

**Unhidden: The voices of teacher education scholars
on disrupting, transforming, and healing
toward an antiracist world**

Mary Candace Raygoza

Saint Mary's College of California

Aaminah Norris

Sacramento State University

Raina León

Saint Mary's College of California

Abstract

This counternarrative is an homage to the work of abolition in teacher education and a call to humanizing liberatory praxis as collective healing from racism and anti-Black hate. We, three critical teacher educators, interrogate our positionalities and the experiences within and beyond schooling that have shaped us. We recognize that our identities were informed by our individual memories of growing up in a racist United States. We therefore make space for disruption of practices that continue to (de)humanize us, our students, and their students. We say their names— Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubery, George Floyd—as we replace dehumanization with rehumanizing praxis and a commitment to the journey of seeking freedom through finding joy in our work and in our lives. Our voices are unhidden as we join the resistant and transformational voices of youth and adults in the movement for Black lives. Together we change the world.

Keywords: Antiracist teacher education, social justice teacher education, teaching for transformation, praxis, counternarrative

Introduction

In the midst of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and ongoing anti-Black racism, we offer what we can as teacher educators to the many teachers and professors navigating the crises of our time. On March 11, 2020, five days before the Shelter in Place directive was issued in the San Francisco Bay Area, we wrote an article together entitled “Humanizing Online Teaching.” What does it mean to teach for a more just, antiracist, humanizing world when we must be physically distant from our students, when we are grieving a world on fire, when we are mourning the loss of our own loved ones, the lives of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and the many other Black lives taken by white supremacist, state-sanctioned violence? What lessons does the inspiring national and international resistance brought on by the movement for Black lives teach us? What do our own lived experiences teach us? What do our students teach us? What can “social justice education in the classroom and in the streets” (Picower, 2012) teach us?

Questions born from a place of radical love for humanity, resistance to all forms of oppression, and a belief in our education system as a vehicle for social change fuel our work. Before the coronavirus pandemic, the three of us had worked together, driven by shared justice-oriented ideologies—discussing program curriculum, supporting our students, and getting to know and hold deep admiration for one another’s work. It was through collaborative work over the past eight months, though, that we dove into extended conversations with one another on our lived experiences, revealing and interrogating our histories and positionalities in our work as teacher educators. Time was now more sacred, more precious. Zoom fatigue was growing more real. Two of us were now suddenly caring full-time for young children alongside our paid work. Instead of spending less time in meetings with one another, we found ourselves spending more time in conversation—storytelling, inspiring one another, and learning what drives us, what we dream for the future, and how we can collectively manifest those dreams into existence in our work together as teacher educators. We were engaging ourselves in what we strive to teach in our teacher education praxis seminars—that we cannot do

Raygoza, Norris, and León

this work alone, that we must disrupt educator alienation through transformative communities of praxis (Martinez, et. al, 2016; Navarro, 2018; Picower, 2015).

Most notably, Dr. Aaminah Norris's own invitation to Dr. Raina León and Dr. Mary Raygoza to participate in her new podcast, (Un)Hidden Voices, created a space for the three of us to engage in praxis together on our experiences with racism, the impacts of white supremacist violence on our lives and families, our visions for a more just world, and how all of this connects to and fuels our work as teacher educators. The conversation we had during the (Un)Hidden Voices podcast (Norris, 2020) serves as the basis for this article. As we consider our identities and lived experiences, the overarching questions we seek to address are: How do we strive to disrupt oppressive dominant narratives? How do we lead to transform teacher education? How are we guided both by rage and radical love to create healing spaces?

Antiracism and Social Justice in Teacher Education

We draw on and honor our teacher education colleagues who have shifted and are presently shifting the landscape of teacher education through disruption, transformation, and healing. We resist transforming terms such as “social justice” and “culturally responsive” into meaningless buzzwords co-opted by a white liberal agenda (Ladson-Billings, 2015; Matias, 2013; Sleeter, 2015; Souto-Manning & Emdin, 2020). Therefore, we assert that antiracist, social justice work in teacher education involves naming and confronting injustice in education systems and beyond with an historical and present-day analysis of power and structural inequities (Sleeter, 2015). We also affirm our continuous commitment to antiracism as humanizing liberatory praxis. This vision for teacher education is both an homage to the work of our colleagues and a call to praxis as collective healing from racism and anti-Black hate.

We begin by making space to deeply interrogate our position- alities and the (de)humanizing experiences in schools and society that shape us (Aronson, 2020). We resist the reproduction of historical trauma as we create spaces of healing and reconciliation (Souto-Manning & Emdin, 2020). We foster a culture of lifelong

Voices of Teacher Education Scholars

learning and praxis as we support teachers to be dialogically-oriented (Hsieh, 2015). We integrate humanizing liberatory practices in all facets of teacher education from recruitment and admission to orientation and community building; teaching our courses, assigning students to field placements, and advising them through our programs, humanizing liberatory praxis must permeate our work (Raygoza et al., 2020).

We learn about, center, and draw on Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) teachers' funds of knowledge (Navarro et al., 2019) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), as we support and model for our teacher candidates how they can do the same. We explicitly name and interrogate "racial equity detours" often perpetuated by white teacher candidates and teacher educators alike such as "pacing for privilege" (prioritizing comfort and interests of white people instead of racial justice), propagating deficit ideologies, focusing on diversity and not justice, relying on a program or trend to be a fix-all for racial justice, individualizing racism, or arguing that classism is the problem rather than racism (Gorski, 2019). Educators must be willing to name and take a stand against racism and intervene on "tools of whiteness" that pervade education (Picower, 2009).

Furthermore, our pedagogy and activism as teacher educators is more than a response to current manifestations of racism and anti-Blackness, misogyny, classism, heterosexism, xenophobia, ableism, and ageism; our work is rooted in an understanding of "the original violence that made way for this particular political moment: the theft of labor and of land, and the systematic project of dehumanization that justifies and allows such theft" (Valdez et al., 2018). Bettina Love (2020, June 12) argues that instead of reforming the existing social order in schools, we must abolish and uproot the conditions that produced the original violence.

There is great possibility to uproot the existing social order. Teacher educators and teachers can play a role in dreaming another way into being despite inequities that include ongoing anti-Blackness, white flight, resource hoarding, disinvestment in public schools, disproportionate stress, and overreliance for the work of childcare on women and women of color (Turner, 2020). At the foundation of our work is the critical hope that Bettina

Raygoza, Norris, and León

Love captures:

The impossible is becoming possible. As we all stand in the midst of a world crisis, those of us who can dream must dream. And after we dream, we must demand and act ...When schools reopen, they could be spaces of justice, high expectations, creativity, and processing the collective trauma of COVID-19. (Love, 2020, para 1, 6)

We look to young people who demand justice. For example, Xavier Brown a youth organizer who rallied 15,000 people to come together in Oakland following George Floyd's murder, posted on Instagram:

It is a march to say: Oakland Stands With You...This is to show we aren't letting shit slide. There's an agenda against us. We cannot let incidents like this happen, and move on to the next 'viral' social media event. (BondGraham, 2020, June 2, para 4)

Akil Riley, fellow organizer, emphasized in a follow-up post, "We're saying if there's no justice, we will continue to disrupt" (BondGraham, 2020, June 2, para 6).

As we charge our teacher candidates to engage with young people from the perspective that they will change the world, we see our students as the teachers who will dream and act alongside youth and communities in solidarity for educational justice, for the humanizing schools, children, and families deserve. Thus our work is to create schools as community institutions that resist individualism and the privileged status quo, that value collective learning (Norris, 2020) and collective care for community health (Kelly, 2020).

Together, we plan, reflect, organize, speak, and write, rooted in an understanding that by "collectivizing often individualized experiences, larger patterns emerge of how teacher education as an institution contributes to the permanence of racism, as well as strategies of resistance that can inspire and embolden other teacher educators working to confront racism in their settings" (Picower & Kohli, 2017, pp. 4-5). To this end, we engage in teacher educator counternarrative, joining critical scholars who highlight how our intersecting identities and the social, political, and historical contexts of schooling deeply inform our lived

experiences and how we embark on our transformative work as teacher educators (Mayorga & Picower, 2018; Milner & Howard, 2013; Picower & Kohli, 2017; Pour-Khorshid, 2016).

Critical teacher educators, particularly those of non-dominant positionalities, have documented the insidious impacts of white supremacy culture—alongside top-down, market-based neoliberal reform; the privatization and high-stakes standardization of schooling (including teacher education); and the de-professionalization of teachers (including teacher educators)—on their bodies, minds, spirits, and efforts to teach and transform teacher education. Our critical teacher educator colleagues across institutions write to these injuries:

- hearing teacher candidates doubting their Black male professor’s experience teaching (Howard, 2017),
- wrestling with advising teachers of color to go into the profession because of concern for their moral injury, “I just did not want one more public school educator to have to feel what I feel” (Banks (Roberts), 2017),
- being sometimes the only one to denounce racism of teacher candidates and colleagues alike to preserve one’s own humanity (Cortés, 2017).

Our colleagues also write to the power of transformation within and beyond teacher education through system-shifting work such as: racial literacy roundtables (Sealey-Ruiz, 2017), critical racial affinity spaces (Strong et al., 2017), Freirean culture circles (de los Ríos & Souto-Manning, 2017), the Pin@y Educational Partnerships (Curammeng & Tintiango-Cubales, 2017), the Institute for Teachers of Color Committed to Racial Justice (Pizarro, 2017), and current K-12 teachers as teacher educators themselves in People’s Led Inquiry (Martinez, 2017). In describing ongoing efforts to transform teacher education at his institution, Camangian (2017) describes the relentless persistence—the strategizing and organizing—that is required of critical teacher educators to dismantle oppressive teacher education programing, which resonates deeply with us in our ongoing struggle to create and fight for our program. Camangian reminds us that “socially transformative teacher education does not come *after* the contradictions have been confronted—it comes hand

Raygoza, Norris, and León

and hand with it” and that our responsibility is “to work collectively to transform our institutions so that they are less hostile to our humanity, our practice, and our purpose.” (Camangian, 2017, p. 34). We are on this road to transform together, amidst much challenge and contradiction. We embrace the complexity of this work, recognizing the power of our praxis, the power of learning about and being informed by our individual and collective counternarratives.

Methods

In this collaborative piece, we fully claim our subjective selves as an invitation into acceptance of the postmodern power of critique and counternarrative creation. This centering pushes us to consider the multiplicity of identities, the disruption of the mainstream, intertextuality, social and cultural pluralism, and unity and disunity. Lyotard (1992; 1984) calls attention to the metanarrative, the idea that one particular narrative can be the overarching framework for all; he also dismantles this idea, claiming that objective truth is a farce. It is the subjective narrative that reveals the intricacies and complexities of the sociopolitical, interconnected relationships in which we live. The counternarrative, as framed through Critical Race Theory (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998), which challenges the falsity of the metanarrative, is interwoven into rationale for our choice to emphasize collective and individual storytelling. The counternarrative reads the world as it is with precision, insight, and nuance; it is rooted in who we are (León & Thomas, 2016). It reveals structural inequities and dismantles hegemonic propaganda that seeks to preserve itself; the idea of this small piece of existence reveals what is. The counternarrative pushes back on any falsities within stories that complicate and agitate towards liberation and justice.

We draw on Valdez et al.’s (2019) conception of *human being*, which acknowledges both our varied intersectional identities and unique lived experiences and also how we collectively struggle for a common purpose. Valdez and colleagues explain:

We offer a conception of educator activism as the struggle for the inalienable right of all people to *human be*—to be

liberated from any project of violence that treats persons as property, persons as things, persons as disposable, or persons as in any other way less than fully human. (Valdez et al., 2019, p. 247)

As human beings, we are called into story; story is what helps us to cultivate *conscientization*, a critical consciousness defined by Paulo Friere (1968) as whole human beings. Rather than engage in the conspiracy of silence that threatens to strip race, ethnicity, and, indeed, all other characteristics of self from explorations of identity in the creation and analysis of our work as teacher educators, embracing a Freirean approach challenges us to bring to light systems of oppression and counter with our stories, perhaps in the creation of counter-narratives (Williams, 2004; Dominguez, Duarte et al., 2009). We are using the method of counternarrative creation to expand upon our own experiences with racism as people and as educators and through this collaborative process work to disrupt and challenge dominant narratives of white body supremacy (Menakem, 2017). Through our counternarrative creation, we agitate for change in teacher education and also dig deep into our own individual and collective healing (Milner & Howard, 2013). Like Dover et al. (2018), we engage in the “heart work” at the intersection of counternarratives and critical hope as we examine our realities as people and teacher educators and imagine and work to co-create more humanizing realities.

We are also in conversation with the work of Dr. Farima Pour-Khorshid (2016) who incorporated the counternarrative in her framing of the collective *testimonio* in which three educators of color reveal the power of critical professional development groups in agitating for educational transformation. The collective *testimonio* in her work also served, at its core, as a tool for building solidarity and unity within the group. While that was not our aim initially through this interview, we have found a similar bondedness has arisen from our interview, collective transcript review process, and writing together that has grown from and extended back to our work as teacher educators. This is a confirmation of the transformational power of intermingling stories, the humanizing power that extends from vulnerability and strength in love.

After our interview process, we then collaborated on

Raygoza, Norris, and León

identifying particular themes that emerged: liberation that extends from lived experience; healing through storytelling; the power of collective dreaming and strategizing; the importance of reclaiming one's rage as a change mechanism; and the power of love as a galvanizing force. We expanded upon these themes in order to create a text infused with personal narrative and scholarly context. Each of us combed through the interview transcript, identifying passages that illustrated our emerging themes and illustrative sections of the interview that most strongly explored the shared concepts, while also staying true to the linearity of the conversation (Erickson, 1986; Saldaña, 2013). We shared in our meetings what we learned from one another in the moment of the interview and after reading the transcripts again. In our collaborative work, we additionally sought to explore how we encoded and decoded meaning from our narratives.

What follows incorporates excerpts from our conversation; the excerpts support the themes that emerged organically. The conversations have been slightly altered to clarify meaning and omit the connective language endemic to spoken discourse. Each unit of discourse begins with the honorifics of the persons speaking, in recognition of our expertise and with specific acknowledgment that our intersectional identities matter here, most especially that women of color in academia too often are not respected as holding the expertise they do. While we are on a first name basis as colleagues, when talking about and citing each other's work, we highlight that we are professors and hold doctorates, which is standard practice in the field.

Introductions: Tell us a bit about who you are

Dr. Mary Raygoza: I'm an assistant professor of teacher education at Saint Mary's College. I grew up in Concord in the East Bay Area in a white, middle class family. I went to public schools in the Concord area and did my undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley and went to the University of California, Los Angeles for my teacher education and doctoral work. I was a high school math teacher in East Los Angeles, home of the Chicano Power Movement, and was inspired by that as I designed curriculum and thought about how to connect math with the

Voices of Teacher Education Scholars

social and political world. My work as a teacher educator is driven by a commitment to a more just world and understanding how I can interrogate my own privilege and work alongside other folks to do that work, striving to bring who we are and why we're called to the work to the forefront in everything that we do. I have a newly turned three-year-old daughter, Rose Esperanza. In addition to being a STEMInist and teacher educator, I'm a motherscholar. And I should say, too, I'm married to a principal. Our household is an educators' household - I'm in higher education, my husband in high school education, and we're pre-schooling our toddler now at home. We're talking all the time about the role of schools in this moment and movement and doing everything we can in our roles to be there for teachers and youth. It's quite a time.

Dr. Raina León: I am a full professor of education, only the third Black person at St. Mary's College in over 157 years to achieve that rank, and the first Afro-Latina that I can find in any kind of record. I'm a teacher educator, poet, writer, and writing coach. I co-founded The Acentos Review, which has published over 800 Latino voices in our 12-year history, and the senior poetry editor for Raising Mothers, which focuses on non-binary parents and mothers of color and our stories. I'm originally from Philadelphia. I have been doing this work as a teacher educator for nine years. I believe deeply in the liberatory power of education and that of writing. I'm now coming into the teacher education department chair in January, so super excited about that. I've got a punk rock toddler and a very happy newborn. My husband is Italian. So when the folks in Italy were going into quarantine, we were watching very carefully, particularly as shelter in place here began as I was over 7 months pregnant. Giving birth in a pandemic is not for the faint of heart.

Dr. Aaminah Norris: I am an associate professor in teaching credentials at Sacramento State University. My mom and my dad were both college educated. My mom has multiple masters' degrees. My dad had a doctorate degree, but they both came from working class families, which did not, for the most part, go to college. My dad grew up in the segregated South. His family lived in Texas. He attended a one room school and his mom sent him to college. My dad's father, Johnny White, actually worked

Raygoza, Norris, and León

for Buick Motor Company as a janitor. Then he started a general store. When my dad was nine years old, his father had a heart attack in front of my father. My father was on the side of the road doing these distress signals trying to get people to help him and his father. They were in this town called Greenville, Texas, which had a sign that said “the blackest land and the whitest people.” You couldn't get medical attention in the hospital if you were Black. My Dad watched his father die because he was a Black man in America. In 2016, my father was in his 80s and Muslim. Dad traveled to Mecca for Umrah. He flies home through Los Angeles International Airport. He slipped and fell down the escalator and suffered a major brain injury. The Emergency Medical Technicians denied him medical attention. What happened to my grandfather in the 1940s happened to my dad in 2016. Dad deteriorated over the course of a year to the point where he lost a lot of his ability to communicate. The story of his dad? I find that out, because extensive brain trauma tapped into his suppressed memories. I never knew how my grandfather died until 2016 when my own dad was dying. Dad died in June 2017. In 2020, I see George Floyd die at the hands of the police and I wrote this piece called “Wonder Twin Powers Activate: Form of An Ally.” I wrote down this generational trauma, my granddad, my dad, to me, and the impact of that on me in my bloodstream.

Disrupting, Transforming, and Healing

On Disrupting

Dr. Mary Raygoza: When I was a high school senior at a school in a well-resourced neighborhood I transferred to, I went back to the Title I middle school I attended to do a senior project on educational inequality. This is right after No Child Left Behind was implemented and the school was on the road to state takeover. I wanted to talk to my middle school teachers to learn about what was going on. There was only one teacher left who taught when I was there. That was just four years later. The turnover was alarming. She was my eighth grade English teacher. She said, “I have a scripted curriculum. I can't teach my autobiography project anymore. I can't teach my poetry project anymore.” She had tears in her eyes. That was a moment for me

that crystalized how top-down, deficit-oriented school reform is clearly harmful. That's when this fire built up inside me to want to commit myself to joining others in disrupting the inequitable status quo of schools.

I experience a lot of privilege. In my work as a white teacher educator, I benefit from not being questioned when I raise issues of inequity and racism. We are given pats on the back. We benefit from our privilege and also are in this position where we don't even see those benefits all the time. And so I'm trying to work to see them. I think that is a lifelong journey.

Thinking about the movement for Black lives, the societal trauma, the racial violence that's impacted Black folks everywhere, and for you as my colleagues, I feel a lot of anger around that. This cannot continue. I'm thinking about the piece that you wrote, Aaminah, about what it means to be an ally, or be a co-conspirator and stepping back and making space to learn from and be accountable to calls to action from Black people.

Dr. Raina León: I start from my subjectivity. Racism influences so many parts of our lives. And when it most negatively impacts me in academia, that filters into how I interact with my family. It filters into how I function as a mother, as a partner, as a community member and so on. I think of my mother, for example, living in a very racially divided and contentious community in rural Western Pennsylvania, a very small town where my family has been for over 200 years and actually moved there because of racism. The family story is that they moved in the 1800s from Virginia, because they were a mixed family and that there were folks who were free Black people and white folks partnered with them. When Virginia put into place a law that said it doesn't matter if you're free or not, after this law you will be considered enslaved. That's when the whole family left. They moved to the frontiers of Western Pennsylvania to preserve their family. That being part of the history still continues in these divisions, as far as race, in families and communities. I see that very clearly in her experience as well as how folks function still within the haven that is the Black community, but also at the edge of concern and violence and threat. At the same time recognizing that the person that you may fear may also be related to you just a few

Raygoza, Norris, and León

generations back. Racism comes into everything. Even thinking about my father's side of the family where I've got folks who would say things to me—like one of my titis when I was considering graduate school—she said, “You need to go to Miami and find yourself a nice Cuban to marry, because there's too much Black in the family. All these León men, they marry Black women.” Of course, to her, as Puerto Ricans, we're not Black. Even though we are. There's a tension there. There's this tradition of resistance, even in birth certificates, of claiming indigenous ancestry, claiming our blackness within baptismal records when many folks were denying. This push to whiten the race by marrying outside. Yes, racism can be clear, even in the family dynamic at a dinner table.

Dr. Aaminah Norris: Certain things that are happening are triggering other things including suppressed memories. For me, my fury, I would say has really forced me into a sense of urgency, particularly around the fact that I am very much aware that our lives are in danger and mine is in danger, people that I love, their lives are in danger. People are dying. We are in a temporal space. What is the contribution that we can make in this time that can actually provide some source of healing, some source of support, some sort of forward motion? That can also be a benefit. It's just a situation where life is very fleeting. The things that we can do in terms of the contribution and the work I think is really important. That's one of the reasons why I really value this opportunity to have this conversation with you and to learn from you about your experiences as well. Particularly for people of color, racism doesn't just inform our work. It's absolutely very much intertwined to everything, our everyday existence in this society.

On Transforming

Dr. Raina León: I am very aware of racism all the time. As a teacher educator, as a professor, as a person walking in the world. I'm also very aware of the toxicity that can invade my body and the bodies of Black and brown people, folks who experienced racism. Viscerally, how that impacts us and changes our very makeup through generational trauma. And so while I am aware and thoughtful and as much as I can, I enact ways of resistance, holding space for the telling of our stories and pushing back

against racism, I'm also in a space of constantly saying to myself: this is the real thing. How can we undermine that? And how can we also be free and joyous? How can I make sure that I am not perpetuating white supremacy and also internalizing racism? We all have our internalized racism. I'm not saying that we don't or that I don't. I am trying to challenge, interrogate, push back against that, for the sake of me, and the sake of my children, and my communities of which I am apart. I am conflicted thinking about holding that space for freedom, because freedom is complex. It is also joyous, and I want to be in the space of visioning for transformation, rather than always living in the pain of today.

Dr. Aaminah Norris: Yeah, I think about that concept of freedom that you mentioned, too, because earlier in our history as a people and I'm speaking specifically of Black people in this country that when we initially conceived of freedom, we thought of it as a goal that we would achieve from slavery. Right. We become free and then things are just going to be different for us. Now I think it's a continual journey. There are moments that we might experience a true freedom, that joyous thing that you mentioned, that kind of transcendence and transformation. But then we have to keep going, keep that happening, and to become free. We are never free. We are in the act of becoming free.

Dr. Raina León: Yeah, my mom and I started StoryJoy, centered on stories and fostering that joy in the journey for BIPOC human service providers and creatives. She tells a story about where she's from in western Pennsylvania. There's a church called John Wesley AME Zion Church. It's actually at the site of a tunnel that was part of the Underground Railroad. They used to have a bell at the top of the tower and eventually took it down to preserve it. That bell was rung every time someone who had been previously enslaved became a free person whose movement and labor and all these things and life and children were taken away or stolen away. Every time they reached freedom, every time that they reached the ability to make those decisions for themselves as the full human beings that they were, that bell was rung. I think about that as what you're talking about, that journey, that the bells rang when someone got some place. But, the bell has to keep ringing, because we're always getting to another point of evolution on

Raygoza, Norris, and León

the journey toward liberation.

Dr. Aaminah Norris: We have been in such a corporatized system of creating education as a factory. That factory model doesn't work and hasn't worked, does not work for the community we were really trying to serve. It works for the people that it was designed to work for, but it doesn't work for us.

Dr. Raina León: We (Aaminah and I) went to that speculative education conference a few months back. And I think, what would it be for teacher educators to have one course where you just use as your primary text a science fiction novel?

Dr. Aaminah Norris: I've been thinking a lot about redesigning the Ed Psych syllabus because there are these four things that are very pressing in our psyche and in our society right now. One is we're all in this global pandemic. It's not being handled well. We're seeing instances in other countries where they keep the numbers down, people are not dying, the resources are distributed, and people have survived. Then we come to this country. People are dying. More than 250,000 people have died. The deaths are astronomical and unbelievable. That is obviously very pressing on society and psychology. Then there's also this anti-Black pandemic where people are literally dying. We're being shot and killed, knees down on our necks. These different aspects of the movement for Black lives have arisen out of this notion that this country does not value our lives. This is global genocide. How do we address the issues that we're experiencing if we don't specifically target the particular communities and say this is what's happening in this community. What does this community need? Then the third thing is, we are in this election cycle. We're going to have an election. That is not just a referendum on Trump, but also all the other layers of these governors and these people who have really empowered the destruction of people within their states. Reopening schools when there's no resources for that and decisively telling people: get out there and die or live. The fourth is this economic crisis. Loss of jobs. The price of food is going up. Businesses are closing. That is terrifying. When you think about the fact that the things that we thought we could rely on; maybe you thought you could rely on your job and now you don't have one. There's unemployment, money is going, gone and these

Voices of Teacher Education Scholars

things are pressing. Think about that in ways that it impacts and reimagines. How do we support our students, ourselves, and our communities?

Dr. Mary Raygoza: I wanted to notice in the conversation that what preceded you naming all of the different profound moments that we're in and how people are impacted, Aaminah, is you bringing up that you're planning for your Ed Psych teacher education class right now, how you plan to re-envision that class. And I want to appreciate that. I think that really captures what we strive to do as teacher educators in our own practice. How do we genuinely try to understand what's going on in the world? What does it mean for schools? How do we hear young people's voices and lived experiences? And then: what does this mean for our classrooms as teacher educators? And continuously going through that process for our own classes but also doing that in community in our program meetings. I think that it pushes us collectively to continue the work, knowing that we never have arrived at the perfect transformative teacher program. We're on this journey, always reimagining.

I'm thinking about courses a lot at this moment too, because I'm teaching our Foundations of Urban Education class right now, which is the summer intensive course for our program. You have also taught it, Aaminah and Raina. I want to give a shout out to Cliff Lee, who in many ways, designed and re-envisioned the course, and Chris Junsay, G. Reyes, Whitneé Garrett-Walker who have all taught it. I want to be really intentional about acknowledging the work of my colleagues of color who dreamed, envisioned, and designed this class and the program. This class is about building community. It's about getting into the foundations of education through this critical lens, looking at inequitable systems, the foundations of education in this country connected to colonization and slavery, and the work of social justice educators (within and outside of school systems) who have been working to undo that, abolish that, and create something different. Another part of the class is beginning work on teacher positionality. The culminating piece of this class is to write a critical positionality paper where the students are invited to reflect on their intersecting identities and how that's connected to their worldview and

Raygoza, Norris, and León

their experiences moving through Pre-K through 12 schools. They read a number of pieces on teacher positionality, intersectionality, solidarity. For white educators, including myself, it's important to learn about the experiences and respond to the calls of BIPOC teachers and youth, so that we don't go into schools and perpetuate racism.

On Healing

Dr. Aminah Norris: If we continue to separate ourselves from groups of people because of stereotypes we may have of them and their children, then our society is never going to actually reach any kind of freedom. Any of us could simply say we have resources. But what's the difference between that and the Greenville thing? What is the difference? There is none. My grandfather died, because he wasn't allowed in your hospital. You're saying these kids aren't allowed in your pod. That's not okay. We can't keep doing that. I want to be able to reclaim rage for Black and Brown people. We have been conditioned that we are not allowed to feel that or experience that. What we're dealing with is outrageous. It's outrageous. Rage is something that we should acknowledge and claim. Bring back into our vocabulary and expression.

Dr. Mary Raygoza: Aminah, within your piece about how this time should not be distance learning but rather collective learning, you write about looking to Black women, centering your ideas about how we need to engage in this time and beyond. Reading your piece made me think about my work with teacher education students. How can we understand the moment and the movement that we're in? So we read your piece, Erica Turner's (2020) Equity Guide to Pandemic Schooling, a piece by Bettina Love (2020) called "Teachers, we can't go back to the way things were," and Lisa Kelly's (2020) blog, which is about remote emergency education for community health. Then we stepped back and thought about: What does this time that we're in mean for how we can radically dream schools differently in ways that are just and antiracist and anti-oppressive? And what can they do right now coming into student teaching?

Coming back to "pandemic pods" and all that families are

grappling with, it's really terrible that we don't have a bigger system-wide approach to make schooling happen in ways that are empowering and liberatory and support everyone's basic human needs right now and protect people, from the virus, from dying, especially communities of color. It's putting all these individual people in really unfathomably difficult positions of trying to figure out how to navigate schooling and childcare. But for people who have all kinds of privilege, people with many of the same intersecting identities as myself, I ask: "Why are you resource hoarding and hiring credentialed teachers just for yourself? Why is that what you care most about right now?" We have to care about the collective, like you say in your work, Aminah.

Dr. Aminah Norris: We can't keep perpetuating these deep seated hateful things that are destroying us individually, communally, societally on every level. It's a problem. We can't keep doing that, at some point we have to break it. We have to say, "This is enough. I have resources. I'm a capable educator. Why would I give those resources to people just for money?" That's not why, we went into the educational field in the first place. I need to make our society better. So therefore, I want to make sure that every child has access and the people who don't have access are the people that we keep talking about and so we need to change some things you know for sure.

Dr. Mary Raygoza: Healing practice doesn't just inform one particular class or unit in our teacher education program, but is one of the themes that runs throughout. We have two seminars in our program that we call Praxis. We have envisioned them as spaces that are trauma-informed and healing-centered, so that we're always centering how everyone is as a human being, making sense of their experiences in the classroom and holding that and honoring that. That is part of the process of teaching. How do we engage in teacher self-care? And what does teacher collective care look like, and how is activism and resistance and action actually part of our care, part of healing us all?

Dr. Aminah Norris: This reminded me of this Audre Lorde quote. She says, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." It's this idea of preserving ourselves so that we don't burn out, so that we

Raygoza, Norris, and León

can continue to do the collective work. That's the political warfare piece, too. You have to take care of yourself, especially, particularly when there are people trying to detract from you, being able to contribute to the students in the community.

Dr. Raina León: I think this piece around self-care first and starting with where we are, what we believe. We need to engage in interrogations of our beliefs and also opening up space for folks to invite us into interrogating that belief. Calling in, if you will, is important. I always start with the self and subjectivity. How do I hold space for others? I need to make sure that I'm doing that for myself. That if I tell my students about the importance of self-care, well, I need to remind myself that actually, I need to do that too. I need to take my walk. I need to spend some time in my garden. I need to play with my son on the ground. I don't know about anyone else, but I also recognize that I have a lot of childhood trauma stuff. Part of what I carry is sometimes I get really, really stressed, and I don't realize until I'm about to blow up or shut down. I don't realize that my body was showing all the signs of "You are under siege and you need to stop." I consciously have to check in with my body and check in with how I feel about things. The channel for reckoning, revolution and antiracist practice starts in that self and then extends into how we do this work together. I do believe that the most powerful and sustaining change happens in connection with the community. Finding people to be in community with and to have those critical conversations so that you're not just talking to yourself in a closet somewhere is important. Being able to talk with people and strategize and build and vision together. Whatever that vision is for transformation may happen five years or more down the line. I tell the story that there were a few of us who literally met in secret for a long time, visiting and strategizing and having meetings before "the meeting" so that we could bounce off one another in a way that seemed organic during the larger meeting. That's what we had to do, recognizing the system in which we work. We now have a critical mass of folks who are on the same page and can advocate together within our teacher education program. What does that mean within a school? I think it might mean the same thing: how do you vision together and make change happen?

Voices of Teacher Education Scholars

Here's an example: we got into a little issue with one of our colleagues about some classes. As a way of pushing back, I asked for more data and our placement coordinator, Chris Junsay, did the research. He called all of our candidates of the previous five years and discovered our work is highly successful. When we have 95% plus who stay in the profession after five years; that is highly successful because the rate of teachers who leave the profession within five years is more than 50%. For our candidates to have come through and to have done that work of interrogation, to feel overwhelmed with all the things that they're learning and all the planning that they're doing, and yet be sustained in how they grow as teachers and community organizers and people and in connection with one another as human being. That's phenomenal.

Conclusion: Reflecting on Our Praxis

Consistent with stories across the book, *Confronting Racism in Teacher Education, Counternarratives of Critical Practice*, our experiences include “incredible trauma, as well as resistance and resilience, that teacher educators face in working toward racial justice” (Picower & Kohli, 2017, p. 10). Thus, we recognize the importance of sharing what we have learned through our collective work to provide implications for racial justice in teacher education, teaching, and learning.

In our work together, various themes arose: those of freedom and liberation and what that means in our personal experiences as well as in social and educational landscapes; healing through storytelling to draw on memory to illuminate the current time; the power of dreaming and strategizing together; and the importance of reclaiming one's rage as an activating mechanism for change. We proudly found ourselves celebrating the effectiveness of our teacher education program and the resultant retention of our students in the field of education over time. We additionally realized that over and over again we emphasized the centrality of love in our work. It is not a trivial act to locate our energetic work in creating resources for and holding space in love for our educators. bell hooks (2006) reminds us:

A culture of domination is anti-love. It requires violence to sustain itself. To choose love is to go against the prevailing

Raygoza, Norris, and León

values of the culture...Awareness is central to the process of love as the practice of freedom...Choosing love we also choose to live in community, and that means that we do not have to change by ourselves. (hooks, 2006, p. 246)

In framing our work as emerging from and being animated by love, we resist the metanarrative that says that a structure stained in racism, toxicity, and domination is what must be, because it is what has always been; through our community storytelling and counternarrative co-creation we disrupt, transform, and heal both individually and collectively. While the pandemic has been devastating across the world and has been isolating, it has also drawn peoples more closely together to interrogate what truly matters. How can we more fully honor and nurture connections and thrive? In our conversation, we center praxis that draws on love, sees clearly where we have been, where we are as teacher educators—as humans in a decidedly divisive world—and moves toward a daring future. It is a future we are just about to make.

The implications for the field and practical applications are many. In our conversation and examples, we model ways to manifest rehumanizing praxis of teacher education. In this section on implications, we provide practical suggestions that teacher educators might employ in an effort to transform teaching and learning. We recognize that we are all on the journey towards freedom. Therefore we must engage in these practices to collectively heal. Therefore, we suggest these implications as guideposts on our journey toward becoming free and experiencing joy.

Teacher educators must begin instruction by interrogating our positionalities and asking our students to do the same. We must explicitly recognize, name, and frame ways that our intersectional identities inform our commitment to anti-racist work including disrupting anti-Blackness within and beyond schooling. It is through this recognition that we might transition from simply engaging in philosophical discussions of ideology to participation in a radical transformation of our educational thought and praxis. For our classes, we can begin by ensuring our syllabi include the work of BIPOC abolitionist teacher educators and critical race theorists. Across our work, we must interrogate our identities as we strive to answer questions such as, “How do my intersectional

Voices of Teacher Education Scholars

identities inform my contribution to the movement for Black lives?” And, “How do we ensure that anti-racism is an interwoven thread that connects our pedagogies, practices, policies, and systems?” As teacher educators, we can engage in such questions powerfully as a collective, as revealed through our work together. What does it look like for teacher educators to regularly engage in the kind of critical inquiry spaces—forefronting our identities and lived experiences and hopes and dreams—that we hope our students engage in themselves as teachers? How can we extend and model the practice of more explicitly being in community with one another, whether at the same institution or not, benefiting as people and professionals from the beauty in camaraderie and the praxis and the organizing that takes place within such spaces?

We have a vision and you are a part of it. We ask you to dream with us an interconnected, humanizing educational future. We ask that you consider the questions throughout this piece to agitate your own (teacher) education practice. We ask you to build with us a new teacher education practice. We started this work together guided by questions that themselves arose from a radical love for humanity, resistance to all forms of oppression, and a belief in our education system as a vehicle for social change. We know we cannot do this work alone. We have set a call. We hope you will answer it. Our futures and our now depend on that answer. Together we find joy, become free, and change the world.

References

- Aronson, B., Meyers, L., & Winn, V. (2020). “Lies my teacher [educator] still tells”: Using critical race counternarratives to disrupt Whiteness in teacher education. *The Teacher Educator*, 55 (3),1-23.
- Banks (Roberts), M.A. (2017). How neoliberal education reform injured a strong Black professor. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 42-50). Taylor & Francis.
- BondGraham, D. (2020, June 2). How 2 Oakland students got 15,000 people to march against police violence on Monday. *Berkeleyside*.<https://www.berkeleyside.com/2020/06/02/how-oakland-students-got-15000-people-to-march-against-police-violence-on-monday..>
- Camangian, P. (2017). The transformative lives we lead: Making teacher education ours. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 29-34). Taylor & Francis.
- Cortés, N. (2017). You just don’t see me! The “Puerto Rico Incident” and the choice of freedom from silence. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 81-88). Taylor & Francis.
- Curammeng, E. & Tintiangco-Cubales, A. (2017). Growing our own hope: The development of a Pin@y teacher pipeline. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 157-163). Taylor & Francis.
- de los Ríos, C. & Souto-Manning, M. (2017). Freirean culture circles as a strategy for racial justice in teacher education. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 145-150). Taylor & Francis.
- Delgado, R., & J. Stefancic (Eds.). (1995). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*. Temple University Press.
- Dominguez, N., Duarte, Y., Espinosa, P. J., Martinez, L., Nygreen, K., Perez, R., Ramirez, I., & Saba, M. (2009). Constructing

Voices of Teacher Education Scholars

- a counternarrative: Students Informing Now (SIN) reframes immigration and education in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(5), 439-442.
- Dover, A. G., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Dotson, E. K. (2018). It's heart work: Critical case studies, critical professional development, and fostering hope among social justice-oriented teacher educators. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 20(4), 229-239.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 119-161). Macmillan.
- Freire, P. (1968). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Seabury Press.
- Gorski, P. (2019). Avoiding racial equity detours. *Educational Leadership*, 76(6), 56-6
- hooks, b. (2006). *Outlaw culture. Resisting representations* Routledge.
- Howard, T.C. (2017). Tales from the dark side: Reflections of Blackness and maleness in teacher education. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 35-41). Taylor & Francis.
- Hsieh, B. (2015). The importance of orientation: Implications of professional identity on classroom practice and for professional learning. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(2), 178-190.
- Kelly, L. (2020, April 9). REECHing, not distance teaching. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/@mslisamkelly/rejecting-distance-teaching-9b096cd6e4d9>.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2015, April 16-20). *Justice... just, justice*. [Social Justice in Education Award Lecture]. American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, United States.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24.
- León, R., & Thomas, N. D. (2016). Critical race theory and the cultivation, mentorship and retention of Black women faculty. *American International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(1), 1.

Raygoza, Norris, and León

- Love, B. (2020, June 12). An Essay for Teachers Who Understand Racism Is Real. *Ed Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/06/12/an-essay-for-teachers-who-understand-racism.html>.
- Love, B. (2020, April 29). Teachers, we cannot go back to the way things were. *Ed Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/04/30/teachers-we-cannot-go-back-to-the.html>
- Lyotard, J. F. (1992). *The postmodern explained, Correspondence 1982-1985*. (D. Garry, B. Maher, J. Pefanis, V. Spate, & M. Thomas, Trans.) University of Minnesota Press.
- Lyotard, J. F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. (G. Bennington. & B. Massumi, Trans.) University of Minnesota Press.
- Martinez, A.N. (2017). A people's education model to develop and support critical educators. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 139-144). Taylor & Francis.
- Martinez, A. N., Valdez, C., & Cariaga, S. (2016). Solidarity with the people: Organizing to disrupt teacher alienation. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 49(3), 300-313.
- Matias, C. E. (2013). Check yo'self before you wreck yo'self and our kids: Counterstories from culturally responsive White teachers?... To culturally responsive White teachers! *Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 3(2), 68-81.
- Matias, C. E., & Nishi, N. W. (2018). ParentCrit epilog. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 31(1), 82-85.
- Mayorga, E., & Picower, B. (2018). Active solidarity: Centering the demands and vision of the Black Lives Matter movement in teacher education. *Urban Education*, 53(2), 212-230.
- Menakem, R. (2017). *My grandmother's hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies*. Central Recovery Press.
- Milner, H. R., & Howard, T. C. (2013). Counter-narrative as method: Race, policy and research for teacher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16(4), 536-561.
- Norris, A. (Producer, Host). (2020, August 16).

Voices of Teacher Education Scholars

- Reimagining schools with special guests Drs. Raina Leon and Mary Raygoza* [Audio Podcast] UnHidden Voices. <https://anchor.fm/aaminah-norris/episodes/Episode-9-Parts-1-and-2-Reimagining-School-with-Special-Guests-Drs--Raina-Leon-and-Mary-Raygoza-ei8i4t>
- Norris, A. (2020, July 25). No more “distance learning”: Create collective learning instead. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/un-hidden-voices/no-more-distance-learning-create-collective-learning-instead-91736b471da5>
- Norris, A. (2020, June, 6). Wonder twin powers activate: Form of an ally; Shape of a human shield. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/un-hidden-voices/wonder-twin-powers-activate-form-of-an-ally-shape-of-a-human-shield-d556a012bf23>
- Navarro, O. (2018). We can’t do this alone: Validating and inspiring social justice teaching through a community of transformative praxis. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 48(3), 335-358.
- Navarro, O., Quince, C. L., Hsieh, B., & Deckman, S. L. (2019). Transforming teacher education by integrating the funds of knowledge of teachers of Color. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 41(4-5), 282-316.
- Picower, B. 2009. The unexamined Whiteness of teaching: How White teachers maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies.” *Race Ethnicity & Education* 12 (2): 197–215.
- Picower, B. (2011). Resisting compliance: Learning to teach for social justice in a neoliberal context. *Teachers College Record*, 113(5), 1105-1134.
- Picower, B. (2012). *Practice what you teach: Social justice education in the classroom and the streets*. Routledge.
- Picower, B. (2015). Nothing about us without us: Teacher-driven critical professional development. *Radical Pedagogy*, 12(1), 1-26.
- Picower, B., & Kohli, R. (Eds.). (2017). *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice*. Taylor & Francis.
- Pizarro, M. (2017). The Institute for Teachers of Color Committed to Racial Justice: Cultivating community, healing, and transformative praxis. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives*

Raygoza, Norris, and León

- of critical practice* (pp. 151-156). Taylor & Francis.
- Pour-Khorshid, F. (2016). H.E.L.L.A.: Collective testimonio that speak to the healing, empowerment, love, liberation, and action embodied by social justice educators of color. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 10(2), 16-32.
- Raygoza, M.C., León, R., & Norris, A. (2020). *Humanizing online teaching*. [Unpublished manuscript]. Kalmanovitz School of Education Faculty Works <http://works.bepress.com/mary-candace-raygoza/28/>
- Raygoza, M. C.; León, R; Lee, C.; Junsay, C., Norris, A., & Niermann, G. (2020). Social justice in teacher education: It's not just a course. *CCTE SPAN 2020 Research Monograph*, (pp 86-99). California Council on Teacher Education. <https://ccte.org/wp-content/pdfs-conferences/ccte-conf-2020-spring-monograph.pdf#page=89>
- Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2017). Talking race, delving deeper: The racial literacy roundtable series at Teachers College, Columbia University. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 127-132). Taylor & Francis.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2015). Deepening social justice teaching. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 42(6), 512-535.
- Souto-Manning, M., & Emdin, C. (2020). On the harm inflicted by urban teacher education programs: Learning from the historical trauma experienced by teachers of color. *Urban Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085920926249>
- Strong, L; Pittman-Polletta, M.; & Vázquez-García, D. (2017). Creating critical racial affinity spaces for educators. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism in teacher education: Counternarratives of critical practice* (pp. 133-138). Taylor & Francis.
- Turner. O. (2020, August 4). *Equity in pandemic schooling: An action guide for families, educators, & communities*. Equity in Action Committee Lapham-Marquette Parent Teacher Group <https://tinyurl.com/EquityGuidePandemicSchooling>. ..

Voices of Teacher Education Scholars

Valdez, C., Curammeng, E., Pour-Khorshid, F., Kohli, R.,
Nikundiwe, T., Picower, B., Shalaby, C. & Stovall, D. (2018,
July). We are victorious: Educator activism as a shared struggle for human being. *Educational Forum*, 82(3), 244-258.