Integrating Social-Emotional Learning and Culturally Responsive Teaching in Teacher Education Preparation Programs: The Massachusetts Experience So Far

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Abstract

In this article, we present an integrated approach to social-emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching (SEL/CRT), a framework that has guided the advocacy and practical work of teacher educators (including the authors of this article) in Massachusetts. Hailing from a range of higher education programs across the state, this group has organized to advocate for systematic integration of culturally responsive SEL in all teacher preparation programs in Massachusetts.

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In addition to describing our guiding framework and advocacy work, we will also share the challenges and opportunities that have been faced in the process. We also share "lessons learned" as guidance for all who believe in the vital importance of integrating SEL/CRT principles and practices into teacher education—to support preservice candidates to become highly capable, equity-minded teachers who can capably support all students to engage successfully in academic rigor as well as develop strong social-emotional and civic skills.

Introduction

Mounting research evidence points to why it is vitally important for teachers, in all types of schools and at all levels, to develop culturally responsive social-emotional learning (SEL) skills, beginning with preservice training (Cruz, Ellerbrock, Vásquez, & Howes, 2014; Gay, 2001; Hammond, 2015; Hecht & Shin, 2015; Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond, & Krone, 2018; Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013; Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, & Hanson-Peterson, 2017; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Fostering culturally responsive SEL skill development in teacher preparation programs supports new teachers to develop foundational competencies for (a) maintaining their own health, well-being, and emotional resilience—to avoid burnout (Jennings, 2018); (b) fostering students' SEL skills through strength-based, rigorous academic learning; and (c) engaging in authentic CRT, to equitably reach and teach students with a range of backgrounds (e.g., cultural, racial, socioeconomic) and social identities (Gay, 2001; Hammond, 2015).

Though a number of states have adopted SEL standards or guidelines for the implementation of SEL in school districts, there is typically a gap between these and what happens in residing preservice teacher education and in-service professional development programs (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). A recent research project found that only a small handful of U.S. higher education institutions house teacher preparation programs that prioritize and integrate SEL (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). Even fewer preservice teaching programs, in states across the United States, prioritize an integrated SEL and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) approach.

In this article, we present an integrated approach to SEL and CRT (SEL/CRT), a framework that has guided the advocacy and practical work of teacher educators (including the authors of this article) in Massachusetts. Hailing from a range of higher education programs across the state, this group has organized to advocate for systematic integration of culturally responsive SEL in all teacher preparation programs in Massachusetts. In addition to describing our guiding framework and advocacy work, we will also share the challenges and opportunities we have faced in the process. We also share "lessons learned" as guidance for all who believe in the vital importance of integrating SEL/CRT principles and practices into teacher education—to support preservice candidates to become highly capable, equity-minded teachers who can capably support all students to

engage successfully in academically rigorous learning as well as develop strong social-emotional and civic skills.

Making the Case for Integrating SEL and CRT in Teacher Preparation: Three Key Assertions

To begin, we present our guiding assertions for why systematic integration of the social-emotional dimensions of learning and teaching is vitally important in teacher preparation programs and why CRT needs to be integrated with SEL practices to support preservice and new teachers, as well as in-service teachers, to equitably reach and teach all students.

Assertion One

Preservice teachers and new teachers need time and support to develop psychological and emotional resilience, as well as specific strategies to maintain health and efficacy in the face of an increasingly demanding profession. As new teachers enter classrooms, they are often overwhelmed by school environment factors that mirror systemic realities (e.g., complex diversity of students' backgrounds and needs, high-stakes testing/accountability pressures, lack of quality mentoring and/or professional development opportunities). Classroom management challenges and problems typically emerge during the first year of teaching. New teachers commonly feel unprepared to manage their classrooms effectively (Intrator, 2006; Koller & Bertel, 2006). Too often, emotional reactivity to daily school/classroom frustrations and collegial tensions becomes the norm for novice teachers as well as for more experienced teachers. Beginning teachers are particularly prone to acutely feeling emotional exhaustion and epistemological challenges that often provoke anxiety, frustration, insecurity, fear, and/or other challenging emotions. Attending to the instructional, management, and emotional demands of a classroom requires a tremendous amount of emotional resilience for new teachers. When demands outpace skills, stress rises, and teachers may react to students in hostile and/or punitive ways (Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2011); when this is the case, and such teachers have not engaged in reflectively examining their own deficit view biases, this can be especially harming for historically marginalized students (Dray & Wisneski, 2011).

Supporting teachers to develop emotional awareness and agility during preservice education can help to increase their capacities for handling the normative yet complex challenges of classroom teaching. Moreover, the development of emotional agility skills can also enable novice teachers to successfully enact more cognitively challenging and creative instructional practices to optimize meaningful student learning. Most teacher education programs focus almost exclusively on instructional skills without much emphasis on teaching preservice teachers how to be aware of their emotions, how to interpret their emotions without judgment,

and how to manage their emotions so they enhance rather than interfere with their teaching (Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011; Intrator, 2006).

The current teacher attrition crisis beckons preservice teaching programs to explicitly cultivate preservice teachers' psychological and emotional resilience, to help them to continually develop their abilities to recognize, manage, and respond to difficult emotions without harsh judgment, rather than reacting to stressful situations. This involves transformational learning, whereby preservice candidates transform their "frames of reference through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which [their] interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). Developing a capacity for transformational self-awareness is foundational to teachers' development of solid social-emotional competencies, involving the five core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship management (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Yet, as the abovementioned SEL-TEd research scan has revealed, there is currently a dearth of attention cultivating social-emotional competence in teacher preparation programs in the United States (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017).

Assertion Two

Development of teacher social-emotional learning skills is vital to fostering students' SEL skills through strength-based, rigorous academic learning. An emotionally supportive learning environment is a key predictor of student achievement in schools (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011). As Jennings and Greenberg (2009) illustrated in their prosocial classroom model, teachers' social-emotional competence and their sense of well-being are central to "their ability to cultivate a prosocial classroom climate linked to desired student social, emotional and academic outcomes" (Jennings, 2011, p. 135). According to Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, and Oort (2011), caring teacher–student relationships remain important at all levels of P–12 schooling.

SEL is a developmental-contextual process that impacts children, adolescents, and adults in interconnected and developmentally spiraled ways (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Teachers foster SEL by explicitly teaching and modeling these skills as well as by creating classrooms in which students feel safe and are willing to risk challenging tasks while participating in class discussions and learning activities. Teachers can create environments that foster SEL when they recognize student strengths, hold high learning expectations for all students, and model not just strong communication skills but also the ability to listen and empathize (Elias et al., 1997; Medoff, 2010)—all of which are elements of a classroom guided by a CRT approach. Classrooms with strong social-emotional climates (e.g., warm teacher–child relationships and responsive interactions) can better facilitate deep learning among students (Merritt, Wanless, Rimm-Kaufman, Cameron, & Peugh, 2012). Conversely, when teachers poorly manage the social-emotional demands of teaching, or when they ignore the many strengths of the different cultures at play

in every classroom, students demonstrate lower levels of performance and on-task behavior. As the classroom climate deteriorates, a "burnout cascade" (intrapersonal and interpersonal) is often triggered, negatively impacting the students' behavioral health, sense of well-being, and academic achievement (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Assertion Three

Socially, emotionally, and culturally competent teachers are better equipped to reach and equitably teach students with a broad range of backgrounds (e.g., socio-economic) and social identities (in terms of culture, race, etc.). Social-emotional competencies are critical to authentic, culturally relevant and responsive teaching and learning in schools. Although SEL and CRT are interconnected, this connection has not been made explicit in the field frequently enough. Teachers and teacher educators are often left with the idea that CRT and SEL are two different and distinct domains. When SEL is viewed and approached in this way, it can, as Hoffman (2009) asserted, too easily become co-opted into "the larger patterns of individual and group deficiency, risk, and differential access" (p. 547) and mirror inequitable systemic education practices (e.g., inequitable district funding and resources, disparities created by tracking in schools). To best serve all children and adolescents, and to effectively collaborate within schools, it is crucial for new teachers to develop an understanding of how strength-based approaches (rather than deficit views and approaches) to race, ethnicity, and class are linked to the cultivation of social-emotional well-being. As Yosso (2005) asserted, to serve all children in high-quality ways, teachers need to be aware of and value cultural capital, "the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged" (p. 69).

Although SEL emerges from a different research background than CRT, it is important to understand that it is essential to integrate or cross-pollinate the two. Much of the research often cited to promote SEL comes from neuropsychology, school psychology, special education, social work, and related fields. While SEL is truly interdisciplinary and maintains an openness to change and evolve, its roots are, unfortunately, closer to the medical model of disability and mental health, which has historically emphasized pathologies, disorders, and diagnoses as "within-child." Some initial SEL research and practice was oriented around the idea of teaching or fixing children rather than examining the cultural contexts surrounding them. Integrating the focus of SEL with CRT helps widen this lens as the sociopolitical awareness of CRT helps in cross-pollinating SEL with a more equity-based mind-set. We need teachers who will understand the metaphor that when a plant is wilting, we focus on improving the soil, nutrients, water, and sun—not fixing the plant in isolation. This speaks to the CRT goal of sociopolitical awareness and the SEL competency of social awareness as defined by CASEL.

To develop strength-based, rather than deficit-focused, mind-sets in relation-

ship to and with the students they will teach (Brooks & Goldstein, 2008; Cruz et al., 2014; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), it is essential for preservice candidates to reflect on their own internalized prejudices and assumptions. Cruz et al. (2014) identified five stages preservice teachers tend to go through when engaged in inner work to develop authentic CRT practices: naïveté/pre-awareness, bombardment, dissonance and resistance, adjustment and redefinition, and acceptance and internalization. Moving through these stages involves intra- and interpersonal work that is inherently emotional and social, and often difficult. This demands complex conceptual capacities and strong social-emotional competencies for teacher candidates and teacher educators alike.

SEL/CRT Awareness and Skill Development: The Key Role of Teacher Educators

> Helping student teachers negotiate the zig and zag of their emotions, contend with the emotional lives of their students, and understand how what is happening inside of them shapes how they teach and how their own students perceive them is a critical element of supporting our new teachers. (Intrator, 2006, p. 234)

Teacher educators are a key element in the development of new teachers' culturally responsive SEL. Yet, teacher educators who are committed to culturally responsive SEL and aim to prepare preservice candidates to competently address the complex equity issues and challenges that come with teaching in U.S. public schools are also called to negotiate the "zig and zag" of their own emotional lives. The majority of teachers work with students from racial, cultural, linguistic, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds very different from their own; this documented "diversity gap" is projected to continue, and widen, in the coming decades (Hansen & Quintero, 2019). Villegas and Lucas (2002) have long argued that for teacher preparation programs to move beyond

> the fragmented and superficial treatment of diversity that [continues to] prevail, teacher educators must articulate a vision of teaching and learning in a diverse society and use that vision to systematically guide the infusion of multicultural issues throughout the pre-service curriculum. (p. 20)

Guiding preservice teachers to develop racial literacy and cultural competence for their work with students in a racialized society and education system is complex and emotionally intensive; it is a process that must go beyond merely promoting cultural sensitivity (Stevenson, 2013). For teacher educators committed to culturally responsive practices, this process inevitably calls them to face and reflect upon their own held biases, assumptions, and cultural misattributions; it also involves navigating emotionally laden tensions in their efforts to facilitate dialogue and address issues regarding identity and social location.

In her book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, Zaretta Hammond (2015) argued that authentic CRT is fundamentally about "being in relationship and

having a social-emotional connection" (p. 15). She also emphasized how and why it is vital for educators to continually develop and strengthen skills to constructively address "the social-emotional impact of living in a racialized society" (Hammond, Equity Project interview)—that doing so is the cornerstone of authentic CRT:

> It's about recognizing the social-emotional impact of living in a racialized society where some people have unearned privilege and others have unearned disadvantage. Sometimes this is hard for teachers to address in a meaningful way that doesn't make them, or students, feel awkward. But it must be acknowledged. Unacknowledged implicit bias and racial stress have a negative impact on culturally and linguistically diverse students. It erodes their trust in us. . . . We have to first give teachers the tools to engage in conversations about racialization, which is different from racism. . . . They [often] don't have the social-emotional stamina to manage their fight-or-flight response when looking at social inequities. (Hammond, Equity Project interview)

Social-emotional stamina, necessary for authentic CRT, hinges on one's development of the SEL skills needed to recognize and manage emotions, handle conflict constructively, establish positive relationships guided by empathy, engage in perspective taking, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullotta, 2015). As a result, helping teacher candidates and in-service teachers develop their social-emotional stamina must be a focus of teacher educators, who must simultaneously develop their own social-emotional stamina. Social-emotional stamina is cultivated when an individual is able to consistently access and activate, as modus operandi, SEL skills across a broad range of situations, from no- to low-stress to highly stressful, complex, and contentious situations; it is actualized when an individual develops a balanced, calm autonomic nervous system as a baseline state, to manage fight-or-flight responses (Seppälä, 2016; Yuan & Silberstein, 2016). As confirmed by cutting-edge affective neuroscience research, such mind–body psychophysiological balance can be better attained through strengthening one's vagus nerve, a neural network that extends from brain to gut; it is considered "a key nexus of mind and body and a biological building block of human compassion" (Keltner, 2012). When a person develops social-emotional stamina, he or she is better able to access and activate social-emotional skills, as well as compassion and empathy, during highly stressful personal and/or professional situations (Hammond, 2015).

Teacher educators may promote social-emotional stamina in different ways. One effective "on-ramp" way is to encourage teacher candidates to consider practicing mindfulness, the practice of maintaining present-moment awareness and "non-judgmental acceptance of one's feelings, thoughts and bodily sensations within the surround of one's environment" (Greater Good Science Center, n.d.). Research has demonstrated how and why sustained mindfulness practices can lead to a simultaneous decrease in bodily stress hormones (e.g., cortisol) and increase

levels of dopamine and serotonin—neurotransmitters that promote emotion regulation and proactive relationship behaviors—and oxytocin, the hormone in service of positive relational connecting (Greater Good Science Center, n.d.). Consistent, intentional breathing practices promote the development of social-emotional stamina and well-being through mindfulness.

Bringing SEL/CRT Principles Into Practice: The MA SEL-TEd Consortium

With a shared commitment to bringing culturally responsive SEL knowledge and skills into teacher preparation programs and P–12 schools, a group of teacher educators in Massachusetts founded the Massachusetts Consortium for Social-Emotional Learning in Teacher Education (MA SEL-TEd) in spring 2011, in response to the publication of the state's *Guidelines for the Implementation of SEL Curricula in P–12 Schools* by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Since the publication of these guidelines, numerous school districts and related constituencies in the state have mobilized to further the impact of DESE's "guidelines for schools and districts on how to effectively implement social and emotional learning curricula for students in grades P–12" (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE], 2011, "Introduction"). Those involved in the creation of the MA SEL-TEd consortium were brought together by a shared belief that a SEL and CRT lens should be a vital part of teacher preparation programs—that in order to bring SEL and CRT into all P–12 classrooms and do so effectively, teacher candidates needed to learn the content and develop the skills necessary for successful implementation. The MA SEL-TEd consortium, now a branch of the Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts (SEL4MA), includes teacher educators from college/university-based preservice educator programs across the state. The overarching goal of the consortium is to raise awareness and foster skill development among teacher educators and to advocate for operationalized integration of SEL and CRT research and practice into teacher preparation in Massachusetts, with a focus on college/university-based programs.

The accomplishments of the consortium to date can be organized into two interconnected areas of focus: advocacy and professional development, guided by evidence-based research. Both have been key in strengthening SEL and CRT in teacher education programs with the goal of supporting the inclusion of SEL/CRT in K–12 schools in Massachusetts.

Advocacy

The advocacy work of the MA SEL-TEd consortium has focused on different levels of its system of potential influence: from advocating for revisions of teacher

education programs and courses in the home institutions that are members of the consortium, to advocating with colleagues in other institutions so that they, too, revise their coursework and programs, to working with practitioners in the field who request allies in their own advocacy efforts in the schools where they work, to the larger dimension of advocating for policy changes at the state level. In one of the two case examples presented later in this article, advocacy at the classroom and institutional level is discussed.

In 2014, the state of Massachusetts approved new Professional Standards for Teachers not only to guide the evaluation of in-service K–12 teachers but also to assess the performance of teacher candidates as they completed their student-teaching experiences, a requirement for educator license. Soon after, the DESE began the work of developing indicators that programs of teacher education would be required to use to assess the teacher candidates' readiness to start teaching "on day one."

A working group of teacher educators from institutions of higher education and schools, as well as other educators, was created by the DESE to develop these indicators; two members of the Steering Committee of the consortium applied and were invited to be members of this Professional Standards for Teachers Working Group. From the very beginning, we advocated for the inclusion of SEL and CRT indicators on the list. In that way, teacher educators, college supervisors, and supervising practitioners (mentor teachers) would need to support teacher candidates as they collected evidence that they knew how to use a SEL lens to plan and implement instruction, manage their classroom, and support all of their students in culturally responsive and proficient ways.

During the months of work, it became evident that most every member of the workgroup was supportive of including CRT practices and skills at the highest level of performance ("demonstrate"), but it required a lot of advocacy work to finally come to an agreement to include one specific SEL indicator. However, the working group as a whole voted to place the SEL indicator only at the second highest level of performance ("Practice").This indicator, one of eight intended to determine that a teacher candidate has met the "teaching all students" standard, requires that every student teacher employ "a variety of strategies to assist students to develop social emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making" (DESE, 2015, p. 5). The consortium continues to advocate to move this standard to the "demonstrate" level, as that would send a message to all teachers and teacher candidates that SEL practices are at the core of excellent teaching by requiring teacher candidates to "demonstrate" (rather than just "practice") the ability to foster SEL skill development as a requirement of licensure.

In the view of the MA SEL-TEd consortium, all CRT indicators are interlinked with SEL, even when not identified as such. We believe that no teacher can practice CRT unless the social-emotional dimensions of the students, the teacher, and the classroom community are taken into consideration. Identifying it as SEL is, of course,

our target goal, as labeling the practices highlights the work that student teachers, teachers, and administrators must do.

Having the SEL indicator as a state requirement for teacher preparation sent a strong message to all schools and programs of teacher education that SEL was an important aspect of effective teaching practices; the inclusion of this indicator also solidified the advocacy work of the MA SEL-TEd consortium. As a result of the success of including an SEL indicator in the state's Professional Standards for Teachers, many teacher educators have started to revise their courses and programs; additionally many supervising practitioners (K–12 teachers) who work with teacher candidates have also begun the revision process of their own day-to-day work and practices to ensure that student teachers indeed have the opportunity to practice SEL strategies and to use the SEL lens to plan curriculum, manage their classroom, and develop routines and systems that respond to SEL/CRT principles. The consortium continues to advocate for strengthening the presence of SEL in teacher education at the policy level and is actively engaged with legislators and other policy makers in the Commonwealth in these efforts.

Members of the SEL-TEd consortium recognize that advocacy alone is not enough. We have also conducted survey research to learn about the current practices in teacher education programs in the commonwealth and to learn of identified needs of teachers and teacher educators in the areas of SEL and CRT as reported by teachers, faculty members, and higher education administrators, in order to then devote time and work to offering professional development opportunities for educators at different levels of the system: faculty in teacher education programs, superintendents of K–12 school districts, teachers, and student teachers.

Research

To bolster the MA SEL-TEd consortium's advocacy and professional development work vis-à-vis the integration of SEL/CRT in teacher preparation, we have gathered information from teacher education programs across the state to make research-based decisions about our strategies. For example, in January 2017, the MA SEL-TEd administered a survey for MA teacher educators using a secure, anonymous online tool. Respondents were obtained through emailed letters sent to teacher education institutions as well as to the email list of the sponsoring organization. The survey respondents consisted of 76 professionals in teacher education. Of these, 56 were faculty members (73.7%), 11 were deans or administrators (14.5%), and 9 were in other roles, such as mentor teachers or supervisors of student teachers (11.8%). Respondents from private institutions of higher education made up 61.8% of the sample, while those from public institutions of higher education accounted for 34.2%. Others (3.9%) came from K–12 institutions.

Teacher educators in the sample indicated a high level of interest and motivation for SEL integration into teacher education; yet the level of implementation revealed

a discrepancy between levels of interest and reported practice. While about three-quarters (76.3%) of teacher educators reported being very or extremely interested in this endeavor, fewer than half (46.7%) felt that their practices at the time were "very or extremely aligned" with SEL in teacher education.

Recurring themes related to the barriers to SEL implementation were primarily focused on constraints of the curriculum, state-mandated licensure requirements, standardized testing and assessment, the state curriculum frameworks, and other time-related pressures that "make it hard to find time for SEL," in the words of one respondent. Other themes included the lack of expertise in SEL among teacher educators as well as K–12 educators. The lack of buy-in or motivation and the challenges of field placement experiences were cited several times as well.

Suggestions for professional development in this area included a focus on interdisciplinary collaboration among educators within related fields (counseling, social work, and psychology). Respondents requested curated resources for teacher educators to use in their courses, such as videos, articles, Web sites, and lesson planning templates. Several topics for workshops and conferences were also shared.

In their open-ended written responses to a question about the connection between SEL and CRT, survey respondents shared a range of understandings and perspectives—from a focus on racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity, to a focus on mental health and disability, to a focus on behavior and classroom management. Critiques were also articulated, including examples of SEL implementation in ways that are not culturally responsive or designed to promote student compliance rather than student empowerment. One survey respondent's written response encapsulates well these critiques:

> I think that one barrier is that there is some debate around some of the practices of SEL in schools (e.g. mindfulness practices) which some see as practices that might run the risk of glossing over, for the students enacting this practice, real systemic inequities and problems. In other words, the students and their coping mechanisms are problematized when it is the systems which should be problematized. I am aware of colleagues who have shared these very concerns about SEL.

The members of the MA SEL-TEd Design Team (executive committee) and the Steering Committee of the consortium have since met numerous times to analyze these data and develop plans of professional development offerings that the consortium could provide across the state.

Professional Development

Members of the SEL-TEd consortium, in particular, members of its Design Team and Steering Committee, have presented at statewide teacher education conferences, such as the Massachusetts Association for Colleges of Teacher Education semiannual conference and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents annual Executive Institute, and have organized a series of conferences and work-

shops with invited guest speakers, scholars specializing in SEL and CRT, such as Nancy Markowitz, Mariale Hardiman, Zaretta Hammond, and Vanessa Rodriguez. Each speaker/facilitator helped both teachers and teacher educators reflect on their practices, revise their curricula, and promote change. Most of these conferences and workshops have targeted teams of educators as their intended audience with the intention of having the most impact at the practical level. Although most of the participants have come as individuals and not teams, on some occasions, teams of faculty from one institution or teams of faculty and student teachers have attended together. Here two case examples are presented to illustrate that impact.

Impact of SEL-TEd work on a college of teacher education: A case example. A small college in the Boston area dedicated primarily to the preparation of teachers has had a representative in the SEL-TEd consortium since its founding. Recognizing the importance of SEL and CRT in teacher preparation, and due to its commitment to preparing effective teachers who know how to work with urban populations and those who may come from underresourced communities, this small college has been host to some of the professional development opportunities offered by the consortium and has had representatives attend most every workshop and conference offered.

This college has had a commitment to urban education, culturally responsive practice, and diversity for more than 3 decades, as demonstrated in their curriculum, practicum sites, course content, requirements, and the composition of its faculty and student body. In the past few years, a few members of the college began to introduce SEL content into their own teacher education coursework, but there had not been an intentional effort to do it at the institutional level, partly because of many other demands of time and requirements, and partly because there was no sense of urgency about this matter. However, that changed recently. In what follows, we describe the changes in one particular program in that college, the Elementary Education program.

The timing of several factors helped propel change in the college's Elementary Education program to bring a CRT/SEL lens as a guiding strategy in the preparation of teachers. One of the factors was the approval of the new Professional Standards for Teachers with the new SEL and CRT indicators at the time that the program had started a regular process of evaluation and revision, in which the department engaged regularly as part of the process of national accreditation. Another factor was the changing national and local environment, in particular, the increase of school violence reported in the news, discussed regularly by students in practicum seminars seeking support and guidance about how to do best for the students in their practicum sites. The third was an increase in the cases of aggressive behaviors and "out-of-control" behaviors in Grade 1–6 students in the sites where the college's students were completing their student teaching (as reported by those students and their supervisors). The fourth was the advocacy and professional development that the

SEL-TEd consortium was doing at that time, which motivated a significant number of the faculty in that program to attend one of the conferences as a team based on the idea that it was important to address the emerging need to include SEL in the teacher preparation program as a program, and not just in individual courses.

A team of five faculty members attended a half-day conference organized by the SEL-TEd consortium; this event took place in the main building of an urban public school district. Zaretta Hammond was the keynote speaker. Her presentation was followed by small-group discussions and then time for teams to work together to connect the presentation with their own program practices. The faculty of this small institution decided that the approach presented by Hammond at the conference and in her recently published book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students* (Hammond, 2015) would be used to guide the program revisions. After that workshop, faculty members read and discussed Hammond's book, and several courses made this book a required reading, especially three courses that prepared and supported students during their practicum experiences. Faculty also began to share other resources focusing on SEL, signed up to receive information from the consortium, and began to attend other conferences and professional development opportunities.

After some work, the faculty revised specific courses, in particular, courses that focused on introducing students to the education field, those that facilitated their learning about curriculum development and instructional methods, practicum seminar courses where students discussed and processed their experiences in the field, and capstone courses where students reflected on the development of their own careers as educators. All were revised to have a more focused and intentional perspective on SEL and the intersection of SEL and CRT; new discussion activities and readings were assigned that strengthened SEL and CRT contents, strategies, and practices, and all these elements of the program build on one another, creating a sequence of experiences that followed a logical progression. Department and program meetings included conversations about content and resources available both for faculty and students, and the student teachers reflected on their own work and experiences using a SEL/CRT lens. Although no formal evaluation was completed of the impact of these revisions, informally, student teachers reported not only an increased interest in learning more about SEL strategies and CRT practices but also feeling more confident in managing classrooms and individual challenging behaviors. They also identified SEL/CRT practices that their supervising practitioners (mentor teachers) used regularly and helped bring new ideas and strategies into their student-teaching classrooms.

Lessons learned about integrating SEL/CRT and implementing program revisions. While reflecting on the process followed to bring more emphasis on a SEL/CRT lens into this program of teacher education at this small institution,

there are clearly a few lessons worth highlighting for colleagues and institutions interested in revising their own programs and teaching experiences:

◆ Involving a significant number of faculty teaching in the teacher preparation program in the process of program revision is essential. Although there is no magic number, it is clear that one or two faculty alone will be able to modify and impact their own courses, but not the entire program. In this case, once the faculty agreed on their commitment to revising the programs and their own teaching practices, the process was not difficult to implement. Faculty were able to learn and reflect together, to support each other in the process, and the most important part is that they were able to truly connect the experiences throughout the program so that there was a clear coherence in the resulting program.

◆ Another lesson learned is the importance of including the supervising practitioners (teachers) working with the student teachers in the process of revision from the beginning. This is something that we wish we had done differently. Many student teachers would be frustrated when "best SEL/CRT practices" as studied in the college classroom were not implemented in the student-teaching classroom. Partnering with the supervising practitioners from the beginning, listening to their voices and concerns as the program revisions were being conducted and later implemented, would have been a much more respectful and productive process. This was an important lesson for all members of the department.

◆ Implementing program revisions to bring in more SEL/CRT content, strategies, and perspectives requires a revision of multiple aspects of the program, not just the content of some courses. At the same time, significant improvements can be made as long as core courses and practicum experiences are included. In the case of this small college's experience, a few faculty considered their courses to be "fine" and not in need of revision. Fortunately, the courses were already using a CRT lens in most cases, and although not explicitly, they were addressing key elements of SEL. Bringing the "SEL approach" more openly and directly into their courses would have been the new dimension, and having core courses focus on that was enough to have an impact on most—if not all—student teachers. In other words, not every faculty member needs to be on board with these revisions. Change can be equally impactful with a significant number of faculty committed to the SEL/CRT approach.

◆ Having a state-mandated SEL indicator as part of teacher candidates' evaluation was, probably, one of the strongest and most convincing motivators to promote the beginning of the process, as it gave a strong reason to move to for all involved in the process of preparing new teachers. This lesson speaks to the importance of advocating for SEL and CRT beyond one's own institution and program. The SEL-TEd consortium continues to do so.

Individual faculty member efforts to promote SEL/CRT in teacher education: A case example. This second case example illustrates the integration of SEL and CRT through one faculty member's individual efforts, in the absence of a programmatic initiative. While evidence from the first case illustrates the impor-

tance of a shared mission among colleagues, individual teacher educators who are seeking to promote and advocate for SEL/CRT can begin at the level of their own coursework and hope to expand from these efforts.

This example takes place in the context of a small, public institution of higher education with a licensure program in early childhood education. Candidates in this program take a required course in inclusive early childhood special education practices. Before this faculty member joined the teacher education program, the course included some content about social-emotional development; however, SEL as an evidence-based approach was missing. The cultural dimensions of teaching and learning were emphasized in some readings about the broader themes of special education and inclusion, but not with an integrated view of SEL and CRT. Over the span of several semesters, this new instructor developed a set of new readings and assignments in an effort to improve this aspect of the courses. He also brought a new emphasis on critical consciousness, a central element of CRT, to the course.

The new version of the course is anchored around an introductory unit on SEL and CRT, culminating in the candidates' first lesson plan assignment. The course begins with a collaborative process of developing culture, norms, and climate for the semester. Theories and practices from SEL and CRT are woven into this work, such as the use of circle discussions, greetings, and cooperative games. The candidates read a chapter from *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* (Hammond, 2015) and reflect on their own identities and backgrounds. The candidates take the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) and reflect on their own potential biases. They engage in a wide-ranging discussion about the role of power, privilege, and marginalization in schools and society. Through this introspective work, the teacher candidates begin to examine their own social-emotional histories and experiences. Class time is devoted to personal sharing, reflection, and peer support as the conversations emerge and sometimes provoke challenging or uncomfortable responses.

Next, as the candidates read and analyze SEL resources, such as the CASEL frameworks and the SEL standards from their state department of education, the instructor endeavors to build a critical consciousness into the discussion. Candidates analyze, critique, and "play" with the SEL frameworks as they begin to envision lesson activities they will plan and lead. After a few weeks of this work, the candidates are usually struggling to integrate theories of SEL, CRT, early childhood development, inclusive special education, and the basics of lesson design. They have also grown to know the early elementary students in their field placements and are ready to begin integrating that knowledge into a lesson design process.

The instructor then challenges the candidates to plan an interactive, inclusive, culturally responsive SEL activity to implement with early elementary children. For many of the candidates, this is the first lesson plan they have written and taught. Thus a collaborative process is used to allow feedback and revision before the lessons are implemented. In class, the candidates enact their lessons with one another

in a role-play context. The instructor and visiting mentor teachers from the early elementary classrooms join in to observe and offer feedback as well. Candidates then have time to revise their lesson plans before leading them.

After the candidates lead their activities, the instructor and a mentor teacher each provide written and verbal feedback to the candidates. They are asked to watch video clips of their lessons as well, looking for SEL and CRT practices and at how the children engaged with their activities. Candidates write a reflection about the process, in which they are encouraged to share their own emotional experiences. The candidates often report having had uncomfortable and/or validating feelings as they went through the unit and usually can synthesize their experiences into a meaningful learning encounter with a complex set of ideas. As a result, the candidates are able to consider their own social-emotional experiences within the context of lesson design and implementation.

The faculty member found that some colleagues have been open to strengthening SEL and CRT within other courses in the department. The Elementary Education program now includes a similar assignment in which candidates develop a lesson plan using an integration of SEL and social studies curriculum frameworks, often with a focus on citizenship, cultural diversity, and equitable classroom communities. The mathematics methods courses include some embedded SEL practices as well as opportunities for teacher candidates to reflect on their own math autobiographies and anxieties. The faculty member in this case example seeks to continue building an integrated view of SEL and CRT at this institution through a proposed new course to be developed in the future. In the absence of a programmatic initiative, incremental change is one way to build stronger implementation.

Conclusion

1. We have shared a vision for teacher education that seeks to address some of the greatest areas of need in the field through an integrated model of CRT and SEL.

2. On their own, the momentum behind these two movements (SEL and CRT) has been powerful in teacher education and classroom practice. When the two are integrated at the nexus of preservice teacher education, we believe that future teachers benefit more than they do learning about these theories in isolation.

3. Our work highlights the ways that SEL/CRT can help preservice teachers feel better prepared for the social and emotional dimensions of teaching.

4. We have illustrated a model for collaboration among teacher educators focused on SEL/CRT that can yield observable results at the state level and within teacher education programs. The work of the consortium has been able to influence policy, research, preservice teacher education, and professional development in a short time period, and without significant sources of outside funding.

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