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Race-Conscious Professional Teaching Standards: Where Do the States Stand?

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Abstract: Education policymakers have long sought to reduce persistent achievement disparities between students of color and White students with varying levels of success. Understanding the different needs and obstacles faced by students and families of color is important given educating all individuals for our future U.S. society is a priority. Educational policy should reflect the assumption that race matters and continues to impact educational opportunity. This paper argues that race-conscious professional teaching standards could extend the structural boundaries of teacher practice when working with racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. Using discourse analysis to analyze the deeper meanings of selected states' teaching standards in different sociopolitical contexts, this paper describes the challenges and opportunities for infusing race-conscious perspectives in teaching standards. Implications for how states' teaching policy language actively creates and builds teaching and learning environments are discussed.
Keywords: teaching standards; InTASC; racial inequality; culturally responsive teaching; discourse analysis

Estándares de enseñanza profesional conscientes de la raza: ¿Dónde se encuentran los estados?

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Resumen: Los formuladores de políticas educativas han buscado durante mucho tiempo reducir las persistentes disparidades de rendimiento entre los estudiantes de color y los estudiantes blancos con distintos niveles de éxito. Comprender las diferentes necesidades y obstáculos que enfrentan los estudiantes y las familias de color es importante dado que educar a todas las personas para nuestra futura sociedad estadounidense es una prioridad. La política educativa debe reflejar el supuesto de que la raza importa y continúa impactando las oportunidades educativas. Este artículo sostiene que los estándares de enseñanza profesional conscientes de la raza podrían ampliar los límites estructurales de la práctica docente cuando se trabaja con estudiantes racial, cultural y lingüísticamente diversos. Utilizando el análisis del discurso para analizar los significados más profundos de los estándares de enseñanza de estados seleccionados en diferentes contextos sociopolíticos, este artículo describe los desafíos y oportunidades para infundir perspectivas con conciencia racial en los estándares de enseñanza. Se discuten las implicaciones sobre cómo el lenguaje de las políticas docentes de los estados crea y construye activamente entornos de enseñanza y aprendizaje.
Palabras-clave: estándares de enseñanza; InTASC; desigualdad racial; enseñanza culturalmente receptiva; análisis del discurso

Padrões de ensino profissional com consciência racial: Onde estão os estados?
Resumo: Os formuladores de políticas educacionais há muito buscam reduzir as persistentes disparidades de desempenho entre alunos negros e brancos com níveis variados de sucesso. Compreender as diferentes necessidades e obstáculos enfrentados pelos estudantes e famílias negras é importante, visto que educar todos os indivíduos para a nossa futura sociedade nos EUA é uma prioridade. A política educacional deve refletir a suposição de que a raça é importante e continua a impactar as oportunidades educacionais. Este artigo argumenta que os padrões de ensino profissional com consciência racial poderiam ampliar os limites estruturais da prática docente ao trabalhar com alunos racial, cultural e linguisticamente diversos. Utilizando a análise do discurso para analisar os significados mais profundos dos padrões de ensino de estados selecionados em diferentes contextos sociopolíticos, este artigo descreve os desafios e oportunidades para infundir perspectivas com consciência racial nos padrões de ensino. São discutidas as implicações de como a linguagem política de ensino dos estados cria e constrói ativamente ambientes de ensino e aprendizagem.
Palavras-chave: padrões de ensino; InTASC; desigualdade racial; ensino culturalmente responsivo; análise do discurso

Race-Conscious Professional Teaching Standards: Where Do the States Stand?

Society in the United States (US) is in demographic transition. Between 2010 and 2021, the percentages of U.S. school-age children of Latinx and Asian background increased, with Latinx student public school enrollment increasing 24% and Asian student public school enrollment increasing 17% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). In contrast, school-age students who were White and Black[1] decreased, with numbers falling 14% for White students and 6% for Black students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Teacher candidates learning in

[1] Consistent with (Mack & Palfrey, 2020), I capitalize *Black* and *White* as racial descriptors tied to a history of systemic racism. My intentional choice to capitalize *White* is to call attention to the inextricable relation between *Black* and *White* and to name the explicit function of Whiteness in perpetuating racism.

colleges of education are not nearly as racially and ethnically diverse as the PK-12 schools in which they might work. Currently, 55% of students in public schools are non-White, and only 28% of candidates earning undergraduate degrees and certificates from colleges of education are teachers of color (King, 2022). Demographics shifts in U.S. population is one reason to help prepare new teachers to work with diverse groups of students, particularly students of color. Understanding the different needs and obstacles faced by students of color whose racial and/or cultural background is often marginalized in many White/European culturally-centered classrooms is important for future U.S. society to thrive (Gay, 2000/2018; King, 2022).

Past educational policies have long sought to reduce persistent achievement disparities between students of color and White students with varying levels of success. Failed educational policies have commonly neglected race as a factor in shaping individuals' life chances (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Nasir et al., 2016). Beliefs about the nature of racial inequality reflect deeply partisan, regional, and racial differences currently debated by U.S. policymakers and society (Orfield, 2022). Underlying the debate are Discourses—"distinctive ways of speaking/listening and/or reading/writing […] *coupled* with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, and believing" (Gee, 2014, p. 183, emphasis in original) about racial inequality that involve the history and roles of U.S. institutions and the effectiveness of policy to remedy racial inequality (Orfield, 2022).

This paper argues that educational policy should be designed and implemented with the assumption that race matters and continues to impact educational opportunity resulting from racial inequality. Instead of attempting to downplay or evade the impact of racism in society through race-neutral policy (Welton et al., 2023), race-conscious professional teaching standards could be one policy guide to help scaffold teachers' practice when designing and teaching lessons for racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. As a former U.S. and international schoolteacher whose race is privileged, I did not necessarily see how my students and I were racialized within U.S. society (Omi & Winant, 2015). Seeing how race matters might have helped me design and teach lessons that more meaningfully and respectfully engaged the identities and perspectives of my students, particularly my students of color (Casey & McManimom, 2020).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, most states and the District of Columbia (DC) do not provide insight at the policy level toward how teachers might address culture or race and power in ways significant to advancing students' learning. One reason for the absence of race-conscious policy is the deeply fraught (past and present) sociopolitical and historical context of the US. For example, conservative White backlash resulting in anti-CRT laws nationwide[2] illustrate how race-evasive policy is used to systematically deny the presence and impact of racism in society (Welton et al., 2023). Ever present challenges around designing and implementing race-conscious policies also exist at the individual school and classroom level. Researchers have documented the historical resistance that some White teachers and teacher candidates experience when learning about pedagogies that center race (Jupp et al., 2019). However, the field of teacher education suggests numerous insights to help teacher educators expand future White teachers' Discourses (Gee, 2014) that contribute to authentic race-conscious/anti-racist teaching (Casey & McManimom, 2020). Why, if there are already tools and strategies for teachers to leverage in terms of race-conscious pedagogy, would teachers need policy to point out the importance of race in their teaching? The background that follows builds context for how race-conscious teaching standards policy could expand the structural boundaries of teacher practice beyond traditional conceptions of students and teaching.

[2] See Schwartz (2023) for a map of current and proposed regulation of teachers' discourse on issues of systemic inequality.

Background

What are Professional Teaching Standards?

Professional teaching standards are designed to guide teachers' actions, both in the US and abroad (Lewis & Young, 2013). Teaching standards contribute to a professional development (PD) structure connected to teacher education and teacher evaluation. While professional teaching standards do not necessarily cause particular beliefs or even practices, they contribute to how teachers might understand the experiences and needs of their colleagues and students. They outline ways of thinking and practices considered important to the teaching process such as planning, instruction, assessment, and content area pedagogy. Because teaching standards, in various forms, are present in each state's education system,[3] teaching standards impact large numbers of teachers and their students.

States have the primary responsibility for establishing standards related to education. Teaching standards were created to support students' attainment of learning standards (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2022). Teaching standards work in tandem with academic content, or curriculum standards, which outline what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level. Teaching standards are an integral part of states' accountability systems, also known as teacher effectiveness systems.

Prior to the 1980s, local school systems had considerable autonomy in developing materials and standards for teaching. Schools worked with independent publishers, teacher educators, and professional associations to develop curriculum (Cohen, 1982). Decentralized local school governing led to critiques of a lack of uniformity of curricular standards and student outcomes that could be measured and compared to gauge school system's effectiveness (Koppich & Esch, 2012). During the 1980s, learning standards were implemented as a solution to problems outlined in *A Nation at Risk* (1983). The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB) sought to advance the national education agenda of global competitiveness, accountability, and ameliorating group-based educational disparities. Policy instruments were created to measure states' teacher effectiveness systems related to teacher preparation, teacher evaluation, and professional development. Teacher evaluation was largely tied to students' academic achievement outcomes as determined by standardized tests and standards-based curriculum. Despite attention to racial test score disparities, many accountability advocates argued that factors such as family background should not be considered mitigating conditions in evaluating schools and teachers (Rury, 2024). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, colorblindness—a perspective that ignores race as factor leading to disparate life outcomes (Bonilla Silva, 2018)—was embedded in school policy reform research and implementation.

InTASC, an acronym for the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, created *Model Core Teaching Standards* in 2011. These standards provided a national template that states could adopt as a foundation for their professional teaching standards. The Council of Chief School State Officers' (2013) InTASC volunteer committee created a framework for what effective teaching across all content areas and grade levels looks like in teachers' practice. The InTASC committee was comprised of public officials who head state departments of education, practicing teachers, teacher educators, and other education professionals and organizations committed to defining and supporting effective teaching for all learners (CCSSO, 2013). The InTASC standards describe the performances, essential knowledge, and critical dispositions of effective teachers as related to 10 standards (CCSSO, 2013). These 10 standards outline aspects of teaching that include:

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[3] The Council of Chief School State Officers created a set of national teaching standards that states could adopt and adapt to their state's education context.

(1) learner development, (2) learning differences, (3) learning environments, (4) content knowledge, (5) application of content, (6) assessment, (7) planning for instruction, (8) instructional strategies, (9) professional learning and ethical practice, and (10) leadership and collaboration.

While writing this paper, I realized that I had a personal connection to the CCSSO. In 2007, I was chosen as a finalist for the DC State Teacher of the Year. The CCSSO, who sponsors the State Teachers of the Year program, are the authors of the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards. The CCSSO recognized my students and me as a classroom community dedicated to learning in ways that helped each student feel seen and supported. The CCSSO might have seen me represent "a creative, tenacious passion for students and the teaching profession" (CCSSO, 2024); however, my experience teaching in the mid-2000s showed me how much more I could have known and done in terms of recognizing the impact of structural racism on my students, me, and the school community. I realized that I had a stake in seeing the CCSSO's teaching standards as important to the field, as the organization recognized the work being done at my school located in a historically Black and economically disinvested area of DC.

Thirty states use the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards in some form and to varying degrees. The other 20 states and DC do not explicitly mention InTASC in their teaching standards, though some evidence of similar policy language is evident (see Table 1 in Appendix). Teaching standards revision varies from state to state. Revision occurs through the collaboration of various stakeholders who provide input to state legislators in some states such as New Mexico (see Table 2 in the Appendix for which I searched, gathered, and analyzed states and DC's teaching standards between the years 2020-2022).

Most states and DC are not specific about how teachers might support students' race or culture in their pedagogy. Dependent on teachers and their individual racial and/or cultural competency, many states' teacher evaluation systems (connected to teaching standards) largely do not require racially and/or culturally-centered classrooms. For example, a teacher in Pennsylvania for "Domain I: Planning and Preparation, Component 1B: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students" is proficient by "demonstrat[ing] a thorough knowledge of the cultural background and learning needs of student groups" (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021). Identifying the cultural background of student groups is important for a proficient teacher, but centering their cultural background is not required. A distinguished teacher, however, "actively seeks and values individual student's cultural background as well as cognitive and physical needs; applying that knowledge to advocate boldly on their behalf" (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021). Students' culture, not race, is directly named in a way that pushes beyond the knowledge and practice of proficient teachers. The distinction between a proficient and distinguished teacher can be clarified using Gee's (2014) Fill-In Tool (#2) for discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is used later in this paper to examine deeper meanings of teaching standards. To examine what needs to be filled to achieve clarity as to the distinction between the standards, it is implicitly stated that the distinguished teacher knows that not all students' cultural backgrounds (i.e. students of color for whom the classroom environment is not typically centered) are valued. "Bold" (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021) actions (that resist White/European culture) are needed to highlight culturally diverse students' presence by advocating on their behalf. Implicit in my analysis of the difference between a "distinguished" and "proficient" Pennsylvania teacher is the distinguished teachers' assumption that asymmetrical power relationships exist between minoritized students of color and society (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The distinguished teacher, who goes above and beyond what is required, is considered exemplary if they can identify, understand, and advocate for students' cultural backgrounds in their teaching. The proficient teacher does what is required and maintains the status-quo through recognition of culture without the expectation of planning for and centering students'

racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. In other words, the absence of explicit race-conscious language for teacher proficiency appears to make the utilization of race-conscious teacher pedagogies, such as culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2006), an "add-on" if teachers wish to be "distinguished" rather than "proficient." Assuming that race matters and impacts educational opportunity, and U.S. students are increasingly diverse while their teachers are most likely to be White, one can argue that the description of the distinguished teacher would better serve all students, particularly students of color. Could the distinguished Pennsylvania teacher who centers students' cultural backgrounds be the new proficient teacher with race-conscious teaching standards? Why is culture described more often in teaching standards and not race? The next section details what race-consciousness is and why race-consciousness is important for professional teaching standards.

What is Race-Consciousness?

Omi and Winant (2015) describe the evolution of race consciousness in terms of the discourses that appeared dating to prehistory as a process of "othering" human beings in order to classify them (p. 105). Race can be seen as "master category" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 106) traced to the rise of Europe and the arrival of Europeans to the Americas. One way that European explorers distinguished themselves from Indigenous peoples was to characterize themselves as full-fledged human beings and cast Indigenous peoples as savage others (Omi & Winant, 2015). Omi and Winant (2015) explain that Europeans who were part of the transatlantic slave trade needed justification that legitimized their alleged discovery of America to advance, in their eyes, the development of modern world through merchant capitalism. Omi and Winant (2015) posit that Europeans' conquest of America therefore sparked modern racial awareness—race consciousness—as a struggle between civilization (Europeans) and barbarism ("Other"). Racial discourses throughout history constitute racialization, which Omi and Winant (2015) define as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group" (p. 111). The term "racialization" refers to a process of selection that "impart[s] social and symbolic meaning to perceived phenotypical differences" (p. 111). In other words, racialization became the main basis to justify or reinforce social differentiation. Omi and Winant (2015) further explain that "racial categories, and the meanings attached to them, are often constructed from pre-existing conceptual or discursive elements that have crystallized through the genealogies of competing religious, scientific, and political ideologies and projects" (p. 111). They theorize that race is "a master category—a fundamental concept that has profoundly shaped, and continues to shape, the history, polity, economic structure, and culture of the United States" (p. 106). Intersectional categories of classification such as class, gender, and sexual orientation and other (il)logic forms of social stratification can be seen through the process of how racial categorization became the template of difference and inequality (Omi & Winant, 2015).

Contemporary social science, which in large part measures phenomena, often fails to account for racialization in the US because race is often seen as a social category that is either objective or illusory (Omi & Winant, 2015). Objective, more fixed/concrete views of race are often rooted in biological differences such as skin color, hair texture, or eye shape, and regard race as an "essence" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 109). Illusory, more recent views of race, construct race as an ideological construct or "unreal" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 110). The impacts of race can be seen as manifested through material distinctions or identity-markers such as inequality, class stratification, and culture/ethnicity. In our current time, this illusory understanding of race is not rooted in nature but is synonymous with colorblind ideology. Colorblind ideology ignores the power or presence of race or racialized difference in institutions (Bonilla Silva, 2018). Someone who holds colorblind

views see racial classification as inherently racist because race is not perceived as "real" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 110). This perspective dismisses race as a legitimate category of social meaning and the many connected material consequences that people of color experience in their everyday lives.

Persistent education achievement gaps well into the 21st century—largely along race and class lines—illustrate inequality of opportunity and outcomes for students of color. The 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics reveals a 25-point test score gap between fourth-grade White and Black students (The Nation's Report Card, 2019). College-age Black males who are about one-seventh of the U.S. male population receive one-twelfth of the college degrees. Latinx males who are more than one-fourth of U.S. college-age males receive one-ninth of the post-secondary degrees (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). An individual with a race-conscious perspective understands that Black and Latinx males are disproportionately non-college degreed because the racialization and racial stratification that built the US persists in the present day (Nasir et al., 2016; Orfield, 2022). Students of color face inequality from the earliest parts of their lives including life before school, family resources, segregation in unequal schools, different opportunities and preparation in high school, and other aspects of life. Racial inequality remains largely unresolved due to many factors that include the shifting frames of understanding race as a category, social construct, and process (Dixson et al., 2020). Omi and Winant (2015) explain that "race is both a social/historical structure that signif[ies] individual and collective identities, inform[s] social practices, shape[s] institutions and communities, demarcate[s] social boundaries, and organize[s] the distribution of resources" (p. 125).

The school at which I taught in a historically segregated Black DC neighborhood is an example of how racialization, when ignored, manifests patterns of inequality (Carrier, 2023; Omi & Winant 2015). Standards-based accountability neglected the entrenchment of racial dynamics historically present at my school, which resulted in part, in the school's closure in 2008 (Carrier, 2023). Had district and school leaders made visible the process of racialization in the community that functioned as a tight-knit family, potentially a more equitable outcome other than the school's closure could have been reached. The next section describes how an awareness of race and the many material consequences connected to racialization matters for teachers and students.

Why Does Race-Consciousness Matter for Teachers and Students?

Race-conscious teacher education scholars report positive student outcomes such as increased engagement with class material, deeper understanding of subject-area content, and increased in-class test scores (see Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Beginning in the 1970s, race-conscious pedagogies were developed by foundational educational scholars Gay (1973; 2000/2018) and Ladson-Billings (1995). Gay (1973) wrote explicitly about race early in her career. As colorblindness took root in national discourse by the 1980s, Gay's language shifted from explicit mention of race during the 1970s to the term culture. Although the two terms—race and culture—have distinct meanings, race is more closely associated with power than culture. Race, as described above, is a slippery term that connotes a charged historical past and whose meaning, as socially constructed, must be understood within the context of Whiteness and White supremacy. Culture, on the other hand, to use Ladson-Billings' (2014) anthropological definition is "an amalgamation of human activity, production, thought, and belief systems" (p. 75). Perhaps in an era of colorblindness, culture became a term less controversial to critics in an intended post-racial era. Although Gay and Ladson-Billings embed race as a lens for which teachers should think about students, race was subsumed under larger theories that Gay (2000/2018) conceptualized as culturally responsive teaching and Ladson-Billings (1995) conceptualized as culturally relevant pedagogy.

Culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy focus on slightly different aspects of teaching—the former on teacher practice and the latter on teachers' thinking and dispositions. However, both theories ascribe race-conscious lenses to make explicit teachers' recognition of and engagement with race (Dixson, 2021). Teaching with a culturally responsive and relevant perspective means that teachers have a developed sense of racial literacy and sociocultural consciousness that informs teaching beyond the status-quo (Carter Andrews, 2021). An example of a culturally responsive and relevant teacher is the evaluation criteria for a "distinguished" teacher in Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021).

Culturally responsive and relevant teachers help students make explicit connections between historical, social, and political realities and their personal lives in complex and multifaceted ways (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally relevant pedagogy in particular helps teachers notice unequal power dynamics since the focus of this theory is to provide a lens to teachers' thinking. Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy is credited with inspiring numerous instantiations of race- and culturally-conscious pedagogies that this paper does not have space to detail here (Paris, 2012). It is important to acknowledge that there is not a monolithic or single story for a racial, cultural, ethnic group, or individual. Intersecting identities paint nuanced understandings of student identity markers. In short, pedagogies exist that help teachers work with students of various racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Policies, however, that might help teachers see the importance of planning for students' racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity, are rare.

Why Race-Consciousness Matters in Education Policy

Race-conscious education policy holds the potential to help teachers see race as something important to plan for when thinking equitably about all aspects of teaching. Teaching standards, a form of education policy, were developed to help guide teachers' pedagogies. Carefully crafted race-conscious language in these standards would make race visible in a way that would create new, structural limits of possibility. Teachers would be expected to know that race matters, race continues to impact educational opportunity, and that race-conscious pedagogies are important to use with all students in classrooms.

For teachers for whom the process of racialization might be difficult to see, race-conscious teaching standards would shift colorblind boundaries to include more substantiative engagement with race beyond surface-level racial classifications used to report test score disparities. Many well-intended White teachers with varying backgrounds, experiences, and local contexts could have access to anti-racist resources that might help them make sense of Whiteness as instantiated at personal, local, and structural levels. *Building Pedagogues: White Practicing Teachers and the Struggle for Antiracist Work in Schools* (Casey & McManimon, 2020) is one anti-racist guide for grassroots professional development. Casey and McManimom (2020), part of the Midwest Critical Whiteness Collective which is a non-university based research group of academics, educators, practitioners, and activists, detail their process developing a two-year PD seminar called "RaceWork" with eight White teachers committed to advancing antiracism in their classrooms, schools, and communities. The grassroots nature of RaceWork and the time and space afforded to engage nuance illustrates some of the limitations that top-down race-conscious teaching standards might engender from a structural level. Scholars of policy implementation note the complexity with which human sense-making constructs different understandings of policy language (Spillane at al., 2006). Spillane et al. (2006) explain that teachers construct different understandings of policy by connecting new ideas to their existing understandings and social contexts. Teachers, for the most part, interpret new information in light of what they already know as their prior knowledge includes tacitly held expectations and beliefs that influence what teachers' notice in classrooms (Spillane at al., 2006). Casey &

McManimom (2020) share that RaceWork participants, through their two-year professional development, understood race in deep ways that resulted from ongoing critical engagement with topics of White supremacy and racism. Race-conscious teaching standards should not prescribe top-down ways of responding to students and instructional situations, although PD that is context-specific around anti-racist pedagogy coupled with other relational supports that engage complexity in multifaceted and nuanced ways, will be important.

Survey of Race-Conscious U.S. Teaching Standards

Mūniz (2019) surveyed states' engagement with culturally responsive teaching and conducted a state-by-state review of teaching standards focused on the extent to which state teaching standards correlated with culturally responsive teaching competencies. Culturally responsive teaching, as explained earlier, is an instructional strategy that recognizes race as an important factor that impacts the learning environment (Gay, 2018). Mūniz (2019) found that states try to incorporate several culturally responsive teaching competencies such as "culturally mediated instruction/curriculum, high expectations, and respect for differences/diversity" (p. 23). Implicitly missing from states' teaching standards was specificity around what it means and looks like for teachers to provide "culturally mediated instruction/curriculum, high expectations and respect for differences/diversity" (Mūniz, 2019, p. 23). One competency found absent from most states' professional teaching standards was "recognizing and redressing bias in the system" (Mūniz, 2019, p. 23). Two states from Muñiz's report, Alaska and Washington State, prioritized culturally responsive teaching by developing and implementing stand-alone sets of teaching standards that focus on the knowledge and skills that are crucial to culturally responsive teaching.

To date, Muñiz's (2019) report is the most recent comprehensive national analysis and correlation of culturally responsive competencies with states' professional teaching standards. This paper builds on Mūniz's policy report to show updated professional teaching standards for 14 states and standards connected to teacher evaluation (see Table 3 in Appendix). I collected but did not analyze separate documents for states that had stand-alone culturally and linguistically diverse teaching standards. Though certain states' guides for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students is highlighted through separate teaching standards, these standards if available, for the most part, are not required for teacher evaluation (for an exception see Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board, 2024). For the current study's purpose, teaching standards aligned to teacher evaluation were analyzed as these standards are most representative of the expectations for teacher practice in public schools (see Table 2 in Appendix).

This study was complicated by the diverse sociopolitical context of U.S. federalist system in which states' education agencies are independent and not expressly tied to the federal government. Within the US, comparing states' teaching standards can, in ways, represent comparing apples and oranges. Within states as well, local districts' teaching standards may vary depending on state and local context. Context was at the forefront of my attempted comparisons with room for nuance important to my analyses. As such, a comprehensive portrait of states' teaching standards is more complex than can be gleaned through coding or discourse analysis, which are the methodologies used in this study. This study is one starting point for future analyses.

Research Design and Methods

The first step in my research design was to determine the extent to which race-conscious and race-neutral discourses were present in states' professional teaching standards. I also searched for similarities and differences within and between states' teaching standards as they related to race-conscious and race-neutral discourses. To determine the variations between and within states

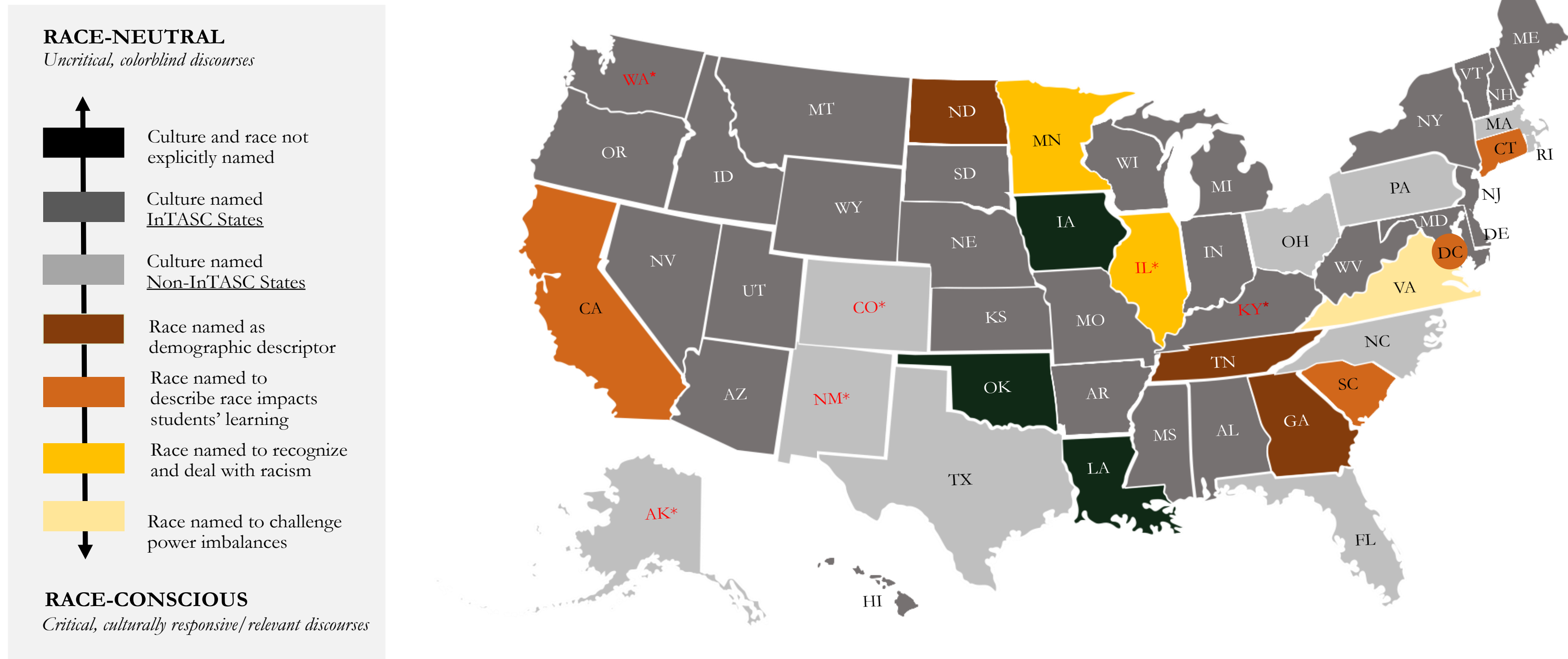
teaching standards, I first coded for the presence/absence of racial and cultural language described in the standards. Through iterative coding cycles, my doctoral committee co-advisor and I wrote analytic memos that discussed how I searched for the presence/absence of language related to race and culture. I began coding the InTASC Model Core Teaching standards first because a number of states used the InTASC standards as the basis of their teaching standards. Through memo writing and coding at this preliminary stage, my advisor pointed out that he believed I over-coded for standards that I thought showed evidence of culturally responsive teaching discourses, which I used to represent race-conscious discourses. As Ladson-Billings (1995) would affirm, I indeed coded what was "just good teaching" (p. 484). I did not find explicit mention of racial language in those teaching standards. Through my advisor's questioning and dialogue, and by attending to my researcher positionality and subjectivity, I understood that consistent with researchers' claims that race often is ignored as a tenet of culturally relevant pedagogies (Dixson, 2021)—I, too, ignored race in my first cycle of coding. As I recognized and corrected this mistake, it is not surprising that this mistake occurred in the broader context of how Whiteness and White supremacy has been and continues to be embedded within systems and individuals. I reflected on my own socialization in Whiteness and the influence it held in my meaning-making of the teaching standards. My co-advisor and I decided to organize the rest of the teaching standards by grouping InTASC standards and non-InTASC standards. Separating the standards helped organize similarities and differences in how states' discourses were similar and different. Our groupings resulted in Figure 1, which shows a descriptive view of variations present in states' race-conscious and race-neutral teaching standards language.

Figure 1 is limited in that nuanced descriptions of race consciousness expressed in language is deeper than the literal reference to racial (and cultural) words. For this reason, discourse analysis afforded a deeper examination of states' teaching standards that explored how the language and structure of states' standards varied in more nuanced ways. For example, Hawaiʻi as examined through discourse analysis contained race-conscious discourses not readily apparent through coding only. Hawaiʻi shows on the map as gray although the state's teaching standards, on deeper examination, contain critical culturally responsive/relevant discourses. Thus, the variation in discourses present in Figure 1 are a general sweep of reference to race and/or culture in states and DC's teaching standards.

Figure 1 shows that InTASC states name culture directly. These states are shaded in dark grey on the map. Several states have stand-alone cultural standards that describe teachers' work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. These states are Alaska, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, New Mexico, and Washington state. States that explicitly mention race in addition to culture include two InTASC states, Georgia and South Carolina, and seven non-InTASC states, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and DC. These states and DC show some critical discourses pertaining to race in teaching standards. There are three non-InTASC states that do not mention culture and race: Iowa, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. These states' discourses are primarily colorblind and place a large emphasis on students as equal individuals. In total, 47 states and DC explicitly mention culture. Ten states explicitly mention race in addition to culture. Three states do not mention race or culture at all. Further examination was needed to unpack deeper meanings communicated through states' teaching standards.

Figure 1

Map of Discourses in U.S. Professional Teaching Standards[4]



* *Separate stand-alone standards for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students*

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[4] Map created by Nadiah Salam.

Discourse Analysis

I used Gee's (2014) tools for discourse analysis to probe into how the language in the standards functioned to convey various instantiations of race-conscious and race-neutral teaching. I used Gee's (2014) Fill In Tool (#2), Subject Tool (#4), Framing Tool (#6), Why This Way and Not That Way Tool (#9), Significance Building Tool (#14), Politics Building Tool (#18), and Connections Building Tool (#19), to interpret meanings that teaching standards discourses could potentially hold for teachers in different state sociopolitical contexts. I used these tools (and other tools not explicitly mentioned) as different lenses to ask different questions of the standards. I ultimately sought convergence with Gee's other tools to see if my analyses triangulated. Analyses often converged with the use of multiple tools.

There are limitations, however, as stated earlier to discourse analysis and subsequently to my findings. As the tools highlighted above inquired into salient aspects of states' teaching standards, my findings were limited, in part, by the patchwork of publicly available data on teacher evaluation and teaching standards. I also did not deeply analyze all 50 states and DC's teaching standards due to space limitations. I chose one InTASC standard and four states: Arizona, Hawaiʻi, Oklahoma, and Virginia as salient examples of race-neutral (colorblind) and race-conscious discourses. I chose InTASC Standard #1 as the foundation of the InTASC standards and to illustrate how two states that used the same standard can show significant variation through language that produces different race-conscious and race-neutral boundaries for teacher practice. I chose Oklahoma to illustrate how descriptions of student difference were omitted and reified through the state's sociopolitical context. As I was limited to publicly available information, media, and literature that appeared to connect findings to states' sociopolitical contexts, I am not an expert in any one state's sociopolitical environment. Due to space limitations, I was unable to posit numerous alternative explanations to my interpretations in this paper. I did, however, consider how communities of educators might interact more broadly, creatively, and critically within (and outside of) the boundaries of their standards.

Findings

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards—Setting the Limits of Teacher Pedagogy

InTASC Standard #1 describes what teachers should know about learner development. Standard 1(e) states:

> Learner Development/Essential Knowledge 1(e):
>
> The teacher understands that each learner's cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development influences learning and knows how to make instructional decisions that build on learners' strengths and needs. (Council of Chief School State Officers, 2013)

To first interpret this standard, I used Gee's (2014) Tool #4: The Subject Tool. Gee (2014) explains that discourse analysis tools can be used for written (i.e. policy documents) as well as spoken communication (i.e. oral transcriptions). Various combinations of people were involved in writing teaching standards, which adds to the hybridity of the text (Bakhtin, 1981). Subject Tool (#4) showed that teachers were the target audience of the text and who would most likely read the teaching standard. Teachers were the point around which information in the standard was organized. Learners were the predicate in the sentence. The "learners" predicate positioning explained what the standard said about teachers' understanding of learners (Gee, 2014, p. 24).

Teachers must (or should) have knowledge of their learners to plan learning experiences *for* students. Teachers make instructional decisions and must (or should) base their decisions on what they know about students' learning.

I next used Gee's (2014) Tool #2: The Fill in Tool to make sense of any implicit messages stated in the teaching standard. From the text, I assumed that teachers can (or should) understand that students' learning *outside* of the classroom (i.e. cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development) influences learning *inside* of the classroom (i.e. learners' strengths and needs). Based on these outside influences, I assumed that teachers must (or should) know their students well enough to know their cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical needs. The language in the standard can also be read as assuming that teachers know how to make instructional decisions that use each learners' developmental influences as a baseline for teaching. When analyzing for the presence of race-conscious discourses, one can see the presence of colorblind ideology that evades reference to race as a developmental influence. One of the many tensions that teacher preparation programs experience, for example, is raising teacher candidates' sociocultural and racial awareness to help them connect with racially and culturally diverse students (Carter Andrews, 2021). Teacher education scholar Carter Andrews (2021) explains:

> [Teacher education programs] have historically been and continue to be designed with oppressive policies and practices aimed at assimilating teacher candidates to embody a mindset and employ behaviors in the classroom that position whiteness as the benchmark to which all K-12 students should strive. Neither TEPs or K-12 schools in the U.S. were designed to advance critical understandings or enactments of equity and justice—not in ways that support the liberation and self-determination of People of Color. Thus, our inability to effectively prepare teachers to educate all children is linked to our inability to systematically and meaningfully decenter whiteness […]. (p. 417)

Without explicit mention of race in this InTASC teaching standard, Whiteness remains centered and the cultural code to which all teacher and students adhere. The knowledge systems, traditions, and customs of "communities and peoples who are not white, economically advantaged, cisgendered, Protestant, able-bodied, and male" (Carter Andrews, 2021, p. 417) are left on the margin. Although we do not know the intent behind the writing of this teaching standard, the limits of teacher practice, similar to the difference between the "proficient" and "distinguished" Pennsylvania teacher (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2021), are often set through language.

Hawai'i and Arizona

InTASC standard 1(g) is an example of how two states, Hawai'i and Arizona, used the same standard, but modified the standard to fit state context. Hawai'i used the originally worded language of the standard and modified other parts of the InTASC standards for the Hawaiian context. For example, Hawai'i added to InTASC Standard 2(d): "The teacher brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of content, including attention to learners' personal, family, and community experiences and cultural norms, *including Native Hawaiian history and culture*" (Hawaii State Department of Education, n.d., emphasis is mine). Hawai'i's addition, "including Native Hawaiian history and culture" explicitly draws attention to teaching Native Hawaiian history and culture. Hawai'i's state context is an example of how Native Hawaiian-serving schools and teachers have embraced responsibility to cultivate Native Hawaiian student identities.

Sociopolitically, after nearly a century of federal restrictions on Hawaiian language in schools, Kaomea et al. (2019) documented the transition of Hawaiian schools to provide culturally and linguistically affirming education to Indigenous students. The researchers describe how Kānka (Native Hawaiian) activists in the 1980s alongside a growing Hawaiian nationalist movement began to assert educational sovereignty through the creation of Hawaiian-language immersion and Hawaiian-focused charter schools. Other Kanka educators sought to create epistemological space for Indigenous knowledges and social relations within existing, traditionally American-assimilatory schools. Hawai'i's InTASC teaching standard modification is an example of a race-conscious discourse that highlights the importance of including Indigenous Hawaiian knowledges in teaching. Kaomea at al. (2019) describe one limitation related to this race-conscious discourse: In spite of Indigenous educational policies and agendas, "such policies are rarely accompanied by institutional support or professional development for the teachers tasked with implementing them" (p. 273). Enacting race-conscious policy at the structural (state) level encountered barriers at local and individual levels despite Hawai'i's broadly sympathetic sociopolitical context (Kaomea et al., 2019).

Arizona's teaching standards also include an addition to the InTASC standards to fit state context. InTASC standard 1(g) says: "The teacher understands the role of language and culture in learning and knows how to modify instruction to make language comprehensible and instruction relevant, accessible, and challenging" (Council of Chief School State Officers, 2013). Four words were added to the end of this standard: "consistent with Arizona law" (Arizona Department of Education, 2021). I used Gee's (2014) Why This Way and Not That Way Tool (#9) to probe more deeply into the semantic difference that Arizona's four-word addition created for teachers and students. I wanted to know why Arizona's standards were written one way, and Hawai'i's written another way. This tool showed how the text was built around the role of language and culture in learning. In sum, Arizona's standard 1(g) is written as "Standard 1.7. The teacher understands the role of language and culture in learning and, *consistent with Arizona law,* knows how to modify instruction to make language comprehensible and instruction relevant, accessible, and challenging" (Arizona Department of Education, 2021, emphasis is mine). I then used Gee's (2014) Politics Building Tool (#18) to unpack the discursive difference with the four added words.

One interpretation of this standard is that the social good described is students' language and culture. The standard describes this social good as relating to students' learning. Because Arizona's standard added "consistent with Arizona law," the language emphasizes that Arizona's law modifies the social good of language and culture. I next used Gee's (2014) Frame Tool (#6) because I wanted to know how Arizona's modification of InTASC standard 1(g) might relate to Arizona's sociopolitical context. I asked, what do I need to know about Arizona's political context that will help me better understand how the social good of students' language and culture is being modified by Arizona law[5]? What was/is the Arizona law? I learned that Arizona's Proposition 203 does not allow students described as "English learners" (ELs) to have access to schools' curriculum until ELs reach English language proficiency. The Frame Tool helped broaden the interpretation of this standard in that the social good, students' language and culture, is modified by Arizona law by withholding ELs access to academic content based on students' home language and culture if it is not English.

Many teachers who work with EL students throughout the US are trained to use sheltered instruction, which describes general instructional practices that can be beneficial to students who are learning to speak English (Vanderbilt University, 2023). Sheltered instruction is designed to help English learners learn English content while simultaneously learning academic content. Sheltered

[5] Arizona became a state to initiate an anti-CRT bill—see Schwartz (2023).

instruction is a pedagogy that speaks against restricting ELs to English proficiency classes only. The widely used online professional development tool, IRIS Center, informs teachers that language instruction should be integrated into all content-area classes (Vanderbilt University, 2023). If Arizona's law restricts teachers from using sheltered instruction, what might be the state's perspective of students' language and culture and how language and culture should be distributed in society (Gee, 2014)? As read through this interpretation of Arizona's teaching standard, language and culture is valued as English-only. Students whose first language is different are positioned as "other."

Arizona as visible in Figure 1 is not alone in its lack of explicit attention to the needs of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. In the case of InTASC standard 1(g) applied to Arizona's state context, students whose first language is not English are positioned as "other." Applying a race-conscious lens to this teaching standard is one way to critically see the discourses present in this standard. Gee (2014) shared how one teacher in Arizona used a race-conscious lens to describe Arizona's Proposition 203:

> It's racism. Blatant racism. There's no other way to describe it. It's against the 14th Amendment [of the U.S. Constitution]. It's made specifically to isolate children who are immigrants to this country. And that's what it is, because if you're an immigrant, you're coming in this class. And to say that there's no time to teach them science and social studies is against the 14th amendment of the Constitution. It is segregation at its finest, because you are not providing the same educational opportunities for kids in that class that you are providing to native English speakers. (Data from Heineke, 2009, p. 162, as cited by Gee, 2014, p. 147)

This Arizona teacher names Proposition 203 as racist. She says that not teaching EL students academic content—most often immigrant children of color— does not provide for equal opportunity under federal law. Any child residing within a states' boundaries is required to provide free public schooling to children, including undocumented immigrants on an equal basis with other children in the state and district (*Plyer v. Doe*, 1982). This teacher provides an example of applying a race-conscious lens to race-neutral, and unjust state education policy.

One step I imagine this teacher took, along with other teachers, is collective action. Groups such as the American Immigration Council are a point of contact in advocating to repeal Arizona's Proposition 203 in service to EL learners who deserve culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies to best meet their needs. Anti-racist pedagogies that support culturally and linguistically diverse students, albeit many pedagogies use students' home language as a point of departure for learning new academic content, are an important consideration in moving toward race-consciousness in Arizona, although against state law.

If the language "consistent with Arizona Law" was removed from this teaching standard, space for anti-racist teaching would be within the bounds of this teaching standard. Arizona's sociopolitical context, in contrast to Hawaiʻi's seeming support for race-consciousness, draws a distinct and narrow boundary around what is possible and not in terms of how teachers should teach and recognize (or not) students' race and culture. Challenging the broader state educational system can begin with examples of localized, unique, and contextual antiracist work happening already in Arizona. Guidance from organizations such as the National Education Association are one place to start (see National Education Association, 2023). In sum, two different sociopolitical state contexts show the variation of what is conceivable for teachers' pedagogy on a structural level in terms of race-consciousness. Hawaiʻi's explicit statement to teach Native Hawaiian knowledges

and Arizona's explicit adherence to state law which in effect dismisses teaching EL students academic content, shows how a state's sociopolitical context can influence states' teaching standards language in race-conscious and race-neutral ways despite InTASC being used as a foundation.

Race-Neutral Teaching Standards Reified Through Sociopolitical Context

Oklahoma

The following non-InTASC teaching standard from Oklahoma illustrates how one teaching standard describes race-neutral behavioral expectations of students and teachers. I used Gee's (2014) Tool #19: The Connections Building Tool, Politics Building Tool (#18), and Frame Tool (#6) to probe deeply into how the discourses of the standard figured the presence/absence of race among students. Oklahoma's teaching standard says:

> [The teacher] monitors the behavior of all students at all times. Standards of conduct extend beyond the classroom. As necessary and appropriate, [the teacher] stops misbehavior promptly and consistently, with a voice level word choice suitable to the situation, in a manner that promotes positive behavior and relationships and encourages students to self discipline. (Oklahoma State Department of Education, Tulsa Public Schools, 2014, p. 3)

First, I used Gee's (2014) Tool #19: The Connections Building Tool to see how words and grammar connected or disconnected things or ignored connections between things. I asked how words and grammar were used to make things relevant or irrelevant to other things, or ignored their relevance to each other (Gee, 2014). Oklahoma's standard connected behavior with conduct that applies in and outside of the classroom. Teacher action was connected to stopping misbehavior through verbal action to correct and change unsuitable behavior to suitable behavior. Students are encouraged to maintain suitable behavior themselves (i.e. "encourages students to self discipline" (Oklahoma State Department of Education, Tulsa Public Schools, 2014, p. 3). What was disconnected, irrelevant, and/or not visible in Oklahoma's standard was a description of student difference. One interpretation of this standard is that allowances for variation in student behavior, whether the result of racial, cultural, and/or ethnic difference, is minimized. It can be inferred from the standard that students must allow the teacher to maintain a classroom environment that displays appropriate student conduct, which contributes to, according to the standard, a positive learning environment.

By using Gee's (2014) Politics Building Tool (#18), one interpretation of Oklahoma's standard is that the social good is represented by learning as determined by appropriate student behavior. If student behavior is determined by the teacher as not appropriate, to use Gee's tool, the social good—learning—can (or should) be withheld. Gee's (2014) Politics Building Tool asks how words and grammatical devices are used to build a viewpoint on how social goods (i.e. learning) are or should be distributed in society (i.e. the classroom). One interpretation of Oklahoma's standard is that the standard builds the viewpoint that students with appropriate behavior (what counts as a social good) will learn (receive the social good based on how others determine the social good should be distributed in society/the classroom). If students' behavior does not fit the view of the teacher (the "distributer" of social goods), the distributer (teacher) can (or will) decide how the social good (learning) will (or should) be distributed in the classroom. Should the social good (learning) be withheld, students whose behavior is determined not appropriate, will not receive the social good (learning).

By applying a race-conscious lens to Oklahoma's standard, one can see that unequal opportunities can be created for students whose behavior might be considered outside the

boundaries of mainstream White/European culture. Because descriptions of difference are absent from Oklahoma's standard, there exists a high risk of harm to students positioned as "other" through racial, cultural, and/or ethnic difference. One Dean of Students from Casey & McManimom's (2020) *Building Pedagogues* described how she recognized the structural reality of White supremacy in her school and called it "perpetual" (p. 72). The Dean saw her students of color in her school's social and academic spaces read differently from White students. She described that teachers saw things like "disrespect" more frequently from students of color or that teachers failed to connect or make curriculum relevant and recognize for themselves that disciplinary policies were biased through the disproportionate suspensions of students of color targeted for discipline (Casey & McManimom, 2020).

Broadening the analysis of Oklahoma's standard using Gee's (2014) Frame Tool (#6), I learned that Oklahoma's recent passage of Executive Order 2023-31 prohibits state agencies, colleges, and universities from using state funds to support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (Jackson, 2023). My analysis of Oklahoma's non-description of difference was confirmed through Gee's Frame Tool with the additional sociopolitical contextual information described by Oklahoma's latest legislation. Educational opportunity, as materially seen through race, can be seen to take on an illusory view of race as unreal and inherently racist. One interpretation of Oklahoma's sociopolitical context is that colorblindness was reified through the Oklahoma governor's statement about Executive Order 2023-31: "Encouraging our workforce, economy, and education systems to flourish means *shifting focus away from exclusivity and discrimination*, and toward opportunity and merit. We're taking politics out of education and focusing on preparing students for the workforce" (Jackson, 2023, emphasis is mine). Race, seen as a tool for politics and not real, can be seen through a colorblind perspective as a political tool that causes exclusion and discrimination. From this race-neutral perspective, students of color who are disproportionately referred for disciplinary infractions, are the subject of discrimination when opportunity and merit are afforded to those who fit within the boundaries of what counts in a colorblind/post-racial society—adherence to White supremacy and Whiteness.

Within the sociopolitical context that potentially drove Oklahoma to minimize difference through legislation, race-conscious teaching standards could, in similar ways to Hawai'i, incorporate language that constitutes race-consciousness (although watered down) without direct reference to race. For example, the standard could say something like:

> [The teacher] monitors student interaction for evidence of engaged and productive learning. As necessary and appropriate, [the teacher] seeks to understand student misbehavior beyond the classroom and promptly and consistently redirects behavior in a way supportive of student needs and promotes learning and positive relationships inside and outside the classroom.

Ladson-Billings (2006) talks about culturally relevant teachers as assuming that asymmetrical relationships exist between poor students of color and society. Culturally relevant pedagogues know that race is a factor in learning environments. In a militantly conservative social context with race-neutral teaching standards, this context does not create a structural environment that expands the boundaries of teacher practice in race-conscious ways. Teachers must (and expressly can) think on their own about how students whose difference is marginalized is a part of a broader system of racist practices that result in the overrepresentation of students of color in behavior referrals. Including indirect reference to student difference in a revised standard such as the standards language suggested above could be a first step toward race-consciousness, but my revised language does not

make race visible in a way that creates explicitly race-conscious structural limits of possibility for teachers.

What could teachers do in their individual classrooms, such as teachers in Oklahoma, if their teaching standards are primarily race-neutral? Emdin's (2016) concept of reality pedagogy, which is race-conscious, details how teachers can view every student as having a distinct perspective, voice, and can be seen as an individual influenced by their racial and/or cultural identity. Teachers know that race is a factor in students' daily school experiences and opportunities. Reality pedagogy privileges students' sense-making processes. Teachers position students as expert in their own learning. The teacher experiments with being positioned as learner so that the teacher and students co-construct the classroom through the teacher sharing academic content, but students have a voice in how the teacher can best teach content to them (Emdin, 2016). Anti-racist reality pedagogy would shift the narrative that teachers must (or should) monitor students at all times to position students as monitoring themselves in a way that moves beyond "self-discipline" because students are invested in their learning and therefore engagement can replace self-discipline. In sum, because race-neutral teaching standards are not explicit around race, local districts and individual teachers can (and should) explore antiracist teaching pedagogies that actively seek and value individual student's racial and cultural backgrounds as a critical foundation for creating inclusive learning environments in which all students thrive.

The Complexity of Race-Conscious Teaching Standards

Virginia

The Virginia Board of Education included a teacher performance standard, "Culturally Responsive Teaching and Equitable Practices." Part of this standard states:

> *The teacher demonstrates a commitment to equity and provides instruction and classroom strategies that result in culturally inclusive and responsive learning environments and academic achievement for all students. Examples of teacher work conducted in the performance of the standard may include, but are not limited to:* [The teacher] teaches students the skills necessary to communicate and engage with diverse groups in ways that support the eradication of discrimination and bias while mitigating against classroom power imbalances (based on race, ethnicity, gender, identity, ability, and/or socioeconomic status) that perpetuate fear and anxiety of difference. (Virginia Department of Education, 2021, pp. 12-13, italics in the original)

I used the Subject Tool (#4) to interpret this standard as being about teachers who build culturally responsive and inclusive learning environments through knowing and enacting equitable teaching practices. This standard is explicit about how equity is defined (i.e. "engage with diverse groups in ways that support the eradication of discrimination and bias while mitigating against classroom power imbalances (based on race, ethnicity, gender, identity, ability, and/or socioeconomic status) that perpetuate fear and anxiety of difference"). Compared to Oklahoma's standard which does not mention difference at all, Virginia's standard can be seen as race-conscious by seeing difference and not being afraid, i.e. "fear and anxiety of difference" (Virginia Department of Education, 2021, p. 13). Fear is often an emotion described by teachers who actively practice antiracist work in schools as they actively push against power imbalances structured in school environments (Casey & McManimon, 2020). The Virginia Board of Education (2021) states that a "highly effective" teacher helps students mitigate against power imbalances, which is the nuance between the "effective" (i.e. status-quo) teacher in Virginia and the "highly effective teacher" (the "highly effective teacher" is

reminiscent of the "Distinguished" teacher in Pennsylvania). Due to the nationally publicized 2021 gubernatorial race in which Republicans used race as a political tool to win Virginia's governorship (Natanson & Elwood, 2022), I used the Significance Building Tool to attempt to better understand how the words and grammatical devices in Virginia's standard became a racial project that linked signification (the origins, patterning, and transformation of racial meanings, representations, and social identities) and structure (segregation, stratification) to shape policy (i.e. "anti-CRT" laws) that not only exert political influence, but organize understandings of race as everyday "common sense" (Omi & Winant, 2015).

One interpretation of this standard is that it emphasizes Virginia teachers' commitment to equity through the use of italic font at the beginning of the standard. Italics serve to draw the reader's attention to the content in the communication. The italic font emphasizes the importance of the standard's content, which is about equity, culturally inclusive and responsive learning environments, and the academic achievement of all students. Explicit language is used, that from a colorblind view, might appear racist because of phrases such as "support the eradication of discrimination and bias", "mitigating against classroom power imbalances (based on race, ethnicity, gender, identity, ability, and/or socioeconomic status)," and "perpetuate fear and anxiety of difference." A person with a colorblind view would ignore the power or presence of race or racialized difference in institutions.

The political backlash that occurred in Virginia and other states through the initiation and enactment of "anti-CRT" laws (Schwartz, 2023) show how Virginia's race-conscious standard did ideological and practical work that required simultaneous interpreting, representing, and/or explaining of racial identities and meanings in the effort to organize and distribute resources (economic, political, cultural) along particular racial lines (Omi & Winant, 2015). As a teacher insider, I can confidently assume that most teachers believe that all students deserve an equal opportunity to learn and thrive. Many teachers understand that in order to achieve educational equity, race-consciousness is a critical perspective for teachers in their work toward "mitigating against classroom power imbalances" so that students of color and White students can experience equal learning opportunities. It can be inferred that this understanding was most-likely intended for teachers (specialists), speaking and acting as experts, while the public "everyday people" using "vernacular" style language" (Gee, 2014, p. 76) produced tension when the two social languages—styles or varieties of language (or a mixture of languages) that are enacted and are associated with a particular social identity—came into contact in Virginia's contentious sociopolitical context. Gee (2014) describes specialists as having their own type of social language with different standards than "everyday people" (p. 77). Specialists' style of language is a tool for attempting to produce knowledge. Conversely, when people speak and write as "everyday people" (Gee, 2014, p. 77), they have their own informal theories and ways of saying and doing things that they share with others in families and cultures. Gee (2014) describes that one difference between experts/specialists is that specialists (teachers) make their theories and practices more overt and public, which are shared well beyond families and cultures. In Virginia one can see how conflict between everyday/common sense and specialists claims to knowledge came into conflict. Because race can be used as a common-sense term that everyone claims to know, there can be contestation between elite (specialist) and street (vernacular) perspectives of race for which colorblind views work against the type of productive, race-conscious work the Virginia Board of Education attempted to do with its culturally responsive and equitable teaching practices standard. Although Virginia's race-conscious teaching standard was politically contested, the standard provides the type of race-consciousness important to helping guide teachers to see the work necessary to providing all students with equal learning opportunities inside (and outside) of the classroom.

Discussion and Conclusion

Educational policies, such as teaching standards, often neglect race as a factor that shapes educational opportunity. Race-conscious teaching standards could play a significant role in structuring teacher pedagogies that push against racial inequality for an increasingly diverse U.S. student population. Gee's (2014) tools show how states' teaching policy language actively creates and builds teaching and learning environments. Gee's tools afforded a scaffold to ask meaning-making, critical questions of states' teaching standards. This study's findings are a potential starting point for teachers, administrators, and policymakers endeavoring to support students for whom processes of racialization create barriers that race-neutral policy is unlikely to solve.

By taking a structural approach to race-consciousness through policy, teachers would not have to shoulder alone the historical structural inequities that impact their work with students and communities. Although limitations policy scholars note regarding the complexity with which human sense-making constructs understandings of policy language, antiracist resources in cooperation with thoughtful guidance at various state and local levels could potentially help teachers in their personal journeys toward constructing understandings and use of race-conscious teaching standards. In other words, race-conscious teaching standards could be an important structural support, among other anti-racist initiatives at local and individual levels, toward mitigating longstanding structural issues embodied in the legacy of White supremacy in schools. Likewise, race-conscious teaching standards could also provide a scaffold for catalyzing critical PD at state and local levels. With support from carefully planned and ongoing PD, teachers can play an increasing role in actively advocating for minoritized students while empowering them with tools to advocate for themselves and navigate a world in which racialization is instantiated in consequential ways.

Future research includes empirical classroom-based investigations of how race-conscious policy impacts teachers' instruction. Studies that examine the affordances, challenges, and risks of K-12 race-conscious education policy are needed. Lastly, tracing the historical and social construction of education policy might help researchers untangle what did not work and why to continue to offer new insights that attempt to reduce impacts of racial inequality in U.S. schools.

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Appendix

Table 1

States' Alignment with InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards Analyzed by Author

Identical	Slight Modifications	Major Modifications	Solely for Teacher Preparation	No Mention of InTASC
Arkansas	Arizona	Alabama	Maryland	Alaska
Delaware	Hawai'i	Georgia	Michigan	Colorado
California	Kansas	Indiana	Mississippi	Connecticut
Idaho	Kentucky	Maine	Nevada	District of Columbia
Oregon	Montana	Missouri	Washington	Florida
Vermont	New York	Nebraska	Wyoming	Illinois
	Utah	South Carolina		Iowa
	Wisconsin	South Dakota		Louisiana
		West Virginia		Massachusetts
				New Mexico
				North Carolina
				North Dakota
				Ohio
				Oklahoma
				Pennsylvania
				Rhode Island
				Tennessee
				Texas
				Virginia

Table 2

State Teaching Standards Gathered by Author

State	Teaching Standards and/or Evaluation Rubric Reviewed and Date Last Updated
Alabama	**Alabama Core Teaching Standards (ACTS)** (2018); **Alabama Quality Teaching Standards** (n.d.); **Alabama Standards for Effective Professional Development** (13 June 2002); **Educator Effectiveness: Overview of Teaching Effectiveness Process** (updated 3 May 2017)
Alaska	**Alaska Educator Content & Performance Standards** (n.d.); Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools (n.d.)
Arizona	**Arizona's Professional Teaching Standards** (2019)
Arkansas	**Arkansas Teaching Standards** (2012); **AR TESS Classroom Teacher Rubric** (29 September 2020); **The Arkansas Teacher Excellence and Support System** (AR TESS) (2018); **Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching Component Descriptions** (Spring 2021)

State	Teaching Standards and/or Evaluation Rubric Reviewed and Date Last Updated
California	**California Standards for the Teaching Profession** (2009)
Colorado	**The Colorado Teacher Quality Standards** (2020); **Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers** (2019); Colorado State Model Educator Evaluation System: Practical Ideas for Evaluating Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education Specialists (2018); Resource Guide for Deepening Understanding of Teacher's Professional Practices (16 July 2020)
Connecticut	**Connecticut State Department of Education 2010 Common Core of Teaching: Foundational Skills** (2010); **The Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Rubric for Effective Service Delivery 2015** (2015); **Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Rubric for Effective Teaching 2017** (2017)
Delaware	Delaware Administrative Code, 1500 Professional Standards Board, **1597 Delaware Professional Teaching Standards** (1 July 2012); Delaware Department of Education, **The Delaware Teacher Classroom Observation Framework** (piloted in 2021-2022; final observation framework last updated 16 June 2023); **Professional Learning Standards Core Concepts** (adopted from Learning Forward, last updated 17 September 2021)
District of Columbia	**The DCPS Essential Practices Grades 1-12**, **IMPACT: The District of Columbia Public Schools Effectiveness Assessment System for School-Based Personnel** (n.d., retrieved on 21 October 2021); DCPS Philosophy and Approach to Student Behavior and Discipline: Safe and Effective Learning Environment (1 August 2009)
Florida	**6A-5.065 The Educator Accomplished Practices** (Amended 13 February 2011)
Georgia	**Georgia Department of Education Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) Standards Reference Sheet and Performance Standards, Teacher Keys Effectiveness System** (1 July 2016); **Georgia's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System: Implementation Handbook** (1 July 2021)
Hawaii	**Hawaii Teacher Performance Standards** (2011)
Idaho	**Idaho Core Teaching Standards** in "Idaho Standards for Initial Certification of Professional School Personnel" (State Board of Education approved 19 June 2019)
Illinois	**Section 24.130 The Illinois Professional Teaching Standards** (2021); Section 24.50 The Illinois Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards (2021)
Indiana	**Indiana Developmental Standards for Educators** (2010)
Iowa	**Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria** (2010)
Kansas	**Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators 2020-2021, "Professional Education Standards"** (2015); Kansas Educator Evaluation Protocol (KEEP) Teacher Instructional Practices Protocol (August 2014)

State	Teaching Standards and/or Evaluation Rubric Reviewed and Date Last Updated
Kentucky	**Kentucky Teacher Performance Standards** (2018); **Framework for Teaching** (2014); **Characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learning** (CHETL) (2020); Differentiation: Culturally Responsive Instruction (20 May 2021)
Louisiana	**Title 28: Education, Subchapter C. General Teacher Competencies, §205. Introduction (July 2017); §207. General Competencies** (for teacher preparation) (July 2017)
Maine	**National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Core Propositions and Standards** (2014); Maine DOE Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth Model Professional Cohort Handbook (2014)
Maryland	**Blueprint for Maryland's Future**—Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) (2022)
Massachusetts	**603 CMR 35.03 Evaluation of Educators, Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice** (25 October 2017); **Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation: Classroom Teacher Rubric** (August 2018)
Michigan	**TNTP Core Teaching Rubric** (2017); **Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium** (INTASC) Standards (2013)
Minnesota	8710.2000 **Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers** (2010)
Mississippi	**Professional Growth System, Teacher Growth Rubric: Observation and Feedback Guidebook 2019-2020** (n.d.)
Missouri	**Literature Review: Missouri Teacher Standards** (June 2013)
Montana	**10.58.501 Teaching Standards** (2015)
Nebraska	**Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards** (2020)
Nevada	**Nevada Educator Performance Evaluation System** (NEPF) (August 2020); **Teacher Instructional Practice Standards and Indicators** (July 2019)
New Hampshire	**Chapter Ed 500 Certification Standards for Educational Personnel** (2020)
New Jersey	**New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers (N.J.A.C. 6A: 9C-3.3): Foundations of Effective Practice** (August 2014); **N.J.A.C. 6A: 9, Professional Standards (2014)**
New Mexico	**Elevate New Mexico** (27 July 2020); Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Guidance Handbook (2020)
New York	**The New York State Teaching Standards** (12 September 2011)
North Carolina	**North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards** (7 April 2017)
North Dakota	**Chapter 67.1-03-01 Code of Professional Conduct for Educators** (amended August 2002). Model Code of Ethics for Educators (copyright 2017 NASDTEC)
Ohio	**Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession** (2005); **Ohio Teacher Evaluation System: Teacher Performance Evaluation Rubric** (27 March 2020); Licensure Code for Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators (17 September 2019); **Ohio Teacher Evaluation System 2.0** (2018)

State	Teaching Standards and/or Evaluation Rubric Reviewed and Date Last Updated
Oklahoma	**Enrolled House Bill No. 2957** relating to teacher evaluations (16 May 2016) **Oklahoma TAP Teaching Standards** (OTTS) (2013); **Oklahoma State Department of Education January 2019 Legislation Brief: Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE); Tulsa Public Schools TLE Observation and Evaluation Rubric Teachers (2014-2015)** (2014)
Oregon	**Oregon Department of Education, Chapter 581, Division 22 Standards for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, Administrative Rule 581-022-2415 Core Teaching Standards** (effective 15 December 2011); **Oregon Model Core Teaching Standards** (2011)
Pennsylvania	**Pennsylvania General Assembly 2020, Act 13 Public School Code of 1949 – Rating System, Persons to be Suspended, Revised Rating System and Pandemic of 2020 Act of Mar. 27, 2020, P. L. 62, No. 13** (March 27, 2020); **Pennsylvania Department of Education Educator Effectiveness Observation and Practices Framework for Evaluation: Classroom Teacher** (June 2021)
Rhode Island	**Educator Evaluation System Standards** (adopted 3 December 2009); Rhode Island Department of Education Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services, Rhode Island Professional Learning Standards (RIPLS) (October 2018); **RIDE Educator Evaluation: Frequently Asked Q's** (n.d.); **The Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards** (2007)
South Carolina	**Responsive and Inclusive Practices and the South Carolina Teaching Standards** (2021); **South Carolina Teaching Standards (SCTS) 4.0 Rubric** (2021)
South Dakota	**South Dakota Codified Law: Teacher Evaluations, SDCL 13-42-33** (4 December 2013); **Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching** (2011)
Tennessee	**Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) General Education Rubric** (2018-2019); **Tennessee State Board of Education Educator Evaluation Policy 5.201** (23 July 2021)
Texas	**Texas Administrative Code RULE §149.1001 Teacher Standards** (30 June 2014); **Texas Administrative Code RULE §235.21 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Standards, Early Childhood-Grade 6** (17 May 2018)
Utah	**Utah Effective Teaching Standards Version 2.0** (August 2013); **Utah Effective Teaching Standards and Indicators** (Summer 2013)
Vermont	**Vermont Core Teaching Standards** (2013); Code of Professional Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct for Vermont Educators (2018)
Virginia	**Teacher Performance Evaluation System Handbook** (2021); **Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers Interim Guidelines** (2021)

State	Teaching Standards and/or Evaluation Rubric Reviewed and Date Last Updated
Washington	**Teacher Evaluation Criteria and Descriptors** (n.d.), Student Growth Goal Rubrics (1 August 2022); Cultural Competency Standards (2016); Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Standards (CCDEI) Standards (2021)
West Virginia	**West Virginia Department of Education Evaluation Rubrics for Teachers** (2018-2019); **West Virginia Department of Education West Virginia Professional Teaching Standards** (3 May 2023)
Wisconsin	**Wisconsin Educator Standards, Teacher Standards** (n.d.)
Wyoming	Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB); **Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards** (n.d.)
CCSSO's Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)	**InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0** (2013)

Note. Standards in bold were analyzed by the author for this study.

Table 3

Standards Not Analyzed by Muñiz (2019)

State	Standards Name, Year Updated
Alaska	Alaska Educator Content & Performance Standards, n.d.
California	California Standards for the Teaching Profession, 2009
District of Columbia	DCPS Essential Practices, n.d.
Maryland	Blueprint for Maryland's Future, 2022
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation: Classroom Teacher Rubric, 2018
Mississippi	Teacher Growth Rubric: Observation and Feedback Guidebook 2019-2020
Nebraska	Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards, 2020
Nevada	Teacher Professional Responsibilities Standards and Indicators, 2019
New Mexico	Elevate New Mexico, 2020
Oklahoma	Tulsa TLE Observation and Evaluation Handbook, Teacher 2014-2015
Pennsylvania	Educator Effectiveness Observation and Practices Framework for Evaluation: Classroom Teacher, 2021
Tennessee	TN Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) General Education Handbook, 2018-2019
Virginia	Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers Interim Guidelines, 2021
Washington	Teacher Evaluation Criteria and Descriptors, n.d.

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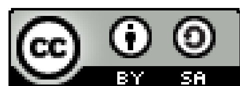

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