

## Introduction to Spring 2022 Issue

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The power of reflection is a well-established tool in teaching and learning. However, opportunities to reflect through the lens of anti-racism in the context of teacher education is something that is more recently becoming central to the field of teacher education. This spring 2022 edition of *Issues in Teacher Education* brings forth opportunities for deep self-reflection around topics of race, racism, and anti-racism.

Schön (1983) theorized the importance of reflection for professionals, broadly defined, which then ignited a shift in the field of education to quickly acknowledge the importance of reflection in developing the skills and knowledge of teacher practice. Building on this, the learning from reflection on professional experience after an event is especially important in the iterative nature of learning cycles, which can impact the resultant application of anti-racist pedagogy. With the tragic events and messaging around race throughout history, and highlighted in the past years, the articles in this journal issue bring to light these important issues in teacher education.

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Issues in Teacher Education

As you read the articles, keep humanization at the forefront, in terms of the researchers and you as the reader. As Creswell (2013) states, “We always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to our research” (p. 15). This is true of the models we bring to our practice and how we engage in our work within the teacher preparation community. We define the teacher preparation community as the continuum of learning to teach. This continuum includes both pre-service and in-service practices; it also necessitates a strong connection between those who work in both pre-service and in-service. We feel that progress in teacher preparation necessitates collaboration.

Most recently, our collaborative work across the educator preparation community has focused on sharing the experiences and importance of bridging anti-racism pedagogy across teacher pre-service and in-service programs. In this collaborative work between a large teacher preparation program and a large teacher induction program, we have explored the problem of practice of creating a continuum of development, which bridges teacher preparation and teacher induction. Through this project, we have explored the initial development of teacher attitudes and skills and the connection between anti-racism pedagogy, practice, and new teacher development in situ.

It is from this lens, born of our collaborative experiences, that we are eager for readers to engage in further reading, dialogue, and learning. We contend that anti-racism skills and understanding could work against systemic racism in TK-12 schools. We also acknowledge that skills must be practiced. But of course, the work of identifying the problem is just the beginning. The range of articles in this issue are presented to build upon this crucial skill of reflective practice.

Calli Lewis Chiu, Donna Sayman, Mandy E. Lusk, Benekia Kressler, and Debra Cote, in their article “Does This Mean I am Racist, Distrust, or Dislike People of Color?” present the structure and outcomes from a qualitative study which included both pre-service and in-service educators. The study focused on implicit bias among pre-service and practicing special educators teaching children in special education who represent intersectional identities, such as race, gender, ethnicity, and ability. In the study, the implicit bias results from 68 educators reminds us of the overrepresentation of Black students in special education, which provides suggestions of racism and ableism in schools (Love & Beneke, 2021). Chiu and her co-authors define these culturally responsive educators as analytical and self-aware of their own biases. However, they also contend that in order to break the cycle of unfair educational practices, teacher preparation programs must support the development of pre-service and practicing teachers to be-

come culturally competent teachers (Kondor et al., 2019). The authors further suggest that a crucial initial step toward becoming culturally competent is self-reflection regarding one's own biases.

Kimberly Vachon, in her article "The Racialization of Self and Others: An Exploration of Criticality in Pre-Service Teacher Self-Reflection," presents a qualitative case study from a teacher preparation program to explore how pre-service teachers discussed racial positionality in relation to teaching for social justice. Using narrative analysis, the research is inclusive of 24 multiple subject preservice teachers who plan to teach elementary school. This article brings forth the important reminder of criticality in reflection. Specifically in this research, teacher education can be seen as a mediator for individual and systemic positionality. Vachon contends that teacher education can reshape cultural schemas and provide access to resources that reject the racial hierarchy. For proponents of self-reflection, it is affirming to learn that teachers in the study discussed the lifelong process of critical reflection.

In the review of *The Price of Nice: How Good Intentions Maintain Educational Inequity* (2019), Ann Jenkin LaVanway examines the deep divide which niceness creates within education, including K-12 schooling and higher education. The book itself includes fifteen excerpts from anthropological research and in her review LaVanway uses this same organization to provide structure for understanding and reflection. LaVanway weaves Bourdieu's (1977) symbolic capital with the work of other seminal researchers in support of more deeply understanding the divide which Niceness creates. By unpacking additional studies, the reviewer provides further references and resources to reflect upon.

In closing, through reflection, we are led to the question: are schools complex organizations? Absolutely. We must therefore pursue change and improvement through systemic change. As we continue our collaborative work aiming to bridge anti-racism pedagogy across the learning-to-teach continuum, we hope you will wade into the reading and the work with us. Understanding racism and its roots, questioning our own privilege and biases, and slowly dismantling those systems and beliefs internally and in our schools is a lifelong process. We look forward to ongoing critical reflection, dialogue, and supportive actions to create schools which are places for all students to be empowered.

A special thank you to the reviewers who took the time to give back to the field of teacher education by providing excellent feedback on these manuscripts. The role of the reviewer is critical to the progression of thoughts, ideas, and research within the field to improve education. As you read through this issue, please consider signing up with *Issues in Teacher Education* as a reviewer.

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