Preparing antiracist educators through transformative teacher education

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper reports the findings of a study examining the impact of one teacher preparation program on the current practices of its graduates and documents the ways the program focused on equity and social justice in preparing educators who see themselves as agents for transforming schools. This paper aims to identify program elements that can be transformative in the preparation of antiracist teachers.

Design/methodology/approach – This study examined the stories of nine program alumni who shared preservice education experiences and reflections on current practices. Interview data, videotaped and transcribed verbatim, included the teachers’ reflections and perceptions of their preparation program and descriptions of current practices and areas to which they each attribute success as educators. Data were analyzed through inductive analysis.

Findings – Two thematic categories were identified: pedagogical experiences and foundational experiences. Pedagogical experiences were field experiences across multiple districts and schools, preparation for culturally relevant pedagogy and focus on building relationships with students and families. Foundational experiences included mindsets of examining self, conversations over time and truths about racism and inequity.

Practical implications – This study has clear implications for how programs prepare teachers for antiracism, social justice and educational equity. This paper should inform policy and practice in teacher education.

Originality/value – This study offers hope and guidance for teacher preparation programs and demonstrates that teacher education can and must be a leading contributor to an antiracist society.

Keywords Teacher preparation, Antiracist teaching, Urban education, Teacher education

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

As the events of the past 24 months have demonstrated, racism in America is alive and our children are learning it every day by participating in society, watching the media and going to school. American children are being socialized to believe that White lives matter more than Black lives, that Asian Americans are to blame for the pandemic that took them away from their friends and that Brown and Immigrant people belong in cages. Even those of us
fighting for justice may have inadvertently participated in this socialization by merely having the news on in front of our children. Why do we need to march for Black lives if Black lives matter?

Never in our lifetime has the role of schools been more critical. Racism and oppression are both acquired and practiced throughout societal institutions, including schools, where children and youth are socialized. Coles and Stanley (2021) concur in stating, “as institutions that are part and parcel to the nation-state’s functioning, schools and the educators responsible for teaching and learning, are innately producers and/or enablers of antiblackness” (p. 3). The role of a teacher is critical in breaking this cycle. Teachers help children and youth interpret, make sense of and view the world around them, “characterized by [...] ideologically and institutionally embedded conceptions of Blackness and Black people as less human than non-Black peoples (Coles and Stanley, 2021, p. 2). Therefore, it is critical that teachers understand themselves, the contexts of education, and their role in challenging racist curriculum and practices to create a more just and antiracist society. This paper report the findings of a study examining the impact of one teacher preparation program on the current practices of its graduates and documents the ways in which the program focuses on equity and social justice in preparing educators who see themselves as transformational agents.

**Rationale**

Milner (2011) asserts, “teachers often rely on stereotypes of their students based on misconceptions they have acquired about the students’ racial or ethnic group” (p. 61) and “stereotypical beliefs and thinking may force teachers to think about their [...] students through deficit lenses – whether consciously, subconsciously or unconsciously – and these counterproductive thoughts can contaminate teaching and learning” (Milner, 2011, p. 61). Therefore, effective teacher education must involve opportunities for teacher candidates to understand their own cultural identities, the experiences of their students and communities and use this knowledge to create culturally responsive and relevant learning opportunities in their classrooms (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Paris and Alim, 2017; Sleeter, 2001, 2008). Teacher education is challenged to provide “courses and experiences for teacher candidates that challenge their belief systems and result in a change in dispositions” (Warren et al., 2011, p. 109). It is critical; therefore, that teacher education provides authentic experiences that can impact the knowledge, beliefs, skills and dispositions of teacher candidates. Authentic experiences in coursework are opportunities for candidates to interact with PK12 teachers and students within schools and communities.

Shah and Coles (2020) agree, “teachers’ deficit views of racially minoritized students are consequential because they can diminish the learning opportunities available to these students” (p. 584). However, they argue it is difficult to change the racial attitudes of preservice teachers, especially related to connections from reflection to practice. Shah and Coles (2020) assert preservice teachers need to learn how to identify and address racial phenomena within the classroom and in everyday interactions. They define “racial phenomena” as “events or artifacts that involve either explicitly racial language or could be construed as having racial implications” (p. 584). The authors state, “Teacher education efforts in this area are crucial” because they prepare preservice teachers to recognize and retract racist teaching and behavior” (p. 584).

Previous research reported on current practices of program graduates involved in this study and how they engaged in Black mattering within their schools. Black mattering was defined as “being cared for and feeling that one counts” (Caruthers et al., 2021, p. 1). Findings demonstrated graduates were prepared for Black mattering, involving families and
communities and building trusted spaces for learning (Caruthers et al., 2021). However, research is lacking regarding what teacher preparation practices had the most impact on preparing antiracist educators. This paper further examines the impact of an urban teacher preparation program on the current practices of its graduates and aims to address the Journal’s need for “humanity-grounded reform in teacher education” (p. 1). The paper seeks to identify transformative program elements for the preparation of antiracist teachers.

Institute for Urban Education

The educator preparation program (EPP) at the center of this study is located in a Midwest mid-sized city. The Institute for Urban Education (IUE) was conceptualized in 2003, with its first cohort beginning in 2005, as a response from the community to better prepare teachers for the schools within the local community (Waddell and Ukpokodu, 2012). Aligning with Milner’s (2012) definition of urban emergent, the schools are located in a city that has “some of the same characteristics and sometimes challenges as urban intensive schools and districts in terms of resources, qualification of teachers and academic development of students” (p. 560). As such, the program involved in the study prepares teachers specifically for teaching in the urban areas of the city. The IUE is a supplement to the degree program. Candidates in the program have been recruited from area partner schools and receive scholarships to help support the additional requirements of IUE. In exchange for the scholarship, teacher candidates in IUE commit to teach in partner schools. IUE partner schools are those in the city with historically marginalized and underserved populations.

IUE graduates celebrate a five-year teacher retention rate of 90%, compared with a state average of 34%. To date, 50% of program graduates are teachers of color. Throughout the program, IUE provides candidates with opportunities to explore the contexts of education while engaging in dialogue and critical reflection on their own backgrounds, experiences, biases and assumptions. Candidates learn how race, class, privilege and systems impact their identity and work as teachers. IUE prepares teachers to understand their roles as transformative and antiracist educators.

Reforms include:

- learning the history of systemic oppression and racism;
- programming focused on understanding self, implicit bias and the manifestation of personal beliefs in interactions;
- courses and experiences in urban schools and communities;
- culturally relevant, antiracist and social justice pedagogy; and
- relationships with students and families.

Critical reflection “challenges learners to see themselves as transformers, not just of their own values but also of the institutions and societies with which they interact” (Gorski and Dalton, 2020, p. 359); it is a key pedagogy of the program.

History of systemic oppression and racism. IUE curriculum is grounded in the historical and cultural contexts of education, both within the specific geographic region as well as within the USA. Courses within the first two years of the undergraduate program help students understand their community, the racialization and marginalization of the city in which they will teach and the role institutional racism plays within education systems. While not yet naming it, IUE programming was guided by what Shah and Coles (2020) refer to as racial noticing:
The process of attending to, interpreting and formulating responses to racial phenomena in learning settings. This conceptualization is grounded in the idea that race and racism manifest in people’s everyday lived experiences and that, racial discourse saturates how we communicate with each other and also organizes social interaction. (p. 586)

IUE program designers contend it is impossible for teachers to change systems to preserve and honor Black lives if the oppressive history of those systems is not part of training from the onset. One cannot break invisible binds.

**Co-curricular and curricular programming.** Within IUE, teacher candidates engage in social justice seminar courses that focus on understanding one’s own racial and cultural background, how one interprets the world, what factors influence one’s conception of race, bias and beliefs and the manifestation of personal beliefs and biases in interactions with others. Although the seminars are designated safe spaces to learn how to engage in difficult discourse, they are not the only spaces in which race, otherness and racism intersect with teacher preparation. Issues of race, social justice and equity are intentionally integrated into all coursework. For example, within the literacy methods courses, teacher candidates learn the importance of incorporating windows, mirrors and sliding doors (Styles, 1988; Sims Bishop, 1990) into the reading, writing and social studies curriculum. Courses in classroom management engage candidates in critical reflection on school discipline practices, the School to Prison Pipeline (NAACP, 2005) and the importance of restorative practices in schools (Stutzman Amstutz and Mullet, 2005). Once again, to change systems, educators must understand the damage current systems have caused generations of Black and Brown children and must also have knowledge of alternative systems meant to restore and repair previous damage.

**Courses and experiences in urban schools and communities.** The community is integral to the preparation of future teachers. Courses in community immersion allow candidates to learn the strengths of the community through authentic interactions with community organizations such as home associations, faith-based organizations, youth academies and child development centers. IUE candidates spend extended time working and learning in urban schools. Through strong partnerships with local school districts, many methods courses engage in a medical-school model in which candidates learn to teach through working side-by-side practicing teachers, engaging with PK12 students and observing their instructors teaching in real school contexts. Finally, IUE candidates have robust field experiences, spending over 1,500 h in practicum, teaching internship and student teaching experiences, providing authentic experiences in learning to teach. Particular emphasis is placed upon the importance of partnerships, and thus, working with and not to the community, thereby strengthening relationships and affecting meaningful change.

**Culturally relevant, antiracist and social justice pedagogy.** As indicated, the curriculum of IUE is grounded in racial noticing and change agency. The curriculum is guided by Ladson-Billings’ (1994) culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) conceptualized to understand the role of culture in learning. Candidates engage in observation, learning and discourse of the three tenets of CRP: academic success, cultural competence and socio-political critical consciousness. Cultural competence “empowers students […] by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 17–18). Although the evolution of CRP was grounded in understanding the ways teachers acknowledge the communities and cultural backgrounds of students, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) used critical race theory to examine how race impacted educational policies and practices within schools pertaining to communities of color. Over time, IUE has continued to incorporate other approaches to equity and racial literacy (Sealy-Ruiz, 2010) that draw upon and extend CRP: culturally responsive teaching (CRT) (Gay, 2002, 2010), culturally sustaining practice
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(CSP) (Paris and Alim, 2017) and a focus on creating a culture of care (Nieto, 2008; Jackson et al., 2014) into a holistic approach for antiracist, social justice teaching. CRP in its current iteration (Ladson-Billings, 2020) remains the central theoretical framework for the program, as the first two tenets serve as a foundation for CRT, CSP and a culture of care, and there is an urgent need for teachers to practice socio-political critical consciousness in which students “learn to critique the cultural norms, values, mores and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162). Throughout the program, candidates engage in critical reflection of their own schooling experiences, discourses on race and social justice, the current practice of schools, observations of pedagogical approaches or lack thereof and possibilities for the future by interrogating what it means to have high expectations for all students. Candidates give attention to ways to honor, use and sustain students’ cultures and engage students in questioning their worlds, empowering their voices and advocating for change. These critical practices challenge the status quo and lead to systemic and lasting change.

Relationships with students and families. A final but salient emphasis of IUE is the importance of developing relationships with students and families. Within the program, candidates spend time in critical reflection regarding the relationships they have with students: How and why do some relationships come easier than others? What biases may be impacting actions toward certain students? With which students are relationships easily formed? What strategies bridge challenging relationships with students? Candidates also engage in a semester-long course focused on developing relationships with families. Within this course, candidates interrogate their assumptions about families, participate in community events and engage in family visits outside the school. The course forces candidates to confront power dynamics between traditional schools and families. Previous research demonstrates that this focus helps candidates confront deficit views and preconceived notions of families and commit to establishing collaborative family–school relationships (Waddell, 2013).

Throughout all IUE experiences, candidates and faculty engage in critical reflection of experiences, texts, biases and behaviors. Candidates learn to be comfortable with the uncomfortable as their professional identities change from student to teacher to change advocate and, eventually, to transformative agent. Thus, this paper responds to the need to transform schools as places for equitable socialization. It also responds to a recent call for “teacher educators [to] reflect on the ways they incorporate critical reflection into their courses and other work” (Gorski and Dalton, 2020, p. 366).

Research methodology
This study was designed following a previous 2016 study in which 29 program graduates responded to a survey regarding the impact of preservice experiences. Purposeful sampling was used to identify alumni who were still teaching/working in PK12 schools at the time of the study (2021). Nine alumni responded within the first week and were selected for interviews.

Accordingly, this study examined the stories of nine program alumni who shared their preservice education experiences and reflections on current practices. Of the nine participants, five self-identified as Black; four self-identified as White. The majority of the participants were females, and one identified as male. The eight female participants all described their schools as urban, with three working in public district schools and five working in public charter schools. The male participant described his current school as rural but had spent six previous years teaching in an urban charter school. At the time of the interviews, all participants had worked in education for 8–12 years.
We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews over a six-month period with interviews videotaped and transcribed verbatim. Data included the teachers’ reflections and perceptions of their teacher preparation program and descriptions of current practices and areas to which they each attribute success as an educator. Data were organized and analyzed through inductive analysis and an open-coding approach that entailed “discovering patterns, themes and categories” (Patton, 2002, p. 453). Research questions were:

**RQ1.** How do program graduates conceptualize their preparation for social justice teaching?

**RQ2.** What IUE experiences contribute to the current practices of program graduates?

The first author completed the analysis, and categories of sub-themes and themes were checked by the second author.

**Findings**

There were similarities in the ways graduates described their teacher preparation program, perceptions of being prepared for social justice teaching, and the IUE experiences most foundational in their current work. Two thematic categories formed the findings: pedagogical experiences and foundational experiences. Although the pedagogical experiences were built on foundational experiences, each set of experiences was present throughout the program. Therefore, we first detail the shared pedagogical experiences and conclude with the foundational experiences most prevalent in the responses.

**Pedagogical experiences**

The pedagogical experiences identified as most impactful were field experiences across multiple districts and schools, preparation for CRP and focus on building relationships with students and families.

**Variety of field experiences.** Each graduate shared stories of impactful field experiences throughout the program. These varied, including one-day field trips to schools in suburban areas, summer experiences in the community, literacy courses in real classrooms and year-long student teaching experiences. The graduates revealed that exposure to schools within different contexts and demographics helped them gain an understanding of different teaching styles, student needs and classroom cultures.

Ella, a Black female, described the importance of being exposed to multiple classrooms during her preservice preparation: “Being in the classroom and getting to see so many different teachers teach because each person has their own special sauce when it comes to teaching.” Tiffany, also a Black female, credited field experiences as critical to her development:

> Having that full year in the classroom was really important [...] because you got to see from start to finish, you got to be with the teacher and watch the culture building of that classroom.

Graduates also shared how experiences in schools and communities helped solidify their commitments to teaching in historically underserved communities and to understand the varied needs of students and the teacher’s role in meeting those needs. Mellie-Tee, a White female, stated:

> We visited schools all over the city to see different schools [...] That was coupled with the study of race, real estate and uneven development where we were able to truly learn one of the foundational reasons oppression exists [...] because of how our city has been redlined and how
Accompanying their experiences in schools was preparation for CRP as paramount to current practices. 

*Preparation for culturally relevant pedagogy.* Graduates spoke of their foundational knowledge in CRP and the ways in which they strive to make content and teaching relevant to their students. Tiffany, who works in a project-based school, shared that IUE aided the groundwork for her current practices:

I felt like we really went in depth about the quality of teaching and really learning the background and culturally relevant, culturally responsive teaching was the biggest highlight [...] we went in depth about what it looks like, what it sounds like, what it feels like and that was really important [...] I just believe the project work is a great way to do that and I know that at [IUE] that was the foundation that I got that from.

Theresa, a White female, also shared how CRP shaped her practice as a beginning teacher and still today:

Trying to be culturally responsive with texts and different things that we would do within the classroom. Being student-centered and playing the role of being a facilitator and giving them choice in their learning.

Grace also talked about the importance of cultural competence when interpreting and modifying school rules:

A majority of my students that came in with their shirts untucked were Black boys. So, everybody else got a “good morning” and they got “tuck your shirt in,” which doesn’t seem like a big deal, but you’re talking about the first words you’re saying to a kid walking into a classroom or sending them to the office in the morning because their shirt is not collared [...] it was bias towards that group of students; they were most commonly the ones being called out on it [...] So yes, I do feel like some of those policies work for some kids and don’t work for other kids and I think that young Black kids are sometimes at the center of those policies [...] “I don’t want to fight this battle with the shirts.” If somebody walks in, make sure your shirt is tucked in.

One of the most prevalent tenants of CRP graduates discussed was that of academic success (*Ladson-Billings, 1995*). Respondents spoke of the teacher’s role in setting high expectations for students and ensuring students receive the support needed to meet expectations. Respondents talked about beliefs in their students’ abilities and how those beliefs help empower success. Angie, a Black female, was filled with pride in sharing how she helps facilitate academic success with her students:

That’s kind of been one of my greatest successes at the end of the year, the kids who come in with their heads down and don’t want to do it, they can’t do it, they feel like they don’t understand it. Seeing them at the end of the year or middle of the year progressing and the “aha” moments and the smiles they get when they finally get it and they can get it by themselves without having to ask me with every question [...] so that confidence kind of building.

Angie referred to the work of warm demanders and the need for teachers to be a balanced combination of authority figures, caregivers and pedagogues (*Ware, 2006*). Graduates described practices rooted in what they learned in the program and aligned with *Ware’s (2006)* description of warm demanders: “incorporating elements of the students’ culture in their teaching, adapting instruction to meet the students’ learning style and having high
standards and expectations” (p. 446). Ella described how this characteristic formed her teacher identity:

Conversations, introducing them to different cultures and having those conversations, thinking of how to set those high expectations with being a warm demander [...] it’s one of those things that because of what I learned in [IUE], it’s just so natural within me that it’s hard for me to explain it [...] I just do it.

Angie also shared examples of her role as a warm demander and the importance of relationships as an anchor for this work:

The relationship piece I think has been very key to every relationship that I’ve had with any Black students because the trust has to be there. They have to know that I really believe that they can do it [...] So that relationship and the constant encouragement. That would go for my lowest students to even my highest students.

*Relationships with students and families.* Graduates also spoke passionately about their comfort, preparation and success in building relationships with students and families. They spoke about the necessity of relationships as a means of connecting with the students. Sally, a Black female, emphasized the importance of building relationships with her Black students:

[...] relationships. That’s true for every student, but I think especially if the teacher does not have the same background [...] I think there’s less of a trust that’s there if that relationship isn’t built, especially with Black students. I’ve got to know that you care about me and that you have my best interest and then I know who you are and you know who I am [...] it’s about intentionality especially with children of color.

Graduates also spoke about IUE experiences that helped them feel comfortable building relationships with families. Theresa stated:

The relationship piece of really getting to know the students and the families and being partners with the families and knowing that everyone wants what’s best for the student. I do, mom and dad do, grandma and grandpa do and we’re all working together as partners.

Each of the pedagogical themes was supported by the foundational themes that laid the groundwork to promote equitable practices in their schools and classrooms.

*Foundational experiences*

Foundational experiences were common across all respondents and indicate the significance of a comprehensive teacher preparation program. Foundational experiences include a mindset of examining self, conversations over time and truths about racism and inequity.

*Mindset of examining self.* Many graduates described their time in IUE as “transformative” or “life changing”. They shared that learning about self was an unexpected but necessary component of preparation for social justice teaching. For Angie, the most impactful part of the program was the self-knowledge gained:

We did a lot of discussion around culture, around self-examining our own biases. I think that was probably the most impactful for me: learning to look at myself in the mirror [...] [And] taking the time to do that before we actually start teaching.

Grace reflected on the importance of self-knowledge for White teachers and the difficulty they encounter:

It is very difficult for me to imagine classrooms where there are teachers who maybe haven’t explored their race and the impact it might have in a classroom [...] We have to have teachers
who have had conversations actively and felt uncomfortable and have explored who they are before going into a classroom.

Sally shared how self-examination shaped what not to do as an educator:

I was really able to be critical of my own experiences and be sure that I wasn’t perpetuating things that I had experienced that were harmful because I was made aware of it through that reflection [. . .]. I also had the opportunity to reflect on the experiences that really were affirming [. . .] so that I could be clear about what those were so that I could practice that as an educator myself.

Graduates also spoke of the mindset of examining self serves them well today. Russell, a White male, shared how this mindset shapes current practice:

Because of that, I developed a practice of being very self-reflective each and every day. How can I tweak the next day’s lesson or the next unit to meet the unique needs of the Black students that I’m teaching?

**Conversations over time.** A significant factor in graduates’ self-growth resulted from opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations on topics such as race, culture, bias and personal backgrounds. These conversations occurred over the duration of their time in the program and were facilitated within their cohorts. Many of the graduates talked about how hearing the experiences of peers helped them better understand themselves and become prepared to work within diverse schools.

Grace explained how the conversations within IUE facilitated a better understanding of her role as an antiracist educator as well as prepared her for future difficult conversations:

I don’t know if I could pinpoint a specific experience, but more of the feeling of moving through and learning how to be comfortable with conversations that feel uncomfortable. Being in the program with other students who were not White was also very impactful because I got to hear somebody else’s perspective and I got to gain insight into other people’s experiences.

Sally also described the significance of being in conversation with others,

Also, the collaborative reflection that we all had was helpful in forming that lens but also hearing my peers’ experience has helped to further my understanding of my beliefs around who I wanted to be as an educator [. . .].

**Truths about racism and inequities.** Perhaps the most prevalent and unexpected theme identified in the data was the importance of candidates learning the truth about structural and institutional racism and the inequities perpetuated by school systems. Graduates spoke passionately about being exposed to inequities and unjust practices and how this exposure provided them with an awareness that impacts their practices today. Mellie Tee shared an appreciation for learning about systems of oppression:

My preservice training, specifically [IUE], was really centered around learning and thinking about underserved youth. About the ideas of not only diversity, but systemic oppression [. . .] people in our society who were not given the same equitable access to not just education, but health care, housing, [and] jobs.

Theresa also commented on the awareness she gained from IUE and how it helped her understand her role as a beginning teacher:

I had some understanding about things that other first-year teachers didn’t have, like racism in Kansas City, and the Troost Divide [. . .] and how the underlying theme of why we’re doing this is equity and we believe in equity for all kids. Seeing the way that the content of the program related to that and then what you can actually do in the classroom.
Sally also reflected on the program’s impact on her role as a change agent, pinpointing equity and CRP:

It’s so centered on equity and cultural responsiveness in your practice [. . .]. We were expected to think about our role in society, how we’ve interacted within society from an intersectionality perspective: as a woman, as an educator, as a Black woman who is an educator. That was very grounding so that I could better understand myself so that I can understand the different complexities of society at large and my role in that.

Conclusion
The findings demonstrate that teacher preparation can play a foundational role in developing antiracist school systems. The graduates in this study shared common experiences that used a mindset of self-examination and equity-based practice. Through learning to talk about race through critical self-reflection, graduates were able to develop racial literacy (Bolgatz, 2005) that allows them “to challenge the construction of race and racist practices because they are equipped with ways to talk critically about them” (Sealy-Ruiz, 2010, p. 46). Graduates also had a shared commitment to meet the needs of Black and Brown students and to question and change oppressive school practices. Changing such practices is a social justice issue that lies at the heart of preserving Black lives. Graduates of IUE are aware that something as simple as an untucked shirt can result in differential treatment for Black and Brown youth who are disciplined differently than their White peers. Such actions have consequences. Such actions often lead to youth of color dropping out or being forced out of schools; literally the opposite of preserving Black lives.

For teachers to recognize such racist practices, it is critical that teacher preparation become grounded in the truths of systemic racism and oppressive practices. Programs also must be comprehensive and exemplify self-examination, truth in history, culturally relevant and antiracist practice and critical reflection is interwoven throughout all aspects of coursework. This will demand that all teacher educators engage in the work of preparing antiracist teachers.

Significance
This study has clear implications for how EPPs prepare teachers for antiracism, justice and educational equity. Findings should inform policy and practice in teacher education. Additionally, the work of changing racist school systems and the socialization that occurs within cannot be relegated only to programs preparing teachers for perceived diverse or urban schools. We agree with Coles and Stanley (2021), “In an age of neoliberal incrementalism, predominantly white [White], aspiring teachers graduate from programs unprepared to see Black humanity and educate Black students” (p. 5).

Until the work of antiracist teacher education becomes the work of all teacher preparation programs, the profession will continue to perpetuate the wrongs of the past and devalue Black lives. White teachers teaching White students need to be prepared in the same manner as the IUE graduates. In other words, self-examination, critical reflection and antiracism must be central to all teacher preparation programs. This can no longer be merely optional. The nation’s future and the very lives of Black youth depend on us. The time is now for schools to become places of societal change rather than places to preserve the status quo. As a respondent, Ella, eloquently stated:

[. . .] It starts with the teachers and it starts in those teacher prep programs [. . .]. So, let’s go ahead and unpack those lived experiences and what your biases are so that when you are in the
classroom you are not gaslighting students or doing microaggressions and not even realizing you're doing it.

Although the road ahead will not be easy, this study offers hope and guidance for teacher preparation programs and demonstrates that teacher education can and must be a leading contributor to an antiracist society.

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