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The Role of Intersectionality in Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers

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Abstract: This paper emphasizes the complexity and criticality of intersectionality in understanding the research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers (TOCIT). Cho and colleagues (2013) identified three dimensions of intersectional dialogues: how intersectionality has been used in research and teaching, how it has been used as a theory and methodology, and how it has been used in community organizations. As Cho and colleagues noted, what intersectionality does in theory is equally as important as what it does in practice. Therefore, we drew from the recently published *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers* to highlight how intersectionality research has captured the beliefs, perspectives, retention, and recruitment of TOCIT. We begin by summarizing critical contributions from

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the *Handbook* and other recent research highlighting intersectionality in understanding and diversifying the teaching workforce. We then integrate policy impacts and implications and provide a case exemplar of how intersectionality can be thoughtfully integrated into the existing scholarship and practices to recruit and retain TOCIT.

Keywords: intersectionality; retention; recruitment; diverse workforce; Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers

El papel de la interseccionalidad en la investigación sobre Maestros de Color y Maestros Indígenas

Resumen: Este artículo enfatiza la complejidad y la importancia crítica de la interseccionalidad en la comprensión de la investigación sobre los Maestros de Color y Maestros Indígenas. Cho y colegas (2013) identificaron tres dimensiones de los diálogos interseccionales: cómo se ha utilizado la interseccionalidad en la investigación y la enseñanza, cómo se ha utilizado como teoría y metodología, y cómo se ha utilizado en las organizaciones comunitarias. Como señalaron Cho y sus colegas, tan importante como lo que hace la interseccionalidad en teoría es lo que hace en la práctica. Por lo tanto, nos basamos en el *Manual de Investigación sobre Docentes de Color y Docentes Indígenas*, publicado recientemente, para resaltar cómo la investigación sobre la interseccionalidad ha capturado las creencias, perspectivas, retención y contratación de Maestros de Color y Maestros Indígenas. Comenzamos resumiendo las contribuciones críticas del manual y otras investigaciones recientes que destacan la interseccionalidad en la comprensión y diversificación de la fuerza laboral docente. Luego integramos los impactos y las implicaciones de las políticas y proporcionamos un caso ejemplar de cómo la interseccionalidad puede integrarse cuidadosamente en los estudios y las prácticas existentes para reclutar y retener a Maestros de Color y Maestros Indígenas.

Palabras-clave: interseccionalidad; retención; reclutamiento; fuerza de trabajo diversa; Maestros de Color y Maestros Indígenas

O papel da interseccionalidade na pesquisa sobre Professores de Cor e Professores Indígenas

Resumo: Este artigo enfatiza a complexidade e a criticidade da interseccionalidade na compreensão da pesquisa sobre Professores de Cor e Professores Indígenas. Cho e colegas (2013) identificaram três dimensões de diálogos interseccionais: como a interseccionalidade tem sido usada na pesquisa e no ensino, como tem sido usada como teoria e metodologia e como tem sido usada em organizações comunitárias. Como observaram Cho e colegas, tão importante quanto o que a interseccionalidade faz na teoria é o que ela faz na prática. Portanto, baseamos-nos no recém-publicado *Manual de Pesquisa sobre Professores de Cor e Professores Indígenas* para destacar como a pesquisa interseccional capturou as crenças, perspectivas, retenção e recrutamento Professores de Cor e Professores Indígenas. Começamos resumindo as contribuições críticas do manual e de outras pesquisas recentes que destacam a interseccionalidade na compreensão e diversificação da força de trabalho docente. Em seguida, integramos os impactos e implicações políticas e fornecemos um exemplo de como a interseccionalidade pode ser cuidadosamente integrada aos estudos e práticas existentes para recrutar e reter Professores de Cor e Professores Indígenas.

Palavras-chave: interseccionalidade; retenção; recrutamento; força de trabalho diversificada; Professores de Cor e Professores Indígenas

The Role of Intersectionality in Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers

Kimberlé Crenshaw helped to popularize the term *intersectionality* in 1990. Intersectionality is often used as an analytical tool to solve problems, think about developing strategies to achieve equity, and describe power in a given social order. Patricia Hill Collins reminds us that intersectionality is “neither confined to nations of North America and Europe nor a new phenomenon” (Collins & Blige, 2020, p. 13). She continues, “People in the Global South have used intersectionality as an analytical tool, often without naming it as such” (p. 13), underscoring that intersectional frameworks have been applied for centuries. Contemporary theories employing intersectional frameworks—like those underpinning Crenshaw’s work—marry Black feminist thought and critical legal theory to expand understandings of social forces, social identities, and ideological instruments through which power and disadvantage are expressed and legitimized (Wozolek et al., 2023). However, the idea that the intersections of macro-level contexts, such as racism, classism, sexism, anti-LGBTQIA stigma, bias, and discrimination, among others, shape experiences of oppression and privilege was articulated before Crenshaw’s use of the term—for example, by the Combahee River Collective (1983), or in Sojourner’s Truth’s famous “Ain’t I a Woman” speech (Siebler, 2010). Crenshaw’s articulation of intersectionality explicitly addresses the challenges of conflating single identities and the tensions that arise when intra-group identities are ignored to advance social movements (Erevelles & Minear, 2010). In other words, we must understand how social identities co-operate and inform individual and collective experiences, thereby creating contexts where individuals may simultaneously experience oppression *and* privileges (e.g., as Black *and* female *and* queer rather than Black *or* female *or* queer). In the latter example, there is the risk of centering whiteness in identities that do not specifically call forth race (i.e., feminist movements become white feminist movements, or disability movements become white disability movements when whiteness and power are not explicit or exposed). Considering the contextual, fluid, and complex nature of social identities and categories, applying an intersectional lens is complicated, particularly if scholars who employ intersectional analyses and methodologies consider the epistemological implications at play and attend to the nuances within and across these identities and the contexts within which they work. In this vein, McCall (2005) argued that scholars adopting intersectionality in their work must reckon with the complexity of social identities and categories. Scholars must also critically interrogate their use.

According to Tefera et al. (2018), “[a]n intersectional approach is fundamentally oriented toward analyzing the relationships of power and inequality within a social setting and how these shape individual and group identities” (p. viii). In public education in the United States, we see the importance of intersectionality as it relates to an expanding population of multiply marginalized youth¹ in P–12 schools. In states such as California and Texas, multiply marginalized youth make up the majority of public school students (Carver-Thomas, 2017). Multiply marginalized students are expected to become the majority student population by 2050 (Carver-Thomas, 2017).

Unfortunately, despite demographic shifts toward more diversity, including the growing number of multiply marginalized students, the teaching workforce has not kept pace. Additionally, teacher shortages plague most states. Overwhelmingly, teachers remain majority white, able-bodied, cis-gendered, female, straight, middle class, and English-speaking. It is important to note that states like Florida employ laws prohibiting the “promotion of homosexuality” (read: no-promo-homo

¹ Multiply marginalized refers to the intersecting oppressions faced by groups of people. In this case, we use it to refer to youth in schools and teachers.

laws), which can prevent teachers from disclosing their sexual orientation and police their gender expression. Undiverse educator demographics persist despite significant demographic changes in the direction of diversity. While educator demographics have not kept pace with student shifts, we know that teachers who look like and have the shared social identities of their students tend to improve student outcomes such as academic gains and socioemotional support (Shirrell et al., 2021). Williams et al. (2020) also reinforced earlier research highlighting the positive impacts of Black teachers on Black students, including academic improvement and a reduction in discipline disparities.

Intersectionality helps us to understand the importance of considering more than one social identity construct (like race/ethnicity) and interrogating how constructs (like race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and disability) intersect with one another and every respective position on the social hierarchy ladder when advocating for a diverse teaching workforce. Considering intersectionality in education is especially important given recent data indicating that more public-school students are identifying as LGBTQ+, and the challenges that they report facing in schools are increasing at the same time. The CDC recently reported that LGBTQ+ students increased from 11% in 2015 to 26% in 2021. At present, one in four high school students identifies as LGBTQ+. Noteworthy here is that many students do not report engaging in queer romantic or intimate relationships; however, they are hyper-aware of how socially constructed and stigmatized identities are designed to enable white supremacy, as evidenced by Johns (2021) research. LGBTQ+ students report significant mental health challenges, including suicidality and depression, and data show that these reported rates are often higher for Black LGBTQ+ students. Recent data from the Trevor Project shows that one in four Black trans students reported a suicide attempt in the last year. Researchers, educators, and policymakers must understand and use intersectionality frameworks to design solutions for Black LGBTQ+ students and students from other multiply marginalized communities.

Given continued demographic shifts reflected in public schools throughout the United States, there is a particularly urgent need to attend to how the identity mismatch between teachers and students impacts teaching and learning dynamics, minoritized students' sense of belonging, expectations, school climate, and other factors that often erect barriers to success for students who are multiply marginalized (La Salle et al., 2020), which negatively impacts their ability to thrive—in school and life. We do note, however, some of the limitations of generalizations made about teachers of color and how diversity initiatives often equate color with consciousness (Jackson & Knight-Manuel, 2019). Thus, when we speak of TOCIT, we note that there is a specific desire to recruit and retain teachers who possess sociopolitical consciousness.

This paper emphasizes the complexity and criticality of intersectionality in research and policy related to diversifying the educator workforce. We begin with an overview of research from the section on intersectionality in the *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers*. We follow this with a research and policy analysis of intersectionality as it relates to a diverse educator workforce and provide a case exemplar of how intersectionality helps us to advocate for research, policies, and practices that increase intersectional diversity in teaching. We conclude with an overview of policy initiatives and recommendations for improving the workforce by applying intersectionality frameworks to the opportunity to address enduring gaps in ways that reflect shifts in demographic diversity.

Overview of *The Handbook*

Wozolek and colleagues (2023) noted how early examples of intersectional research on teachers of color centered on Black female teachers, which makes sense given the Black feminist roots of intersectionality. While some research has cited Black female teachers as “other mothering”

(Collins, 2000), more recent scholarship on Black female pedagogies and Black liberatory pedagogies (Perlow et al., 2017) have noted how Black women teachers used intersectionality to ensure their praxis prepares Black youth with multiple marginalized identities to navigate systems of cis-gender heterosexual white supremacy.

In addition to scholarship on Black female teachers, other literature on intersectional approaches to teachers of color has emerged. For example, the experiences of Black male teachers have centered on Blackness, heteropatriarchy, and fatherhood expectations (Bristol & Mentor, 2018). Other research has delved into the experiences of Latino/a/x teachers (Flores, 2011), queer teachers (Mattheis et al., 2022), and works across populations and contexts (i.e., students of color, Hispanic–Serving Institutions [HSIs], etc.). Additionally, Love’s (2019) book provided the intersectional framework of abolitionist teaching that illustrates how multiply marginalized youth must move beyond educational survival to thriving in schools. In *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers*, chapters engage intersectionality from various vantage points. These include sharing the experiences of four Black female teachers (Burkhard et al., 2023) who engaged in “race talk” (Howard, 2004) to both explore their own experiences in educational settings and trouble assumptions about the category of “Black woman.” Another chapter includes the documentation, creation, and implementation of a Queer Studies in Education course at an HSI (Mattheis et al., 2022). This chapter acknowledges the strengths of bringing queer theory and intersectionality theory into the conversation to shed light on how the students engage with both frameworks. The next chapter highlights how even well-intentioned diversity initiatives can marginalize people of color and recenter whiteness (Player & Irizarry, 2023) and illuminates how intersectionality can be used to attend to processes of becoming rather than static understandings of social identities. Others (Pour-Khorshid et al., 2023) used critical affinity spaces to critique the shortcomings of communities of practice, whereas Wozolek (2022) challenged us to think more deeply about identity politics in institutional spaces.

Noteworthy in the section on intersectionality in *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers* is that while Black feminist research was the original focus of this work, there has been a heavy expansion of intersectional research to include non-Black Teachers of Color. Through Mattheis et al. (2022) and other authors writing on the intersections of race, we can identify how race is deeply integrated into other social identities, such as disability and sexuality. For example, Kulkarni et al. (2022) highlighted how critical affinity spaces can support Special Education Teachers of Color (SETOC) in providing healing and support. Bracho and Hayes (2020) also documented the lives of Queer Teachers of Color in P–20 education. These studies noted the need for further study on intersectional research related to teachers of color to continue to broaden the reach of recruitment and retention of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers (TOCIT). Pham and Phillip (2021) also examined the micro-interactional processes through which teachers of color facilitated identity among social movement workers, teachers, and students using the 2019 Los Angeles teacher strike. Their work noted how the everyday practices of teachers who also work as activists can reflect the neoliberal context of education.

Policy Landscape and Research

K-12 Education

At the federal level, the Biden-Harris Administration has focused on “advancing educational equity,” including “addressing the national teacher shortage by improving teacher preparation, strengthening pipelines for underrepresented teachers, and supporting current teachers” (The White House, 2021). The Administration recognizes that while access to Teachers of Color benefits all

students, there are robust outcomes for Students of Color. In responding to this research and pressing needs resulting from teacher shortages, school closures, and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic the Administration has proposed investing in teacher preparation programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions (each with particular designation described within the Higher Education Act). The Administration has also called for additional investments in high-demand certification areas, including special education, and has urged Congress to invest in mentorship and leadership development programs. President Biden called for increases in teacher salaries during a 2023 State of the Union Address.

Congresswoman Fredericka Wilson (D-FL), ranking member of the Higher Education and Workforce Investment Subcommittee, and Congressman Jamaal Bowman (D-NY) recently reintroduced The American Teacher Act to raise minimum teacher salaries to \$60,000. The bill addresses the teacher shortage crisis by providing teacher salary grants supporting state efforts to increase teacher salaries to at least this level. At a press conference announcing the bill's re-introduction, Congressman Bowman said, "Nearly one in five American teachers report needing to take on a second or third job just to make ends meet" (Wilson, 2023). A companion bill, The Pay Teachers Act, has also been introduced by Representative Bernie Sanders.

Teach.org, which emerged from the U.S. Department of Education, is focused on the future of Black teachers serving as the nation's most extensive support system for Black talent considering teaching. Teach.org currently supports more than 15,000 prospective Black teachers in six states. It is working to scale across 50 states and support more than 200,000 prospective teachers annually. Teach.org employs an affinity-based support system provided by TEACH, an organization that supports prospective teachers as they explore the profession, make decisions about available roles and fit, navigate the entry process, and experience the first 3 years of teaching. A chief goal of Teach.org is to identify and eliminate the barriers that prevent Black talent from choosing, persisting, and succeeding in the profession. The organization has identified 24 barriers along the pathway that may prevent a prospective teacher from becoming a teacher and 33 unique supports that TEACH can provide to help bypass and overcome the aforementioned barriers. Similarly, One Million Teachers of Color is also working to increase educator diversity.

Educators for Excellence is an ever-growing coalition of more than 30,000 teachers founded by public school teachers, improving student learning and elevating the teaching profession. The coalition recently released a Call to Action to Diversify the Teaching Workforce (Educators for Excellence, 2024), which includes improving teacher preparation and placement and growing recruitment and retention of diverse teachers.

The Center for Black Educator Development was founded in 2019 by educator Sharif El-Mekki, with the understanding that students need windows and mirrors to reflect at them pieces of who they are and to help them imagine possibilities in a world into which they did not ask to be invited—including the educators and school and system leaders who create the conditions within which they learn and develop. The Center focuses on rebuilding the national Black teacher pipeline with an unapologetic focus on the recruitment and retention of Black male educators. The program hosts an annual convening for Black male educators (and the students and communities they serve and who-support them) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It is a hub for national partnerships that seek to revolutionize every aspect of the public-school pipeline to improve outcomes and opportunities for all public-school students.

Postsecondary

Across the United States, lawmakers are working to defund diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts within higher education. In Iowa, lawmakers have proposed a bill prohibiting state universities from funding DEI efforts. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is leading the charge to defund all DEI-related initiatives within colleges and universities nationwide (Gomez, 2023). DEI bans within the workplace are also gaining momentum. In Texas, on June 15, 2023, Governor Greg Abbott signed a law prohibiting diversity offices and initiatives, mandatory DEI training, and the use of diversity statements in hiring. In a memo, Abbott's chief of staff, Gardner Pate, wrote that state agencies engaging in DEI practices within hiring are violating both federal and state employment laws (Abbott, 2023). These attacks are intersectional. Missouri House Bill 2885 would make educators who validate a transgender child's gender by using their chosen names and pronouns a criminal offense. Violating educators would be subject to a \$10,000 fine, imprisonment, and placement on the state's sexual offender registry as a Tier 1 sex offender. Sex offenders in the state are not allowed to reside within 500 feet of a school or daycare, which makes this one of the most expedient ways to end the career of and restrict livelihood for affirming, inclusive, and supportive educators. The dismantling and defunding of DEI will have disparate impacts across higher education, with the career paths of Black faculty and other faculty of color, who are already severely underrepresented within higher education, being most at-risk.

At the time of this writing, nearly 100 anti-DEI bills were targeting programs at colleges and universities introduced in 28 states and Congress. These bills have been signed into law in Florida, Texas, and Alabama. The NAACP has called for a boycott of postsecondary institutions in the state of Florida following the Governor's and state legislature's attacks against Black and LGBTQ+ communities throughout the state. Similarly, Alabama Mayor Randal Woodfin said he would advise Black athletes to boycott the state if a proposed anti-DEI bill was signed into law by the Governor against the objections of many leaders throughout the state. We have already observed teachers declining to teach courses and topics that have come under political scrutiny. There have been additional decreases in the number of classroom educators as well as Black people and other people of color applying for teacher development programs and opportunities. What we know is that DEI and other anti-Black, anti-LGBTQ, anti-diversity, and anti-democratic attacks will weaken our economy, the social fabric that binds the community, and the quality of learning in public schools.

According to 2020 data from the National Center for Education Statistics, Black faculty represented only 7% of all faculty in the United States (NCES, 2022). According to the same data, 74% of faculty members in 2020 identified as white. Similar trends were seen within the different faculty positions and ranks across higher education. The concerted attack on DEI efforts likely means that less attention and action will be placed on increasing the racial diversity of faculty members and decreasing funding allotted to facilitate faculty diversity. Praslova (2022) noted that many organizations consider intersectionality in hiring sequentially, meaning they consider one social identity at a time when seeking candidates. She argued that organizations that pursue inclusion should consider candidates with multiple marginalized social identities and reconsider hiring criteria related to "fit" and "potential."

In addition, the push to eliminate DEI offices at institutions of higher education and in other contexts may also disintegrate the concerted intersectional efforts that many of these offices undertake. For example, David Johns worked in an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement as a graduate student researcher for 3 years under the leadership of the College's Chief Diversity Officer. Part of a College of Education and Human Development at a large, midwestern, Predominately White Institution (PWI), the Chief Diversity Officer (a Black woman faculty member) quickly transformed the space into a breathing room for students, staff, and faculty of

color. Students, Staff, and Faculty of Color would drop in throughout the day, sit at the large conference table, and take a breather, vent, or laugh before returning to their respective spaces, often described as isolating. The office hosted programming, such as lecture series by critical teachers such as Geneva Gay, Crystal Laura, and Bill Ayers, and town halls that brought together the entire College to discuss violence against communities of color. Intersectionality was at the heart of this organizing effort, as the office staff considered multiple forms of marginalization and the need for access and inclusion for each decision.

Teacher education preparation programs located in institutions of higher education have substantial implications for how candidates will carry forward their work into P-12 spaces. Noting the above need for support and programming, teachers prepared within such spaces that offer intersectional practices and policies are then more likely to utilize asset-framed approaches toward their students, especially students who present as multiply marginalized. Specifically, there is evidence to suggest that teachers of color prepared and supported through an intersectional lens are those who will nurture students' sense of belonging, reduce incidences of exclusionary discipline practice, and promote their overall academic success (Gist & Bristol, 2022).

The current discourse about the work and legitimacy of offices such as the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement, and the one described in the case exemplar, as well as the pushback against the role of Chief Diversity Officers in conservative political circles, will likely have a lasting impact on the functioning of these spaces, to the extent they exist, and will likely negatively impact institutional climates for multiply marginalized students, staff, and faculty, which the authors argue has a detrimental impact on the community and our country. This supposition is affirmed by data demonstrating positive outcomes associated with diversity.

While writing this article, the U.S. Supreme Court issued twin affirmative action decisions, effectively gutting affirmative action practices to end race-conscious admissions. The six-justice conservative supermajority invalidated admissions programs at Harvard and the University of North Carolina. The precedent-reversing decision recognized diversity's educational and social benefits but now requires that race/ethnicity not be considered when institutions make admissions decisions. The Supreme Court decision will likely follow trends observed in California and Michigan following similar changes via referendum and result in significant decreases in applications to and students enrolled in postsecondary programs nationwide. Colleges (and employers alike) are exploring changes to DEI programs and investments, including removing reference to race in the federal law—or Title VII—instead.

It is worth noting that programs are focusing on supporting Native and Indigenous educators. These programs include the National Indian Educator Initiative, which is a partnership between the National Indian Education Association and the TNTP (Transforming Public Education) to recruit and retain effective educators who are equipped to support Native students.

Case Exemplar

At the Minority Serving Institution where Saily Kulkarni works, against the backdrop of racial unrest that propelled universities to issue statements of racial equity, the College of Education moved to create an Institute for Emancipatory Education dedicated to transformation (Lattimer & Pizarro, 2021). The institute is a cross-disciplinary space dedicated to community-engaged, culturally sustaining research and practices to reimagine learning from preschool through postsecondary education. It serves as a hub for work across the intersections of race, disability, sexuality, health, STEM, and more. The institute has hosted critical scholars (virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic) dedicated to increasing the diversity of the educator workforce, such as Dr. Bettina Love, Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, Dr. Tara Yosso, and Dr. Jonathan Rosa. Additionally, with Kulkarni's

leadership, the institute hosted emerging scholars, poverty scholars,² and community and youth activists.

Speakers were asked to define emancipatory education and integrate the criticality of a diverse workforce into their answers and speaking engagements. As one of many common threads, the institute notes the importance of understanding intersectionality and living it through practice. Therefore, speakers, scholars, and community partners prioritized educator diversity among its key areas of interest.

Sharing the perspectives of multiply marginalized activists and scholars, the institute has brought in engagement from the university and broader community. In part due to projects such as a Community Cultural Wealth Working Group for faculty members and an Emancipatory Education Now student group, the percentage of teachers of color entering the university increased while enrollment for some programs such as teacher education almost doubled overall. Additionally, a core group of faculty members dedicated their time to enacting the practices of scholars and community activists, such as abolitionist teaching (Love, 2019) or culturally sustaining pedagogies (Alim & Paris, 2017), when working with teacher candidates to enact intersectionality in practice. These faculty working across teacher preparation spaces engaged intersectional authors in their courses, generated assignments that deepened teachers' critical thinking, and aided in helping teachers center race and the intersections in their classroom practices (see Burciaga et al., submitted for publication).

Several systems and sustainable practices made the Institute for Emancipatory Education possible. Above all, strong leadership committed to intersectional racial justice fueled the types of initiatives that were possible at the institution. Additionally, leadership was committed to building investments in the institute from local partnerships. For example, leaders would reach out to local nonprofit organizations and corporations to help build momentum and raise funding for institute initiatives. Virtual access ensured participation, as many of the partners and speakers could not physically travel during the pandemic. Virtual access allowed for a more dynamic set of conversations about teacher of color recruitment, support, and retention to take place. Overall, the commitment of leadership and dedicated faculty helped generate a space where intersectionality was both a way of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce and a tool for creating meaningful conversations and programs for the university community.

Discussion

Using intersectionality frameworks in educational theory and praxis during the last 20 years has not only facilitated conversations about the nuances and intersections at play when we consider students, faculty, teachers, and staff who have one or multiple marginalized identities, but also created the space to imagine what these frameworks mean for teaching and learning. Black feminist scholar and intersectionality critic Jennifer Nash (2016) argued that in contemporary feminist discourses, intersectionality as an analytic has become celebrated and reviled (p. 27) due to its dominant discursive positioning as the most appropriate lens through which marginalization should be analyzed. However, the case example illustrates that intersectionality as a relatively widely accepted analytic still plays a crucial role in teacher education settings. While critiques of intersectionality as a framework and its status as the most dominant analytical tool used to study the experiences and social locations of multiply marginalized peoples should be continuously pursued,

² Poverty scholars are those who are told their knowledge, speech, languages, art, experiences, and solutions are not valid or legitimate by linguistic domination and formal institutions of learning (Gray-Garcia et al., 2019).

intersectionality theory remains a framework with great potential for furthering equitable outcomes for minoritized students and faculty and for better understanding how multiple systems of oppression collude to harm students from the most vulnerable communities. For example, according to data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (2022), 757 hate crimes were committed on college and university campuses in the United States in 2019, with race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation as the predominant motivating biases for these hate crimes. Data provided essential insight into the need for critical education that disrupts Othering (Gover et al., 2020). Unfortunately, quantitative data rarely provide insight into the nuances and intersections worthy of consideration. For example, Burkhard's (2017) doctoral dissertation was a qualitative study designed to overcome the challenge posed by federal educational data ignoring intersectionality. The most extensive national educational data sets do not consider students as whole beings. They do not ask students questions about their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression in ways that allow researchers, policymakers, or educators to design programs, experiences, and solutions that account for multiple ways of being—especially for students who are most neglected and ignored. Burkhard leveraged professional and personal relationships to access private data owned by GLSEN and collected qualitative data to illustrate and overcome gaps resulting from a lack of intersectional consideration in education research and policymaking. Burkhard's (2017) previously referenced methodological approach was informed by and used intersectionality theory.

Considering the ongoing dire shortage of teachers, specifically Black and other Teachers of Color, as well as the struggle of many institutions of higher education to stabilize student enrollment after the pandemic, the pushback against the critical and intersectional work that has been occurring in K-12 and higher education settings is beyond concerning. While noting that state decisions to combat what numerous conservative pundits and politicians call “woke ideologies” and policies result from the ongoing backlash to movements for social justice, it is equally important to remember that teaching is a political act. We should all heed bell hook's (2010) teachings that living in a democracy is not a birthright—we must work to maintain democracy. hooks underscores the convergence of these points in *Teaching Critical Thinking* when writing, “Democracy has to be born anew in each generation, and education is its midwife” (p. 14). Public schools and institutions of higher education in the United States must remain spaces where minoritized students are seen, safe, and supported. The following section describes the impact of specific policies across different settings.

Policy Implications

In California, efforts to diversify the educator workforce have led to both (a) Assembly Bill 520 in 2020, which provided state resources for recruiting, supporting, and retaining a diverse educator workforce, and (b) an advisory group for the California Department of Education (§AB 520; Bristol et al., 2022). This group has structured five primary recommendations for teacher diversity efforts: (a) creating communities of practice for district and local schools to recruit, support, and retain Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers (TOCIT); (b) sustaining-funding and maintaining support at local, state, and federal levels; (c) guiding local educational agencies (LEAs) to increase supports such as grant funding for foundational equity practices; (d) linking community-based organizations, LEAs, and institutions to build intentional pipelines for TOCIT; and (e) continuing to sponsor statewide diversity legislation and promotion of the importance of TOCIT.

In New York, the state senate passed the Grow Your Own Initiative (§SB S1100A) to attract underrepresented teachers and generate a task force (§SB S255A) dedicated to reviewing the

initiative, providing recommendations, and generating creative pathways and solutions for recruitment. Sponsored by Senator John Liu, the Grow Your Own Initiative helps school districts, boards of education, and higher education institutions attract multiply marginalized teaching candidates into the field. SB S255A engages a task force to study and make recommendations to recruit a more diverse teacher workforce. These initiatives add to other programs in the state, such as Underrepresented Teachers of Tomorrow (§SB S342), which focuses on the recruitment and retention of underrepresented teachers; and the Bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow Program (§SB S5433), which attracts and retains bilingual certified teachers; and the Diversity and Empowerment Commission (§SB S1984), which brings together statewide and regional multiply marginalized teachers to generate networking and support.

In 2022, the U.S. Department of Education announced the Augustus F. Hawkins Program grants for higher education institutions. The grant program invests in high-quality teacher preparation for teachers of color and nationally improves the pipeline of diverse teacher candidates (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). The program targeted Minority Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The program is named in honor of “Augustus F. Hawkins, the first Black politician elected to the U.S. House of Representatives west of the Mississippi River” (U.S. Department of Education Press Office, 2023). The year 2022 marks the first time the program has been funded since its authorization in 2008. The total for these grants is over \$18 million and has been distributed across 12 institutions across 10 U.S. states.

Recommendations

Based on the research and policy initiatives described above, we offer the following policy recommendations:

1. Supporting educator preparation programs, including residential workforce development programs, to ensure that teachers are aware of and equipped to navigate the barriers to entry that frequently prevent teachers, principals, and other school leaders from traditionally under supported communities and with multiple marginalized identities from becoming teachers, matriculating year to year, and otherwise succeeding in the profession.
2. Increasing programs to improve teacher salaries, compensation, and benefits to retain, rehire, and hire new employees, with particular emphasis on teachers from historically marginalized and under supported communities.
3. Engaging in public service campaigns, philanthropic investments, and marketing efforts to increase the value associated with the profession is essential. We experienced increased public support and affirmation for teachers at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, much like annual teacher appreciation events, the effects are short-lived.

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