everything is *awareness* - people cannot understand what they have never been exposed to. Incorporating cultural humility into preservice teacher preparation and continued education courses, is not just about being able to mark the "multicultural training" checkbox. It is about instilling teachers with the tools they need to create inclusive classrooms that honor the perspectives of all their students, challenging those views that may be based on racist stereotypes or prejudices, and resulting in the empowerment of traditionally marginalized voices and the fostering of a global citizenry of students with empathy for those whose cultures differ from their own.

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