



## *Navigating the Ethics of Teacher Preparation: The Moral Responsibility to Equip Future Educators with Culturally Responsive Practices*

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### **Abstract**

*In recent years, our 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms have become increasingly more diverse. In response, culturally responsive pedagogy has begun to gain more traction within the field of teacher preparation while simultaneously attracting political scrutiny. The fragmented landscape of stakeholders involved in teacher preparation is one which undergoes a deeper analysis within the context of this paper. More specifically, an ethical lens is used to explore the moral obligation of teacher educators, school leaders, teachers, and policy makers to collaborate in critiquing the current teacher preparation system (ethic of critique), take action for more equitable practices (ethic of justice), and maintain relationships with those involved in the process of improving education (ethic of care). Following the examination of the ethical considerations involved, concrete recommendations are provided for equipping future teachers with culturally responsive practices in order to respond to the call to act grounded in moral principles.*

**Keywords:** *culturally responsive pedagogy, ethic of critique, ethic of justice, ethic of care, teacher preparation, educational change*

The lens of ethical leadership provides a necessary and politically relevant framework for exploring the moral obligations inherent to teacher preparation. Although effective teacher preparation programs (TPPs) hinge on a wide range of crucial variables such as curriculum design, field experiences, and faculty expertise to name a few, culturally responsive practices are a complex variable under recent scrutiny and must be included in the equation for equipping effective future teachers. Teachers' levels of self-efficacy regarding the use of any of the pedagogical tools with which they were equipped within their TPPs are a strong determining factor for their successful implementation in the real-world classroom (Bandura, 1977). Although each university TPP is comprised of a unique group of faculty members with a vast array of diverse experiences, do they all not share a common goal? If this goal is to develop competent future teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective teaching, it would be important then to reflect on the choices that faculty members and programs make both individually and collectively for the inclusion or exclusion of specific content in their courses. The focus of the following discussion will be on the choices regarding culturally responsive teaching practices specifically.

## Introduction

Gloria Ladson-Billings first defined the phrase “culturally responsive pedagogy” within her seminal research as a pedagogy which, “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (1994, pp. 16-17). This focus on culturally responsive pedagogy derives its importance from the critical role that teacher educators play in adequately preparing future teachers for the reality of an increasingly diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. Recent literature supports that upon graduating from TPPs, teachers’ confidence related to implementing culturally responsive practices declines within the first years of teaching (Madler et al., 2022; Nahal, 2010). More specifically, recent literature has also demonstrated that novice teachers have reportedly low levels of perceived self-efficacy for teaching English language learners (ELLs) (Madler et al., 2022). Self-efficacy, as theorized by Albert Bandura in his work with Social Cognitive Theory (1977), is a teachers’ belief in their own ability to succeed in effectively instructing their culturally and/or linguistically diverse students in this context. Self-efficacy is a critical focus due to the fact that increased confidence in one’s ability in a specific area is a strong predictor for future behavior. That is, the more confident a teacher feels effectively implementing culturally responsive practices, the more likely they will implement them well in the future. Recent research has substantiated Bandura’s theory demonstrating that higher levels of self-efficacy have led to improved instructional and assessment practices as well as increased engagement with families of diverse learners (Bodine, et al., 2020; Carbonneau et al., 2022). Given the importance of self-efficacy, this idea will be explored more in-depth within the subsequent review of literature.

Another complicated facet of teacher preparation in this context worth considering is that TPPs are at times lacking in coherence of faculty beliefs regarding multicultural education thus weakening any central program focus in this area (Assaf et al., 2010). To dig a bit deeper into this idea, Rowan et al. (2021) performed a more extensive review of the literature as it relates to the framing of challenges for preparing teachers for student diversity in schools. They state that there exists an explicit gap within current research regarding teacher educators and the fact that, “little attention is given to the ways that teacher educators select, access, reflect critically on, and evaluate various standpoints about diversity and select epistemic aims” (p. 149). Echoing this gap in the literature, other studies have shown discrepancies between the perceptions held by both teacher educators and school leaders as it relates to the preparation of future teachers for the challenges of the classroom, as well as a lack of faculty alignment toward teacher preparation goals (McFadden & Sheerer, 2006; Assaf et al., 2010). This has inevitably led to a collective call to action for a stronger collaborative partnership between teacher educators and school leaders in order to better prepare future teachers with culturally responsive practices.

Current data support the vital need to focus on equipping teachers with culturally responsive teaching practices. The National Center for Education Statistics (2023) reported that within United States public schools from 2012 projected to 2031, the percentage of Hispanic students, Asian students, and students who identify as two or more races will increase. However, it is projected that by 2031, the percentage of White public school students will decrease. These statistics help to demonstrate the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity across classrooms in the United States. It was also reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (2023) that the percentage of ELLs in public schools from 2011 to 2021 increased from 9.4% to 10.6% showing a parallel increase in linguistic diversity within U.S. classrooms. Notably, in the fall of 2020 it was reported

that Spanish was the most common home language spoken among English language learners representing more than three-quarters of all ELL public school students. In the vein of the ethic of critique, there is no room for our future teachers to have any lack of preparedness with culturally responsive practices in the face of an inevitable rise in cultural and linguistic diversity represented in classrooms across the nation.

Perhaps more important than the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic makeup of public school students is the substantial achievement gaps that exist between White, English-speaking students and their diverse peers. As these achievement gaps are prevalent across all subject areas, room will be spared to solely discuss the gaps that exist in mathematics and reading. It was reported in 2024 that Black students scored 34 points lower than White students on the nationwide 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics assessment and 23 points lower on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). Furthermore, in the same year, Hispanic students scored 27 points lower than their White peers on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics assessment and 21 points lower on the respective reading assessment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). With relation to ELLs, the greatest gap exists with reports of ELLs scoring 39 points lower on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics assessment and 41 points lower on the reading assessment compared to their English-speaking peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). It is difficult to argue, then, that teacher preparedness for diverse student groups is not a moral or ethical issue when the current, bleak reality indicates such staggering disparities.

### **Literature Review**

The current base of literature related to culturally responsive pedagogy and the realities of classroom diversity consists of research studies that predominately explore pre-service or novice teacher perceptions of preparedness for teaching diverse learners and the value placed on the many teaching experiences within their programs. Conversely, very few studies have recently begun to shift the focus to teacher educators' perceptions of culturally responsive teaching and their perceived levels of teaching efficacy. The latter area of focus is significant as faculty members who teach within their respective TPPs play a vital role in developing curriculum and facilitating learning opportunities that have the potential to increase teacher candidates' preparedness for diverse classrooms. In the following sections, several studies will be reviewed which explore both pre-service and novice teacher perceptions of preparedness for teaching in diverse classrooms as well as teacher educator perceptions and beliefs regarding culturally responsive teaching.

### **Teacher Perceptions**

There are many studies within the current literature with a focus on teacher candidates' low levels of self-efficacy for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse populations (Cho et al., 2020; Clark & Andreasen, 2020; Madler et al., 2022). More notably, there are also many recent studies that investigate the factors that have demonstrated the ability to increase teacher self-efficacy to effectively instruct diverse learners (Cho et al., 2020; Carbonneau et al., 2022; Zaier & Maina, 2022; Mahalingappa, 2023; Putman et al., 2023). All such studies point to the need for TPPs to bolster their strategies for equipping future educators with culturally responsive practices. The review of literature regarding teacher perceptions is one which will help to frame the gap that exists between teacher educator strategies for teacher preparation and their students' perceptions of this preparedness.

One significant qualitative phenomenological study conducted by Nahal (2010) aimed to explore the experiences of first-year novice secondary teachers as they related to the discrepancy between the expectations of teaching before entering the classroom and the realities of teaching after one year. Results of this study revealed that all participants indicated that their TPPs did not provide them with all the tools and approaches necessary for the reality of the classroom. The researcher suggests that teacher educators reconsider the theoretical frameworks that underpin their individual programs in order to move from theory to practice more effectively. Nahal's study is a valuable starting point for providing the most general overview of the greater problem that teachers feel unprepared for the reality of the classroom and offers broad suggestions for teacher preparation improvement.

A similar qualitative study conducted by Jakopovic and Gomez-Johnson (2021) also focused solely on novice secondary teachers but at the pre-service level instead. This study aimed to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers in a specific university STEM preparation program in order to determine which components students perceived to be most valuable. The results of this study suggested that pre-service teachers found immediate and potential value in both formal teaching opportunities and those not centered on explicit teaching alike. Most relevant to the current discussion of literature however, researchers note that results indicated that faculty members often acted as gatekeepers to diverse opportunities that pre-service teachers found offered them immediate and potential teaching value. These results are critical as they indicate the influential role that teacher educators and their respective programs have in preparing future teachers for the reality of the classroom.

Lastly, a more recent quantitative study conducted by Madler et al. (2022) consisted of a study aim most closely related to the current discussion. The purpose of this study was to explore novice teachers' perspectives of their preparedness to teach diverse learners both before teaching and after one year of teaching. This study is similar to that of Nahal's as they both focus on the differences in teacher perceptions of preparedness after one year of teaching but is much more specific as the focus is exclusively on perceptions of teaching diverse learners. The results of this study indicated that novice teachers felt least prepared to teach gifted learners, English language learners, and students with mental health needs. Researchers suggest that teacher educators have the responsibility of providing coursework and experiences to address these weaker areas of teacher preparation. These results shed light on the many growing areas of student diversity that teachers are confronted with in the classroom and the lack of preparation that needs addressed as it relates to the current discussion. Each of these studies explored pre-service and novice teachers' perspectives highlighting the substantial deficiency in teacher preparation for the reality of diverse classrooms as well as the crucial role that teacher educators play in potentially addressing this gap.

### **Teacher Educator and School Leader Perceptions**

As previously mentioned, the majority of studies within recent literature have placed a heavier focus on teacher perceptions of preparedness for diverse classrooms whereas very few have focused on teacher educator and school leader perceptions. One relevant quantitative study conducted by McFadden and Sheerer (2006) helps to highlight the juxtaposition between teacher educator and school leader perspectives within the k-12 school system. This study aimed to explore the differences in perceptions between superintendents and teacher education faculty with regards to recent criticisms posed against TPPs. Researchers surveyed superintendents in the state of North Carolina about their perceptions of the professional knowledge base, research, structural design

and curriculum within local TPPs. The results indicated a considerable gap between superintendent and teacher educator perceptions with 88% of superintendents expressing that TPPs required significant revision as opposed to only 36% of teacher educators who often insisted that “significant” was too strong of a word. More specifically, researchers reported that superintendents felt much more strongly that TPPs needed to devote more attention to student motivation and every day, real problems within the profession.

Assaf and colleagues (2010) conducted a qualitative study with the purpose of exploring early and middle childhood teacher educators’ perspectives concerning multicultural education. The results suggested that there were a wide variety of perspectives and practices which could indicate a lack of coherence within the preparation program itself. Researchers discussed the importance of clarifying a shared vision within their respective programs in order to achieve greater success teaching future educators for diverse student populations. Similarly to the findings discussed in Jakopovic and Gomez-Johnson’s study (2021), Assaf and colleagues mention the pivotal gatekeeping role that teacher educators play in the preparation of pre-service teachers.

A more recent study (Siskind et al., 2022) is one that helps provide a different perspective to paint a more detailed picture of teacher educators’ beliefs surrounding culturally responsive practices. The researchers of this quantitative study aimed to explore early childhood teacher educators with regards to the relationship between their self-reported levels of cultural competence and their perceived levels of teaching efficacy in this area. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between these two variables and the authors suggest that the findings could support the notion that higher levels of teacher educator cultural competence may lead them to have a greater focus on developing these same skills within their pre-service teachers.

All in all, each of these studies broadly outline that there has been a heavier focus in the literature on investigating teacher perceptions of their experiences and preparedness gleaned from their TPPs. The research in this area has suggested that teacher candidates do not feel as prepared after confronting the reality of the culturally and linguistically diverse k-12 classroom environment. This journey through the current research in the field then inevitably leads to the central question of how ethical leadership might emphasize the moral duty of TPPs and school leaders to ensure that teachers are well-prepared to teach diverse learners.

### **Ethical Considerations**

An ethical discussion in this context begins with the ethic of critique. To echo the beliefs of Starratt (1991), it could be argued that beginning this conversation with critique is done purposefully in order to emphasize the systemic injustices that exist. As the ethic of critique is rooted in the heart of critical theory, teacher educators and school leaders must reflect on the ways in which they might contribute, consciously or unconsciously, to perpetuating the inequitable practices that continue to endure within our school systems. Only then might the discussion have enough viability to turn to subsequent considerations of the ethic of justice or the ethic of care. Could it be possible that the lack of collaboration and differing perspectives of preparedness between teacher educators and school leaders attributes to the aforementioned achievement gaps in our increasingly diverse classrooms? Current literature certainly appears to suggest that this may be the case as any lack of collaboration and decision-making amongst teacher educators and school leaders will inevitably, eventually affect underprivileged student groups (McFadden & Sheerer, 2006; Wilson & Kelley, 2022). That is, the disconnect between teacher educators and school leaders could contribute to future teachers’ adoption of deficit mindsets in student learning and

achievement due to a lack of preparation and low levels of self-efficacy with culturally responsive practices.

As a central criticism of the ethic of critique is often that there is an overemphasis on criticism without any offering of solutions, the solution to be explored in this context is a critical pedagogy in the spirit of Paulo Freire. In his words, “There’s no such thing as a neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument to bring about conformity or freedom” (p. 70, 1970). Thus, culturally responsive pedagogy is an example of critical pedagogy offered as a possible solution with its inherent intent to leverage education as social justice, offering individual agency and liberation. When considering the achievement gaps prevalent within our classrooms, we should be driven to engage in reflective morality, examining and criticizing the “traditional” to reflect on what principles ought to direct our TPPs, given the results involve the rights and interests of students.

Callahan (1988) might argue in this case that educational researchers, stakeholders, and leaders have an obligation to assess the ethical appropriateness of how we are choosing to train our future teachers. When considering the current data, literature, and political landscape surrounding education in this nation, an argument could perhaps be made to advocate for culturally responsive practices in teacher education on both the teleological and deontological ends of the ethical justice spectrum. Equipping teachers with these practices could surely produce the greatest good for the greatest number of students but could also be regarded as the right thing to do based on a sense of duty to bring justice for underserved students. It is precisely within the ethic of justice that this conversation then should continue to develop as it may offer a system-centered solution for providing students with equal respect, increasing the greater good of society, and developing a stronger public school system.

We might first consider Howe’s (1993) interpretation of three justice theories (utilitarian, libertarian, and liberal egalitarian), as they may help offer a more detailed picture of offering equal educational opportunity for every student from both sides of the justice spectrum. Starting with a utilitarian interpretation, the drive would be to maximize the overall total benefit for society. If we were to consider that equipping future teachers with culturally responsive practices might improve their levels of self-efficacy, then this would in turn lead to better instructional outcomes for their students, and student achievement would improve. Thus, a utilitarian perspective would maximize the total educational benefit in society, especially for those historically underserved. It is possible, then, to take the stance that equipping teachers with culturally responsive practices would lead to better outcomes for the greatest number of students overall, thus making it morally crucial to do so.

However, a Rawlsian perspective on justice (1971) would make the counterargument that utilitarianism depends on how one defines what the greatest good is for the greatest number. In the same context, it is possible to argue that investing in equipping teachers with culturally responsive practices is too costly, complicated, and only directly benefits a smaller subset of the student population. From this point of view, a focus on culturally responsive pedagogy would not benefit the majority which is precisely Rawls’ critique of utilitarianism in this case. That is, utilitarianism has the potential to deem individual rights as negotiable in the name of the greatest good for the majority. It could be, perhaps, that the current state of the nation’s education system has built itself on utilitarian soil, maintaining the status quo due to the fact that it works fine enough for the White, English-speaking majority. But is this sufficient enough?

If we move toward a more non-consequentialist perspective, Howe’s libertarian lens is driven by setting individual liberty as the overriding value to be maximized. An interesting angle

can be taken in light of libertarian thinking if we consider that teacher educators should each have autonomy in their instructional choices without any infringement of institutional mandates. Given this view, it seems that the notion of requiring faculty to impose culturally responsive teaching practices within their courses violates their individual freedom of choice when designing their courses. However, the previously mentioned literature highlights the lack of program coherence that exists in many TPPs, which in turn leads to teachers' low levels of self-efficacy and consequently inequitable education for our students (Assaf et al., 2010; Cho et al., 2020; Clark & Andersen, 2020; Madler et al., 2022). Said another way, perhaps too much decentralization and unregulated choice in preparation programs involuntarily perpetuates the systemic injustices harming culturally and linguistically diverse students. The tension present at this point should be noted, where one may ask whether more uniform and standardized teacher preparation would be able to achieve preparing candidates for such diverse classroom environments. However, there is arguably an important balance between alignment with shared ethical commitments while still leaving room for pedagogical flexibility. In this sense, teacher preparation programs need coherence around shared commitments such as culturally responsive pedagogy and equity but the freedom to enact these commitments in varied ways which align with unique contexts and faculty expertise.

A response to this argument then could be the liberal egalitarian perspective. Justice in this view is driven similarly toward maximizing individual liberty but while intervening in social activities to ensure equality. Liberal egalitarianism arguably aligns most directly with the central ethical claim in this paper. Since culturally and linguistically diverse learners often begin their educational journeys with structural disadvantages, such as inadequately prepared teachers, a justice approach would attempt to even out the playing field. Equipping teachers with culturally responsive practices emphasizes supporting the "minority" of the student population, but in the end serves and benefits all. Moreover, echoing the sentiments of recent literature, cultivating collaborative conversations on this topic among school leaders and teacher educators allows schools to move further away from neutrality and closer to becoming agents of equity. Returning to Rawls' earlier critique of utilitarianism, the full circle is made here with his idea of justice as fairness, which aligns with the liberal egalitarian perspective.

The response to the objection of utilitarianism includes two principles. The first being equal basic liberties which would propose that every student has the same fundamental rights that cannot be traded for any sense of societal efficiency. That is, the linguistic and cultural minority hold the same value and deserve the same respect for their right to an education as the majority. Secondly, the difference principle and fair equality of opportunity supports the moral obligation to equip future teachers with culturally responsive practices since Rawls argues that inequalities are only permissible if they benefit the least advantaged so that all have the same opportunities in the end.

Lastly, Gilligan's interpretation of the ethic of care (1987) offers a slight shift in perspective that helps us consider a relational approach to morality in this context. The importance of considering this perspective lies in the attention that should be given to everyday, lived relationships (between teacher educators, school leaders, future teachers and students) as opposed to these moral agents acting under abstract principles of justice. To further elucidate this idea, Gilligan would argue that our moral failure does not stem from inequality alone, as was discussed previously, but from our detachment. That is, if we neglect to see the needs that our culturally and linguistically diverse students have and then neglect to respond to these needs with, for example, equipping teachers with culturally responsive practices, then we have morally failed. As a result, these ethical considerations have hopefully shed some light on the need to critique the current educational system, to take action in the name of justice, and to open our hearts to the very real

relationships that exist between all of us involved in continually improving education in this nation.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

A stance has now been provided which outlines the ethical obligation of teacher educators and school leaders to engage in more collaborative decision-making processes to prepare future teachers with culturally responsive practices as a way of challenging inequity. The next question then naturally poses itself as to how this obligation might be carried out. The faculty and staff members within TPPs possess a wide range of knowledge, research experiences and practical understanding to equip our future teachers with methods for teaching diverse learners. One of the first and most important steps in forging a path to preparedness is creating a space for meaningful dialogue. Strike and colleagues (2005) support this notion arguing that free and open expression allow for a marketplace of ideas which leads to the advancement of knowledge and competent decision-making. In this context specifically, this open dialogue must not be solely constrained to those in colleges of education but instead must be an interdisciplinary conversation to tap into the knowledge of a variety of different areas of expertise. Said another way, we should create a dialogical space that welcomes faculty members from other disciplines within higher education as well as school leaders who have the experience working with teacher graduates each and every day. Only then will we be able to launch a fruitful and meaningful conversation with our future teachers in mind.

This open dialogue should include the development of an overarching vision for future teachers. We must all come together and consider what every student needs in the classroom, and then what kind of educator we want to cultivate and equip to respond to these student needs. These considerations will begin to allow us to dismantle systemic injustices that are continually perpetuated within our education system. The following might be offered as an exemplary starting point to the creation of this vision as based on relevant research with ELLs specifically:

- (a) a strong background and experiences with second language learning principles and practices, (b) knowledge about the differences between conversational language proficiency and academic language proficiency, (c) the importance of access to comprehensible input and opportunities for producing output for meaningful purposes, (d) the role of social interaction for the development of conversational and academic English, (e) the positive impact of strong native language skills on ELLs' achievement, (f) the necessity of a welcoming classroom environment for ELLs, and (g) the need for explicit attention to linguistic form and function. (de Oliveira, 2011)

Moreover, as previously mentioned, there is a wide variety of recent studies which point to a number of beneficial strategies for increasing teachers' self-efficacy for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners. For example, direct exposure with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations through field experiences has been shown to significantly influence self-efficacy beliefs in a positive way (Cho et al., 2020; Putman et al, 2023). As a result, TPPs should ensure that their students are given as many opportunities as possible to be immersed in the field in order to gain direct experiences with diverse student populations. Furthermore, other recent studies have indicated that targeted coursework within teacher training is both needed to assist our

future educators in improving differentiation practices and enhancing confidence to support multilingual learners (Zaier & Maina, 2022; Mahalingappa, 2023). Thus, it would be most advantageous for teacher educators and school leaders to implement specific, focused instruction and professional development in this context to support our teachers. Following the example above, specifically for equipping teachers to effectively support their *linguistically* diverse students, a few suggestions are offered which could be added into current TPP courses or professional development opportunities:

- An overview of how the Department of Education identifies and evaluates our English language learners as well as a brief overview of their prevalence in schools across the U.S. and their unique needs (example: introduction to education course)
- An introduction to culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and the importance of recognizing teacher bias and understanding language ideologies (example: schools, society, and cultural diversity course)
- The role of English as a Second Language Teachers (ESL) and the responsibility of all content area teachers to be able to understand and provide for the specific needs of ELLs aside from ESL support (example: teaching students with exceptionalities course)
- Specific models and supports for teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom including, for example, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model, translanguaging practices and comprehensible input demonstrations (example: instruction and differentiation course)
- The principles of second language acquisition, additive vs. subtractive bilingualism and common misconceptions about second language learning and multilingualism (example: disciplinary literacy course)
- Where to access English language learner fluency levels and current status within a school district as well as how this information might be used to create equitable assessments and evaluations for these students (example: assessment and evaluation course)

By no means is this an exhaustive list of focused instructional opportunities, but rather a starting point. With an interdisciplinary approach to open dialogue regarding teacher improvement with culturally responsive practices, there will inevitably be a much more extensive list of prospective supports not just for ELLs, but for each of the unique needs of our diverse student population. It should be acknowledged that although some of these recommendations could be integrated into existing coursework and field experiences, others require a higher cost and investment. Large-scale institutional changes are highly difficult, but as argued in this paper, laden with considerable ethical obligations.

In conclusion, this paper is only the beginning of many conversations that must be had over the years to come. As it has been outlined, the current national data show an increasingly diverse student population in our future school system but a great disparity in student achievement between the now ironically White minority and their culturally and linguistically diverse peers. Current literature supports the notion that teacher educators often lack alignment in their beliefs and approaches regarding teacher preparation for diversity and teachers consistently report low levels of self-efficacy for the teaching of diverse student populations (Aalde & Staal Jensen, 2024; Cho et al., 2020; Clark & Andreasen, 2020; Madler et al., 2022; Sandoval et al., 2021). However, recent

literature also supports the idea that offering targeted teacher training and professional development for culturally responsive teaching practices has been shown to improve teachers' self-efficacy (Cho et al., 2020; Carbonneau et al., 2022; Zaier & Maina, 2022; Mahalingappa, 2023; Putman et al., 2023). From an ethical standpoint, it could be argued that there is great importance in making space to engage in the critique of this reality and engage in discussion about the perpetuated systemic injustices in our education practices. It could also be argued that our teacher educators, school leaders, and teachers are morally obligated to take a stand for justice to even out the playing field for our underserved students, no matter the cost, and remind ourselves of the real relationships that exist with our students. This paper is a call to action for all of us involved in education to step up to the plate and engage in what we are morally called to do.

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