

**“More than enough” to “surface level:”
Preliminary Findings on Preservice and In-Service Teacher
Reflections on Antiracist Pedagogy in Teacher Education**

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Abstract: Early findings from an ongoing mixed-methods research project about pre-service teachers’ meaning-making regarding antiracist education describe the nuanced ways teacher candidates interpret and internalize teacher preparation. We focus on how participants make meaning of classroom activities aimed at overcoming barriers based on identities and circumstances (including, racism, dis/ability and inclusion, social class, gender and sexuality, social and environmental justice) to assess (pre)practitioner perspectives on the field of education. Three preliminary findings from interviews conducted thus far — the needs 1) to emphasize the structural nature of racism, 2) to more readily situate teaching as political work, and to present antiracism as an orientation to educator identity — provide material for discussion of implications for teacher preparation programs.

2026: We find ourselves in the midst of a tumultuous socio-cultural-political moment shaping education in the United States at all levels. Daily, we read articles and news stories covering the elimination of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, amid the ongoing fight to abolish the federal Department of Education. As a current tenured professor and educational historian (Mario), a recent Ph.D. and abolitionist YPAR scholar (Ana Juliana), and a current Ph.D. candidate and interdisciplinary ecofeminist scholar (Amanda) we are situated disciplinarily within Foundations of Education and teacher education. We each arrive at this moment with continued questions, uncertainties, and even fears about what futures are becoming possible for preservice teachers we (and our colleagues) have mentored in our courses. In addition, we recognize the pressing obligation for teacher educators and schools of education to foster courses and learning spaces through which preservice teachers can construct and explore identities, perspectives, and practices to support the needs of antiracist and inclusive classrooms. Authoritarian systems and repressive policy movements deeply shape and further challenge our academic freedom and First Amendment rights. In this moment, educators suffer under a heavy set of constraints as they navigate the changing field, diverse students, and micromanaged schools and classrooms. Education programs that tailor instruction to the constraints under which teachers are having to work provide poor teacher preparation. Upon graduation from a constraint-aligned program, teacher candidates lack practical ability to implement meaningful antiracist philosophical values; and, more generally, lack deep self-awareness of their positionality in relation to their diverse students/classrooms. Throughout our discussion, we refer to socially or politically imposed constraints on teachers as *barriers*. Barriers include burnout factors, pedagogical training/exposure, and thwarted self-awareness of professional positionality.

As we think about how preservice teachers cultivate inclusive and antiracist identities, we recognize that their professional identities become curated through curricular experiences they have, barriers they face, and privileges they enjoy in their undergraduate experience (Ladson-Billings, 2021). Not only how teachers are prepared, but how teachers perceive and cultivate their professional identities while being prepared affects the ways in which they engage practices to support diverse and inclusive classrooms. Culturally sustaining pedagogy, trauma-informed

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care, ecojustice/sustainability pedagogy, and inclusive teaching practices are things teacher candidates *learn* (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Oamek, 2023; Rushton, 2021). Our study grew out of our experiences, individually and as a teaching team, within a Foundations of Education course rooted in the histories of US schooling. We are two former teaching assistants (Amanda and Ana Juliana) and the current professor (Mario) of the class. Students in EDU 310 explore how educational in/equity continues to be shaped by mutually reproducing structures of oppression, namely white supremacy, heterocispatriarchy, racial capitalism, dis/ability, and more. Students consider topics such as colonial schooling, early efforts to make public education a “common good,” positive and negative effects of segregation and integration, Supreme Court cases shaping ongoing education policy, and broader ways education is enmeshed with institutions shaped by racial capitalism. Students read James Baldwin, Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, Monique Morris, and Bettina Love. Students also engage in personal reflections on their own social identities and social locations as well as complete a final creative project enacting decolonial and antiracist assessment practices (Kingston, et al., 2024). Course 310 is required of all students enrolled in teacher preparation programs and is situated in a larger school of education with three key organizational signatures, two of which — still in effect as of June 2026 — are inclusive and antiracist pedagogy. To understand both the needs of the students we serve as well as what continued support is needed to prepare preservice teachers in constructing diverse, antiracist, and inclusive classrooms, we are engaged in an ongoing mixed methods study exploring the experiences of preservice and in-service teacher with making meaning of their teacher preparation program’s use, alignment, and implementation of antiracist pedagogy. A deeper understanding of how students become inclusive and antiracist teachers — by their own perceptions — provides data to address experiences, barriers, and opportunities not only in our foundations course but in the larger school of education curriculum. We seek to understand how meaning-making influences how pre-service teachers conceptualize their role as educators.

Our methodological approach builds on our previous research about the role of assessment in teaching decolonial and antiracist pedagogy (Kingston et al., 2024) by investigating how pre-service teachers make meaning of their positionality, that is, their pedagogical philosophies, while negotiating institutional barriers and identifying opportunities to do transformative (transgressive) practice. The urgency of learning how to teach inclusively is dramatically intensified in our current sociopolitical context as educators, students, and educational spaces continue to undergo threats and actions to eliminate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in schooling spaces. Shining a light on Education students’ meaning making about instruction in inclusive pedagogy illuminates the ongoing need to discuss barriers and opportunities related to race, gender, sexuality, and class; as well as the work needed to center antiracist, feminist, and environmentally and socially just educational frameworks. A review of literature on antiracist pedagogies and their use in teacher preparation programs shows how educators and researchers understand student experiences with critical pedagogies. Baldwin’s (1963) analysis of education as a mechanism for structural transformation or reinforcement of hierarchies as well as Sardabi, et al.’s (2018) and Bartolomé’s (2004) arguments for reshaping teacher identity in teacher education through critical pedagogy, provide a theoretical perspective on which to build the framework for our study. Three preliminary findings from interviews conducted thus far in the study — the needs to emphasize the structural nature of racism, to more readily situate teaching *as* political work, and to present antiracism as an orientation to educator identity — provide material for discussion of implications for teacher preparation programs.

On Being an Antiracist Educator

Antiracist pedagogy is a paradigm within critical theory meant to explore the impact of racism via structures and institutions as well as what social justice in society must look like in practice (Arneback, 2022; Blakeney, 2005). Therefore, pedagogically, antiracist pedagogy offers both a power analysis of current systems as well as heuristics for how we might imagine future systems and structures for just and equitable communities. As a framework for analysis, antiracist pedagogy examines historical structures producing dominant culture and marginalization. It also examines the ways individuals experience biased structures through systemic inequity and privilege (Arneback, 2022; Blackeney, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Antiracist pedagogy is rooted in consciousness-raising as core to educational practice and is inherently interdisciplinary in approach, drawing from many fields to analyze power within historical and present-day structures/identities as well as to radically imagine alternative futures (Blakeney, 2005; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Core to consciousness-raising is a commitment to both self-reflection and active reimagining of educational spaces — as well as actively working to transform these reimaginings into realities (Blakeney, 2005; hooks, 1994). Antiracist classrooms integrate content written by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) scholars, ongoing self-reflection and self-awareness on the part of instructors and students alike, ongoing analyses of how power structures shape a classroom space, and how power structures shape notions of fairness and learning (Arneback, 2022; Kishimoto, 2018).

Preservice teachers who explore antiracist pedagogy are “better equipped to contribute to the project of education as a means of liberation” (Kulick & Cartun, 2025, p. 2). However, Zembylas (2021) explores how emotions can complicate antiracist teacher preparation as preservice teachers process guilt, anger, etc. Both Zembylas (2021) and Matias (2016) examine the emotionality of whiteness in teacher education, which can become a barrier to white preservice teachers if they do not learn and actively process their emotionality around issues of race. Gadd (2023) explores specifically the ways in which white womanhood works to uphold white supremacy, and the ways in which white women being the dominant demographic in US education must interrogate their “comfort zones” when speaking and learning about race and antiracism. As a result of barriers presented by white teachers’ comfort zones, BIPOC teachers are often burdened with teaching about race in settings where white colleagues are protected from the work of antiracist teaching by their ignorance of racialized barriers (Kohli & Pizarro, 2022). While many teacher preparation programs engage in reflection-based practices on race within an antiracist pedagogy, without opportunity for *critical* practice teacher education programs can ultimately reify dominant biases and prejudicial positions about race (Gorski & Dalton, 2020).

Developing and utilizing *affective* tools is a prerequisite for healthful and productive practices in engaging preservice teachers in the process of becoming antiracist pedagogues. Finding emotionality surrounding issues of (anti)racism must be made part of antiracist teacher education by allowing for reflective and critical practices of recognizing and working through emotions. Kulick and Cartun found preservice teachers were able to connect personal emotions to structural analyses so that both individual and institutionalized racism are addressed. Kulick and Cartun (2025) also call for a normalizing of discomfort within teacher education as a tool for antiracist learning so that students can name their emotions and explore them in critical ways. In addition, developing shared definitions of racism, as well as other cognate terms, proves to be a critical practice in antiracist teacher education. Gadd (2023) notes sharing an understanding of core concepts is a particularly important practice to help preservice teachers explore

emotionalities around race so as to critically reflect on their own positionalities from narratives of white supremacy to aspirations racially messianic in outlook. Given that the teaching field and teacher preparation programs enroll predominantly white women — including the program in which we and our course are situated — we recognize the imperative to not just include information about antiracist teaching within the course but to facilitate learning in which students can explore identities of *being* an antiracist educator.

Teacher education is a deeply politically contested site. The field is scrutinized and socially critiqued, yet too often critics only reach service-level practitioner analysis rather than a deeper philosophical and political analysis. We look to critical pedagogy to help us make sense of teacher education in foundational terms. We define critical pedagogy as instructional practice that interrogates narratives of dominance. Guiding teaching in a way that is subversive of standardized forms of learning, critical pedagogy draws from an epistemological stance that posits students can build their own meaning and weave their own worldviews when learning. For critical pedagogues, educators facilitate a process rather than "force" knowledge or behavior onto or into students. Critical pedagogy accomplishes its pedagogical aims by prompting students to interrogate what they are learning in school. Interrogation of curriculum helps students "unlearn" previous lessons that may enforce dominant thought and "relearn" their own ideas and use them to construct solutions to world issues (Wink, 2005, p.67). Within teacher education, critical pedagogy can also help us make sense of how teachers conceptualize their work and identities as educators as well as how these conceptualizations can reinforce or dismantle hierarchies of oppression (Baldwin, 1963). Teacher professional identity can be understood as a complex, ongoing process (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Trent, 2010) in which teachers negotiate their professional positionalities — that is, how they take up and make sense of their role as teachers within the bounds of their abilities and values (Sardabi et al., 2018; Maclean & White, 2007). Teacher education is rightly assessed by its ability to shape and influence the long-term beliefs and practices of educators, what we may call teachers' professional identity. Teachers' professional identity gets shaped and reshaped throughout teacher preparation in a way unmatched by any other period of career development (Korthagen, 2004). Our study draws on critical pedagogy to surface implicit assumptions embedded in a teacher preparation program at an R1 school of education. We use our study as an analytical process to understand how preservice and in-service teachers make meaning of their pedagogical experience in teacher education programs. We critically interrogate how participant positionality shapes perspectives on program curriculum. Outcomes of our study influence choice of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment for effective education of teachers as critical pedagogues.

Our study utilizes a mixed-methods approach through participant completion of surveys and semi-structured interviews. Participants were individuals who have completed the foundations of education course which we taught/teach, who are 18 years of age or older, and who are currently enrolled in or have completed a teacher preparation program. We coded our data using critical pedagogical analysis of teacher preparation as a practice for deconstructing or reifying dominant narratives (Baldwin, 1963; Sardabi, et al., 2018; and Bartolomé, 2004). While we reached out to individuals fitting eligibility as far back as 2014 to complete the initial survey, we found that many email addresses are no longer monitored or are now inactive. We ultimately recruited 30 individuals who completed the survey, and based on interest, recruited (so far) from our survey completers 10 interviewees. Based on the survey responses (n=30), 84.1% of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 24. 83.7% of participants identified as white, while 7% identified as black American and, both at 4.7%, Asian and Native American. Sixty-nine point

nine percent of participants completing the survey self-identified as cisgender women, along with 28.6% as cisgender males; roughly 10% of participants identified as nonbinary or other. Participant makeup reflects where the study takes place: in a predominantly white (and cisgender female) teacher preparation program. White students/young adults make up most of the school of education student body, as well as the university as a whole. The majority of interviewees are white, including 6 cisgender white women, which reflects the population of the teaching field at large. At the time of interviews, seven individuals were enrolled in teacher preparation as undergraduate students, two were enrolled in graduate teacher programs, and one was a practitioner in a middle school. Table 1 presents further details about our participants:

Participant's Pseudonyms	Race	Gender	Age	Current Status
Thomas	White	Cisgender Male	18-24	Undergraduate Student
Sara	Hispanic / White	Cisgender Female	25-34	Graduate Student
Crystal	White	Cisgender Female	18-24	Undergraduate Student
Kelsey	White	Cisgender Female	18-24	Undergraduate Student
Sage	White	Cisgender Male	18-24	Undergraduate Student
Bethany	White	Cisgender Female	18-24	Undergraduate Student
Braxton	White	Cisgender Male	25-34	Practitioner
Teresa	White	Cisgender Female	18-24	Undergraduate Student
Griffin	White	Cisgender Male	18-24	Undergraduate Student
Natalie	Asian	Cisgender Female	18-24	Graduate Student

Table 1. Interview Participant Demographics

Survey responses were conducted remotely via an online platform. Follow-up, semi-structured interviews lasting about an hour were conducted using video conference software. During interviews, participants answered questions about how much and in what contexts they learned about antiracist teaching and pedagogy, how these experiences shaped their teaching and learning experiences, what they wish they would have learned, and how much they hope to discuss and utilize antiracist pedagogy in classrooms where they (will) teach. Participants also answered questions about additional pedagogical models and about barriers and opportunities they experienced in teacher education and how their social positionality shaped their experiences. Our research questions addressing antiracist teaching and pedagogy are:

- 1) How do preservice and in-service teachers describe their curricular experiences related to learning about antiracist teaching and pedagogy?
- 2) How do preservice and in-service teachers make meaning of the antiracist teaching and pedagogy they experienced within teacher education?

Preservice Teaching Programs and Antiracist Practices

Preliminary findings from the quantitative survey completed by 30 participants can be broken down into two parts. The first is a comparison between training in antiracist pedagogies in relation to other, critical pedagogy practices included in preservice teacher education. The second is the barriers and burnout factors faced by white preservice and in-service teachers and

what work-related difficulties mean for study of antiracism. Survey findings are framed by the demographic breakdown of the participants who completed the survey. White preservice teachers are more than 80% of the voices in these findings. Thus, gaps in pedagogical exposure and training are uniquely impactful, especially since participants were not exposed to antiracist topics in their early preparation. When the survey asked participants, “Did your teacher preparation program provide training in the following pedagogical practices and topics?,” training specifically in instruction for English language learners (ELLs) reached only 54.1% agreement, with 21.6% disagreeing they received such preparation (Table 2, next page). Out of 8 pedagogical practices listed on the survey, working with ELLs was the fifth-highest pedagogy participants agreed they had learned in their prep program — a significantly low ranking for a pedagogical expertise essential for educators. While antiracist teaching earned 91.9% student agreement (Table 2), this stark spike in percentages still leaves open the possibility that teacher preparation programs do not adequately support preservice teachers in putting into practice antiracist pedagogy. Programs may stress a curricular focus on abstract theoretical concepts instead of teaching practices geared toward antiracism, such as ELL instruction. Agreement percentages for antiracist pedagogy are nearly identical across different survey questions. For example, antiracist agreement is 91.7% in Table 1 and 91.9% in Table 2. Antiracist (91.7%), culturally relevant (88.9%), and culturally sustaining (85.4%) pedagogies all exceeded 85% agreement (Table 1).²

Pedagogical Training	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Don't Recall	N
Anti-racist	93.3%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0%	30
Culturally Relevant	93.3%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	30
Dis/ability Justice	83.3%	13.3%	3.3%	0.0%	30
Culturally Sustaining	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	30
Social Justice	80.0%	13.3%	3.3%	3.3%	30
Multicultural-multilingual	60.0%	26.7%	6.7%	6.7%	30
Subject-field Competencies	50.0%	30.0%	6.7%	13.3%	30
Abolitionist	44.8%	27.6%	3.4%	24.1%	29
Decolonial	37.9%	27.6%	6.9%	27.6%	29
Feminist	30.0%	40.0%	23.3%	6.7%	30
Environmental Justice	20.0%	43.3%	23.3%	13.3%	30

Table 1. Survey Question: Which of the following pedagogies were emphasized in your teacher preparation program?

High percentages at which antiracist efforts and actions were identified as being included in teacher preparation programs were accompanied by low rates at which participants experienced race-based barriers in their teacher education program. However, participants did experience class-based difficulties. Given the demographics of the study's participants; the most frequent barriers experienced were associated with class and financial access rather than racism. Of 30

² Note, for all tables, item-level N may be lower where a completer skipped a sub-question.

respondents, 12 (40.0%) reported financial barriers (e.g., program costs, textbooks, certification fees), the most frequently reported item in Table 3 followed by lack of steady income/financial stability (30.0%). 26.7% reported feeling isolated or excluded. Seven participants (23.3%)

Pedagogical Training	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Don't Recall	N
Anti-racist teaching	93.3%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	30
Culturally relevant/sustaining	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	30
Multicultural classrooms	63.3%	33.3%	3.3%	0.0%	30
Intercultural communication	63.3%	30.0%	6.7%	0.0%	30
English language learners (ELL)	50.0%	23.3%	23.3%	3.3%	30
Religious backgrounds	40.0%	16.7%	36.7%	6.7%	30
Trauma-informed care	13.3%	46.7%	30.0%	10.0%	30
Environmental justice/climate	6.7%	36.7%	43.3%	13.3%	30

Table 2. Survey Question: Did your teacher preparation program provide training in the following pedagogical practices and topics?

Barriers Experienced	Count	% of N
Financial barriers (e.g., program costs, textbooks, certification fees)	11	39.3%
Lack of steady income and financial stability	8	28.6%
Feeling isolated or excluded	8	28.6%
I have not experienced any barriers	7	25.0%
Family obligations/responsibilities	6	21.4%
Work obligations/responsibilities	6	21.4%
Clinical placement location/transportation issues	5	17.9%
Language barriers	4	14.3%
Lack of faculty who share my racial/ethnic background	3	10.7%
Curriculum that doesn't reflect my cultural background	2	7.1%
Cultural barriers	2	7.1%
Microaggressions from peers	2	7.1%
Standardized testing requirements	2	7.1%
Lack of mentors who share my racial/ethnic background	2	7.1%
Lack of mentors who share my trans identity	1	3.6%
Lack of faculty who share my trans identity	1	3.6%
Microaggressions from faculty	1	3.6%

Table 3. Survey Question: Have/Did you experience any of the following barriers in your teacher education program?

selected “I have not experienced any barriers” (Table 3). The lowest-reported items in Table 3 cluster around barriers shaped by racial identity: cultural barriers (6.7%), microaggressions from

faculty or peers (6.7% each), and lack of mentors who share racial/ethnic background (6.7%). Simultaneously, logistical barriers — clinical placement transportation issues (23.3%), family obligations (20.0%), and work obligations (20.0%) — were reported significantly more often than racial barriers. Teacher preparation programs in PWIs (predominantly white institutions) need to refocus the way they think about barriers. If preservice and in-service teachers are privileged enough to not experience racial barriers, it is imperatively incumbent on teacher educators and programs to support students to work through their positionalities and emotionalities as educators so as not to allow lack of experience negotiating racial barriers to create harm in their future classrooms (Matias, 2016; Zembylas 2021).

The survey also asked about factors that influence burnout in preservice and in-service teachers who are going through a preparation program. The burnout factor that received the highest percentage was political climate (90.0%, Table 4). Among factors that affect teachers most are policy movements shaping educational institutions towards workplace authoritarianism and away from professional autonomy, a trend often driven by racial capitalist interests. Forms of racism found in the political climate of schools amid neoliberal educational policy initiatives are a significant factor in the burnout of early career educators. The current presidential administration and its top-down educational policies have deeply influenced teacher burnout, even before teachers enter the field. For example, all fourteen factors in Table 4 received agreement above 56%, with political climate (90.0%) the highest-rated. Six factors tied at 86.7%: educational policy changes, funding limitations, resource distribution, demographic challenges, social justice issues, and cultural competency expectations (Table 4). All six factors are very

Burnout Factors	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
Political climate	90.0%	6.7%	3.3%	30
Educational policy changes	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	30
Funding limitations	86.7%	10.0%	3.3%	30
Resource distribution	86.7%	10.0%	3.3%	30
Demographic challenges	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	30
Social justice issues	86.7%	10.0%	3.3%	30
Cultural competency expectations	86.7%	3.3%	10.0%	30
Standardized testing pressure	83.3%	13.3%	3.3%	30
Public perception of teachers	83.3%	10.0%	6.7%	30
Community support levels	83.3%	10.0%	6.7%	30
Educational inequity	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	30
Achievement gaps	80.0%	10.0%	10.0%	30
Curriculum mandates	76.7%	20.0%	3.3%	30
Technology demands	56.7%	33.3%	10.0%	30

Table 4: Participant Perception of Importance of Burnout Factors

closely associated with racial inequities that counteract antiracist practices. Recall that most participants in our study (more than 80%) identify as white. If political climate of the teaching

profession is pushing white persons out of the field of education, it seems safe to assume that teachers of color or teachers with multiple intersecting identities are experiencing burnout factors in even more intensified ways. If so, that leaves us with one major question: What can we expect to happen to antiracist pedagogies if enforced inequities are the political conditions in which educators must function?

How Education Students Make Meaning of Antiracist Education

Participants who completed surveys were asked if they were interested in completing a follow-up interview. Ten participants agreed to complete a 1-hour, semi-structured interview using video conferencing software. Like the larger population of participants who completed surveys the majority of interviewees are white, including 6 cisgender white women, which reflects the population of both the university as a PWI and the teaching field at large. At the time of interviews, seven participants were enrolled in teacher preparation as undergraduate students, two were enrolled in graduate teacher programs, and one was a practitioner in a middle school. (See Table 1, p. 5 for detailed demographics.) Interviews brought to light three key themes: 1) emphasis on antiracist learning but through varying means, 2) mixed-responses to discussing anti-racism in current or future classrooms, and 3) well-being and health as an issue that matters most to preservice and in-service teachers.

Varying Emphases on Learning about Anti-Racism: Nearly all ten interviewees stated their teacher preparation programs emphasized antiracist pedagogy which confirms our survey data. However, interviews revealed that participants understood the antiracist emphasis to varying degrees. When asked how much they learned about antiracist pedagogy as part of their teacher education, Kelsey, a cisgender white woman, described her experiences of learning about antiracist pedagogy by saying: “I think I’ve learned about it beyond what I thought it was going to be. Like, it’s not just... ‘Don’t be racist.’ It’s so much more, it’s the consistent teaching of different perspectives in history. It’s allowing students to come with their own knowledge and background and language, and celebrating it while not alienating and not overly highlighting and separating them....” Kelsey understands the teacher education program as explicitly doing anti-racism work by actively engaging different historical perspectives and creating space for culturally relevant teaching practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Other students described similar experiences. For example, Natalie, a cisgender Asian woman, shared the extent of her learning in teacher education, but from her positionality felt that she already knew much of what she learned, stating: “So I learned... where I was taught a lot about antiracism, antiracist practices, what it even means. A lot of it was kind of knowledge that I felt like I had coming into the school, but it was... I’m sure it was helpful for some.” Other participants, such as Griffin, a white cisgender male, described learning about anti-racism through a more interpersonal lens of simply not being racist. He shared: “I know I’ve learned about it, but... in my experiences, if you’re not, like, already having those, like, subconscious thoughts through, and I’d say I keep myself pretty in check with not subconsciously being racist, or else... or at least I’d like to think that I do.”

While Griffin discussed learning about antiracism in teacher education and coming in with some knowledge, his understanding of antiracism differs from how Natalie and Kelsey describe it. Natalie and Kelsey echo the active antiracism, the purposive intent to expose and supplant racist policies, that Kendi (2019) describes, as opposed to simply not being (personally) racist, a position Kendi would likely describe as, at best, non-racist rather than antiracist. Other participants described the depth of antiracist instruction in teacher education classes to widely

varying degrees. For example, Teresa, a white cisgender woman, described the amount of antiracist teaching stating: “I think... the curriculum did a great job of teaching antiracism, and I think it was honestly, like, more than enough.” Teresa elaborated by sharing that she felt there were other elements of practice that might have been included rather than a perceived overemphasis on antiracist teaching. Teresa’s perception of the depth of antiracist instruction in the program starkly juxtaposed with Sara’s, a Hispanic/white cisgender woman. Sara shared: “If I’m being completely honest, I feel like I have learned about it in very, like, surface-level.” Sara went on to describe the whiteness of her teacher education, naming how often she was the only or one of few students of color in her teacher education courses where deficit language about BIPOCs from fellow students might arise. Further, Sara described her current experiences in graduate school as opening her eyes to further conceptualizations of antiracist and inclusive teaching that she felt her undergraduate experience did not provide. Overall, participants described their teacher education as emphasizing antiracist pedagogy. So far, only one student, Sara, has named antiracist instruction as surface level as opposed to other students who felt they learned about the concept robustly. We recognize that social positionalities deeply shape student meaning-making of antiracist pedagogy which is evident in our participants’ responses. Our participants point to larger ways teacher education has been theorized as a white space (Matias, 2016) and pose an essential enigma of antiracist education: How to do antiracist practices within predominantly white spaces.

Discussing Antiracism in Current or Future Classrooms: In a set of questions about antiracism, we also asked participants about their engagement in discussions around antiracism and use of antiracist pedagogy in their current or future classrooms. Many participants, such as Crystal, a white cisgender woman, discussed the desire to weave antiracism throughout their courses: “I feel like I... I hope to... From the get-go, like enforce these kind of ideals in my classroom, so it's pretty prevalent, like, that... I'm looking to create a very inclusive space. And even if it's not, like, we sit down and I'm like, this is antiracism, like, this is what we're gonna talk about, like, kind of just, like, through, like, weaving it through everything.” Other students similarly emphasized their desire to weave antiracist practices throughout their teaching, but also described a connection to their particular subject area. For example, Sara, a Hispanic/white cisgender woman who focuses on literacy, shared: “I anticipate that it will be a lot of talking about antiracism, because again, it can't... I cannot be talking about how language, race, and power intersect and shape the ways in which we speak and in which we're heard if I don't talk about race, right? So I think antiracism is a core component of those conversations.” Similarly, Griffin, a music education major, stated: “I think the bigger thing for music educators is you kind of introduce antiracism through the pieces you pick to play and the influences that you show.” Sara and Griffin both describe their content areas as being key to the way they approach antiracist pedagogy. Antiracist pedagogy is necessary for their content to be holistic, as evident in Sara’s question of what it means to teach about language and not talk about race.

Responses speaking to weaving antiracism throughout the curriculum were balanced against other participants, such as Bethany, a white cisgender woman, who expressed hesitancy or uncertainty about discussing antiracism in their classrooms: “I'm a little scared because I don't know... it depends, I mean, in the US, you hear these things about people getting destroyed for to talk about certain topics... of course, like, it would be a part of my daily practice, but I don't know how much explicit... I have no idea.” Bethany shared her belief that learning and engaging antiracist teaching were meaningful aspects of her teacher education program; but when asked about how she would discuss antiracism in future classrooms, she reflected on the current

political climate. Bethany's response points toward broader questions in teacher education about reflecting on the role of the educator as a political figure — not a neutral functionary — and how teacher education programs do not just prepare students to do antiracist work or be antiracist teachers, but, in addition, teacher education students learn what being an antiracist educator means for the political climate they are entering.

Well-being and Health as Important Issues: In addition to explicitly questioning about antiracism within teacher preparation, we also asked participants what issues mattered most to them in education and in their classrooms. Many students explicitly named justice, inclusivity, and equity as issues that mattered most to them. Participant responses indicate ways in which preservice teachers think about structural issues shaping educational spaces:

Bethany: “I mean a big one, of course, that has become a part of my philosophy, is inclusivity.” **Natalie:** “Socioeconomic barriers, Asian rights, and racial justice.” **Sara:** “Asset versus deficit-based teaching like seeing someone as truly capable of accomplishing whatever they want... and antiracist and justice-oriented teaching.” **Crystal:** “I think I've started to view equity as... even more important than equality, just based on what it can provide for students, even though equality itself is important. I think... access... it's pretty important to provide students the ability to learn the same, or different, whatever they need to.”

In addition, other participants noted personal and mental well-being as core issues they cared about. Sage: “I think the health and well-being of my students matters the most to me.” Griffin: “I think it's more important that I'm helping my students pursue, like, social and, like, actual, like, mental growth, as compared to just, like, are you a good musician?” As we consider the ways in which antiracist pedagogy is both embedded within and frames teacher education, we consider *how* programs make broader connections to antiracist pedagogy by positively affecting student well-being and mental health. Antiracist pedagogy should not merely address content in just ways, but offer a different embodied space for students to inhabit, build relationships, and self-reflect on broader societal structures (Blackeney, 2005). We continue to ask in our own courses how we facilitate learning that allows students to construct antiracist pedagogy as a holistic practice that does more than harangue; but allows students to be whole persons and interrogate systems that prohibit or are barriers to fully realized personhood.

Refining Our Understanding of Antiracist Teacher Education

While we are still in the process of collecting data, we look to preliminary findings from our study to think through our efforts to support preservice and in-service teachers in becoming antiracist educators. First, we consider how we can continue to attend to the structural nature of antiracism in teacher education classes and how programs must go beyond simply emphasizing interpersonal dynamics (non-racism) to enacting new ways of teaching (antiracism). Survey results demonstrated students affirmed antiracist pedagogy as part of their teacher education; however, during interviews, participants conceptualized antiracist pedagogy in a number of different ways and committed to antiracist education to varying degrees. As a result of our early findings, we reflect on how we might best communicate the structural nature of racism in educational spaces. Of course, structural questions and reflections lead us to consider what opportunities students have to explore, build, and practice antiracist curriculum in teacher education courses as they learn, concurrently, how the classrooms and schools they will be working in are shaped by racial capitalist logics. Teacher preparation programs that emphasize

structural aspects of racism in schooling may also help situate teaching *as* political work and prepare students to be resilient against burnout potentially brought on by the (sometimes stultifying) political climate they will navigate when working in the field. Preparing students to think about their work as political may also shape the ways in which they understand and carry out antiracist pedagogies and teaching in their future classrooms.

Lastly, we consider how teacher preparation programs and teacher educators conceptualize antiracism not only as a pedagogical approach but as an orientation to educator identity. In particular, we continue to think through the ways in which antiracist pedagogy shapes embodied experiences of student health and well-being in schooling spaces, and how *being* an antiracist educator is to make sense of health and well-being through structural understandings of oppression. In future studies, we hope to think through with participants how they connect well-being to antiracist practices as providing more holistic ways of *being* educators. (Other pedagogical frameworks, such as culturally sustaining pedagogy or feminist pedagogy, should be subjected to the same kind of assessment. A strong test of any pedagogical theory is its contribution to consummate professionalism in teaching.) Finally, we consider the necessity of antiracist work in addressing messianic assumptions students may hold, rooted in racial or cultural biases. Through continued study, we hope to strengthen and refine our understanding of teacher engagement with antiracist pedagogy so that we, as well as other researchers and scholars, can critically reflect on our own positions within teacher education programs as well as how we might best support students to do antiracist work and become antiracist educators.

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