Utilizing Latinx Counterstories to Support Developing Critical Race Consciousness in Teacher Education

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Abstract

This study examines responses of educator participants to realities and current experiences of Latinx student educational experiences. Latinx student's counterstories of racialized experiences are used through four distinct teaching formats: frequency charts, student quotes, voice clips, and poetic counterstory. We interrogate how participants responded to youth's experiences and the relationship between the counterstory formats and the development of critical race consciousness. Findings demonstrated the use of voice clips and poetic counterstory were critical in creating empathy needed to move toward racial understanding and action. This transformative study develops future teaching approaches and professional development to increase awareness of student's racialized experiences.

Keywords: teacher education, critical race theory, critical race consciousness

Most teachers' lives are worlds apart from students of Color (Kailin, 1999), creating tectonic schisms of understandings as many educators resist fully grasping the effects of racism perpetuated by schools and communities. We are three educators dedicated and committed to offering racially just principles of practice related to teacher education. We believe that building awareness and empathy are the first steps to moving toward foundational understandings of equitable and anti-racist pedagogical practices. Additionally, although Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been misunderstood and unfairly scrutinized in public education, we find that explicitly leaning on CRT tenets can increase the opportunity for creating critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995) among staff serving PK-20+ students. As educators in the U.S.

reckoning with the national awakening to institutional racism from 2020-2023, we, two Latinas and one European American women researchers, felt it imperative to consider ways to address the culture gap between Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students served and those who serve them. We, along with many teachers in PK-24 settings were asking "how do I respond to difficult diversity issues when I'm teaching?" We continued to grapple with the question "how do we effectively cultivate a critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995) among teachers?" We believe that applying a CRT lens to educator professional development is a useful tool for creating empathy and racial understanding among educators.

Therefore, we studied an approach to professional development that involved presenting Latinx youths' own narratives and voices about their racialized experiences–what we refer to as counterstories–to participating educators, who reflected on these Latinx youth's experiences in writing. We examined these educators' written reflections to better understand how they were making meaning of these youths' racialized experiences. Our findings make visible both openings and barriers to educators' critical race consciousness, particularly related to Latinx students. We demonstrate what we learned and the hopes we have for building educators' critical race consciousness in these trying times we live and work in.

Literature Review

This study is grounded in the need to acknowledge and deconstruct dominant ideologies, policies, and practices impacting Latinx students. We share the voices through different formats including audio recordings of Latinx students to educators so they hear the students explain how they are perceived, treated, and experience unsafe feelings in their schools. Therefore, we endorse the perspective that educators need to cultivate critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014) and go a step further in advocating for critical race consciousness (Carter, 2005;

2008). Because race and racism are core to our study, the teacher education approach we examine here is grounded in foundational tenets of CRT (Bell, 1992; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Taylor et al., 2023).

Critical Race Consciousness

Ladson-Billings' (1995) seminal article in which she coined the term *culturally relevant pedagogy* focused on developing students' academic achievement, cultural competence, and "…critical consciousness – a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (p. 162). Dorinda Carter (2008) further developed this notion of critical consciousness by centering race, arguing that those possessing a "critical race consciousness . . . demonstrate an awareness and understanding of race as a potential barrier to their schooling and life success. They also understand the historical and current impact that racism has in perpetuating social inequality in America" (p. 14). We view critical race consciousness as a critical understanding of the asymmetrical power relationships existing between BIPOC and Whites in the United States. Without comprehending the racialized experiences of students of Color, many educators may believe we live in a post-racial society (Spring, 2022), failing to learn – through continued awareness, understanding, and critique of racial inequality – critical consciousness (DiAngelo, 2018; Kendi, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2006). In our work, supporting the development of a critical race consciousness is enhanced by grounding in CRT.

Critical Race Theory and Counterstories

Critical Race Theory (CRT) underscores the permanence of institutionalized racism in our society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Taylor et al., 2023), the belief that one race, the White race, is dominant and superior through a system of power,

ignorance, and exploitation used to oppress BIPOC (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT asserts that race and racism are central factors in the experiences of BIPOC. Recognizing the reality, permanence, and impact of racism on our society and on students of Color is a difficult process, particularly because dominant ideology strongly denies this reality. Additional tenets of CRT include challenging dominant ideology and claiming racial objectivity through countering dominant cultural, meritocratic and colorblind equal opportunity status (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Colorblindness, a concept often practiced in teacher education, includes seeing racial and ethnic differences as irrelevant to education (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Further, CRT counters dominant cultural assumptions related to culture, language, and intelligence, contradicting White majoritarian ideologies asserting deficits among Communities of Color (Yosso, 2005). Deficit thinking proliferates educational systems and blames the victims for the shortcomings of the education system's failure. (Esmail et al., 2017; Gabriel et al., 2016; Valencia, 2010; Yosso, 2005). The six types of blaming proposed by Valencia (2010) include: (1) blaming the victim, (2) oppression, (3) pseudoscience, (4) temporal changes, (5) educability, and (6) heterodoxy. Engaging in these strategies to assert deficits leads to deficit thinking, blaming the victims for the shortcomings of the education system's failure to provide appropriate education (Aragon, 2016; Gabriel et al., 2016).

Moreover, CRT centralizes the experiential knowledge of BIPOC. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) refer to the sharing of lived experiences of color as the "notion of a unique voice of color," adding that "the voice-of-color thesis holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that whites are unlikely to

know" (p. 11). One method often utilized in counterstories is through the "persistence of racism from the perspectives of those injured and victimized by its legacy…[by] bring[ing] attention to those who courageously resist racism and struggle toward a more socially and racially just society" (Yosso, 2006, p. 10).

When CRT is used in research, it grounds race and racism front and center in all aspects of the study and challenges conventional and dominant ideology (Azzahrawi, 2023). Centering race and racism in teacher education and professional learning is often unaddressed since it is difficult to discuss and creates charges in people. Hambacher and Ginn (2021), in their systematic review of literature, showed that teacher education and professional development typically utilizes general "multicultural or diversity" notions focused on culture or such social identities of gender, dis/ability, or social class (Hambacher & Ginn, 2021; Milner, 2017; Sleeter, 2017). This review of the literature only identified 39 peer reviewed articles between 2002-2018 of which professional development was "race visible" (Hambacher & Ginn, 2021, p. 329). They found that the majority of these race visible programs focused on curriculum, pedagogy, and few were focused on participating teachers' racial understanding and power. We purposefully situate our work as one of the few examples of teacher education and professional development studies centering race, racism, and teachers' racial understandings which include student voice. After additional review of literature, we found that typically student voice is presented to educators in professional development programs through written formats such as case studies (Bourke & Loveridge, 2016; Cook-Sather, 2006). We address this gap in the literature by utilizing typical text data presentations such as frequency charts and student quotes, but also adding unique data sets such as recorded voice clips and poetic counterstory into teacher education and professional development to build racial consciousness.

Methodology

We examined how educators' encounters with Latinx students' racialized experiences and counterstories may have influenced their understanding of the role of race in education through a "basic interpretive qualitative study" (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). Our research design involved participants writing reflective responses as they were presented with Latinx youth counterstories in a PD session, then analyzing those written responses through thematic analysis. The first author, María, presented to two groups of educators the Latinx youth's counterstories based on her original doctoral research where she examined Latinx youth narratives regarding their own racialized experiences (Gabriel, 2011). Drawing upon these Latinx students' narratives, María produced four different forms of counterstories, including data frequency charts, student quotes, voice clips, and poetic counterstories. Participants in this study recorded their reflective responses to these four different counterstory formats. The authors applied inductive coding via thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006) engaged through a CRT lens to critically analyze explicit and implicit meanings of participants' responses to the racialized experiences expressed by Latinx youth.

This study is guided by the following research question: How might the varied presentation formats of Latinx youth counterstories support, constrain, and/or further develop educator's critical race consciousness? We seek to make visible participants' efforts to grapple with Latinx racialized experiences in the school system and their communities.

Setting and Participants

Data collection was in two different settings, a professional development (PD) session for nine educators and a guest presentation to a combined group of two graduate education courses of twenty educators for a total of 29 participants. The study participants are considered a

convenience sample since they were engaged in this research based on the instructors' interest in the topic. Given the geographical context of the study, the participants' race and ethnicity included Latinx and White. See Table 1 for a demographic summary of all participants, enumerated by group.

Table 1

Demographics of Participant Groups

	Hispanic/ Latinx	White	Hispanic/ White	Female	Male
Group 1	3	6		7	2
Group 2 - MA		6	1	6	1
- PhD	2	11		10	3
Total	5	23	1	23	6

Both settings and participants are described accordingly below.

Group One: Professional Development Setting

As the equity and diversity coordinator for a mountain west region school district (MWRSD) that was a predominantly White institution, María, a Latina, offered the PD session to employees in the district. The district served 27,000 students preschool through twelfth grade (PK-12). In the year of the study, 26% of students in the district were identified as minority according to state demographics. The minority label used by the state included American Indian, Asian, Black/African American or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races, Due to the focus of this paper on Latinx youth,

we highlight that 17.6% of the student population identified as Hispanic or Latino and 4% of teaching staff identified as Hispanic.

In Group One, nine school district employees attended the two-hour PD session, most receiving district-approved PD credit. Three participants were classified staff and six were licensed educators with one to thirty years of experience. The classified staff did not have a license and held roles such as Paraprofessional. The licensed educators included licensed teachers. Three participants were Hispanic/Latino and six were White. Two identified as male and seven as female.

Group Two: Graduate Education Setting

The second and third authors are professors at the same institution who each taught a graduate course in critical multicultural education in the same semester. Antonette, a Latina, taught a master's level course and Louise, a European American woman taught a doctoral seminar. These courses were taught within a School of Education at a predominantly White land grant institution in a predominantly White region of a mountain west state. The students in the two graduate programs largely lived within an hour of the university and several also commuted from cities within a three-hour radius. The master's course included seven pre-service and in-service educators. They included six females and one male; all identified as non-Hispanic/Latino except one identified as both Latina and White. The doctoral course included 13 students who were all employed full time as educators, including teachers, administrators, and counselors. Eleven students identified as White (ten females, three males) and one male and one female identified as Hispanic/Latino. Both graduate level classes were in one room to participate in the same professional development that María earlier delivered to Group One.

Data Collection

María led the professional development sessions. Participants were first asked to introduce themselves and their professional experience working with Latinx students. Then an overview of CRT was explained and the Latinx student counterstories in four different formats were presented/read/heard: frequency charts, student quotes, voice clips, and a poetic counterstory (Gabriel, 2011, 2015, 2016). (These four formats are described in further detail in the findings section). Given the positionality of the researchers as two professors and one district-level administrator whose work centers on equity and antiracist pedagogy, we were concerned that our positions of power and Latina identities of María and Antonette might hinder authentic responses. Therefore, we took steps to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of data collection. We sought to build trust with the time allowed in each session. We assured participants that their responses would remain confidential and that we sought their honest feedback, reminding them that they could withdraw from participation with no adverse consequences at any time. Participants individually wrote responses on a reflection sheet and consented to voluntarily share their anonymous reflections. Their hand-written responses were typed up by student assistants who did not know the participants and who created pseudonyms for them. We were concerned that participants would write socially desirable responses, however, we found their responses to be authentic, making visible how they grappled with the difficult process of understanding how race and racism was experienced by the Latinx youth.

Data Analysis

The participating educators' written responses to the four formats of students' counterstories were analyzed using inductive coding and thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006) that drew on CRT and Critical Race Consciousness in multiple phases.

The data were examined through three analytic questions: 1) What is the nature of the participants' responses to each of the four formats of data? 2) In what ways do participants respond to the racialized content of the youths' reported experiences? and, 3) Is there a relationship between the format of data shared and participants' awareness of racism?

Throughout the analysis, we focused on the meaning making process. We three researchers first read through the entire data set several times, writing individual analytic memos that we shared with each other noting patterns and outliers regarding the participants' responses to the students' counterstories. We then coded the data for markers of response type within and across the two groups for the first two analytic questions. For Question 1, codes included emotional responses (sub-codes: angry, sad, shocked), unemotional responses, and statements of impact. For Question 2, codes included empathy, doubt, naming racism, noting racism without naming it, minimizing, excusing, putting onus on target, deflecting blame, raising questions, and calling for action.

Because Group 2 had been studying anti-oppressive educational theories and practices for six weeks before the session, we anticipated differences between the two groups. However, while Antonette and Louise had hoped for more significant growth in racial understandings and de-centering whiteness among their students at this point in the semester, they found little variation between the two groups. We understand from CRT that the effects of race and racism and long-term embedded socialization about race keep people pinned in their worldview, as we will examine in detail in the findings section. For several reasons, then, we decided to present the findings for the groups collectively rather than comparatively. First, we found little variation in the responses of the two groups. Second, our analytic process was on the meaning making processes of the participants rather than a comparative examination. Third, given the small sizes

of each group, we were concerned that breaking down the findings by group could compromise the protection of participants' identities. In the end, we found that combining the groups in our report provided a more in-depth analysis than a comparative approach could have afforded.

There were key patterns of the nature of the responses to each format of student data and we sought to characterize the shifts in emotional response and knowledge of race/racism in naming our themes. Table 4, *Participant Responses to Latinx Student Data*, presents the themes in the results section. The trustworthiness of our qualitative methods (Glesne, 2015) was checked through our interpretations and conclusions against the data and we sought alternative explanations through negative case analysis. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved through our consensus.

Findings

In this section, we provide written responses by participants based on the four distinct presentations of Latinx counterstories (known here forward as counterstory). Participants shifted from direct interpretation of Latinx numerical data to more empathetic reflections when hearing auditory voices of Latinx youth. Meaning making by respondents was analyzed.

Frequency Charts: Resistance

The first set of Latinx data presented to participants included a traditional quantitative data set of four frequency charts that provided numbers of documented occurrences of racialized experiences indicated by Latinx youth (Gabriel, 2011). The frequency charts were shared on screen for the participants to view and provided numeric representations of the frequency of Latinx students' (N=105) racialized experiences. Ninety-four of the 105 students referenced 100 experiences when they or someone known to them were racialized in their schools or their

broader community. One of the frequency charts revealed the verbalized racialized experiences as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency of Verbalized Racialized Experiences

Said/Verbal	Total
Racial comments	30
National origin "Go back…"	8
Language	6
Skin Color	4
Income	1

Source: Gabriel, 2011, 2015

Racial comments were associated with the use of racial slurs or comments related to perceived racial grouping, whereas the other themes fit directly under the following headings: national origin [such as] "Go back…," perceived spoken language, skin color, and perceived family income of the Latinx youth. The frequency charts unveil the normalcy of racism in the lives of middle and high school Latinx youth while describing experiences "that Whites are unlikely to know" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 9), showing the 'permanence of racism' (Bell, 1992).

Participants provided surface level attention, while lacking emotion in their written responses to the frequency charts. For example, several remarked that the data were "interesting." Mateo found the frequency charts "simple to read and follow," leaving him and three others wanting to know more. Several questioned the credibility, noting that the data "can be manipulated." A few participants referred to some of the racialized content of the youths' experiences. Francisco related to the chart noting the data "really put numbers to the day-to-day

frequency of racist acts Latino students face … and as I have lived it …. However, these charts don't speak to the severity nor the pain associated with such numbers."

Colorblindness was expressed as participants diverted or dismissed attention from race to another social identity. Rachel asked, "How does this data look when SES [socio-economic status] is considered?" Two other participants focused on gender differences since there were more female than male youth reporting experiences of being targeted. Kristin suggested that the issue was bullying, not racism. Participants observed the frequency of Latinx racialized experiences yet resisted their veracity of such common occurrences.

Student Quotes: Encounter

Second, Latinx quotes were presented, adding more context to the numbers in the frequency chart. Table 3 was shared to participants on a presentation slide and read aloud by María.

Table 3

Student Quotes of Verbal Racialized Experiences

Said/Verbal	Example
Racial Comments	"That guy turned and yelled 'beaners' with anger, like hating Hispanics"
National origin	"A problem I confronted was when a student at my school thought it was okay to make fun of immigrants."
"Go back…"	"A white student made the comment of 'all Mexicans, illegal or not should go back to Mexico'."
Language	"My teachers said I couldn't do the work because I talked Spanish."
Skin color	"…we were picked on and called black because of our skin color. They would tease us for being darker skinned than them."
Income	"…My teacher answered the student saying, 'Most Hispanics don't have money to spend on little things like glasses'."

Source: Gabriel, 2011, 2015

The counterstory quotes provoked a range of emotions. Many participants wrote that the quotes were "powerful" for a variety of reasons; and several found the data from the frequency charts combined with the quotes were helpful in learning about the Latinx racialized experiences. For 19 of the 29 participants, the counterstory quotes provoked emotions expressed as anger. Brittney stated, "It enrages me that these students cited instances where teachers were at fault – saying students couldn't do the work because of language rather than helping/supporting them in their efforts to learn, despite a language barrier." Other participants also made implicit statements of anger, such as, "would this [treatment] have been tolerated if it were a White child?" Sophia expressed sadness "that in the 21st century people think it's okay to say" these stereotypes. Francisco expressed some "raw emotions," of sadness and anger as he felt the quotes showed the pain of Latinx children and also illustrated that racism "happens more than we

admit." Francisco's "raw emotions" were coupled with a feeling of powerlessness, of being "up against an unchanging system."

The participants' emotional responses to the student quotes correlated with a recognition of the racial content as they began to explicitly name racism. Eight participants named racism as a reality, such as Mateo, who stated that the quotes "...validated my experience with students I work with, in the sense that 'racism,' 'prejudice' exist[s] [here]." Emma concluded that the quotes are "proof racism is alive and well in [the] U.S. no matter how many people say it is a thing of the past."

As powerful as these quotes were, many participants struggled to fully accept the reality of racism in the youths' lives. Nearly half expressed doubt and evaded the authenticity of these youths' quoted experiences. Rachel mused, "for some of the quotes, I am wondering what the evidence is that it is because of race. Is it possible there were other factors?" More concerning, Kristine continued to dismiss the youths' experiences:

> It's interpretation and perception. It is obvious that there are racism issues. Sometimes
>
> youth play the 'race card' for pity or to make an authoritative figure look bad. If youth
>
> aren't teasing/harassing you about skin color, they will find something else. It's what
>
> happens. I would be curious to find out what/how White students would respond (on an
>
> issue that they are picked on) or a disabled student.

Kristine's reference to playing the "race card for pity" and suggestion that "it's what happens," dismisses these youths' racialized experiences and shifts attention to White and disabled experiences with bullying.

Voice Clips: Empathy

A unique aspect of this study was the inclusion of voice clips recorded from student focus groups. The four voice clips shared provided a full auditory description told in the voices of Latinx students. Below is a transcript of one of the voice clips shared:

There was that one experience when we got off the bus one day, off the school bus. There was this guy who was chasing us with a big branch, or stick. He was swinging it and said, 'You little Mexicans, I know you tagged up my shed.' He thought we had spray painted his shed and he was swinging the stick at us. So, I guess judging just because we are Mexican or other that we had something to do with what happened to his stuff. I guess there was gang writing or something and he was stereotyping that just because we are Mexicans we are in gangs (Gabriel, 2011, p. 130).

Intonation, emotion, and feeling were heard in Latinx voices of the audio clips. The voice clip as a counterstory heightened emotional responses in the participants. Witnessing the description of racism in the Latinx voice appeared to create an empathic moment.

Six participants responded akin to Samantha, who explained, "To have the experiences shared aloud—in their own voices—gave great weight to the experience. It happened—let me tell you about it—gives more feeling and emotion to the experience when you hear it." Participants' responses were often specific to individual clips of students' stories, connecting with the students. Nine of the participants were emotionally moved, such as Mateo, who stated that he sensed the "hurt, the pain" in the students' voices. Three highlighted the power in hearing actual voices, such as Tomás: "very powerful way for data to give 'voice' to stories many prefer not to hear—or take time to hear." Similarly, four described the voice clips as 'honest', including

Judy: "honest testimony very compelling and genuinely moving." In earlier counterstory

formats, participants tended to resist and doubt the honesty of the students.

A critical mass of the participants discussed the relationship between the voice clip

format and the racial content. Two Latinx participants expressed deeply painful reactions to the

racism youth faced. Francisco emphasized "my heart hurts for these students. I have been there

and it angers me to know that our children are now facing the same problems I once, and still,

continue to encounter." Fernanda discussed how "words matter," and interactions are

internalized by Latinx youth and impacted for a lifetime. She was concerned as to how the

"mean" interaction of a teacher toward a Latinx student might begin to change the student and

impact "the education of this child."

The participants focused on painful realities of racism in general heard in the voice clips.

Several expressed a desire to take anti-racist actions to alleviate society and schools of racism.

Many participants identified specific racist statements, behaviors, and choices in curriculum. The

witnessing of racism seemed to awaken some racial empathy. Emily wrote, "This teacher's

approach is unacceptable and racist," and Debra commented the "type of training we give

teachers who put students in these types of situations are highly problematic and discriminating."

Like Debra, many participants tied their recognition of racist acts to recommended actions.

However, several participants employed one of the six characteristics of deficit thinking

proposed by Valencia (2010), 'blaming the victim.' Educators can find themselves putting the

onus of racism on the target, such as Nicole who suggested we "need to offer students a way to

stand up for themselves." These may be well-intentioned ways to advocate for support of Latinx

youth, but places responsibility on marginalized youth to learn to deal with racism individually

rather than requiring the educators to address institutionalized and systemic racism. Mark placed

responsibility on parents, suggesting "many students are influenced by their parents so education about diversity needs to start there," without recognizing the responsibility of schools to address racism regardless of parental influences.

Overall, participants' 'witnessing of racism' by listening to Latinx voices heightened emotions of anger, sadness, and powerlessness which contributed to an empathetic response to racism. Many participants revealed a developing awareness of racism as they engaged in questioning strategies.

Poetic Counterstories: Call for Action

Poetic counterstory was presented visually and vocally to participants. Data poems were developed by the first author, María, (Gabriel, 2011, 2015, 2016) using Latinx students' written statements and transcriptions from focus group interviews with Latinx students (Koelsch & Knudson, 2009; Lahman et al., 2010). The poems demonstrate the permanence of racism from the perspective of Latinx students. For example, the below poem described numerous racial comments and racial slurs made by students during a class discussion and the teacher's inaction in acknowledging or addressing racism in the classroom.

Role of Schools in Addressing Racism

The teacher is

standing there

and watching.

She hears.

That teacher—

She's only watching.

She doesn't tell

students to stop.

She's only watching—

(From data poem: She's Only Watching, Gabriel, 2011)

This poetic counterstory conveys the students' experiences of being othered and oppressed within school contexts without school personnel intervening. Participants appreciated this unique counterstory format. Susan stated, "[I] love this as a form of making 'data' personal and powerful as poetry speaks to people on a different level." Debra noted, "it got to the heart of the matter in a powerful way." Heather stated, "These speak to me" and added that the research poems could capture more information at different levels. Judy seemed to understand the constructive process of creating the poetic counterstory, commenting, "This is a creative way to both summarize and illuminate points for action." Participants began to express their concerns and desire for action to address overt and covert racism exemplified by the poetic counterstory and the teachers' lack of action, discussion, value, and education.

Participants addressed the powerful interaction of silence, socialization, and racism articulated through this poetic counterstory. When teachers watch and do nothing to stop racist behavior, "the silence in the classroom is perpetuating/normalizing up racism," observed Emma. Zachary wrote, "Not telling kids to stop is actively taking part, reinforcing stereotypes, enabling racism in the classroom almost with permission from the teacher." Students rely on teachers to prevent all facets of racism, overt and covert in action, deed, vision, and voice. "But instead [teachers are]…tolerating/perpetuating it!" exclaimed Brittney. Lucia questioned why teachers are not intervening and stopping racism: "I think most of the time teachers don't know how to deal with situations mainly because they need to go through their process of 'peeling the onion' of their own beliefs." Such analysis is profound, yet teacher education programs often do not

provide adequate critical multiculturalism or anti-racism training as part of the curriculum to learn how to reflect, deconstruct, and become competent social justice agents of change against racism (Hardee et al., 2012).

Some participants felt inspired as they saw racism in the poetic counterstory, and they were moved to make a call for action against racism that sometimes included themselves. For example, Rachel asked: "How can we require these types of classes so that all educators have this critical lens and perspective? How do we overcome racism in our schools?" Betty wrote: "The data poem creates or inspires a nearly visceral reaction. [It] also makes me want to do more to change things, to make…[education] even just a little better. Am I just watching, or do I/will I say something?" Reflectively, the participants finally saw racism, they recognized their own need to continue to cultivate personal awareness of racism. They demonstrated a desire to critique these racialized experiences by questioning and yearning for anti-racist action and culturally responsive experiences for Latinx students in schools.

Emerging Critical Race Consciousness through the PD sessions

Our findings revealed a gradual progression of awareness and acknowledgement of racism among participants as they responded to each format of the Latinx students' counterstories. Table 4 demonstrates the three analytic questions, the counter story format, and the themes found in the participant responses.

Table 4

Participant Responses to Latinx Student Data

Counterstory Format	Frequency Charts	Student Quotes	Voice Clips	Poetic Counterstories
Response to the counterstory format	Distant but interested	Emotions provoked	Emotions heightened	Reflective
Response to racial content	Racism dismissed	Racism named	Racism witnessed	Racism seen
Awareness of Racism	Resistance	Encounter	Empathy	Call for action

Participants first examined the frequency charts. They remained distant with surface level examination to the numeric data and their written reflections dismissed Latinx racialized experiences. Next, participants contemplated the student's racialized written quotes. The naming of racism by participants provokes some emotion when they read the written quotes. Generally, many participants experienced an encounter of youths' racialized experience, but for some it seemed unfamiliar. Hearing recorded audio clips was the third data presented revealing both heightened emotions as participants briefly witnessed racism and expressed some empathy. The responses to the fourth and final poetic counterstory created new insights about racialized experiences which led to reflective responses. Many participants saw racism in new ways and some desired action on behalf of the Latinx students.

Discussion

In this section we consider the implications of the findings for teacher education. Racial awareness is developed through critical consciousness that delves into the interrogation of systemic power, reality of student lives, and their complex identities (Lee & Lee, 2020). The

findings demonstrate the progression of educators' critical race consciousness when they are

exposed to students' racialized experiences embedded within their counterstories. Some

understanding, acknowledgment of individual and institutional racism emerges. A beginning

level of recognition of cultural competence was beginning to grow, and this is an important

aspect of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The Latinx voice clips when

used at the second half of the PD, pivotally highlighted movement in the educators to witness,

see, empathize, and begin to decenter White emotions and values (Matias et al., 2014) by

acknowledging the negative impact racism has on Latinx students' lives. Participants stated that

listening to the actual voices of young people connected them to the painful reality of their

racialized experiences. Listening to the students' voices seemed to humanize the learning

experience in a way that numbers and text could not.

As indicated in the findings, some participants still voiced resistance, wobbling between

utilizing deficit thinking and victim blaming, yet most were emotionally impacted and began to

empathize with racialized experiences from hearing the students' voices. This emotional

engagement at this point in the session seems to have helped prime the participants to hear the

poetic counterstory from a stronger empathetic stance. The poetic counterstory situated in a

classroom environment created a deeper connection to the emotional impact of these students'

experience of systemic racism in schools. This provoked many of the participating educators to

express a desire for change and a call for action. The use of poetic counterstory is a powerful

strategy that should be noted for further research and practice of teacher education for both pre-

service and in-service teachers.

Our findings underscore the entrenched nature of racism and its effects in educational

institutions. While it is hard for any of us to set aside our worldviews and socialized perspectives

about race and racism due to their intercentric nature, there are often time parameters for professional learning. Professional development sessions are often constrained to hour-long sessions that do not allow for the depth of unlearning and learning required (Delpit, 2012; DiAngelo, 2018; Jennings & Smith, 2002). However, in our study, the additional layers of voice clips and poetic counterstory as qualitative data sets supported new potential growth in participant critical race consciousness in a relatively short amount of time. In our experiences as professors and a district Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice (DEIJ) leader, we tend to see in PD sessions the use of case studies and student quotes that can fall flat without emotionality. In this study, we found that the pre-service and in-service educators were personally moved with the use of multiple student voices in the poetic counterstory. We recommend that professional development opportunities include the connection to student voices, particularly through voice clips and poetic counterstories that bridge the emotional impact of the emotional impact of youths' racialized experiences with classroom and educator and educator practices that produce these experiences. We look forward to future research building on this important study.

An implication of this research is a call for in-service and teacher preparation programs to utilize CRT in their methods, required readings, and analyses; applying CRT perspectives to support the development of critical race consciousness is critical to build the capacity of future teachers to see, value, and support BIPOC students (Gabriel, 2013; Lee & Lee, 2020). We understand that developing critical race consciousness requires time and intention. Our findings underscore the importance of continuing professional development efforts that support educators in deconstructing and nurturing their racial understandings. It is therefore critical for teacher educators to become clear about how injustice is reproduced and maintained in schools through negative racialized deficit perspectives of BIPOC students, and model teaching that critically

examines racism so that pre-service and in-service teachers may engage in antiracism

(Hambacher & Bondy, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Sealy-Ruiz & Greene, 2015). Rather than

shy away from CRT due to political backlash and misinformation, this study demonstrates the

need to embed CRT through teacher preparation education courses and ongoing professional

development; doing so is critical for educators to sustain the heightened critical conscious

emotionality and interest in uncovering and responding justly to racialized experiences of BIPOC

learners, particularly Latinx students. We believe that as teacher preparation programs and

school districts continue to utilize CRT, antiracist pedagogy, and student voice throughout an

educator's experience, they can support more equitable and socially just educational practices.

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