Structuring Disruption Within University-Based Teacher Education Programs[1]: Possibilities and Challenges of Race-Based Caucuses

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Background: Teacher education candidates are in different places in terms of developing their identities and relationships to equity and social justice. Various approaches have been taken within university-based teacher education programs to engage with candidates, wherever they are in this development. One such approach has been engaging or drawing on teachers' own lenses, especially through challenging and understanding their racialized selves.

Purpose: This conceptual article examines how race-based caucuses (RBCs) in one teacher education program attempted to shift candidates' understandings of their racialized selves as related to their teacher identities.

Context: RBCs were instituted in one elementary teacher education program to help White teacher candidates and candidates of Color construct critical teacher identities. Candidates were asked to participate in caucuses according to the ways they had been racialized within schools. Facilitators who demonstrated a willingness to sit with the work of engaging race and racialization led the caucuses.

Observances: For the candidates of Color, the "overwhelming presence of Whiteness" in the teacher education program and in the schools required the RBCs to focus on reframing deficit narratives of teachers of Color to an asset-based view of their value and contribution to the teaching profession. The RBC provided space for White teacher candidates to explore the consequences of Whiteness for their future identities as teachers and for the kinds of communities that they could and wanted to cultivate with students. Messiness and challenges abounded in both RBCs.

Discussion and Reflections*: Emotions—and especially emotion labor—were central to RBCs. For teacher candidates of Color, facing one's own oppression was painful but also presented opportunities for them to articulate emotions and experiences in relatively safe spaces. In a different way, the RBCs resulted in significant emotional upheaval for White teacher candidates that shifted into deeper self-reflection and sense of awareness and allyship (for some)— although in a few cases, RBCs led to even deeper resistance.*

Conclusions*: Race-based caucusing is a messy and challenging practice that can provide opportunities to reflect constructively on emotions and produce emotional upheaval for teacher candidates. Teacher educators and programs must approach RBCs with an orientation toward hyperreflexivity.*

A central goal for teacher education has been to identify the most effective and ethical knowledge base for teacher candidates. However, the field has struggled to develop approaches to engage teacher candidates who are at different points in terms of developing their identities and relationships to equity and social justice. Three of the most significant approaches in university-based teacher education programs have centered on the following (although each approach is not mutually exclusive): providing teachers with the knowledge base and pedagogical tools that focus on teaching nondominant groups (Gay, 2010; Sleeter, 2001, 2008); having teachers learn about nondominant groups through exposure or immersion in nondominant communities (Almarza, 2005; Kasun & Saavedra, 2016; McDonald et al., 2011), and engaging or drawing on teachers' own lenses, especially through challenging and understanding their racialized selves (Daniels & Varghese, under review; Haddix, 2010, 2012, 2016; Milner, 2010; Sleeter, 2008, 2016). This conceptual article further explores the third approach and establishes a connection between such an exploration and teacher candidates' evolving teacher identities.

The basic assumption of such an approach is that White teachers and teachers of Color[2] need to deepen their exploration of their racialized selves as developing teachers—albeit in different ways. White teachers (who still disproportionately represent the teacher workforce in the United States) can only authentically, ethically, and effectively teach in an asset-based and equity-oriented way when they have critically engaged their own racialized identities and relationships to broader systems and structures of Whiteness (Daniels & Varghese, under review; Utt & Tochluk, 2016). At the same time, a consideration of their racialized selves for teachers of Color seems to be especially critical for their own development and persistence in the profession (Haddix, 2010, 2016; Salinas & Castro, 2010; Villegas & Davis, 2008).

This conceptual article examines the possibilities and challenges of social justice-oriented teacher education programs committed to supporting teacher candidates' exploration of the relationship between their racial

identities and teaching identities as a fundamental part of their teacher preparation. In particular, we examine one teacher education program structure, race-based caucuses (RBCs), as a way to further this exploration and engage the relationship between teachers' racialized selves and teacher identities within their teacher education programs (Philip & Benin, 2014). Calling on expanded notions of *criticality* (Kubota & Miller, 2017), we were able to understand the ways in which destabilizing students' own conceptions—as well as, or rather, within, the (sometimes ossified) structures and hierarchies of teacher education programs—is necessary even as it is disruptive and chaotic.

We start by situating the research literatures and theories that hold implications for both the why and how of taking up RBCs in teacher education, addressing the complexities regarding questions that may arise as researchers and teacher educators consider RBCs. We then provide an example of one teacher education program's use of RBCs. We focus specifically on the framings and practices of enacting RBCs—and learning from those enactments—during two academic years: 2015–2016 and 2016–2017. Finally, we conclude with an explication of our own understandings of the differential affordances and pitfalls of RBCs for the teacher candidates of Color and White teacher candidates—as well as the teacher education programs and instructors—with whom we work.

SITUATING CAUCUSING IN RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL LITERATURES: TEACHER IDENTITY, RACE/RACIALIZATION, AND TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

TEACHER IDENTITY

We understand teacher identity as central to the work of teacher education. While recent trends in teacher education have pushed the study and cultivation of critical teacher identities to the margins of teacher education scholarship and practice (Daniels & Varghese, under review; Philip et al., in press), we argue that teacher identity is at the center of what teacher education can and should be. Our conception of teacher identity emerges from a poststructuralist understanding of it (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003) as a fundamentally power-laden dialectic, marked by the engagement of teachers and students in a complex, embodied, and social process of identity development, change, and growth. Teaching, then, is more than a series of "identity-neutral" moves, strategies, or practices. Rather, teaching and learning to teach are processes of identity negotiation.

Much teacher education research examines the essential work of learning to consider and engage with the identities of our students for the

kinds of learning and relationships teachers might foster in classrooms (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2017). Similarly, many scholars have extended this focus on the fundamental role of identity to include the identities that teachers themselves bring into classrooms (Alsup, 2008; Britzman, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001; Daniels & Varghese, under review; Evans, 2002; Varghese, Motha, Park, Reeves & Trent, 2016; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Teacher candidates are engaged in a process of identity formation, of coming to know and construct themselves as teachers and to reconcile the consequences of their various identities for the work of teaching (Daniels & Varghese, under review; Haddix, 2010, 2012, 2016; Salinas & Castro, 2010; Varghese, 2006). Teacher candidates necessarily wrestle with questions of race, gender, sexuality, language, class, religion, and other social manifestations of power: How does being a woman, for instance, shape the work of teaching and the kind of teacher one can and wants to be? What does being monolingual, poor, or able-bodied mean for the kinds of relationships one might cultivate with students (and which students)? What does it mean to teach students whose linguistic identities and practices are different from one's own?

Significant research examines how teacher candidates come to construct and take up various teacher identities and the ways that teacher education programs might support and/or impede those processes (Haddix, 2010, 2016; Knight, 2004; Meacham, 2000; Salinas & Castro, 2010). We frame RBCs as a structure that has the potential to support and challenge teachers in the development of their teacher identities, particularly with regard to the fundamental ways that their teacher identities are constructed in relation to race and processes of racialization.

It is important to note that caucusing—intentionally organizing groups along the lines of particular identity formations and engaging in critical and intentional analysis of the differential consequences of those identities—might be used to examine and engage with any of the many identities (gender, class, language, religion, ability, legal status, etc.) that shape our work in schools (or other institutions). We would argue, however, that caucusing based on different identities should not be done at the expense of centering race in the U.S. context (Kendi, 2016; Omi & Winant, 2014), even as we also recognize that race is not the only way that systems and structures of domination work to oppress and marginalize individuals and communities.

RACE/RACIALIZATION, TEACHER IDENTITY, AND TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In this article, we focus particularly on the framing of caucuses to explore the consequences of race and racialization for the teacher identities that teacher education students co-construct within the context of teacher education programs and a racialized society. Although we have participated in caucusing along the lines of, for example, gender and sexuality, we draw in this article on research that acknowledges the particular salience of race to systems of education in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2006). We understand race and processes of racialization as fundamental to the ways that inequity and power function within the United States. As such, caucusing along lines of race and racialization allows us to engage directly with one of the many ways oppression and domination continue to function and perpetuate themselves in public schools.

We are deliberate in our choice to position race and racialization as the focus of the caucuses we explore in this article. We understand race and racism not as static phenomena, but as dynamic processes that are resilient and ongoing, constantly adapting and remaking themselves to fit the many contexts and relationships in which we find ourselves (Alexander, 2010; Haney-Lopez, 1994; Stoler, 1997). As such, we rely on the concept of racialization to signal this ongoing process and the ways we have been (differently) recruited to participate in that process.

Similarly, we understand race, racialization, and racism—like so many other socially constructed and profoundly consequential phenomena—to be constantly circulating, working in ways that are beyond the control of any individual (Foucault, 1971). As Frankenberg (1997) noted, the very concept of race is rooted in "supremacy": "It is not the case that an innocent racialness was corrupted by a later ranking of races, but rather that race and racism are fundamentally interwoven" (p. 9). In other words, while people of Color have cultivated profound communities of resistance and resilience, race and racialization in the United States are necessarily and fundamentally linked to racism.

Research also tells us that race, racialization, and racism circulate in particular ways— and with profoundly violent effects—in public schools (Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Milner, 2015). As such, students, teachers, staff, families, communities, and administrators participate (albeit differently and with differential consequences) in school-based processes of racialization even as they are also (differently) subject themselves to the violence of those processes.

Much important research explores the importance of the racialized experiences and identities of teachers and teacher candidates. For example, research on pre- and in-service teachers of Color explores the specificity and importance of the identities that teachers of Color bring and the ways that teacher education so often ignores and marginalizes those identities (Gist, 2016; Haddix, 2012, 2016; View & Frederick, 2011). Irvine (1988, 1990, 2002), Villegas and Lucas (2002), and Villegas and Davis (2008) explored the power of teachers' racialized identities to shape schooling. Much of that research was rooted in an exploration of the experiences and insights of pre- and in-service teachers of Color, and the ways that many teacher education programs fail to acknowledge, explore, or engage with the experiences and identities that teachers of Color bring to classrooms. In a specific example, Monzó and Rueda (2003) explored the ways that the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) that preservice teachers of Color bring to teacher education are often ignored and marginalized, even as those funds of knowledge powerfully shape teachers' relationships, practices, and beliefs about education.

At the same time that essential research has examined the marginalization, resilience, and importance of teachers of Color, much scholarly work has focused on the racialized identities and pedagogies of White teachers, particularly White preservice and in-service teachers' strategic resistance to critical engagement with race. For example, White (2012), Sleeter (2008), and Marx (2006) all explored the experiences and identities of White preservice teachers who engage in conversations about race, racism, and Whiteness as part of their teacher preparation. These projects offer insight into the "misconceptions, fears, and biases that White . . . teachers bring to the profession" (Sleeter, 2008, p. 575), and the ways Whiteness informs their interactions with and understandings of students and communities of Color. Parallel bodies of literature explicate what Picower (2009) called the "tools of Whiteness": The strategies and tactics that White teachers employ to protect and maintain the ideologies and perspectives that Whiteness affords even, and especially, in the face of the alternative or critical perspectives offered by multicultural education classes, courses on White privilege, and/or professional development exploring social justice education (Case & Hemmings, 2005; DiAngelo, 2012; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2012; Matias, 2016; Picower, 2009). Explorations of these "tools of Whiteness" allow us to better understand how Whiteness protects itself and therefore shields White teachers from perspectives that might reshape their identities and understandings of racism and oppression.

Expanding on Philip and Benin's (2014) examination of teacher education programs as "mediators of teachers' racial identities" (p. 5), we view structures within the program as providing ways to have teacher candidates (White and of Color) explore and shift their understandings of race, racialization, and their own racial identities. In particular, we show how RBCs in one teacher education program can encourage teacher candidates to examine their varying relationships to school-based processes of racialization (and therefore racism) and to examine how race figures into their own teacher identities. These teacher identities are racialized via a variety of processes, including assumptions and expectations around how they should talk, look, and act (Haddix, 2012, 2016; View & Frederick, 2011). Because teachers participate in these processes differently—based largely on the ways that they are racialized in the world and in schools—RBCs were taken up to encourage White students and students of Color to challenge and explore their respective roles in and engagement with the violent effects of the process of racialization vis-à-vis their teacher identity and their roles with children, classrooms and schools. The structure and practice of RBCs, therefore, can help to challenge the common assumption of teacher education programs that "practices that support White teacher candidates in learning to teach also support the growth of teacher candidates of Color" (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016, p. 507). We now provide background for the contexts, and specifically the framing, structures, and routines, for RBCs in teacher education programs more generally, and in our program in particular.

CONTEXTS: FRAMING AND ESTABLISHING STRUCTURES AND ROUTINES FOR RACE-BASED CAUCUSES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Caucusing, as tool for critical exploration, self-reflection, and institutional growth in general, has a long history (Obear & Martinez, 2013). Although often not structured explicitly or exclusively around processes of racialization and race-based identities, caucusing along lines of gender, class, or religion, for example, has long been used within organizations and collectives for the purpose of supporting more equitable and critically conscious communities and individuals. Our framing of RBCs in our teacher education program followed this tradition in that we framed RBCs as one powerful tool that can help individual teachers to construct critical teacher identities, connect those critical identities to broader systems and structures of power, and help our teacher education program to consider and question its own role in the process of supporting teacher candidates' critical identity construction.

We have found that the ways we frame and situate RBCs within a broader teacher education program is fundamental to the ways that they can provide uniquely meaningful learning opportunities for students. For some RBCs, simply the act of dividing intentionally and critically along lines of racialization provokes profound reflection and meaning-making among participants. For other RBCs, the meaning-making emerges from the particular conversations, insights, and relationships that develop within RBCs. Still for other RBCs, the most profound insights and institutional changes have emerged when the RBCs all come together to engage in structured cross-caucus conversation.

To some extent, then, the framing we offer is contingent on the particular needs we understand within our teacher education programs: We might frame RBCs as a natural and necessary extension of our commitment to social justice teacher education and as a way for us to explicitly engage with the realities of race and racialization. Similarly, we might frame RBCs as a response to particular conversations, insights, or conflicts that emerge within our teacher education programs: a way for students to differentially examine and process the ways that students of Color might have been silenced within classes, for example.

During the 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 academic school years, we framed RBCs within our own teacher education program as a way to critically engage with teachers' self-understandings as racialized beings, both personally and professionally. We believed that self-understanding should be central to the teacher education program's social justice mission. However, it is important to state that although this was supported by the director of our program and did not meet resistance by others involved in the program, it was not necessarily the product of a conversation and a consensus that was agreed on by all the instructors in the program. It is also important to state that, like many other teacher education programs, the social justice mission of our program is fragmented and does not have an explicit decolonial or critical orientation as a whole.

Our own identities were central to our role(s) in the teacher education program and within the RBCs more specifically. The first author is tenured faculty in the program and identifies as a European person of Color (El Tayeb, 2011) of South Asian descent, the second identifies as White and is a doctoral student (advisee of the first author) and teaching assistant, and the third author identifies as person of Color (Korean American), is a former doctoral student (advisee of the first author), and was an instructor in the program. The second author was the facilitator for the White caucus, and the third author was the facilitator for the caucus for the teacher candidates of Color. All of us identify as women. The first author is the lead faculty for the equity strand in the program, which

has been constructed collaboratively with the other two authors over two years. The second author brought RBCs to the teacher education program the previous year with another faculty member in the secondary teacher education program from her past work as an organizer.

RBCs have since become a component of all the teacher education programs at our institution, although they are framed and carried out in distinct ways because of the backgrounds and commitments of those involved in each of the programs. During the two academic years that were the focus of this article, our elementary teacher education program consisted of approximately 60 candidates, a third of whom were students of Color, while two thirds were White, and we met roughly six times each academic year.

CHOOSING CAUCUS GROUPS

It is important to note that race and racialization are in fact dialectics: Our racial identities are functions not only of the ways that we choose to identify ourselves, but also of the ways the world imposes and reads race onto our identities (Ulysse, Berry, & Jupp, 2016). RBCs allow us to engage with this complexity because we asked teacher candidates to participate in caucuses according to how they had been racialized within schools. Of course, this way of organizing students into RBCs does not absolve the situation of its complexity or contradictions: White students who work to deny the realities of race and racialization often refuse to acknowledge the ways that they are in fact racialized in schools, insisting on an ignorant "colorblind" ideology. At the same time, students of Color are often racialized differently in different spaces and experience the world differently and with different consequences according to the various ways that they are racialized.

Our framing of White student caucuses and student of Color caucuses is not meant to erase the varied consequences and experiences of the many ways that people of Color are racialized (within schools, teacher education institutions, and across contexts). We acknowledge the ways that racialization is also itself an intersectional process: Language, class, gender, sexuality, and religion, for example, fundamentally shape the ways that individuals and communities are racialized as well as the consequences of that racialization. Rather, our framing of White teacher candidate caucuses and teacher candidate of Color caucuses was meant to open up a variety of possibilities for both groups to consider and respond to their own needs. We acknowledge that in some contexts, it may be particularly meaningful for all students of Color to be together in one caucus for the purposes of gaining a critical understanding of how Whiteness operates

and developing a politics of solidarity, particularly among students of Color who individually may be seen as token minorities but collectively might form a critical mass with a voice to advocate for change; at the same time, it may be meaningful for White teacher candidates to be pushed into understanding their racialization process and developing models of allyship on their own.

Bi/Multiracial, White-Passing, International, and Adopted Teacher Candidates

In the case of Bi/Multiracial, White-passing, international, and adopted candidates, identification in either White or candidate of Color group can be an especially difficult and painful task. The categorization of Bi/Multiracial candidates who have White racial backgrounds can come down to which parent they will have to "ignore," which half of themselves they will disregard to choose a caucus group. For some candidates, this is a trauma that gets reenacted throughout their lives as families and society demand they fold themselves into a binary that denies these candidates' realities (Hamako, 2014). One White-passing candidate who identified as Latina felt that joining a candidates of Color group would align with her own experiences and identity but worried that her presence would be problematic for other group members because of the privileges associated with her appearance. For international candidates unfamiliar with the racial politics of the United States, caucusing with people who have significantly different racialization experiences can feel confusing or alienating. Candidates who were adopted by families who did not share their ethnic identities may have complex relationships with race, culture, and identity. Of course, racialization in the U.S. context erases the nuances and complexities of identities of people of Color—and part of the work of RBCs was to unpack this process—however, the initial moments of selection into groups were particularly difficult for some of these candidates.

TRAINING FACILITATORS

The work of facilitating RBCs is contingent on a profound facility and a desire to engage explicitly with the vocabularies and experiences of racialization. This is not to say that RBC facilitators need to—or even can—have "answers." Rather, we posit that RBC facilitators must demonstrate a willingness to sit with the perpetually unfinished, inadequate, and incomplete work of engaging race and racialization even as they are also able to maintain a commitment to criticality and to drawing explicit connections between individual experiences and broader discourses of power. Our use of the words *critical* or *criticality* is meant to signal an orientation to power and to the varied manifestations and consequences of power at

work in the world. A "critical" stance within the context of RBCs, then, means that facilitators are constantly interrogating the ways that power is continuing to work—particularly via processes of racialization—within RBCs themselves.

Within White RBCs, for example, we found it essential for facilitators to balance the competing needs of individual White teacher candidates to work through the ways that they have internalized White supremacy and racism, with the need to examine the many ways that racism and White supremacy continue to work even within and through RBCs themselves. The process of working through these realities is ongoing. Facilitators must sometimes allow space for participants' profoundly un-critical, ignorant, and racist sentiments to be voiced (in the service of the participants' eventual growth and burgeoning consciousness), even as they must also sometimes draw explicit attention to the ignorance and violent consequences of those sentiments and draw connections to broader systems of White supremacy. In many ways, this is a unique strength of RBCs: White teacher participants can articulate uncritical, ignorant, and racist sentiments without directly inflicting violence on candidates or faculty of Color. In non-RBC contexts, White candidates either remain silent and miss out on significant learning, or inflict the violence of their own learning on people of Color.

Facilitators of Color also have a complex set of competing commitments to negotiate. With the diversity of historical, sociocultural, and political backgrounds of groups that come together to form a people of Color cau-cus, the facilitator needs to constantly be developing his or her awareness of the important issues and concerns impacting different people of Color groups, identifying both issues that are particular to certain groups and those that are common across groups. In addition, an awareness of issues that cause tension, competition, or conflict between groups is needed. This would include the ability to shine a light on these issues and what is at stake when people of Color groups are unable to work in solidarity with one another. Lacking criticality and intentionality, people of Color cau-cuses can become spaces of lateral oppression (where oppressed groups hurt or oppress one another) and "oppression Olympics" (competition over who is more oppressed) (Philip, Rocha, & Olivares-Pasillas, 2017), both of which make it difficult to disrupt racial oppression because they decentralize White supremacy.

All caucus facilitators must also draw critical attention to themselves and to the ways that racism is always at work through them: Facilitators must question their own facilitation choices and model for participants a criti-cally conscious participation in which they are willing to critique and iden-tify racism at work within their own facilitation and participation.

The following sections are key observances we made from the perspective of the third author and the second author, respectively, as the facilitators of the two caucuses. For that reason, these accounts are provided from their perspective and their voice.

OBSERVANCES FROM RACE-BASED CAUCUSES IN OUR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

CAUCUSES FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES OF COLOR

Caryn: The caucus group for teacher candidates of Color initially met on campus during the day, but after the first few sessions, we began to meet in my home because it was close to campus and provided privacy and a more relaxed setting. Our group consisted of Asian American, African American, Latina, and Biracial women. We met roughly twice per quarter throughout the year.

The candidates were content to sit around my dining table with food or lounge in the living room with pillows and a warm drink, sharing stories and bonding over common experiences that often did not touch explicitly on race or racialization. I always acted as a host for the first hour or so, welcoming candidates as they arrived and settled in. True to my own cultural beliefs as a Korean woman, I prioritized creating a welcoming environment with lots of hot food and beverages and allowed candidates to catch up freely, interjecting infrequently. As I listened, I planned how I might use their free-flowing conversations as a springboard for discussion, coming up with questions I wanted to ask when we were ready to move into the race talk more explicitly.

One of the most salient aspects for the candidates of Color was the "overwhelming presence of whiteness" (Sleeter, 2001) that existed in our teacher education program, especially in relationship to their racialized understanding of themselves and their teacher identities. As a facilitator and based on my interactions with them as a course instructor since the beginning of the program, I felt that many of the stories candidates shared required us to reframe them from narratives of candidates of Color failing to "measure up" to the idealized teacher, embodied as White and middle class (in the eyes of White mentor teachers, university faculty and staff, other teacher candidates, or the program as a whole), to critiquing and strategically resisting the White privilege and dominant culture of the program or profession (Sleeter, 2001; Villegas & Davis, 2008). I used various strategies to try to move toward critical reflection and reframing. One was to ask where the "standards" came from that candidates of Color appeared to have set for themselves. Another was to

examine the problematic messages they had received throughout their own schooling about who they were and what they could contribute as teachers of Color so as to avoid relaying those messages to their own young students. Even though it was easy for candidates to use deficit models on themselves, they did not want to do the same to their students. Using their dedication and love for students to move from internalized oppression toward an asset-based view of their potential value and contribution to the teaching profession, I was able to (sometimes) move us toward collectively critiquing dominant cultural norms and professional standards based on middle-class White femininity.

To practice examining the pervasiveness of Whiteness in the education system, we often started by looking at our own teacher education program. Teacher candidates shared their frustrations around "White ways of doing things." One candidate expressed, "I'm so tired of people who are so used to doing things a certain way that now you look wrong for doing it a different way." They also noted the benefits that come with conforming to these "White ways" even while resisting the erasure of their cultural identities and the pressure to comply with policies and practices that they found to be in conflict with their values or beliefs. One example is how the term *professionalism* was used as a way to monitor and control such varied aspects of students' identity enactments as hair, makeup, clothing, body, language, voice, gestures, tone, volume, and vocabulary. To be charged with being unprofessional could signal a deficiency in attitude, commitment, personality, reliability, respectability, social skills, competence to teach, or all of the above. At what expense would they demonstrate their competence (compliance) to be accepted into a system that denigrates who they are?

Another example of everyday encounters with Whiteness was in dealing with White colleagues, faculty, and program staff. Discussions about race and racism in their classes often felt to candidates of Color to move at a snail's pace, causing frustration and impatience. How should they respond to White fragility in their peers who might become defensive, despondent, tearful, or angry, especially in light of the fact that these very individuals were expected to be teaching in urban educational environments in just a few months' time? How should they respond to White program staff whose need to feel validated and appreciated by candidates of Color caused them significant stress, missed educational opportunities, fear of retaliation, and excessive amounts of time spent in unnecessary meetings and formalities? In being required to navigate these minefields, they felt that the program culture, structures, and policies had not been designed with students of Color in mind. The trials around dealing with the Whiteness of the institution's policies and

practices caused candidates of Color anger, exhaustion, disappointment, isolation (Gist, 2016; Horsford, 2011; Smith, Yosso, & Solorzano, 2011; Souto-Manning & Emdin, 2018), and sometimes shame that RBC groups were able to hold space for:

> I was seen as the one that needed help. . . . That meeting [with White program staff] just made me seem like I'm incompetent . . . I want to still be seen as a professional. The moment I open my mouth, you're gonna view me as this angry Mexican that can't be professional. I'm tired of this program being so White, to come to a school that is acting so White, and the students that we work with aren't White. I'm just feeling like people aren't ready to hear what I have to say. And I don't want to ruin the chances for me because I still want to keep it professional.

In contrast, in the RBC space candidates were able to share their stories without feeling self-conscious, judged, or concerned for their White peers' sensitivity or defensiveness around issues of race and racialization (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2012). The candidates of Color responded to each speaker with affirmations, unconditional support, and validation, without the questioning, doubting, or minimizing (Picower, 2009) that often accompanied the supportive intentions of White peers.

Through interrogating the middle-class Whiteness of the dominant cultural model and identity of the "good teacher," teacher candidates of Color began to notice when they were subconsciously holding Whiteness as the standard for themselves: "I noticed myself looking to her [White teacher candidate]," observed one teacher candidate of Color. Too often the candidates expressed related feelings of intimidation, fear of sounding less experienced or less "cultured": "I don't think of myself as in the same category [as some upper-middle-class White women in the program]. . . . The kinds of things that they drive and things they say. . . . Way above me. They seem above me." Candidates also talked about how they felt they were perceived by White candidates and faculty (as the "quiet Asians," or the "loud Mexicans"), while in contrast, at their placement schools, several reported a level of trust and respect from students and families that their White colleagues had more difficulty gaining.

This process of gradually moving from feelings of insecurity toward an asset-based perspective of what they could contribute to the profession was captured in one candidate's question, "What if we *do* act our normal selves?" This wondering, juxtaposed against a comment that had been made to another candidate by a family member—"I can't even imagine you teaching!"—created a sense of urgency among the participants to forge a teacher identity that not only honored who

they are as cultural beings, but also pushed back against the voices that doubted even the possibility of these candidates of Color becoming teachers. These voices and sentiment had echoes in what Carter Andrews (2007) referred to as "identity-affirming counter spaces" in her study of Black students.

Adding a dimension of criticality to these discussions on identity, I periodically asked candidates what they meant and envisioned when they imagined teaching from their authentic cultural selves. Some of them called this "being real," or "being myself." It was important to me that teacher candidates' developing voices and identities went beyond stereotypical or essentialized versions of culture. For example, the notion of the "quiet Asian" could be embraced unproblematically as an aspect of an individual teacher's "authentic" cultural self, if unaccompanied by historical and political understandings of the model minority myth and other stereotypes about Asian women. How such an individual teacher might be read by students, families, staff, and administration in schools and how she might be serving as a model for her Asian female students were also considerations that required discussion and debate in the RBC. For some candidates who had been receiving stress-inducing feedback from faculty and White candidates about their quietness in classes, such conversations would have been difficult and potentially harmful without the trust and solidarity that existed in the RBC.

One of my goals for this group was for the candidates to both appreciate the differences in experiences and perspectives among their members and also see the value of intentionally building solidarity and coalition as people of Color in a system that marginalizes and oppresses students and families of Color. However, most of the teacher candidates had never participated in RBCs and initially felt mildly uncomfortable. Some remarked that most of their discomfort came not from being with other people of Color, but from imagining what White colleagues might be saying in the White RBCs. One shared how she "felt a NO reflex at first. . . . Why are you segregating us?" While this comment highlights the discomfort some candidates felt about being separated from White people, over time, candidates could see how the structure of RBCs actually facilitated more integration and coalition among people of Color of different backgrounds. Through the collaborative work of developing an understanding of differences and commonalities between different groups of Color (Roots of Justice, 2015), the RBC was able to grasp the critical race theory concept of differential racialization of groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) and the ways in which different groups are racialized in different ways (e.g., as model minorities, illegal aliens, religious extremists) but in parallel serve the

ultimate function of maintaining White supremacy. Recognizing that experiences of marginalization they had felt in isolation were often happening to all of them (for example, some of them being called too quiet, others being called too loud, all being measured against one White norm), teacher candidates of Color formed a sense of solidarity across groups. They committed to using the RBC to continue to develop their politics and identities as teachers of Color in a way that could empower and sustain them in their work of resisting White supremacy in their classrooms and educating for social justice.

Messiness and Challenges

Caucusing for teacher candidates of Color also presented multiple challenges and raised messy questions for me as a facilitator, experienced in discussing race but new to facilitating RBCs in teacher education. Here I discuss two issues: the challenging dynamics of hierarchies of oppression among members, and the complexity of multiracial identities in a RBC; both came with an emotional cost of raising critical awareness in the face of limited power of RBCs to create institutional-level change, which we discuss more in the discussions and conclusions.

Particularly in the early stages of caucusing, I dealt with a familiar problem of students enforcing a hierarchy of racial oppression, with African Americans being the "most oppressed" group, and Asian or biracial individuals as being the "least oppressed." This hierarchy created dynamics in which some students felt less qualified or entitled to speak about their racial oppression and remained silent; the silence was interpreted as disengagement by those who shared more vocally about their hardships, making it difficult for groups to work on building trust and safety.

Discussions about intersectionality and the situated nature of identities could at times disrupt these dynamics but in some cases exacerbated them when race privilege seemed to be connected to other forms of privilege (e.g., race *and* class privilege). When some of the Asian American students were able to disclose their feelings of guilt and shame around how they were socialized by their families to take advantage of any privilege they had access to, or how they had been taught to distance themselves from Latinx or Black folks as a way to survive, the conversations shifted toward awareness of the way racism and White supremacy operate at a broader level. Bi/Multiracial students who initially claimed that they had never been discriminated against began to unpack the marginalization of their parents of Color, or the personal emotional costs of having lived with privileges that one parent didn't have.

Caucusing for teacher candidates of Color began and ended with questions around belonging. I helped to organize the cohort of candidates into their groups, using how they were identified racially in school. However, being grouped purely on the basis of race felt like a blow for some individuals, who had been working diligently most of their lives to succeed within a colorblind ideology. One Asian American candidate, Jane, pointed out that she did not "count" as a minority in scholarship applications, so why should she be grouped into a people of Color caucus? This question of whether some Asian Americans (particularly those of East Asian descent who were second- or third-generation children of immigrants) or lighter skinned individuals of Latin American heritage should "count" as people of Color came up several times in discussions. It was important for these candidates (and myself) to be reminded that it was not RBCs that put individuals into race categories—this process happens continually for all of us as a function of living in a highly racialized society. RBCs in fact were among the only spaces in which it was possible for students to unpack these racialization processes.

Nevertheless, it felt frustrating for some candidates, who felt they had had little voice in which group would be the best fit for them. The experience of being placed in groups for people of Color was particularly complicated for some of our multiracial candidates who had grown up in predominantly White communities or who identified more strongly with the White side of their families. Even though they had self-identified in their intake paperwork as a person of Color, a handful of students each year felt uncomfortable in the person of Color group when they felt they didn't belong, and there were others who had self-identified as White and been placed in a White caucus but felt there should have been more of a transparent process in which the program made space for students to choose their own groups. Candidates who did not identify as multiracial also had questions about belonging. Because of the small numbers of African American, Latinx, and Bi/Multiracial teacher candidates in our program, it was not feasible to form separate caucuses for every group. Therefore, we had people of Color groups of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds. Given these structural limitations, it was an ongoing challenge as a facilitator to prevent glossing over differences while supporting conversations that fostered the development of a collective identity of teachers of Color.

At times the topic of conversation came around to my presence as one of the only two faculty of Color in the teacher education program, what that experience meant for me, and how I navigated teaching predominantly White classrooms within a predominantly White program and college of education. As the only instructor hired to teach through the length

of the teacher education program, teaching content focused on identity, teacher inquiry, equity, culture, race, and language, I had the privilege of witnessing candidates develop across the entire year, but this role also meant that I could not afford to alienate White students or position myself as separate from the program and institution, which were sometimes the topic of critical analysis. I felt uneasy at the thought of sharing this much vulnerability and closeness with only a small group within the larger cohort. How might what I shared in the RBC affect my relationship with other candidates and my ability to reach them if they saw me as biased (though they might already see me as biased)? Would my professionalism be challenged or questioned? Hearing candidates' unfiltered versions of their experiences gave me a better sense of them as individuals, and I heard things that I could sometimes provide support or even help with. But I also recognized that I rarely heard the other side of stories directly. I walked a fine line in these moments, but the ability to be vulnerable with this group of women of Color was often a source of strength and solidarity for me personally and also helped me to continually rededicate myself to the purposes of caucusing.

Then there were the ongoing problems of practice that kept my mind swirling after every meeting had ended and I replayed the conversations over and over, wondering how I might have better seized on an opportunity to push the group further, or uplifted us when we all felt so pushed down by the relentlessness of race in our work and lives. I wondered how didactic to be when students wanted to talk about less generative topics. I wondered how critical to be of the role of the teacher in maintaining social injustices with these brand-new teachers just peeking for the first time in on our profession.

CAUCUSES FOR WHITE TEACHER CANDIDATES

Julia: The White RBCs met twice per quarter. In the beginning, we met at the University in empty classrooms or in circles under a big tree in the quad. Eventually, as the quarter progressed, the White RBCs met in cafes near the candidates' placement schools or in my apartment. When the RBCs met in my home, I provided food and organized the mismatched stools and chairs from my kitchen into a circle. We typically met for two hours, although conversations often spilled over, and I regularly found myself having to gently usher students out my front door so that I could rush to my next meeting.

The initial caucuses focused on the teacher candidates' feelings and reactions to the act of caucusing itself. I posed direct questions about the teacher candidates' emotions when sitting in a room, organized explicitly

according to race, and talking unambiguously about race, racialization, and racism: "What does it feel like to sit in a room with all White people and talk about Whiteness and racism?" I asked. "What was your immediate reaction when you first heard about RBCs? What feelings or questions went through your mind? What were you worried about, and what are you worried about now?"

The teacher candidates' reactions to the idea of RBCs provided rich fodder for our initial meetings: an opportunity to build community, trust, and confidentiality. Perhaps most important, however, these reactions offered a chance to reflect more deeply on their own racialization process in relationship to their developing White teacher identity. RBCs gave White teacher candidates the opportunity to practice questioning each other's thinking, examine each other's emotions, and draw connections between our own ideas and feelings and the broader systems of Whiteness and racism at work in the world, in schools, and in our teacher education program itself.

For example, the White candidates expressed disbelief that they could learn anything from a White RBC, insisting that the only way to learn about race, racism, or White supremacy would be to talk and listen to teachers of Color. Leonardo (2009), for example, explicitly discussed how the assumption of teachers of Color teaching White teachers about race is common in teacher education programs. As a facilitator, I used such statements as prompts for collective thinking and meaning-making within the RBC. "So what do you all think about that?" I said to the rest of the group after one of the White candidates had expressed such an opinion. "What does it mean if people of Color are required to share their experiences with us in order for us to learn or grow? What does that mean for our responsibility as White people? What might we be able to learn or understand about race or racism by thinking about what it means to be White or about how we are as White teachers? How might it be useful to think about our role as White people in racism? How do we do that?"

Such questions provoked a great deal of discussion, disagreement, and conflict within the RBC. In engaging these conflicts, I relied on many of the typical facilitation strategies I so often use as a teacher: revoicing students' ideas and offering new language, naming patterns I noticed in the ideas and perspectives shared, reframing statements as questions, repeatedly asking "Why?", asking students to draw connections between individual experiences and broader systems, and pushing for alternative or more complex explanations.

Much of the learning within the RBC was the result of White candidates' facilitated engagement with each other and structured collective meaning-making, which was in contrast with the rest of the teacher education

program and other similar programs. In the initial meetings, a few of the White candidates were eager to prove and solidify their identities as antiracist White people who were comfortable talking about racism, even as many of their White peers were eager to demonstrate their frustration, discomfort, and anger with RBCs. The facilitated meeting of these divergent perspectives proved generative.

Those White teacher candidates who were eager to prove their antiracist identities quickly realized that righteous indignation did little to support their White peers' necessary learning. Several of those teacher candidates committed to proving an antiracist identity approached me after the first RBC meeting, eager to demonstrate their frustration with and righteous surprise about the comments of their White peers. "And what does that mean for you?" I asked. "Who is responsible for helping to educate your White peers? Whom is their ignorance and racism hurting? What's your responsibility here? How might the context of the RBC give you an opportunity?" In these short conversations, I shared my own tendency toward righteous indignation rather than engaged, critical responsibility and the ways I understand that tendency as connected to broader discourse of Whiteness and power. These questions and comments transformed my conversation with the White teacher candidates from one of indignant commiseration over other White people's racism (and a self-satisfied sense of our own enlightened "antiracism") to a strategic conversation in which we discussed our own responsibilities and approaches to critical self-reflection.

In our second RBC, I began by returning to the conflict that had guided our initial meeting: Students' divergent responses to RBCs themselves. The students who had been previously committed to proving an "antiracist" identity made markedly different moves in the second meeting, deliberately and fully engaging their peers' emotional discomfort with the RBC and drawing on their own emotions and experiences to do so. At the same time, many of the teacher candidates who were resistant to the idea of RBCs were more open to sharing the fears and concerns at the root of their discomfort: "What are the teacher candidates of Color really talking about? Are they just talking about how racist we are?" asked Joy, a student who had baked cookies for the group. "And if they are?" I responded. "What would that mean for us and for what we could learn?"

When Joy later expressed another concern about participating in an RBC—"Does being in a White RBC mean I'm admitting I'm racist?"—Jeff, a participant sitting across the room, immediately jumped in and responded with provocative questions: "Are we afraid that we're actually racist? Because that seems a reasonable fear that is actually maybe

useful to realize. Or are we just afraid of being *seen* as racist, and we're concerned with wanting to be seen as good White people?" This second meeting set the tone and focus for many of our future meetings: a commitment to examining the concerns and fears that guided many of our actions and prevented us from embodying antiracist ideals and commitments.

Many of our subsequent RBC meetings were spent reflecting critically on the teacher candidates' identities as White students whose Whiteness had profound consequences for the other students and faculty in the teacher education program. I regularly posed questions about the White teacher candidates' participation as White students in the teacher education program: "How do you choose to participate in your classes? Do you think about how much you talk or about how much space you take up in a classroom? How might thinking about Whiteness affect how you participate in your classes?"

In asking these questions, I also drew on my own experiences as a White student and White teacher. I talked about the ways that my own patterns and tendencies as a White student—taking up excessive air time in classrooms or talking over peers of Color, for example—translated into my work as a White teacher. I pushed the teacher candidates to consider how their behavior and consciousness as White students in the teacher education program might translate into their work as White teachers and what we all might do to disrupt that behavior.

The RBCs provided a space for White teacher candidates to make meaning of their burgeoning identities as White teachers. White teacher candidates typically work extremely hard to resist and disrupt conversations that center and acknowledge race and racialization as profoundly consequential within the world and, particularly, within schools (Amos, 2016; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Marx, 2004; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005). The RBCs explicitly and deliberately disrupted such work and provided a space for White teacher candidates to practice supporting and pushing each other to acknowledge the realities of race and racialization, and, in particular, to acknowledge our own roles in those processes.

The RBC provided space for White teacher candidates to explore the consequences of Whiteness for their future identities as teachers (Philip & Benin, 2014) and potential White allies, and for the kinds of communities that they could and wanted to cultivate with students. Within our RBC, we worked to hold each other accountable for thinking critically about the consequences of our Whiteness rather than relying on teacher candidates or faculty of Color to do the intellectual and emotional heavy lifting of offering such insights. The RBC encouraged

White teacher candidates to build the resilience, awareness, and insight to develop a practice of "thinking through race" (Frankenberg, 1993) with each other, particularly, "thinking through" our own Whiteness. The RBCs asked White teacher candidates to take on such responsibility and to critically consider and question the ways in which we found ourselves resisting.

Messiness and Challenges

There are, of course, numerous unresolved challenges and tensions in leading the White RBCs. At the same time that the RBCs afforded White teacher candidates opportunities to learn, take responsibility for educating each other, and critically consider what it means to be White teachers, they also caused a few White teachers to deepen their resistance to critical analyses of race, racism, and Whiteness.

Emotions were a salient dimension of RBCs for White teacher candidates (Matias, 2016). About a quarter of the White teacher candidates felt anger and indignation at the RBC process. For almost all of those White teacher candidates, however, the RBCs supported them in critically reflecting on and learning from that anger and indignation. However, a few White teacher candidates became so angered by the RBC process and so resistant to acknowledging their own racialized identity that they cultivated a profound resentment toward the teacher education program itself. These few White teacher candidates escalated conflicts with instructors and program directors and positioned the program itself as "racist toward White people" in their conversations with program administrators. In their commitment to such intense anger and indignation, these White teacher candidates completely avoided engaging with the racist ideologies and assumptions behind such feelings.

Given sufficient time and adequate support structures, these conflicts might have been opportunities to engage in profoundly necessary processes of critical reflection and education with these White teacher candidates. However, our teacher education program—like many other programs strapped for resources and time—was not equipped to deal with this level of intensity and need. As a result, for a small number of White teacher candidates, the RBC process strengthened their opposition to critical engagements with racism. However, as a White facilitator, I also know that the alternative to RBCs—or other forms of critical engagement with White teacher candidates—is to simply allow White teacher candidates to move into classrooms without critical examination. This is also not a viable solution. I continue to question how to support all White teacher candidates in their learning without

letting their dissatisfaction become the center of the teacher education program and take up too significant a portion of the program's resources and energy.

At the same time that I grappled with the effects of RBCs on White candidates, I continuously questioned my own choices as a White facilitator. When given opportunities to discuss Whiteness, race, and racism among ourselves, White people typically do so uncritically and in ways that only further discourses of racism. Ideally, White facilitators are able and willing to interrupt these examples of "White talk" (McIntyre, 1997) and support White teacher candidates in engaging in more critical and self-conscious conversations. As a White facilitator, however, I am also always subject to discourses of Whiteness and racism and as such perpetuate racism within RBCs regardless of my intentions, training, or critical engagement. In other words, while I made the choice to facilitate White RBCs—and to train other White facilitators—I continuously question the degree to which I or any White facilitator can be trusted to disrupt racism. Simultaneously, I also know that without RBCs, teacher candidates and faculty of Color bear the violent burden of educating White teacher candidates. I remain committed to the possibilities of RBCs even as I acknowledge their dangers and limitations.

For example, I wrestled with White candidates' need to explicitly name, engage, and critique the discourses of racism that circulated around and through us. I often encouraged White candidates to acknowledge the ways their own behavior furthered racism and White supremacy, trying to make connections between them as individuals and the system of Whiteness. I also made space for White candidates to critically share their racist thoughts, assumptions, and beliefs about their students of Color in their student teaching placements, for example, or about their peers of Color in the teacher education program. Sometimes students acknowledged the racism inherent to these statements—"I know this is a racist thing to think but I just can't get it out of my head"—and other times students relied on their peers or on me to explicitly connect their statements to racism and White supremacy. I struggled with the effects of this process: Was I condoning discourses of racism simply by encouraging White candidates to voice racist ideas and perspectives aloud even if we then explicitly linked those statements to our own Whiteness and to White supremacy? Did this process desensitize them—and me—to the extreme violence of racism?

Similarly, I questioned how best to support the trajectory of White candidates' learning and critical consciousness. White candidates developed their thinking over the course of our RBC work together, and I struggled

to remain committed to the arc of their long-term growth and development. Often, a White candidate would make a basic statement acknowledging the reality of racism and White supremacy by merely acknowledging the possibility that his or her reaction to a student was connected to his or her own Whiteness. I questioned how to respond: If I pushed the candidate for more specifics or asked him or her to consider the violence of his or her behavior, might that candidate completely shut down and resist further engagement with the realities of his or her own Whiteness? What might it communicate if I did *not* push the candidate or if I acknowledged that such a statement indicated growth on the candidate's part? Would the candidate—or the other White candidates in the group—think that acknowledgement was enough or that they should expect rewards for basic awareness of their own Whiteness? Regardless of how I engaged, my responses felt inadequate and dangerous.

As a facilitator and White person, I know that RBCs among White candidates—or among White people in any context—are profoundly risky and that there is no way to escape such risk. RBCs run the risk of individualizing racism and oppression: focusing exclusively on the actions and racism of individual White people without making explicit and ongoing connections to broader systems, structures, and discourses of Whiteness, White supremacy, and power. At the same time, the risk of engaging in RBCs with White teacher candidates seems necessary if we are to have even the possibility of White teachers who are equipped to consider and engage their own Whiteness and racism in classrooms. As a White facilitator, my only conclusion has been to ask questions and remain continually suspicious of myself and the White people around me: How can White facilitators be held accountable for the conversations that we facilitate? What kinds of training and supports can prepare White facilitators for the kinds of "vigilance" (Applebaum, 2010, 2013) that we need to cultivate toward discourses of Whiteness?

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

The work of caucusing—like most meaningful learning experiences—has profoundly different consequences and effects for different students. For teacher candidates of Color, facing one's own oppression in stark relief is painful. Our students reported feelings of anger, frustration, indignation, self-doubt, inadequacy, anxiety, sadness, disappointment, ambivalence, and fatigue. We could also see that the RBCs presented opportunities for teacher candidates of Color to articulate these emotions and experiences in relatively safe spaces. Moreover, the structure of the RBCs contributed to feelings of connectedness (empathy, solidarity), trust, getting and

giving validation, confidence and competence, righteousness, honesty, greater clarity, awareness, openness, and belonging. In a different way, the RBCs also resulted in significant emotional upheaval for White teacher candidates. This consisted of feelings of anger, resentment, and resistance for many White teacher candidates that (for some) shifted into deeper self-reflection and a sense of awareness and allyship, although in a few cases, it led to even deeper resistance. Overall, RBCs are an attempt to consider how to create specific structures in teacher education programs in order to engage with teachers' racialized identities and their sense-making of these identities.

Emotions are clearly a fundamental part of identity construction and negotiation, and therefore a fundamental part of teaching and learning to teach (Dutro & Cartun, 2016; Zembylas, 2003, 2005). Although emotions are sometimes considered to be individual traits, we saw them to be effects of and constitutive of teacher identities or teaching experiences (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008). Similarly, we understand emotions as fundamentally linked to identity, social location, and social negotiation (Ahmed, 2004; Benesch, 2017), and therefore profoundly intertwined with race and racialization (Zembylas, 2011). The emotions that surfaced in the RBCs were not necessarily caused by the caucusing itself; rather, they were consequences of racism, racialization, and institutional policies and practices that sustain inequities.

At the same time, it is important to highlight that emotions can have different causes and consequences for White candidates and candidates of Color, and these factors were evident in the context of caucusing. Anger was one emotion that was evident in both the caucuses for teacher candidates of Color and White teacher candidates. The sources of the anger were different, as were the ways these were interpreted through White bodies versus bodies of Color. The anger of some White candidates toward being placed in the caucuses and the caucusing itself was expressed without hesitation; moreover, significant energy was spent by the program facilitators to attenuate these feelings. On the other hand, the anger that teacher candidates of Color felt toward the Whiteness of the program seemed riskier for the teacher candidates to express outside the RBCs because such expression of anger would more likely be read as a lack of professionalism; thus, their professionalism as future teachers would be questioned if or when it was expressed.

The full experiences of teacher education programs, including field placements and coursework—and, in this case, RBCs—can provoke what Benesch (2017) called *emotion labor*, which she described as "dissonance between feeling rules and professional training and/or ethics" (p. 2); in other words, emotion labor arises when there is conflict between teachers'

beliefs and institutional power. For example, in the case of candidates of Color, the idealized teacher identity that they saw reflected in their placements and implicitly endorsed in the program of a White, monolingual English teacher clashed with their instinctual understanding of their own self-worth as future teachers of Color. This contrast was raised and brought into greater relief in the RBCs. For White teacher candidates, emotion labor was created by the institution acknowledging and working with the power of White supremacy in teacher education through RBCs and specifically embodying White supremacy in candidates more directly. This jarred with their beliefs about themselves as "good" individuals rather than part of a system of inequity. We do not, however, posit this emotion labor to be necessarily negative. The following quote by Benesch (2017) on a poststructuralist/discursive approach to emotions seems particularly apt to describe the work of RBCs:

> Poststructural/discursive approaches, by contrast, are concerned with the political project of greater social equality and justice. Rather than calling for individuals to tame their emotions in the interest of better workplace functioning, or self-functioning, there is an interest in exploring a range of emotions, including "ugly" (Ngai 2005) ones, as an entrée to challenging unfavorable social conditions. (p. 33)

A question that continually arises in RBCs in our teacher education program is: What happens when teacher candidates of Color point out injustices or problematic practices or policies within the program itself? Facilitators encourage students to critically examine structures that perpetuate inequity, but how are facilitators accountable and implicated? The complexity of this question is compounded when individual facilitators take on different positions, ranging from representatives of the teacher education program to oppositional roles or even victims of the institution. We have found no easy answer to this question, which involves issues of power, confidentiality, and trust. Is the facilitator of Color, who may be an instructor or teaching assistant in the program, a member of the resistance or the establishment? Who are the oppressors and who are the oppressed—all people of Color, or teacher candidates of Color, or their future students of Color? Who can be a liberator under these circumstances (Kubota & Miller, 2017)?

Questions about the responsibilities and positioning of facilitators and RBC groups' relationship to the teacher education program can converge in moments when people of Color caucuses become spaces in which candidates of Color become so disillusioned with their White colleagues, with the program, or in their field placements that they might

do things that disadvantage them, such as refusing to participate in class discussions, resisting program policies and requirements (e.g., dress codes or language use), or speaking out against racial injustices they notice in schools. Is there a limit to the good that can come of criticality and hyperreflexivity? What is the facilitator's responsibility to his or her group members? Is there a way that White candidate caucuses could be called into allyship or asked to be accomplices (Powell & Kelly, 2017)? What is the program's responsibility to facilitators and/or candidates who take an oppositional stance?

We also found that RBCs often provoke conflict and confusion among teacher education staff and faculty. Especially within teacher education programs that themselves house ideological conflicts and contradictions (Zeichner & Conklin, 2008), RBCs can bring such conflict into stark relief. We continue to question and explore new and different ways to encourage resistant (typically White) faculty to become involved in the work and insights of RBCs and to encourage faculty to integrate the insights that emerge from RBCs into their teacher education courses. Often, these insights push directly against the ideologies and/or practices touted within particular teacher education courses. While we have encouraged teacher education faculty to participate in caucuses in a variety of ways, we have also used RBCs themselves as spaces for students to strategize about ways to push back against colorblind agendas or framings of identity and racialization as peripheral to the work of teaching and learning to teach. We continue to explore new ways for teacher candidates and faculty—and teacher education programs themselves—to learn from RBCs.

CONCLUSION

In our discussion of RBCs in teacher education, our goal has not been to promote RBCs as a recommended practice or as the latest and greatest solution to the challenges facing teacher preparation today. Rather, our goal has been to document the intentions of race-based caucusing as a way of engaging with teachers' racialized identities and the messiness inherent to any attempt at disrupting the status quo in teacher education programs. This messiness, we argue, does not render the practice of RBC or the critical reflections it affords less valuable. Rather, we see it as integral to the hyperreflexivity called for by Kubota and Miller (2017), who wrote that in critical praxis, "reflexivity involves an interrogation of the complexity of power disparities that may be irreconcilable, which often leads to 'a reflexivity of discomfort'" (Pillow, 2003, cited in Kubota & Miller, 2017, p. 14). This "reflexivity of discomfort" has anchored us (and continually

unsettled us) in our work with students and in our documentation of that work here.

The critical role of emotions has been another aspect of our attempts to understand and frame the use and utility of RBC in teacher education programs. Overall, caucusing structures can provide opportunities to reflect constructively on emotions "as the effects of encounters among learners, teachers, language, activities, and ideas and to seek areas of transformation in order to redress power imbalances" (Benesch, 2016, p. 5). The work done in caucuses can enable emotions to be elicited, articulated, analyzed or problematized, and potentially disrupted or channeled in strategic ways that deepen teachers' understandings of themselves as racialized beings and racialized beginning teachers. However, the messiness in this work also means that students may leave caucusing sessions feeling disillusioned, angry, frustrated, and depleted, with little to no reprieve from all the other coursework and student teaching responsibilities that come at them full speed. Programmatic structures can enhance or impede the impact of caucusing work depending on how RBCs are positioned in relation to coursework, student teaching, and other moving parts of a teacher education program. What seems also significant is the extent that teacher education programs allow themselves to espouse the reflexivity of discomfort and allow themselves to be challenged and disrupted, especially by their own teacher candidates.

We close by envisioning how the affordances of RBCs as one form of critical praxis might positively affect children's and future teachers' educational experiences. Children and teachers can benefit if the experiences and resources that teachers of Color bring to the profession are supported and allowed to flourish and enrich their teaching practices. Children and teachers can benefit if White teachers are supported to integrate critical Whiteness and challenging White supremacy into their developing identity as teachers from the beginning of their professional lives. Ultimately, we maintain that children and teachers can benefit if teacher education programs and teacher educators aim to build trust and support risk-taking. We maintain that this can only be done meaningfully if teacher education programs are unflinching in their embodiment of social justice by *structuring disruption*: being open to being challenged to reflexively look at how systemic racism lives in our educational institutions, in our own university classrooms, and in ourselves as institutional agents.

NOTES

1. We align ourselves with the "transformers" category of teacher educators who believe in the continued potential of university-based teacher education programs and seek to make changes within them (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015).

2. Throughout this article, we capitalize *Color, White*, and *Whiteness*. Although there is little consensus regarding capitalization of these terms, we capitalize all of these words to highlight their salience and prominence in the process of racialization.

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