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HUMANIZING HIGHER EDUCATION: DISRUPTING RACIAL
INJUSTICE IN TEACHER PREPARATION THROUGH
CRITICALLY CARING COMMUNITIES

by

MELISSA M. BORONKAS

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2020

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Critically Caring Communities**

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Melissa M. Boronkas

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal
Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Humanizing Higher Education: Disrupting Racial Injustice in Teacher Preparation Through Critically Caring Communities

by

Melissa M. Boronkas

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Institutions of Higher Education have played a foundational role in upholding racial inequities within the teaching profession. Eighty percent of public school teachers in the United States are white and female while more than 50% of the total student population is composed of minoritized students (Boser, 2014; NYSED, 2019a). There is a lack of cultural synchronicity between teachers and students in classrooms which is believed to result in unequal outcomes for minoritized students as compared to their White peers (Ingersoll, May, Collins, 2018). These findings are indicative of an underlying problem: racial and social integration has not been achieved. In order to recruit and retain more teachers of color, colleges and universities must first integrate by developing a community of care that is rooted in culturally responsive and anti-racist practices. Using the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Culturally Responsive-Sustaining framework as a guide, this paper will argue that foundational barriers to retaining teachers of color in higher education are rooted in race avoidant and deficit-based ideology, a reliance on recruitment over retention and the individualism inherent in neo-liberalism. These problems can be addressed through developing critically caring communities through relationships built on possibility, humility and accountability between students, faculty and staff. While also addressing these issues through enhanced student resources and supports driven from student needs both within and outside the institution. This paper argues that it is a combination of the interpersonal ways in which people work together, merged with the practical application of services, that will provide greater support for teacher diversity in the profession.

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Humanizing Higher Education: Disrupting Racial Injustice in Teacher Preparation Through Critically Caring Communities

Sokhnadiarra Ndiaye, a fourth-year student at Brooklyn College Academy High School and a member of the school integration advocacy group, Teens Take Charge, looked directly into my eyes and said firmly, “I hope that you take this and do something with it.” Ndiaye had just presented with her colleague Shelda Francois to an audience of youth and adults at the Hunter College School of Education (HCSOE) a four-year college part of the City University of New York’s (CUNY) public education system. Sokhnadiarra and Shelda had not given me an object; they had shared their dreams for what the educational system could be, their reflections on the current New York City public school system and their fight for educational and racial justice within the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE). These were not small nor dispassionate disclosures.

As a member of the event organizing committee, on Equity and Advocacy, I had just finished thanking both Sokhnadiarra and Shelda for presenting. It was then that I was met with Sokhnadiarra’s directive to action. Her response to my platitude was unexpected and humbling. With a flushed face, I responded by mumbling through some actions I was planning to take and ended with a definitive “I will.” My response came across as bullshit. As a person working within the field of education, in a college that prepares teachers, school counselors and school leaders who work in NYC Public Schools, I have a responsibility to Sokhnadiarra and Shelda, to all NYC school students to hear their concerns and take action to make the education system more just and humane.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), specifically the people working within teacher preparation, cannot be divorced from their intimate impact on Pre-Kindergarten-12th grade (Pk-12) schools, especially when it comes to addressing social justice inequities. In this paper I will use the

term IHE to represent the actors within institutions who work to support or disrupt policies, procedures and practices. IHEs have immense power in determining how education professionals will enact school policies and curriculum that impact Pk-12 students, their families and their communities. Equally as important, IHEs serve as gatekeepers and determine who has access to the profession in the first place. Unfortunately, IHEs systematically exclude individuals who do not match the mainstream perception of who should be a teacher (e.g. White females) through added admissions requirements, elevated progress standards, cumbersome bureaucracy, and numerous costly certification exams. As such, IHEs have played a foundational role in upholding racial inequities within the teaching profession. Eighty percent of public school teachers in the United States are white and female while more than 50% of the total student population is composed of minoritized students (Boser, 2014; NYSED, 2019a). There is a lack of cultural synchronicity between teachers and students in classrooms which is believed to result in unequal outcomes for minoritized students as compared to their White peers (Ingersoll, May, Collins, 2018). These findings are indicative of an underlying problem: racial and social integration has not been achieved. According to Olgetree (2004), integration calls for “creating a new community founded on a new form of respect and tolerance” (Olgetree, 2004, p. 295). When I use the term integration in this paper I am drawing from Horsford (2011) and referring to the definition provided by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights which defined integration as “a quality of education and interpersonal interaction based on the positive acceptance of individual and group differences as well as similarities” (as cited in Horsford, 2011, p. 4). Integration in this paper should not be conflated with desegregation or the movement of bodies to “change the existing racial composition of schools” (as quoted in Horsford, 2011, p. 4). Integration is asset based community building, “interpersonal action” and “positive acceptance,” it moves beyond tolerance to belonging and care (as cited in Horsford, 2011, p. 4). As Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) claims, “we understand that

oppression, as a misuse of power, occurs when there is a disconnection between people - when people refuse or fail to care for each other” (p. 84). Healing is needed. In this paper I argue that in order to recruit and retain more pre-service teachers of color, IHEs must first focus on integration by developing a community of critical care that is rooted in culturally responsive and anti-racist practices.

Problem: The State of Teacher Racial Diversity

In 2019, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) released two documents to address diversity in the teaching profession, one is a state-wide Educator Diversity Report which focuses on the current racial and ethnic diversity of teachers and the other a framework for Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education practices which focuses on intersecting forms of diversity including sexual orientation, religion and language for example. The NYSED Educator Diversity Report focuses on data to determine the level of racial diversity present within the teaching force. The main focus of this report is on “body mixing” or the “physical reassignment of children and staff to change the existing racial composition in schools” (Adair as quoted in Horsford, 2011, p. 4). The Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework addresses integration as defined in the introduction of this paper, through discussion of school culture, climate, curriculum, expectations and belonging.

The NYSED Educator Diversity Report (2019a) found that as the state’s student population has become more diverse, the state’s teaching force has remained consistent with 80% (170,000) of teachers identifying as White. Furthermore, the report notes, “Latino and Black educators are under-represented” (NYSED, 2019a, p. 16). These statistics are in line with national teacher diversity trends. In 2016 the U.S Department of Education noted a lack of teacher racial and ethnic diversity in US public schools with 82% of teachers identified as White, 7% Black and 8% Latinx for the 2011 - 2012 school year (United States Department of Education, 2016).

The reality of teacher diversity has not escaped the members of Teens Take Charge and their partner organization IntegrateNYC either. They note this issue in their demands for NYC public schools (IntegrateNYC, 2020). IntegrateNYC demands for a teaching faculty that represents the student body,

We the students demand that all NYC public High Schools hire faculty that is inclusive and elevates the voices of communities of color, immigrant communities and the LGBT community so that student identities and experiences are reflected in the leadership.

(IntegrateNYC, 2020, Real Integration section, image 7)

Currently, the NYC DOE lists no publicly available data or reports specific to teacher racial and ethnic diversity in NYC Schools. The independent School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG), made up of students, parents, and educators, which includes a student advocate from IntegrateNYC and a staff member, made a recommendation to the NYC DOE to report the diversity of school “staff by position (e.g., teacher, administrator, para, other staff) as part of the school quality report” (School Diversity Advisory Group, 2020, Representation section, table 1). The NYC DOE adopted the recommendation with the following alterations,

To the extent that DOE is able to collect this information in a valid and reliable manner, report on the diversity of school-based staff by position at the district- and city-level, and at the school level where appropriate (considering sufficient numbers). (SDAG, 2020, Representation section, table 1)

This idea of “valid and reliable” data is a subject I will return to later in this paper. While the NYC DOE does not currently collect or publicly maintain data on teacher ethnic and racial diversity in New York City, the State of New York has published NYC specific data in the Educator Diversity Report.

According to the NYSED Educator Diversity Report (2019a) New York City fares better in overall teacher diversity with 42% of teachers being identified as of color. The student of color to teacher of color ratio is 1:30 with the ratio of White students to White teachers at 1:4 (NYSED, 2019a). Statewide “more than 200 public school districts did not employ a single teacher of color” (NYSED, 2019a, p. 21). Nationally trends are consistent with 50% of the total student population being students of color and 18% teachers of color (Boser, 2014). These statistics are also compounded as the numbers are not disaggregated by race. The term students of color and teachers of color collapses multiple ethnic and racial identities into one category. Therefore, while NYC may have a 1:30 ratio, it does not mean that the teachers within that label reflect overall “student identities and experiences” especially as this data does not look at other intersecting identity markers such as religion, language, sexual or gender identity for example (Integrate NYC, 2020, Real Integration section, image 7). Additionally, in order for more diverse teachers to enter classrooms, the teachers must first earn an education degree and become certified. Over the years both of these tasks have become increasingly more difficult to complete. For example, in New York in the past several years, the minimum GPA required for entry into a graduate teacher preparation program was increased to 3.0, the GRE was required, and several costly and challenging certification exams were instituted (NYSED, 2012; NYSED, 2017). In addition, NYSED has increased the number of student teaching and pedagogical content areas that they must complete as part of their programs (NYSED, 2018).

In line with city, state and national trends on in-service teacher racial and ethnic diversity, pre-service teachers enrolled in educator preparation programs are also overwhelmingly White. The Educator Diversity Report found “that in 2016-17, only about half of New York college students identified as White, compared to more than 60% of educator preparation enrollees” (NYSED, 2019a, p. 38). Persistent inequities with regard to racial and ethnic diversity in education

particularly as it relates to teachers are not new. They are part of the long fight for equity in American schools extending back beyond *Brown v. Board of Education*. Some even argue that this landmark case may have ushered in the displacement of Black educators with the shuttering of Black teacher preparation programs and the reallocation of jobs to White teachers” (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2018; Horsford 2011).

Ingersoll and colleagues suggest that diversifying the teaching profession has resulted in more teachers of color entering the profession, however, because they tend to be assigned to high needs, struggling schools, they have a much higher turnover. Other research suggests that while some teacher preparation programs may be successful at recruiting teacher candidates, the completion and certification rates for teachers of color may be lower than for their White counterparts. Thus, intentional integration and inclusion is needed. IHEs have a responsibility to adequately prepare future teachers for Pk-12 classrooms. First though, IHEs need to evaluate their own history, policies, practices, procedures and curriculum.

Contradictions abound in higher education. The biggest contradiction is between the principle of equity and the enactment of discriminatory practices within the system that privilege some and oppress others. Among those in power within the field of higher education, a place in which ideas flourish, debate is encouraged, and scholarship is developed, have a difficult time recognizing and accepting their own oppressive practices and the ways in which they maintain inequities. Wagner and Yee (2011) argue that “equality has become rhetoric used to signal an institution’s virtue and commitment to social justice without an actual plan to shift the culture, policies and practices within the institution itself” (p. 95). This performative diversity is enacted within institutions through the avoidance of racial conflict and language, a focus on recruitment rather than retention of students of color and confounded by neo-liberalism’s call for equity through individualism and private markets.

Avoiding History, Avoiding Race

Critical Race Theorists argue that race and racism is real and unavoidable when analyzing all social dynamics and social systems including education. The conversation around race and academia is not new, in our current moment colleges and universities across the country are publicly working through allegations of racism on campus from the donning of black face at parties, to racist graffiti, to contention about the removal of confederate statues from campus property. In many instances, these conversations do not draw from history to identify reasons for the current outrage over discrimination on campus. Lee Bollinger, former president of Columbia University, traces this lack of historical reckoning to the 1978 Bakke decision in which colleges and universities under affirmative action were no longer permitted to reserve a dedicated number of seats for ethnically and racially diverse candidates (Newkirk, 2019, p. 119). After this decision, race could no longer be used as the only explicit reason to admit a student. Bollinger in conversation with Newkirk (2019) says, “We’re deprived of the context that gave (Affirmative Action) a sense of mission...Every college leader is told ‘Do not refer to history.’ I think we have a meaningless, abstract conversation about diversity without a rationale” (p. 119). Essentially, the Bakke decision ushered in color blindness on campuses. In order for IHEs to effectively recruit and retain teachers of color, history and racial acknowledgement must come to the forefront. As Ewing (2018) notes, “The present is not inevitable; things have come to be as we know them through human actors. If we understand the genesis of our present, we have a chance of changing the future” (p. 57). Hunter College, where Sokhnadiarra and Shelda presented, is no exception to this historical and racial avoidance.

Hunter College is marking its 150th anniversary and makes for a useful case study of the legacy of racism that is frequently ignored in higher education. Hunter College opened classes in 1870 operating as a teacher training institution or “normal” college for women (Hunter College,

2020, Department of Anthropology History section, para 1). It was both the first teacher education program and the first college for White women and soon after African American women in New York City (Perkins, 1995). In 1873 eight African American women qualified and were admitted to Hunter College (Perkins, 1995). Yet this access to the institution was not equitable and indicative of how IHEs have upheld racist ideology through process and procedure. Historian Linda M. Perkins (1995) writes,

In 1874, another eight African-American women were admitted, although only half enrolled. Of the four who attended, only one...graduated, in 1880. The other three left the institution due to "continued absences." Interestingly, as more African-American women attended predominantly white public schools after the abolition of separate schools, the number of African-Americans admitted to Hunter declined. By 1881, only one woman was admitted out of a total of 808 accepted students. (p. 18)

The abolition of separate schools decreased the number of employment opportunities for Black teachers thereby leading to a decrease in college enrollment for teacher training. Black teachers were passed over in favor of White teachers for positions in desegregated schools. Hunter College passively accepted this change in employment dynamics and college enrollment for Black women. Furthermore, Thomas Hunter, the founder of Hunter College believed in the inferiority of intelligence across varying racial and ethnic groups. Perkins (1995) continues,

Thomas Hunter's autobiography indicates that he held views common in the late nineteenth century concerning the hierarchy of intelligence based on racial and ethnic characteristics. Categorizing his students by race, Hunter wrote that he believed that the Nordic groups were superior in intelligence while Italians, Bohemians, and Russian Jews were below average. He placed African-Americans at the lowest intellectual level possible. (p. 20)

While Perkins notes that Thomas Hunter held beliefs “common” in his time, this does not negate the impact these beliefs had on the recruitment and retention of racially diverse teacher candidates both then and now. As Newkirk (2019) writes,

Many institutions of higher education...were also home to the influential authors and proselytizers of specious pseudo-scientific racial theories that rationalized and sustained it. Well into the twentieth century an ideology of European supremacy and African inferiority, embedded in the cannon, prevailed at most institutions of higher learning. (p. 99)

Many IHEs have yet to acknowledge or are still working through the deficit ideologies regarding minoritized people on which they were founded. In fact, most organizations these days include statements about diversity, equity, and inclusion as an acknowledgement of legacies of injustice.

The Hunter College School of Education is no exception. The school includes “education a diverse student population” as a tenant of their conceptual framework,

The School of Education provides its candidates with the critical skills and understanding necessary to be responsive to the multiple challenges of all learners: students with a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, abilities and prior knowledge. We teach candidates to create humane and ethical learning communities in their classrooms and schools. They gain the ability to collaborate successfully with parents, families, community members, school faculty and staff in order to provide this support. (Hunter College School of Education, 2020)

Yet even in this statement, diversity is presented as a “challenge,” something that must be overcome through the quality of the pedagogy that the school “provides.” Furthermore, the college is the provider of knowledge, “we teach,” with the teacher candidates being the recipients of the knowledge, “they gain.” This statement does not draw from teacher candidates' pre-existing wealth of knowledge that has been gained through their prior education, communities and families. The

unconscious biases and deficit ideologies that exist in actual practice do not support true integration and inclusion efforts to build a community of care and belonging. The fear of naming distinct races or engaging in conflict around racism prevents individuals within the institution from understanding and empathizing with the quality of experience for students, staff and faculty of color. Widespread practices of refusing to move beyond diversity statements and into uncomfortable conversations about racial and social justice privilege the “safety” of white faculty, staff and students thereby maintaining a racial hierarchy in the workplace. Without the ability or willingness to directly name race or engage in conflict around race, IHEs are unable to rectify their histories and move forward in building an affirming community. Diversification becomes the priority over true integration. This can be seen in the focus on recruiting pre-service teachers of color into the profession.

Recruitment Over Retention: Teacher Candidate Push Out

In general, IHEs spend more effort and resources on recruitment rather than retention (Fike & Fike, 2008). In regard to students of color, the lack of weight given to retention efforts within higher education, coupled with neo-liberal ideology, which I will discuss later, and discrimination within the institution further alienates students of color from their college experience. Higher education institutions are not free from perpetuating discrimination either in one or both of the following forms, institutional discrimination via policies and procedures and interpersonal discrimination as enacted between faculty and staff toward students of color. IHEs enact institutional discrimination by supporting, whether knowingly or unknowingly, a system of white supremacy through policies, procedures, practices and traditions (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). As Gasman (2016) wrote regarding the lack of diverse faculty in higher education, “being mentored by prominent people is linked to social capital and systemic racism ensures that people of

color have less of it” (para 5). IHEs do not differentiate to support the learning needs of students of color or seek to understand their educational perspective and needs. Villegas and Lucas (2002) attest, “while educators and policymakers often speak about the high “dropout” rate among students of color in higher education, it would be more accurate to say that many of the students who leave college are “pushed out” of the institution” (p. 163). Students of color have experienced institutional silencing that has dramatically impeded their education and academic experience. As Cammarota & Romero (2006) assert,

Power is enacted through the curriculum, through pedagogy, as well as racist ideologies. Power issued through these particular forms foments a practice of silencing that can permeate attitudes, policies, and actions and thus instigate the treatment of students of color as intellectually inferior and ultimately uneducable. These abuses of power in education invariably impel students to withdraw, either permanently by dropping out or partially by "checking out" mentally and becoming silent. (p. 17) _

Recent studies, specifically on pre-service teachers of color, have also vocalized a feeling of alienation and silencing through their teacher education experience (Endo, 2015; Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2016; Tolbert & Eichelberger, 2016; Wilkins & Lall, 2011). For example, Endo (2015) explored the experience of Asian American females working and studying in predominantly white schools. All participants in the study faced microaggressions from fellow classmates, colleagues and professors during their pre-service training. One study participant was continuously invalidated when she would attempt to discuss concerns around institutional racism. Of the eleven participants, six wanted to leave the field as they felt disrespected by the institutions in which they worked. Endo (2015) affirms that these forms of racist expression “impede institutional missions to promote inclusive and welcoming environments for all” (p. 604).

In another study, Souto-Manning and Cheruvu (2016) explored the experiences of six pre-service early childhood teachers of color. All participants encountered racialized experiences in their teacher education programs which led them to feel like imposters and outsiders in the field of early childhood education. The scholars look deeply at how the teachers appropriate the teaching and teacher education system by creating counter narratives in response to dominant themes in which students encountered racialized experiences, whiteness as the norm and developed multiple selves/identities to survive and thrive.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) also state that students of color “lack faith in colleges and universities, which have traditionally excluded people of color” (p. 160). As Robinson, Paccione and Rodrigue (2003) have noted, “when services, support, mentoring, and high expectations are lacking, it is no wonder that students do not persist to graduation. These constitute some of the major hindrances to the recruitment of people of color into teacher education and to their retention through graduation and certification” (p. 203).

Dis/ability, Race and Higher Education

Another barrier to the retention of pre-service teachers of color is the support available for students who have reported a dis/ability. I use the spelling dis/ability in this paper to echo the work of critical dis/ability studies scholars and advocates who use this term to bring focus to the role ability plays in creating disability. There is a disproportionate representation of minoritized students in special education at the Pk-12 grade range (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Connor, 2017). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2019), 19% of all undergraduate students in the 2015 - 2016 school year identified as having a disability. The NCES (2019) report also found that 18% of Hispanic, 17% of Black, 23% of Pacific Islander, 27% of American Indian/Alaska Native students and 22 % of students who identified as two or more races

reported a disability. This is of concern as students with reported dis/abilities in IHEs are more likely to require support services to meet academic expectations, take twice as long to complete their degrees and drop out altogether (Hong, 2015). Additionally, as Hong (2015) notes students with dis/abilities in IHEs are less likely to feel empowered, to self-advocate and self-regulate. With decreased motivation to self-advocate, there are likely many other undergraduates, outside those represented in the data, who have a dis/ability and did not report. Furthermore, one of the most common accommodations afforded to students who have reported a dis/ability is additional time on exams (Stefanakos, n.d., para 2). This is especially important for pre-service teachers who in many states are required to take multiple standardized exams in order to become certified. In order to request additional time on these exams, students must navigate the request process with the test provider as well as provide documentation of a recent assessment of their dis/ability. All of these steps, especially for students who may not self-advocate, become increasingly more difficult. It is unrealistic to expect a student to navigate intersecting bureaucratic processes on their own. The intersection of dis/ability on top of minoritized racial and ethnic status is an additional challenge. In general, standardized exams required for admission and certification pose a significant barrier to students.

Standardized Testing

There has been a significant increase in testing for both Pk-12 students and students in IHEs since the inception of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002 and continued by the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). NCLB tied the performance of schools to student test results and ushered in neo-liberal policies in education which I discuss further in the next section. The reliance on testing resulted in additional pressure being placed on teachers to increase pass rates for Pk-12 students. NCLB's focus on teacher quality in turn subjected teachers to enhanced standardized exams to gain entry into the profession. In 2017, two years prior to NYSED's release

of the CR-S framework, a newly developed teacher certification exam, the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST), was found to be discriminatory with 46% of Latinx and Black candidates failing the exam on the first try, compared to 64% of White candidates (Harris, 2015b, para 5). As Johnson, Boyden and Pittz (2001) write, “When racism is measured only by intent, rather than impact, policies such as standardized testing are seen as race-neutral rather than as institutionally racist...What we know for certain is that standardized tests derive from racist origins and punish the victims of pre-existing inequalities” (p. 11). While the ALST is no longer required, teacher candidates in New York seeking their first certification must take other standardized exams for certification as well as admission to programs. Many undergraduate programs in the state still require the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for entry. Standardized exams, the SAT specifically, were birthed from the eugenics movement and used to develop an “intellectual racial hierarchy” to document white superiority (Kendi, 2017, p. 312). Furthermore, standardized exams show bias toward test takers who are neurodiverse or identify as having a dis/ability and whose intellect presents in ways that are not measured or weighed equitably by the exam (Trott, 2014). For example, test takers who have been identified as having dyscalculia, the easy ability to acquire and recall math skills, may have difficulty on the quantitative section of the exam yet score well in literacy and writing (Trott, 2014). However, these test takers may fail to reach an overall score to pass the exam. Furthermore, it has also been documented that test takers who are linguistically diverse struggle to pass standardized exams when achievement is held against a monolingual language framework (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014). Yet despite these reports articulating the bias within standardized exams, in 2018, NYSED required that all applicants to graduate teacher education programs must take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or an equivalent standardized exam (NYSED, 2016). This requirement is still in effect and is in opposition to the new NYSED recommendations in the CR-S framework to “expand the recruitment and retention of

a diverse staff with identities and experiences that reflect the varied experiences of the student population in New York State” (p. 52). Standardized exams for admission and certification into the teaching profession create an inequitable barrier that limits access to linguistically, racially, ethnically and neurodiverse candidates. Additionally, the cost of exams, of test preparation workshops and the overall cost of tuition and fees for academic programs provide an additional barrier to candidates who face limited income. Teachers need a community of resources and support to enter the classroom that are not currently embraced by neo-liberal policies.

Neoliberalism, Equity and Individualism

In general, colleges and universities are working within an increasingly neo-liberal framework tied to individualist ideology that is heavily reliant on testing, quantitative data, efficiency, privatization and competition (Barone, 2006; Hursh, 2017; Ravitch, 2014). The drive for these measures is to quantify student achievement toward a hegemonic norm that prioritizes individual success and capital gain at the expense of individual or collective well-being. Within the confines of neoliberalism, only individual success is rewarded. Hursh (2017) argues that within neoliberalism “the individual is reconceptualized not only as making choices within the limits of those provided by the market, but also as an autonomous entrepreneur responsible for his or her own self, success and failure” (p. 392). This entrepreneurial individualism situates success and failure within the individual and enables blame to be placed on individual people absolving the systems and institutions in which they are intertwined.

This individualist position stems from a place of privileging those in positions of power and race avoidance that does not account for the history of racism embedded within the United States nor the intersections of ableism, classism, sexism and heteronormativity among others. Kendi (2016) traces this racist logic of “personal responsibility” back to slaveholders who believed

African Americans to be more dependent than White individuals and less apt to take action to shift their economic position (p. 458). This belief is rooted in the idea of a racialized “other” that was invented as a justification for the institution of slavery and supported the idea of white superiority. The racist belief of “personal responsibility” denies a legacy of oppression, violence and policy that impacted African Americans ability to attend school, own land and secure loans for business. When applied to the school context, the racist belief of individualism ignores a similar legacy of oppression which denies entire racial groups of economic and social opportunities (i.e., jobs, housing, health) while at the same time blaming minoritized students for lacking in knowledge and skills of a curriculum that caters to the White middle class and accusing their families of being indifferent to the value of and support for their child’s education (Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, the notion of personal responsibility seeks to place power in individual action over community empowerment denying familial and social capital which values a commitment to community.

Individualism as an ideology allows key decision makers to place higher value on the status quo and systematically undervalues the wealth of knowledge found within diverse communities. Hursh (2017) in his definition of neo-liberalism continues, “society has no responsibility for people's welfare beyond that provided by the market” (p. 392). This ideology positions the self and market interactions above the needs of society as a whole and disconnects people from community and from working collectively in support of one another. The individualist culture that dominates IHEs is in direct conflict with the values that many communities of culture come from. Yosso (2005) argues that communities of color “nurture” community cultural wealth through six distinct forms of capital: aspirational, linguistic, resistant, navigational, familial and social. The specific forms of capital that nurture community are Familial, “the knowledge nurtured among family/kin that hold a sense of history, memory and cultural intuition” and Social, “networks of people and community resources...that can provide instrumental and emotional support” (Yosso, 2005, p. 79).

While not all individuals who identify as belonging to a community of color experience the Familial or Social capital Yosso describes, the central focus of community, of success being tied to the reliance and support of others is missing from neo-liberal policies and practices and therefore overlooked in college curriculum and systems. While Yosso speaks specifically of communities of color, these forms of capital also benefit White people, while not centering their experience. As Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2011) note regarding White children,

basing their identities on a sense of racial superiority puts White children at risk for developing an overblown, yet fragile, identity instead of developing a solid sense of self that is based on their interests, connections to people, and contributions to the community. (p. 50)

White people are at a greater risk of adopting damaging behaviors that lead to control and power hoarding. Vulnerability, especially in the face of cross-cultural interactions, is missing.

There is dehumanizing disconnect when systems promote an individualist approach and prepare teachers whose professional responsibility will be to nurture and support growth in young people. It is also a dehumanizing disconnect when supporting faculty and staff who are nurturing and supporting the growth of future teachers. Yet Yosso's relational capital points to a way forward, this form of relational capital decentralizes and shares power and resources with those in the community. It takes teaching and learning out of isolation.

In order to support students of color on the path toward graduation and ultimately a teaching career, the institutions need to repair the damaged relationship between communities of color and the institutions that have upheld racist ideology through policy, practice and procedures that build trust and value the perspective of pre-service teachers of color. NYSED is attempting to address this through two recent documents, the Statewide Diversity Report and the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework.

NYSED Diversity Report & Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework: Possibilities and Limitations

In 2019 the New York State Education Department (NYSED), working in partnership with scholars in the field of Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) education, released the CR-S Framework stating, NYSED (2019b) “has come to understand that the results we seek for all our children can never be fully achieved without incorporating an equity and inclusion lens in every facet of our work” (p. 6). The CR-S Framework sets forth a vision for education in New York State that places responsibility on students, parents, teachers and school leaders through to IHEs and state policy makers.

According to NYSED (2019b), the framework,

helps education stakeholders create student-centered learning environments that: affirm racial, linguistic, and cultural identities; prepare students for rigor and independent learning, develop students’ abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; and empower students as agents of social change. (p. 6)

In this framework, everyone who engages with schools, with education is assigned responsibilities for engaging in CR-S principles.

At the heart of Culturally Responsive-Sustaining education practices is the love, care and healing of communities who have been oppressed by the institution of education (Alim & Paris, 2017; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995). As Alim and Paris (2017) write,

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy is indeed about providing our children with the opportunities to survive and thrive, but it is also centrally about love, a love that can help us see our young people as whole versus broken when they enter schools, and a love that can work to keep them whole as they grow and expand who they are and can be through education. (p. 14)

CR-S is an anti-oppressive pedagogy “that centers itself - intentionally and intensely - on the humanity and possibility of students of color and on dismantling the accepted logics and prevailing discourses of colonialism” (Domínguez, 2017, p. 232). CR-S is connected to the long fight for equity within American schools. Although, it was not until 1995 that the term “culturally responsive” was coined by Gloria Ladson Billings in her seminal article *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* (Alim & Paris, 2017), CR-S has been traced back to African American schools during Reconstruction (1863 - 1877) when teachers were using “a multicultural curriculum, differentiation, and critical thinking, among other instructional practices that are culturally congruent for African American students” (Harmon, 2012, p. 19). CR-S gained further traction during the multicultural education and ethnic studies movements of the 1960’s on college campuses when students of differing identities demanded educational programs that affirmed their race and ethnicity. The drive for CR-S practices is the drive to develop anti-racist, culturally responsive schools that nurture all students on their educational path. Yet historically schools within the United States have not operated from an asset based and justice orientated perspective.

Both the NYSED Educator Diversity Report and Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework make recommendations for IHEs to adopt. The Educator Diversity Report (2019a) recommends IHEs to

- (1) Discuss educator diversity with stakeholders and set an intention to address it;
- (2) Partner to build pathways in your region;
- (3) Establish supports to enable candidates to clear the hurdles and overcome challenges;
- (4) Take an informed look at recruitment, admissions, and hiring practices;
- (5) Induct, develop, retain, and promote effective educators of color; and
- (6) Ensure transparency, accountability, and research (61).

The NYSED CR-S Framework (2019b) tasks IHES with “(1) creating a welcoming and affirming environment; (2) Fostering high expectations and rigorous instruction; (3) Identifying inclusive

curriculum and assessments; (4) Engaging in ongoing professional learning and support” (pp. 46 - 48). In both resources, these recommendations are grounded in potential actions steps IHEs can take. For example, in the NYSED CR-S Framework (2019b), the following are two of the four suggestions given on how to create a welcoming and affirming environment;

Identify school codes of conduct and discipline policies that disproportionately impact persons of color, students who are English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners, students with disabilities, students of different religions, gender identities, sexual identities, nationalities, socioeconomic backgrounds, housing status, migrant/refugee status, and other diverse identities.

Collaborate with teacher and leader candidates to address inequitable policies, and expand the development of tools to do so. (p. 46)

The NYSED CR-S Framework (2019b) is calling on stakeholders to focus efforts on “leveraging difference as an asset” essentially moving schools toward integration and changing policy (p. 7).

The NYSED Diversity Report uses language that makes the recommendations hard to grasp and quantify. Words like “discuss”, “partner” and “clear hurdles” are not targeted enough. In contrast, the NYSED CR-S Framework is action oriented, uses more directive language and provides tangible goals. Yet both frameworks make underlying assumptions about the actors in IHEs who will be enacting recommendations.

Institutional Consciousness

While these recommendations sound like movement in the direction of increased integration in IHEs, the report and framework operate from the assumption that IHEs are already able and prepared to engage in the work of CR-S. Where the NYSED Diversity Report and CR-S Framework fails is assuming that IHEs operate from an understanding of care and love as essential

elements of the teaching profession both within IHEs and in Pk-12 schools and have turned a critical lens on themselves and academia as an institution. Being that IHEs are spaces where “knowledge” is the main commodity, individual ideas are to be “original ” and scholarship is developed through a peer reviewed process, there is an assumption that IHEs already understand CR-S, are up to date with the latest research and are in a position to teach others. The CR-S Framework (2019b) suggests that IHE faculty, “Partner with teachers, school leaders, and district leaders to create materials to help in CR-S strategic planning and implementation at the classroom, school, and district level” (p. 48). Yet IHEs must first look inward at their own structures and power dynamics before helping others. As Alim and Paris (2017) argue CR-S is a pedagogy that “exists wherever education sustains the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling” (p. 1). Essentially, what CR-S practices are asking of faculty in IHEs is to open up the academy to knowledge from outside, from knowledge within cultures and communities. A knowledge, as Yosso (2005) argues, that values caring and love through nurturing and emotional support. The framework is asking for authority to be traded in for humility, and for individualism to be traded in for a collective process where everyone is both teacher and student. Cultural humility requires, “not only sensitivity to privilege and power within a narrow, situation-specific field, but a lifelong reflection and attention to how one’s position in the world might oppress others” (Stanwood, 2017, p. 28). As a workplace, this is not how IHEs currently operate as it requires that all actors engage in critical reflection and develop critical consciousness (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016).

The notion of critical consciousness (CC) was an educational pedagogy developed by Paulo Friere that could be used to

liberate the masses from systemic inequity maintained and perpetuated by process, practices and outcomes of interdependent systems and institutions. If people are not aware of

inequity and do not take action steps to constantly resist oppressive norms and ways of being, then the result is residual inequity in perpetuity....lack of a coherent CC knowledgebase will impede the reflection and action needed to transform systems and institutions that maintain and perpetuate systemic inequity that have dehumanizing consequences. (Jemal, 2017)

Unfortunately, key stakeholders including administrators, staff, and faculty who have not engaged in this important CC work will not be able to disrupt existing systems of inequality nor support the ability to disrupt the oppression of teachers and students of color.

Several examples of systematic oppression and marginalization exist within IHEs, where only certain work or individuals are valued to maintain race and gender-based hierarchies. In the academy, where peer reviewed publications are the fortune of the profession and a requirement for tenure and promotion, we find that those who are able to reach the highest levels of the hierarchy include deans, provosts, and full professors. These individuals are overwhelmingly white males. According to the 2013 Almanac of Higher Education, “only 22% of all four-year university presidents are women, 40% of all chief academic officers, and 43% of all other senior administrators” (Dunn, Gerlack and Hyle, 2014, p. 9). Despite education being a feminized profession male centric leadership models are prevalent. While the barrier to entry into power, privilege, and job security in the academy is peer reviewed publications, those who choose to prioritize and engage in more community-oriented activities, such as teaching and service, will fall to lower levels of the hierarchy. The hierarchy disadvantages those who don’t have tenure or never will (clinical and adjunct faculty) and marginalizes staff whose focus is on supporting the community of faculty and students in the college. Systematic and institutionalized processes dictate who can participate and vote in faculty governance and policy implementation thereby removing

their agency and decision making abilities within the institution in which they work which can be experienced by some as dehumanizing.

Moreover, research has shown that faculty of color are more likely to take on or be delegated more advising and unrecognized service responsibilities, such as acting as a diverse member of a hiring committee, that do not support in meeting metrics for tenure (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Turner, González, & Wood, 2008; Matthew, 2016). These power dynamics do not lend to vulnerable or trusting relationships between colleagues at work. As bell hooks (2003) writes, “While much lip-service is given to the notion of free speech in academic settings, in actuality constant censorship - often self-imposed - takes place” (p. 22). Faculty who do not yet have tenure or who are not on a tenure track, may feel less inclined to share opinions for fear of losing their job. IHEs determine, through values and practices, who is allowed to speak and govern and who is not. As Sonu and Bellino (2018) write, “it is not the policies that make a space inclusive - although policies can certainly make a space exclusive - but the ways in which people encounter each other that brings it into recognition as a place of inclusion” (p. 2). The relationship between people in the institution is a valuable place to begin adopting CR-S practices.

Practical Possibilities

Values around relationships within IHEs are misaligned with CR-S and therefore pose a challenge to implementing the CR-S Framework. Yet, these values around relationships also provide a ripe place to start making changes to adopt CR-S policy and practices. As hooks (2003) notes reflecting on her academic career, “I have sought the spaces of openness, fixing my attention less on the ways colleagues are closed and more on searching for the place of possibility” (p. 74). While the barriers to CR-S in IHEs are great, there are also numerous possibilities and routes to move forward.

In order to build IHEs that are truly inclusive, not merely diverse, of CR-S policies and practices implementation, the literature on CR-S in IHEs supports multiple areas that must be addressed. These areas include language on equity and justice in mission statements and strategic plans, recruiting and retaining faculty of color, recruiting and retaining students of color, fostering collaboration between internal and external partners, developing strong community ties, overhauling and revising the curriculum and instructional methods, supporting faculty development, and aligning resources, budgets and funding to support initiatives (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Han et al., 2014; Nieto, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Nieto, 2000; Seidl & Friend, 2002; Sleeter, 2012). While all of these areas are important, the concept of belonging is increasingly being included in discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Particularly for students, faculty, and staff of color, supporting a sense of belonging is essential to attend to. It includes the feeling of a place, as well as the community and personal connection that comes as a result of positive interactions with others (Meeuwisse, Severiens, & Born, 2010; Singh, Chang, & Dika, 2010). According to Singh & colleagues (2010) belonging “can be defined as the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment” (p.123). Institutions that cultivate a sense of belonging may increase their ability to retain pre-service teachers of color. Belonging develops by operating from an ethic of care. While the literature on institutional requirements affirms the need for collaboration, it does not center care as one of the needed elements to enact CR-S practices. Rivera-McCutchen (2012) contends,

Rather than maintaining the status quo, in schools where caring is an integral part of the culture, educators work to understand the experiences of their students and their families and use the *personal connections* they forge to help students achieve academic success. Schools that care develop resources to support their students *emotionally*, socially, and

academically, all in the effort to graduate students and provide them the opportunity to achieve success at the collegiate level. (p. 654)

In the quotation above I have italicized “personal connections” and “emotionally” as these are two key elements I will return to. The relationship between teacher and student that Rivera-McCutchen describes can also occur between faculty and student, staff and student, and staff and faculty in IHEs. This modeling of care has radical possibilities. As Nieto (2002) writes, “Teachers and future teachers who learn to work collaboratively and in a spirit of solidarity in their teacher education programs will be better prepared to help change schools to become more equitable and caring places for students of all backgrounds” (p. 186). Continuing to draw from Rivera-McCutchen (2012), tied to care, is the fundamental belief that the school is capable of succeeding through changing, that possibility exists. Care is the asset-based belief in the potential of people to grow and change. To embrace care is to embrace human emotion, joy, sadness, rage - a person’s humanity. The explicit absence of care in the literature on institutional requirements disconnects implementation guidelines from the people who will be engaging in the process of implementation. This is where the work of scholars looking specifically at CR-S leadership is especially beneficial.

Bass (2012) in her framework for institutional care asserts that institutions must “commit to employing caring teachers, faculty and staff” (p.85). If IHEs are recruiting, hiring and retaining a diverse faculty and staff and these employees do not demonstrate an ethic of care, then efforts to sustain CR-S will be hindered. Most importantly, Bass (2012) and Khalifa et. al. (2016) argue, leaders within institutions must facilitate relationship development. In order to operationalize the NYSED CR-S Framework, IHEs must (1) ground, value and support the development of interpersonal relationships; (2) commit to an integrated community of care for students (3) retain a diverse student, staff and faculty body (4) implement a CR-S curriculum.

Developing and Valuing Caring Relationships

The most important barometer for retention efforts must be how trusted, valued and safe a person feels within an institution. Domínguez (2017) summarizing Bhabha writes,

The heart of coloniality is not individual, or even systemic, actions of knowledge and content; it is about how we see, understand, and value the humanity of others: It is not the colonialist self or the colonized Other,” Bhabha writes, but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness. (p. 227)

As I have already covered, there is an immense history between communities of color and IHEs that has created a “disturbing distance.” The objective now is to foster relationship development that seeks to heal this distance and create a community that moves from representational diversity to integration. In order to build a community in which members view, respond, engage and interact with one another in new ways, the following is necessary: (1) seeking out the potential and possibility in colleagues; (2) maintaining humility; (3) critical collaboration and (4) accountability.

Human Possibility

Possibility is movement; it is an asset-based outlook that sees all human beings and the systems they operate as ever evolving. It is a critical hope for the future, of what could be. Central to developing relationships is focusing on the potential and possibility of colleagues engaged in collaboration. As adrienne maree brown (2016) writes, “Meaningful collaboration both relies on and deepens relationships - the stronger the bond between the people or groups in collaboration, the more possibility you can hold” (p. 159). The goal is not to force people into rapid change. Rather it is to meet community members where they are, with the learning they have and take it from there. The goal is to shift, even slightly, into a direction where people are more apt to share their resources versus protect what they own. As Kendi (2019) writes, “An activist produces power and

policy change, not mental change” (p. 209). Small changes to support collaboration can occur by viewing each member of the community through their talents and strengths. As adrienne marie brown (2016) argues, “Shifting our way of being is our tangible outcome. Systems change comes from big groups making big shifts in being” (p. 216). If some, not all people are able to move in a similar direction, this can support in making larger system wide changes that are called for in the NYSED CR-S Framework. As Love (2019) asserts,

...imagination informs what is possible, as students and teachers are constantly told what is not possible in education, especially for dark children....But my entire life is possible because dark folx freedom-dreamed. These dreams were filled with joy, resistance, love and an unwavering imagining of what is possible when dark folx matter and live to thrive rather than survive. (p. 92)

Seeing the possibility in others is important as it has the potential to heal relationships. As Love explained, the ability to imagine or dream together is a vulnerable act as disclosures can be met with a lack of curiosity and openness. This is especially true for communities of color. When members of a community view each other through an asset-based lens, seeing each other’s strengths first, defensiveness and the desire to close off from colleagues can be mitigated. Shifting to see potential in others allows for more vulnerability and dreaming, space to focus on what is possible in each other and the institutions in which we work. Equally as important is our own and our communities’ ability to act with humility.

Humility

Central to implementing CR-S is the ability to act with humility. Community members must be able to understand their own importance in relation to others and take responsibility for the impact of their actions within a community. As I have noted earlier, this is a challenge within IHEs

where the profession requires faculty to be “experts” and where a hierarchy exists between faculty, administrators, staff and students. In order to develop a culture that is humble, developing a set of community agreements can help to clearly identify characteristics of humility, provide a tool for self-reflection and act as a guide for interactions between community members. For example, the East Bay Meditation Center’s (EBMC) Agreements for Multicultural Interactions encourage community members to try on new ideas, “practice self focus”, “encourage full participation by all present” and “understand the difference between intent and impact” among others (EBMC, 2017). Understanding the difference between intent and impact is an important characteristic as a community member's intent may be different from the impact it had on an individual or a community of individuals. Focusing on intent can be more harmful as it denies the impact, or feeling the action caused the other person. It keeps the conversation centered in the binary of right and wrong instead of mutual understanding and unearthing solutions.

Additionally, the act of being humble requires a great deal of vulnerability. Leaders at IHEs must be willing to support community members through, as Domínguez (2017) notes, “affective change, a shift in ontology” (p. 228). Ultimately, in coming into new learning and critical consciousness, as Anzaldúa (2015) and hooks (2003) share, it is a profound and personal process that encompasses a wide range of feelings. To deny or sidestep these feelings, is to lose the heart of CR-S, to lose touch with humanity. People going through this process must be supported and encouraged to feel the feelings that arise. IHEs can support this new learning through additional time off, quiet spaces to read and reflect, workshops and events such as meditation and peers who can listen to one another.

Most importantly, the value placed on the feelings of faculty, staff and students of color must be at the forefront. The din of white fragility, as DiAngelo (2018) names it, has long existed and been privileged in IHEs. DiAngelo (2018) argues that emotions from white people in response

to race, “emotions such as anger, fear and guilt and behaviors such as argumentation, silence and withdrawal...work to reinstate white equilibrium” and maintain dominance in relationships” (p. 2). Implementing CR-S will require increased humility from white faculty, staff and students. The need for support for white colleagues is critical, as they may be entering into some of the most triggering learning which, due to power and privilege, can cause new harm and derail CR-S implementation. Bettina Love (2020) argues,

teachers of all backgrounds...need healing because they are trying to fight the biggest problems in this country one student at a time, with little to no emotional support. Yes, educators who are people of color feel the ever-present pain, weight, and torment of racism and need therapy, too, but White teachers have a different task: Many must first win the fight regarding racism within themselves. (para 4)

While Love speaks specifically of teachers, the same is true for faculty and staff in IHEs who are working to support future teachers. The feelings of white community members should not be the central focus of CR-S implementation, yet resources must be established to help guide white community members into new understandings through on campus anti-racist therapy, peer mentors and white affinity groups. This shift in focus is massive and the conflict it will create if not properly addressed cannot be understated.

Accountability

While each institution may approach this work differently, a core piece of implementing CR-S is empowering the community to challenge one another and to become equally responsible for their collective learning. As Nieto (2000) writes, “What is needed are not simply peers who support one another, essential as this may be, but also peers who debate, critique, and challenge one another to go beyond their current ideas and practices” (p. 185). Conflict will arise and IHEs

need to be prepared to support the community in valuing and navigating the issues that come up. To echo the CR-S leadership literature, having high standards is a key element to enacting care in education and embracing confrontation is a form of care that reinforces expectations (Rivera-McCutchen, 2012, p. 666). Without confrontation of ideas and actions, efforts to enact change to create IHEs that embody CR-S will be undermined. As Horsford, Grosland and Gunn (2011) write,

As with any form of organizational change, efforts to demonstrate and engage culturally relevant leadership in schools will face challenge...Educational leaders must therefore become familiar with not only the guiding principles, continuum, and essential elements of cultural proficiency but also the obstacles and resistance they will face as they seek to dismantle oppression and reveal privilege and entitlement within their respective organizations. (p. 598)

Relying on community members to operate from a place of interdependence, can support in navigating obstacles. As adrienne maree brown (2016) argues, “I love knowing how incredible it feels to have a need met, to be loved and cared for, and also know how incredible it feels to meet an authentic need” (p. 96). The motivation to implement CR-S must derive from an ethic of care for oneself and those in the IHE community. This motivation must also be supported by a collective plan to enact new policies and procedures to secure lasting changes in how IHEs are operated.

A collective plan for navigating resistance at the individual and institutional level is necessary and will help to mitigate the power individual and institutional resistance has in pulling focus from the goal of developing a CR-S IHE, in addition to staffing changes over time. The collective plan must include measures to maintain the community and hold individuals and the institution accountable for doing so. This means revising hiring practices and performance reviews to be aligned with both care and CR-S practices. Additionally, this plan must address and support

those in the institution who will take the lead and expend the most emotional energy working toward change.

Administrators must be held accountable for supporting and caring for those who are leading change within the institution. Especially as it relates to the distribution of labor across lines of race and gender. Within institutions, the labor to support diversity efforts generally falls to people of color, most often women (Newkirk, 2019). Administrators must be intentional about recognizing and valuing the labor exerted to support community change. Lack of support can lead to burn out and stalled efforts. As Wharton (2013) states,

Requiring workers to display an emotion that they may not truly feel creates a sense of emotional dissonance. This refers to the discrepancy between what is felt and what is expressed. Workers whose jobs require them to fake or suppress their true emotions may become emotionally exhausted or lose their ability to relate authentically to others. (p. 233)

This emotional labor is also associated with the amount of time listening to, coaching and supporting colleagues. Additionally, the levels of emotional labor will differ for faculty, staff and students with various and intersecting identity markers. It is imperative, as I stated earlier, for IHEs to set emotional expectations that take into consideration race and gender and allow for free expression of sadness, grief and anger in the workplace. Per Eisenberger and colleagues (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001) noted that “perceived organizational support meets socioemotional needs, provides assurance that aid will be available when needed, and indicates the organization's readiness to recompense efforts made on its behalf” (p. 42). IHEs might choose to show care to those engaging in emotional labor through flexible work schedules, additional time off, group outings, peer support networks, discussion groups for those who identify with a specific race or gender, accessible books and materials, spaces within the university/college for emotional release and referrals for counseling. Developing cohesive ways of collaborating

between faculty and staff are essential to lay a foundation for students to feel welcomed in the environment and for colleagues to hold one another accountable to the community.

Student Care

If IHEs are serious about retaining and preparing high quality teachers for K-12 classrooms, then we must provide an avenue for our students to know they will be cared for by the people and systems within the institution. Oakland, CA teacher Cami Jones shared on twitter,

as a teacher, i'm often told that the best weapon against burnout is self-care. strong disagree. the best weapon against burnout is a system that doesn't treat teachers and their labor as disposable cogs in a vast, broken machine humane systems, please. (Jones, 2018, Tweet)

This care of teachers must be integral to the operations of an IHE. Students must know that their concerns will be taken seriously, that action will occur even if the outcome is not the result they had sought and that any disclosure will be met with curiosity and a care that honors the student's humanity. Students should be encouraged to speak openly with presidents, deans, advisors, faculty, staff in person and online without fearing retribution. As Nieto (2004) writes, "by listening to students, we can learn how they experience school, how social and educational structures affect their learning, and what we can do to provide high-quality education for them" (p. 346). This can be accomplished in IHEs by supporting student collaboration, student affairs, advising, additional academic supports, funding for degree and certification expenses, as well as student events, clubs and activities.

Student Collaboration

In the case of IHEs, high quality education should be created with students. Students must be represented in the decision-making process of the IHE. Any plan created for the benefit and

support of students must seek to involve students in the process. Schools should enable students to work together in an advisory capacity to review student concerns and advocate for changes to policy, procedure and curriculum. These advisory teams must as, Villegas and Lucas (2004), assert “privilege the unique experiences and backgrounds of teachers of color as valuable and authentic resources in preparing them to meet the needs of diverse learners” (as cited in Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2004, p.11). Suggestions on improvement from students must be worked into strategic plans, with clear goals and deliverables. Students should be able to easily access information that illustrates how their ideas have been implemented throughout the IHE. In addition to collaborating with students on institution wide needs, IHEs must provide services that support individual students.

Student Affairs

In order for CR-S to be sustained, all school activities including advising and student affairs work should be steeped in CR-S practices that affirm and extend classroom learning. hooks (2003) argues, “serving students well is an act of critical resistance. It is political” (p. 90). Student services need to be a core site of change within IHEs. Much of the literature on CR-S is focused on changes within the classroom with the exception of Villegas and Lucas (2002) who argue that a strong network of supports need to be in place for students of color. This network includes, “orientation to the institution, a strong academic advisement system and ongoing monitoring of progress to completion of a degree, academic support services, counseling, mentoring and the use of a cohort structure” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 160). All of these strategies are aligned with providing care for students in both their personal and academic lives. Most importantly, these strategies support students in understanding how the institution functions and what values are important. Lisa Delpit (1995) asserts that there is a culture of power enacted in schools, for those who are not participants

“being told explicitly the rules of that culture make acquiring power easier” (p. 24). Student affairs can be the bridge to power in IHEs through advising, academic supports and events that center on advocacy and caring for students.

Advising

Advising plays a crucial function in the retention of all students, especially students of color. A strong personal caring relationship with an advisor has shown to deepen a student’s persistence to graduation and attachment to the college (Tinto, 2006). Additionally, Mitchell, Wood and Witherspoon (2010) in line with Villegas and Lucas (2002) argue for culturally responsive and developmental/holistic approaches to advising centered in student need. Lucas and Robinson (2002) contend that advising needs to be a site of advocacy, that the advisor should help students navigate the bureaucratic structures within higher education and support them in feeling comfortable on campus. In line with research on CR-S leadership, advisors are in a key position to promote student care and a culturally responsive school environment. Their direct work with students builds relationships and reduces anxiety (Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016). Additionally, critically conscious advisors can take on an advocacy role within the IHE and mentor students to become self advocates. This advocacy modeling supports pre-service teachers by showing them how to advocate for their future students within existing power structures (Robinson, Paccione, Rodrigue, 2003, p. 205). In plans to develop a caring and culturally responsive environment, the impact and support advisors provide should not be minimized, these positions hold great possibility.

Student Academic Supports

Furthermore, IHEs must also provide additional support resources to help students meet basic needs. Fike and Fike (2008) argue that student support services and receiving financial aid

positively correlate with retention. In line with the CR-S leadership literature, Villegas and Lucas (2002) argue that students of color should be held to the established academic standards for the college and should receive academic support to achieve them. This support should include supplemental basic skills non-credit courses in reading, writing and math, academic assistance centers that provide drop-in learning support, peer tutoring and study groups and workshops and seminars on special topics (Clewell as cited in Villegas & Lucas, 2002). For pre-service teachers of color, support must also include academic resources to pass state level teacher certification exams. These supports must include no cost workshops and tutoring to support students in passing state exams for certification and the Education Teacher Performance Assessment (EdTPA) where applicable.

There must also be a focus on supporting students with dis/abilities in IHEs. As previously stated, students of color are overrepresented in special education. These students have a unique need to know their rights within the IHE in order to navigate systems and advocate for services required by law. In order to receive services, students must self-identify as having a dis/ability. A worthwhile focus for IHEs is to encourage disclosure of the need for accommodations when appropriate. The work of supporting students with dis/abilities in IHEs should not be left to counselors in Accessibility Offices solely. Shared responsibility for student support is necessary and applying a universal design approach is one way that IHEs can enhance support for all students. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach to designing learning environments so that they are accessible to all and is drawn from the field of architecture where innovations such as sidewalk curb cuts and handicap ramps were incorporated into design to support individuals with disabilities (Hitchcock, Meyer, Rose, & Jackson, 2002). As a result of these innovations, people with disabilities do not have to ask for accommodations, they are built into the design of structures and beneficial to all who are able to more easily navigate sidewalks and building entries. Similarly,

a UDL approach to student support within IHEs would ensure that resources are readily available and built into the student support processes of the institution at many levels (Saha-Gupta, Song, & Todd, 2019). Advisors, especially those in roles supporting students outside of Accessibility Offices, need to be trained to ask specific questions, understand and explain accessibility law and differentiate advising strategies to support the various ways in which students learn. Similarly, faculty must be trained to facilitate disclosure from students and differentiate instruction to support students in their classrooms. A UDL approach to student support ensures that accessibility services are featured, advertised and marketed to all stakeholders to bring awareness to the supports available and make dis/ability visible and affirmed in the school environment. Providing accessible and reliable physical space and communication materials are equally important. Ultimately, the IHE culture must be one that moves to affirm dis/ability as an asset to the institution. This is not a small undertaking and is an area for additional research as it relates to both CR-S and critical care. Support for students with dis/abilities is a key area for consideration in order to retain more pre-service teachers of color.

Financial Health

A student's personal life cannot be removed from their academic career, in order to honor a student's humanity, we need to honor their basic needs. The financial aspect of earning a degree can put students at odds with taking care of their needs and the needs of loved ones. This is especially true for pre-service teachers who many times must quit their jobs in order to complete student teaching experiences that require full time unpaid work in Pk-12 schools. Students need access to financial resources to support in paying tuition and fees and creative solutions for student teaching. For students of color, facing "historical patterns of race, ethnic and economic class

inequality” the burden becomes greater (Price as cited in Trent, Lee & Owen-Nicholson, 2006, p. 1741). According to Trent, Lee and Owens-Nicholson (2006),

students of color are at a far greater risk for excessive debt burden; that aid type dramatically affects college choice...that students who borrow and fail to complete are more likely to be lower income, first-generation college students; and that accumulated loan debt matters for decisions about attending graduate school, such that those with greater debt opt out. (p. 1743)

This is especially true for pre-service teachers, as the cost burden is only exacerbated by the cost of teacher certification itself.

In many states, pre-service teachers must take and pass multiple standardized exams, as well as, the Education Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) in order to become certified. In New York State for example, the cost of the exams, edTPA and the certification total over \$1,000 and that does not include the cost for test support materials or re-takes in the event a test is not passed. Standardized exams and specifically teacher certification exams are documented to be biased (Harris, 2015a; Petchauer, 2015) and puts greater need on students to retake exams. This puts an added financial burden on students from low socioeconomic households and those who are linguistically, racially, ethnically and neuro diverse.

Additionally, costs for tuition, fees, and certification do not account for conflicts that may arise in a student’s life such as changes in work schedule, birth of a child or caring for an ill family member that delay degree completion. A student’s personal life can impact a student’s financial world by increasing the number of semesters to graduation, thereby increasing the number of times a student may need to pay semester fees. This account also does not factor in times when a student may need to drop or withdraw from a course and face a financial penalty. The financial burden is real and is a huge deterrent to getting more teachers of color in classrooms.

Colleges and universities serious about caring for students of color must work to provide scholarships, financial aid packages, grants and programs to support students in paying for their education. Institutions must determine what supportive programs exist in their locations and develop partnerships. In New York City for example, the Mayor's office created the NYC Men Teach initiative which provides funding for transportation and exams and proactive academic advising to recruit and retain men of color into teaching. Furthermore, programs like the City University of New York's (CUNY) Edge initiative, "help CUNY students who are receiving public assistance achieve academic excellence, graduate on time, and find employment" (CUNY EDGE, n.d., para 1). The program is currently looking to devise a plan to allow student teaching to count for employment hours to meet public assistance benefit requirements.

Student Events, Clubs & Activities

Events, activities and clubs supported by student affairs offices have the ability to dive further into topics that interest students studying CR-S pedagogy and to build community among students across disciplines. Echoing Nieto (2002), these spaces enhance student's capacity to collaborate and work in solidarity on issues related to culturally responsive education practices. Student affairs offices can provide facilitated spaces outside the classroom for students to discuss issues such as race, dis/ability and gender for example. These spaces provide students with a non-graded place to process their thoughts and practice what they have learned inside the classroom. It can also provide a location for advocacy work.

Student events, clubs and activities can support students as they hone their capacity for advocacy work. Events can be held around local or statewide advocacy issues related to teacher education and the education of PK - 12 students. For example, in New York state prior to new certification exams being implemented there is an open comment period. Student Affairs officers

can hold structured events to encourage students to provide feedback to the state. Additionally, student affairs operations can facilitate students to develop a network of peers who can support them post-graduation when they enter into teaching professions. Once students graduate, they will enter into different school communities who may or may not adopt CR-S principles. The peer networks that pre-service teachers build during their IHE experience can help with the isolation some may feel once they enter the classroom. This is especially true when teachers are faced with the inevitable job of interrupting racism in their schools. As Bryce (2019) writes, “Teachers need to interrupt racism with courage and intentionality, aware that our actions impact the lives of our students now and for years to come” (p.3).

Diverse Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

An IHEs ability to retain culturally diverse faculty indicates how successful student retention strategies will be (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Villegas and Lucas contend that If a school is unable to maintain a diverse faculty, it is unlikely that the institution will be able to maintain and support a diverse student body. Tinto (2006) argues, “Faculty, especially in the classroom, are key to institutional efforts to enhance student retention” (p. 5). Faculty are in a direct role to care for students by providing mentorship, advisement and support both in and out of the classroom. The ability to retain a diverse faculty speaks to the level of care given to cultivating and keeping faculty at the institution. Smith argues that faculty of color specifically, “serve as symbols of the interest the institution has in people of color...create a comfortable environment for students of color...broaden the range of what is taught and ensure that people of color play more than a token or symbolic role in institutional change” (as cited in Antonio, 2003, p. 16). It is also imperative that when speaking of “diverse faculty” that IHEs “nurture differences among racial groups” and take into account varying identities between and among racial groups (Kendi, 2019, p. 180).

Additionally, Antonio (2003) argues that student diversity and faculty diversity are interdependent. He contends an increase in student diversity can support an increase in faculty diversity, “Racial diversity in the student body reduces the isolation experienced by faculty of color” and opens up the curriculum to more culturally relevant pedagogies” (p. 16). He argues that student advocacy can lead to institutional change, including the push to hire more faculty of color and revamp the existing curriculum. Students may have a greater ability to enact change as they are the consumers of the institution, paying tuition and fees for their education. Whether a diverse faculty will retain a diverse student body or a diverse student body will retain a diverse faculty, both are indicative of the institution’s commitment to retaining people of color in IHEs. Representation and reducing isolation are actionable actions of care that can be taken to retain more pre-service teachers of color.

There is overlap in the literature between the strategies used to retain faculty of color and those used to retain students of color. Piercy et al (2005) argue that to maintain faculty of color, the following must be present in the university: sustained faculty mentorship, supportive collegial community, leadership opportunities, participation in program planning, means for complaints to be heard and acted upon, and inclusiveness in retention programs. Villegas and Lucas (2002) also contend that faculty of color need support in qualifying for tenure and promotion (p. 166). This means that the labor faculty of color engage in must count toward tenure and promotion. This means honoring committee work and advising as key requirements for tenure. The value placed on advising specifically will benefit students. For students, the need for strong relational advising from faculty has proven to be a support in the persistence to graduation as does support from staff advisors and non-faculty employees within an IHE.

A diverse staff is also critical to retaining and supporting pre-service teachers of color. Yet within IHEs there is a division between faculty and staff that is generated by a hierarchy between

positions. Faculty are the scholars whose knowledge and research drive the curriculum and make the institution prestigious. Staff are the operators whose labor keeps the systems within IHEs functioning. Staff are charged with managing the numerous offices within a college, including Financial Aid, Bursar, Registrar, Admissions, Advising, Student Affairs, and Counselling. These offices are directly responsible to support and care for students through attending to their basic, personal and academic needs. However, the labor of staff is undervalued in relation to the labor of faculty. Staff are viewed as a support to faculty and institutional administrators, not as colleagues who work in tandem to meet shared goals and uphold the mission of the IHE. This was evident in many IHEs responses to the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic. During this time faculty and students were moved to work remotely via online classes to support social distancing, yet staff were asked to report to campus. As Perry (2020) wrote in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “If we’re telling students and faculty members to work remotely — while demanding that staff members come in and share office space with one another — the message is clear about whose health matters to the institution” (para 2). This decision illustrates that many IHEs are not unified communities that equitably care for all members. Within staff roles hierarchies also exist across race and gender lines.

Within staff roles there are additional hierarchies between those in office positions and those in invisible positions such as maintenance, security and food service. Here this is a division of racial and gender diversity that aligns with the power hierarchy. As hooks (2003) writes, “white supremacy is easily re-inscribed when individuals describe communities of students and faculty as “all white” rather than affirming diversity, even if it’s evident only by the presence of a few individuals” (p. 37). All members of the community must be seen and valued equally for their contribution. Cleaning a bathroom is equally important as determining a student’s financial aid or teaching, it all has the power to be rooted in care. A clean bathroom meets a basic need. Having aid

disbursed to pay for classes meets a basic need. Students who have basic needs met are more focused on learning and have decreased levels of anxiety. Staff within an institution shape the institution and have the power to help change the institution all for the benefit of students. No person and no position is insignificant. Equitable recognition for staff labor must be built into the culture of the IHE with a focus on bridging the divide between faculty and staff. This recognition can be fostered at university wide meetings, supported by faculty and staff working groups, and communicated through websites, emails and press releases.

Care and Love Through Pedagogy

As I have discussed throughout this paper, CR-S practices must occur outside of the classroom in order to build and sustain care as an institutional practice. This is not to diminish the importance of CR-S practices within the classroom. Villegas and Lucas (2002) argue that institutions seeking to retain students of color must have “a multicultural curriculum that brings the voices and experiences of historically excluded groups from the margins to the center” (p. 163). Wilkins and Lall (2011) in a study of 18 black and minoritized pre-service teachers in the UK found that students experienced a disconnect between issues of race and diversity in the curriculum and classroom, citing the curriculum to be “superficial” and deficit focused (p. 380). Tolbert and Eichelberger (2016) in their article provide a case study of one student, who identifies as both bilingual and biracial, and their experience with a social justice pre-service teacher preparation program. Serina Eichelberger, the student and co-author found that while her teacher preparation program promoted implementing “culturally and linguistically relevant instruction...some members of the teacher education faculty and administration attempted to silence her for holding them accountable to the same standard” (Tolbert & Eichelberger, 2016, p. 1032). The curriculum is a powerful tool to either affirm students or exclude them. Villegas and Lucas

(2002) contend that the curriculum “signals to all students...that the institution values diversity” and helps “students of color develop trust in the institution” (p. 163). Actively valuing the scholarship, history and experiences of people of color in the curriculum is an act of care when it is intentionally moved to the center.

IHEs must review how courses are being taught and the scholarship being reinforced in the classroom. Nieto (2004) contends that “teacher education programs still function within a monocultural framework, and, because of this, few teachers are prepared for the numerous cultures, languages, lifestyles, and values they will face in their classrooms” (p. 107). H. Richard Milner (2015) notes that students studying anthropology or sociology are expected to study race “because it is understood that race is a very real factor in people’s lives,” he continues, “I recommend this emphasis in teacher education, as professionals are being prepared to work with students whose experiences are shaped by their racial (and ethnic) identity” (p. 151). If education programs are modeling how and what to teach in future classrooms, the education pre-service teachers of color receive must be reflective of the experience of a diverse student body.

Furthermore, the curriculum needs to be designed to engage in discussion of critical and uncomfortable realities both in the college classroom and in clinical placement schools (Nieto, 2004). Schools of education must provide support to both students of color and white students as they navigate their student teaching, practicum, field and observation experience in schools. As Tolbert and Eichelberger (2016) argue,

Rather than encouraging Teachers of color to ‘grin and bear it’ in mediocre placement classrooms, how could we work to prepare them with the political and diplomatic skills they will need to voice critique and dissent against inequitable educational policies and practices...so they might be better prepared to effect change as beginning teachers in underserved schools. (p. 1039)

Again, the conversation returns to advocacy for students in Pk-12 schools. Advocacy must be layered and taught. Pre-service teachers within the IHE must learn as part of their programs how to advocate with PK-12 students and how to guide students in advocating for themselves. Faculty and staff working within the IHE must advocate on behalf of their pre-service teachers for resources, programs and policy changes. In order to best prepare pre-service teachers, the institutions that train them must model behavior around advocacy. It is imperative that what is taught in education coursework must also be modeled in the university classroom.

These practical possibilities for the implementation of CR-S in IHEs are large and require great collaboration and leadership. None of the solutions included in this paper are simple, and yet all can be made possible through incremental sustained action.

Implications

The path to retaining more pre-service teachers of color through a focus on integration in IHEs is complex, layered and daunting. In this paper I have presented some of the immense challenges and countered with solutions to support movement toward developing communities that are culturally responsive and sustaining. The approach for the way forward is both collective and individual. It relies on a new understanding of data, personal action, and an unending amount of self-reflection.

Data and Assessment

NYSED (2019a) states in the Educator Diversity Report,

The Department is limited in its ability to provide a fully comprehensive report on the issue of diversity in New York State's educator pipeline. Not all data collected by the State is disaggregated by race or ethnicity and the extent to which diversity data is collected or

tracked in individual institutions of higher education or local school districts varies statewide. (p.15)

Data on diversity is not standardized and we need to come to terms with the messiness of human identity. The numbers can never fully and neatly represent the diverse and intersecting identities of all people. Waiting for data to be reliable, to be neatly organized, categorized and unchanging, is unrealistic. This need for reliability is based in the perceived ease of quantifying a homogenous white racial identity. Waiting for reliable data stalls action. The qualitative feedback from people in the present should matter more. The goal for data collection and review needs to be rooted in caring practices that seek to humanize the people who are represented by numbers. The reliability of numbers should not be more important than the experience of people, especially people of color in IHEs.

Accepting the messiness of data is not to say that we should not continue to do a better job of collecting and disaggregating data. In order to move out of the categorization binary of white and “non-white or other,” data needs to be both identified and distilled further. The reticence to collect diversity data is also a reticence to name and identify race. Part of collecting data is to see and become curious about race in IHEs in order to do a better job of serving and supporting students of color in the institution. Disaggregating data is also important as terms like “students of color” or “faculty of color” act as monolithic identifiers for a wide range of races and ethnicities. When used in reporting, findings can be misleading. NYSED (2019a) reported that the student of color to teacher of color ratio in NYC is 1:30 with the ratio of White students to White teachers at 1:4 (p. 21). Yet the term “teacher of color” refers to teachers who have identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Multi-Racial. This 1:30 ratio does not equate to racial parity and certainly does not factor in other intersecting identity markers. These numbers are reinforcing the

idea of integration as “body mixing” or the physical assignment of students and teachers to examine the existing racial composition in a school (Horsford, 2011). These numbers cannot qualify the culture and climate in schools. As part of implementing CR-S in IHEs, we must embrace the messiness of the human experience and rethink how we are collecting data to support students. While data should not prevent action, it is also important in assessing policies, procedures, curriculum, programs and progress in meeting CR-S goals. The mechanism for overcoming performative diversity is both the quality of the relationships between people and hard data that proves results.

It is one thing to say that an institution is striving to adopt CR-S practices and another to assess and follow up to ensure that actions are having the intended impact. IHEs must commit to proactively evaluating their impact affirming student identities and perpetuating or ending discrimination within the institution. While the IHE may have its own institutional research division, it is important to collect and evaluate student feedback on events, advising sessions and common processes in the school. This is especially true for policies around dismissal and probation along with the systems in place to support students who may be placed on probation by the institution. It is also important in reviewing a pre-service teacher's experience in the field as this impacts their desire to remain in the profession and therefore becomes a concern for both retention in the institution, in the profession and for the pre-service teachers own well-being. Continuous quantitative and qualitative assessment provides the feedback loop and to determine and prioritize departmental goals and adjust services to meet student needs.

Action

Waiting for the college President, Chief Diversity Officer, or Dean of a school of education to lead community members in the work of CR-S practices is not an option. Movement can happen

before formalized plans are created. As Kendi (2019) writes, “Every single person actually has the power to protest racist and antiracist policies, to advance them, or, in some small way to stall them” (p. 141). As members of IHEs it is our responsibility to take action to improve the culture and climate of our colleges and universities. As Tatum (2017) writes, “The task of each of us, White and of color, is to identify what our sphere of influence is (however large or small) and to consider how it might be used to interrupt the cycle of racism” (p. 199). Within our roles, there is learning we can undergo and changes we can make from instituting new student events, to revising curriculum, to focusing on care in advising, to revising the language used on common students forms to be less oppressive. Book clubs are a simple way to start and build thoughts and communication around a shared text. This can then lead into introspection on the culture in the IHE, the relationship between colleagues and the policies and procedures in the IHE. Our progress can be measured by the relationships we have with students, faculty and staff within the institution. adrienne maree brown (2017) writes “We can reach the people we need to reach and measure our work by the way the relationships feel. It is hard work, but it is accessible to anyone, anywhere at any scale” (p. 133). We can talk with our colleagues and build a community around shifting the culture in our institutions to be more caring. In some spaces, there will be a leadership team who believes and supports CR-S and the drive to develop a caring community. In other spaces, this may not be the case. This is where enacting Kendi’s stall tactic can be beneficial to hold onto integrity in the face of policies, practices and procedures that are not aligned with care. Everyone has power that can be enacted to change systems.

Self-Reflection

Before we are able to take action within our own sphere of influence, we must first look at ourselves and seek to understand our own complex identities. bell hooks (2003) writes, “Much of

the white-supremacist thought and action we have all unconsciously learned surfaces in habitual behavior. Therefore, it is that behavior we must become aware of and work to change” (p. 37). Here, it is useful to highlight my own experiences as a way to discuss the potential value of self-reflection. For me, prior to taking any action, I needed to check my good intentions, my ability to be self-congratulatory, my white saviorism and my entitlement. I was called in by a colleague who reminded me that any work toward developing an anti-racist or CR-S school culture needs to be rooted in developing a school based in freedom from domination which includes my own freedom from domination. This is not about me as a White woman saving students of color from an oppressive institution. This is about me understanding my own oppression and how I enact oppression without my internal work becoming the focus. I am breaking the legacy of oppression that is constructed in the belief and enactment of whiteness. I will not pretend that any of this work was easy.

For me, there are three core areas that have helped me to grow, many of which I have already outlined as strategies in this paper: embracing conflict, humility and community. I work, or more like struggle sometimes, to be open to conflict and claim my own racism when it arises. Feeling criticized is a big trigger for me that elicits a whole host of vulnerable emotions and can enact my “fight or flight” responses. Yet this discomfort I feel is not more important than hearing the feedback provided. As DiAngelo (2018) writes, “Such moments can be experienced as something valuable, even if temporarily painful, only after we accept that racism is unavoidable and that it is impossible to completely escape having developed problematic racial assumptions and behaviors” (p. 4). Embracing my racist beliefs is the path toward freedom from perpetuating oppression both internally and externally. It dispels the myth of my altruistic “goodness” and right sizes my ego. Additionally, I have been made acutely aware that I need to work out any

uncomfortable feelings with people who have consented to having these conversations with me so as to not put my racist “garbage” back into the community.

Embracing my own racism is humbling as I work to continually learn about myself. Throughout the literature, this commitment to cultural humility with a focus on self-reflection is echoed. Voogd Cochrane et al. (2017) write, “Culturally humility requires that each of us respond to culture as an ongoing process, accompanied by regular self-reflection. How carefully am I listening? What more can I learn?” (p.3). Reflective practice for practitioners is also encouraged in literature looking at CR-S institutions and leadership (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Han et al., 2014; Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016; NYSED, 2019; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). With this humility also comes the understanding that I need to move back and work to support the leadership of people of color who are dedicated to CR-S in my institution. This support is necessary both publicly and privately in my community.

Finally, building a community of support is also a challenge for me. I do not like to ask for help, I prefer to struggle to do things alone, I seek to take care of others and I want to be seen as the star earning all the praise. I adopted this “pull myself up by my bootstraps” mentality from my working class and blue-collar parents who were raised by parents who lived through the depression. Allowing a colleague to support me on a project was a revolutionary act that required me to trust someone else. Trusting is a vulnerable act as it makes disappointment a potential and calls for honest communication. It also stirs up fears of abandonment and criticism. Building community requires gentleness, responsiveness and a ton of humor. This is not to say that critical analysis is absent. Community care is maintaining high standards and pushing each other to be better. As I argued earlier, the relationships within the community are the barometer for how the work is progressing and truly reflect how humane the institution has become.

Conclusion

In order to implement culturally responsive-sustaining education practices in more than the margins, educational institutions must exhibit and develop a critically caring community. Schools of education can work toward accomplishing this by modeling relationship development between students, faculty and staff, supporting a reflective community that interrogates power structures, enacting CR-S practices in advising and student affairs and engaging the community in manageable tasks. While the framework in this paper along with the New York State Education Department's (2019b) framework for Culturally Responsive-Sustaining education act as tools for change, the root of the work lies in how individuals who shape institutions "see, understand, and value the humanity of others" (Domínguez, 2017, p. 227).

Recruiting pre-service teachers of color to lead in increasingly diverse Pk-12 classrooms is vitally important and the need is well documented. In order to retain pre-service teachers of color in teacher education programs, students must feel respected, supported and valued through the curriculum, student services and interactions with faculty and staff. Students must be thoughtfully included in the process of developing a retention strategy that will ultimately enhance their experience.

The framework presented here is significant and daunting. There is no way to enact a perfect plan and yet IHEs must start, even in seemingly small ways, to address the impact of racism on the retention of students of color. Only through critical and difficult conversations on racism in teacher education will growth and change be possible. Only through critical and difficult conversations will any plan to support students of color be sustained.

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