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Luis Octavio Curiel

University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, louie.curiel@stthomas.edu

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Team Teaching: An Innovative Pedagogical Model to Radically Restructure the Classroom and
Transform Social Work Education

by

Luis Octavio Curiel

A Banded Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

University of St. Thomas
School of Social Work

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Abstract

This Banded Dissertation focuses on exploring the concept of team teaching within social work education by restructuring the traditional single teacher classroom structure. The Banded Dissertation comprises three scholarly products examining social work education. Pedagogical innovations introduced in this dissertation aim to address anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion within social work education.

The first product explored Master of Social Work (MSW) student perceptions of team teaching efficacy using a descriptive mixed-methods design. Data was collected through pre, and post-test surveys from MSW students ($n = 76$) enrolled in classes taught by teams of social work instructors. Findings described student perceptions of team teaching as an effective pedagogical model of instruction. Students identified teaching partnerships, knowledge and expertise, and diverse perspectives as factors that contribute to team teaching efficacy.

The second product is a conceptual paper that integrates Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework to explore interracial team teaching as an emerging pedagogical model to teach anti-racism within social work education. An exploratory qualitative systematic review shows that CRT tenets identified by Solorzano et al. (2005) align with anti-racist social work education delivered via an interracial team-taught model.

The third scholarly product applies Scholarly Personal Narrative as the research methodology to examine the author's experiences within academia as a man of color—both as a student and teacher. Findings suggest that ethnic and racial disproportionality in social work education requires academic institutions to hire more Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) faculty, establish mentorship programs, and expand educational and financial support to BIPOC students.

The scholarly products presented in this Banded Dissertation contribute to the growth of knowledge on team teaching utility in social work education to enhance student learning. These products add to the discourse on the need for pedagogical innovation in social work education to address anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion and prepare future generations of anti-racist social work practitioners and scholars.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my ancestors who paved the way and had the foresight to leave me signposts, knowing that the road less traveled is long and treacherous, peppered with detours and speed traps. And to my students to take up the torch and be the generation that defies social work convention and transforms the discipline. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of friends and family whose lives were cut short on account of the COVID-19 pandemic; may they rest in power.

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Team Teaching: An Innovative Pedagogical Model to Radically Restructure the Classroom and Transform Social Work Education

As a pedagogical method, team teaching within social work education to prepare the developing social worker is rare within academic studies. There exists a scarcity of research exploring the possible benefits of team teaching in social work. Team teaching itself is a practice that precedes its research—accounting for the lack of studies on the topic (Wolffensperger & Patkin, 2013). Among the limited studies found, few highlight the learner's perspective within team-taught classroom instruction (Baeten & Simons, 2016). Little information exists regarding the advantages and disadvantages of team teaching and student preferences for individual or team-taught instruction (Money & Coughlan, 2016).

There is a shortage of research comprehensively examining team teaching. Specifically, studies have failed to compare specific team-teaching models; however, it focuses on a singular teaching model—while lacking specificity in identifying the teaching model studied (Baeten & Simons, 2016). Also, studies on interracial team teaching to deliver anti-racist social work education lack (Garran et al., 2015; Ouellett & Fraser, 2011). A factor contributing to the limited research on team teaching is that higher education instruction allows for little room to implement innovative and creative teaching methods of professional teams (Wolffensperger & Patkin, 2013). Hence, this Banded Dissertation is focused on examining team teaching as a pedagogical approach to social work education and comprises three distinct research products.

The first product examined students' perceptions of team teaching efficacy by analyzing data collected from Masters of Social Work (MSW) students enrolled in a team-taught course. Through a descriptive study using mixed methods, participants completed pre and post-test surveys to capture their experiences in a social work course taught by a team of instructors. To

measure student perceptions of a team-taught course's effectiveness, MSW students responded to quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. In response to questionnaires, students compared their experience within a team-taught class to traditional solo-taught courses.

The second product explored anti-racist social work education through interracial team teaching, where one instructor is White, and the other is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC). In this study, previously published articles on interracial team teaching were examined and applied to five Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenets from Solorzano et al. (2005). As an emerging conceptual model, interracial team teaching aligns with CRT as a theoretical framework for teaching anti-racism within social work education. Also examined in this study was the implicit and explicit curriculum in social work education.

The third product focused on the lack of men of color representation within the academy and specifically within social work education. This product highlights the marginality and invisibility of Latinx men in social work. Through Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) methodology, four significant SPN components applied include pre-search, me-search, research, and we-search. Through deep self-reflection, the author shares personal and professional experiences as a social work student and teacher, examining the intersections of race and gender.

Overall, it is hoped that this Banded Dissertation will bridge the gap in research deficits by examining the potential benefits of team teaching in social work education. It is anticipated that these products will contribute to the growth of knowledge on team teaching utility in social work education to enhance student learning. These products add to the discourse on the need for pedagogical innovation in social work education to address anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Exploring team teaching as a pedagogical method in social work education may also provide a practical solution to enhance teaching skills for social work educators.

Conceptual Framework

This Banded Dissertation applies a conceptual framework grounded in theories integrated throughout the dissertation products. Community of Inquiry (CoI), Critical Race Theory (CRT), Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit), and Intersectionality frameworks are applied to explain the phenomenon examined within all three products of this Banded Dissertation. The selected frameworks are identified as complementary methods to help interpret and analyze the Banded Dissertation's overarching theme related to ethnicity, gender, racial diversity, institutional racism, and social work education.

Community of Inquiry (CoI) concepts serve to guide the application of team teaching in a classroom setting and to the learning environment examined. The CoI theoretical framework explains the process of creating a deep and meaningful (collaborative-constructivist) learning experience through the development of three interdependent elements that include *social*, *cognitive*, and *teaching presence* (Garrison et al., 2010). These concepts distinguish the CoI theoretical framework from other educational theories and its assertion that learning occurs within the learning community through the interaction between this conceptual triad (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). In a CoI, facilitating the educational environment is assigned to the instructor to structure the community, regulate, and model engagement (Garrison et al., 2000). Garrison (2013) suggests that learning, in the context of education, is a social activity and that the CoI "is an 'environment' where participants collaboratively construct knowledge through sustained dialogue" (p. 3). An educational community of inquiry may also be explained as a group of individuals who collaboratively engage in purposeful critical discourse and reflection to construct personal meaning and confirm mutual understanding (Community of Inquiry Framework, n.d.).

To examine interracial team teaching as a pedagogical approach to confront racism, Critical Race Theory (CRT) also guides this Banded Dissertation. As a framework, CRT explains the relationship between race, racism, and power and provides insight into how these relationships maintain and support White Supremacy (Kolivoski et al., 2014). CRT offers conceptual tools for politically interrogating how race and racism are institutionalized and upheld (Sleeter, 2017). CRT contests societal assumptions that the U.S. is a meritocracy and, therefore, “color-blind” and unbiased (Patton, 2016). In research, scientific methods replicate the dominant ideology of “color-blindness,” producing results that justify racism or deny its existence (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017). CRT offers a lens to empower activists and scholars to study and transform the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Scholars of CRT recognize past and present institutional injustices imposed upon Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) groups designed to benefit Whites.

Narratives are integral aspects of CRT research, given that quantitative methods alone are incapable of capturing experiential knowledge valued in CRT scholarship (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017). CRT centers the voices of BIPOC, their narratives, and context to bring meaning to explain the biased phenomenon. Furthermore, CRT offers the opportunity to teach and research diversity competently because it requires scholars to scrutinize social structures, institutions, and assumptions (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017; Ortiz & Jani, 2010). The application of CRT to the study of interracial team teaching in social work education is a good fit given that universities are a bastion of Euro-American values (Ortiz & Jani, 2010).

Also guiding this Banded Dissertation is Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit). As a theoretical framework, LatCrit explains Latino men's marginality and invisibility within social work education. LatCrit theory is a contemporary of Critical Legal Studies and evolved from

CRT to address concerns of Latina/o's in legal discourses and social policy (Valdes, 2005). Closely interrelated to CRT, as a theory, LatCrit addresses issues raised in CRT and expands on matters of language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, gender, and sexuality (Kiehne, 2016; Valdes, 2005). LatCrit aims to expose and confront the prevalence of discrimination and subjugation that produces disparate social and economic outcomes for Latinx people in the United States (Kiehne, 2016). LatCrit provides a framework for dismantling White supremacy and elevating anti-racist consciousness within and beyond Latinx communities (Valdes, 2005). With a primary goal of promoting social justice and equality, LatCrit aligns with social work values and provides a valuable perspective for social work (Kiehne, 2016).

Lastly, applied to this Banded Dissertation is an Intersectionality Theory framework. Intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, is rooted in Black feminism and CRT to address discrimination based on race and gender (Carbado et al., 2013). "Intersectionality has been considered a theory, a paradigm, a framework, a method, a perspective, or a lens of analysis" (Hulko, 2009 as cited in Bubar, Cespedes & Bundy-Fazioli, 2016, p. 284-285). Through an intersectional lens, the dynamics of power and privilege inherent within social identities, including ethnicity, gender, and race, are examined. Intersectionality as a framework is applied for identity considerations when developing new equity-minded social workers committed to social justice (Pugach et al., 2019). Thus, the need to examine the complexities of social identities held by both students and instructors in a classroom setting as described within this Banded Dissertation.

Summary of Scholarship Products

Product one is a descriptive study using mixed methods to explore team teaching as a pedagogical approach in social work education. Little is known about the benefits of team

teaching in social work education to improve instruction and preparation for students entering the social work profession. There is a deficit within scholarship highlighting the student or learner's perspective within team-taught classroom instruction (Baeten, & Simons, 2016). This study examines the learner's perceptions of team teaching effectiveness for classroom instruction to explore the utility of team teaching in social work education. This study surveyed MSW students enrolled in classes taught by teams of social work instructors within one academic semester. This study's primary goal is to explore student experiences and perceptions on team teaching effectiveness as participants in a team-taught class. Guided by the Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical framework, this study explores the research questions: What are MSW student perceptions of team teaching efficacy? What factors do students perceive as contributors toward team teaching efficacy?

Product two is a conceptual paper. This article explores anti-racist social work education through interracial team teaching, where one instructor is White, and the other is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC). This pedagogical approach is introduced as an emerging conceptual model to consider in anti-racist social work education. As an anti-racist approach to teaching, this model is constructed as a framework to engage students and faculty in a more active and accountable role in dismantling systemic racism and White Supremacy through social work education. The paper examines published articles on interracial team teaching to determine theoretical framework compatibility to guide this teaching method. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is applied to this study to determine its goodness of fit as a theoretical framework for teaching anti-racism within an interracial team-taught model. The application of five CRT tenets from Solorzano et al. (2005) to previous studies supports this emerging pedagogical approach as a viable option for anti-racist social work education. This paper also

examines the implicit and explicit curriculum for social work education defined by the Council on Social Work Education.

The third product is a Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN). The four major components of SPN – pre-search, me-search, research, and we-search are applied in this study. This paper uses SPN as a research method to reflect upon the author’s personal and professional experiences as a man of color within academia—both as a student and teacher. The author details personal experiences encountered within the academy that have shaped his teaching pedagogy and have impacted his identity as a social work scholar. Central to this narrative discusses how individual identities between social work students and teachers support or hinder growth in social work education classrooms. A conceptual framework grounded in LatCrit and Intersectionality frameworks is applied to explain the four major themes that emerged. The article concludes by making recommendations for recruiting and retaining men of color in social work education. It addresses ethnic and racial disproportionality within social work education and considers the potential benefits between instructors and students sharing similar cultural backgrounds.

Discussion

Knowledge on team teaching within social work education to prepare burgeoning social work students as professional practitioners lack within academic research studies (Zapf et al., 2011). There is a significant deficit of research exploring the possible benefits of team teaching in social work education. The research found on team teaching highlights the existing gap in quantitative studies, but few studies address the learner’s perspective within team-taught classroom instruction (Baeten, & Simons, 2016). Additionally, previous research fails to compare and identify the teaching model studied (Baeten & Simons, 2016). The products introduced within this Banded Dissertation aim to address this research limitation.

The first product analyzed MSW student perceptions of team teaching efficacy to expand the academic knowledge surrounding team teaching as an unexplored phenomenon. The study used mixed methods to explore student perceptions on factors that contribute to team teaching efficacy. The data collected from pre and post-test surveys administered to students enrolled in team-taught classes were analyzed through Qualtrics Software Program. The categories identified and thematically coded as *pre-course student perceptions of efficacy* (on team teaching as a model of instruction within a social work course) included inexperience with team teaching and team teaching expectations. When asked about their familiarity with a co-teaching or team teaching model of classroom instruction, pre-test results revealed 38.16% of participants offered a 'Neutral' response. In contrast, post-test results yielded a 77.59% 'Definitely Yes' answer. By far, most pre-test responses indicated a lack of familiarity as students in team-taught classes.

Conversely, *post-course student perceptions of efficacy* (on team teaching as a model of instruction within a social work course) included teaching partnership, knowledge and expertise, and diverse perspectives as salient factors for team teaching efficacy. When asked to rate team teaching effectiveness concerning their overall educational experiences, at the pre-test, 46.05% of participants reported 'Neither Effective nor Not Effective.' However, post-test results revealed that 47.37% of participants perceived team teaching efficacy as 'Extremely Effective.' These findings are consistent with previous research on team teaching. The themes and categories that emerged reflect the benefit of team teaching as a pedagogical approach. The results support that team teaching promotes intersectional differences between instructors, encourages collaborative relationships, diverse perspectives, and professional practice behavior modeling during course instruction (Curiel & Ashley, 2020; Garran et al., 2015; Zapf et al., 2011).

To further understand the benefits of team teaching in social work education, product two explores anti-racist social work education through an interracial team-teaching model. Although limited, previous research on interracial team-teaching partnerships identifies this model as a pedagogically sound teaching intervention to address anti-racist education (Gollan & O’Leary, 2009; Miller & Garran, 2017; O’neill & Miller, 2015). However, the existing interracial team teaching studies fail to address a theoretical framework to guide this pedagogical method. To address this research limitation, product two examines Critical Race Theory’s goodness of fit as a framework to guide interracial team teaching. The results show that all five CRT tenets identified by Sólorzano et al. (2005), whether implied or explicitly stated, were found within each published article examined in this study. The results yield preliminary evidence that CRT is a good fit for anti-racist social work education delivered via an interracial team-taught model. Moreover, as defined by Sólorzano et al. (2005), CRT tenets provide a natural fit for anti-racist social work education within the context of higher education and specifically the social work discipline.

The relationship between social work practice and education and its embeddedness in the discrimination and exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) explored in the third product applies a Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN). SPN as a research method is used to reflect upon the author’s personal and professional experiences with racism as a man of color within academia—both as a student and teacher. Personal narratives shared by Latinx scholars shed light on multiple barriers encountered in the academy and serve to validate and give voice to unaddressed structural and sociopolitical issues in higher education (Chandler et al., 2014; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Garcia, 2014; Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). Therefore, the author details personal experiences within the academy that have shaped

his teaching pedagogy and impacted his identity as a social work scholar. The study is grounded in LatCrit and Intersectionality frameworks to explain the four major themes that emerged: assimilation and acculturation, barriers to education, microaggressions and racial gaslighting, and cultural taxation. Findings suggest that an increase of Latinx faculty representation who can serve as role models and mentors for Latinx students may significantly grow Latinx students' graduation rates (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014). To address the ethnic and racial disproportionality in social work, academic institutions require hiring more BIPOC faculty, establishing mentorship programs, and expanding educational and financial support to BIPOC students (Ghose et al., 2018).

Through the products discussed in this Banded Dissertation, team teaching stands out as a pedagogical innovation and method to transform social work education by radically restructuring the classroom. There is a shortage of evidence in scholarly research on the benefits of team teaching in social work education and its effectiveness in improving education and knowledge transmission from teacher to student. The products presented in this Banded Dissertation contribute to the developing knowledge of team teaching as a pedagogical model in social work education. Exploring team teaching as a springboard for cultivating pedagogical innovations in social work education propel social work toward the revolutionary change it needs to remain relevant as a discipline that values social justice.

Implications for Social Work Education

The research findings from the studies introduced within this Banded Dissertation contribute to building knowledge on team teaching to improve social work education and preparation for students entering the social work profession. Improved skills and knowledge experienced in the classroom setting translate directly into social work practice, resulting in a

positive effect on client services delivery. A team-teaching approach between instructors can enhance knowledge and teaching skills through their academic collaboration and exchange (Ginther et al., 2007). Through interracial team teaching, diversity inclusion is modeled, improved, and promoted within the classroom as personal identities, practice, theoretical lens, and lived experience between teachers are varied.

Though limited, scholarship on team teaching in social work education supports the claim that teams with instructors who hold intersectional differences contribute to students' analysis of diverse viewpoints on course subjects (Curiel & Ashley, 2020; Zapf et al., 2011). Collaborative teaching reduces teacher bias and promotes various teaching materials within the curriculum to unambiguously confront systemic racism (Miller & Garran, 2017). Restructuring the traditional single teacher classroom structure has implications for social work education on teaching and learning outcomes. Social work as a practice often relies on a team approach and high use of critical thinking skills. Therefore, a team-teaching approach to social work education holds implications to determine if this method compared to traditional teaching methods, can model teamwork and enhance critical thinking skills among students.

Additionally, these studies highlight policy implications for academic institutions for vetting the most advantageous teaching model to implement in social work education. Other implications for social work education include student-teacher ratio, pedagogy, improvement of teaching skills, and mentorship in the academy—also, improved quality training and education to students joining the discipline. Professional collaboration can be reflected through team teaching and interracial team-teaching partnerships, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Team teaching diminishes siloed work environments commonplace within academia and supports the cultivation of pedagogical innovation (Dill et al., 2017).

Implications for Future Research

Although this Banded Dissertation contributes to the limited research on team teaching as a pedagogical approach for social work education, additional investigations are necessary to comprehensively explore this teaching method's benefits. For instance, there remains limited knowledge of team teaching efficacy in the classroom setting than traditional solo teaching. Also, there is a scarcity of quantitative research that examines team teaching as a phenomenon and student learning outcomes. Future research comparing team teaching and solo teaching through an experimental design study is needed to address this limitation.

Also necessary is research exploring social work courses across the curriculum to determine which classes are best suited for a team-teaching model to enhance student learning. Another area to study is transferring knowledge from a team-taught classroom environment to the field practice setting. Additionally, studies that examine field-based teaching teams are also limited. To bridge this knowledge gap, future qualitative and quantitative research examining the relationship between academic coursework and field practice learning are areas that require more consideration. More attention is needed to study the implicit and explicit field education curriculum. As well as exploring factors contributing toward opposition to team teaching.

In terms of future research that examines interracial team teaching, the greater focus may be placed on multiple, intersectional differences between teaching pairs to determine their relationship and influence on student learning. The efficacy of interracial teaching teams on student learning relative to the explicit and implicit curriculum also warrants further examination. Through quantitative research measures, student learning outcomes can help determine interracial team teaching efficacy and add to this study area. Moreover, qualitative research exploring both teacher and student participants' experiences in interracial team-taught

classes can further understand this limited knowledge area. Future studies may also explore teachers' and students' intersectional identities and their influence on peer-group relationships, learning, and field readiness as nascent social work practitioners.

Furthermore, exploring the benefits of team teaching as a method for enhancing teaching skills, onboarding, and mentoring new faculty by pairing them with a seasoned faculty will provide more insight on instructor support. Lastly, additional qualitative data, including that which applies SPN methodology, examining the lived experiences of first-generation BIPOC men and specifically Latinx men in social work education is needed to increase their support and representation in the academy at a national level.

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MSW Student Perceptions of Team Teaching Efficacy:

Are Two Heads Better Than One?

Luis O. Curiel

School of Social Work, University of St. Thomas

Author Note

Luis O. Curiel is now at the Department of Social Work, California State University, Northridge. There are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Luis O. Curiel, Department of Social Work, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330, United States. E-mail: Luis.Curiel@csun.edu

Abstract

This study explores Master of Social Work (MSW) student perceptions of team teaching efficacy using a descriptive mixed-methods design. The study surveyed MSW students ($n = 76$) enrolled in social work courses taught by a pair of social work instructors within an academic semester. The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework was applied to this study. The main research question was: what are MSW student perceptions of team teaching efficacy, and what factors do students perceive as contributors toward team teaching efficacy? Teams of teachers taught three distinct social work courses. Data was analyzed using Qualtrics software program. Findings described student perceptions of team teaching as an effective pedagogical model of instruction. Although students expressed having limited knowledge and experience in a team-teaching model of instruction, lessons learned from thematic analysis of the data showed that students perceived teaching partnerships, knowledge, expertise, and diverse perspectives as factors that contribute to effective team teaching. These findings align with previous findings on team teaching in higher education that emphasize the significance of the collegial relationship between teacher pairings.

Keywords: team teaching, co-teaching, social work education, community of inquiry

**MSW Student Perceptions of Team Teaching Efficacy:
Are Two Heads Better Than One?**

In *the scholarship of teaching*, Boyer et al. (2016) suggest that teaching does not solely serve to transmit knowledge; it transforms and extends it. Also, the authors assert that for knowledge to continue, the function of teaching must exist. Teachers stimulate active learning, foster critical thinking, and inspire life-long learning beyond the classroom environment (Boyer et al., 2016). In general, teaching, specifically in social work, is a multifaceted enterprise requiring theoretical and practice knowledge.

Scholarship on team teaching as a method to prepare social work students for professional practice has received little attention. There exists a scarcity of research investigating the possible benefits of team teaching in social work education. Team teaching itself is a practice that precedes its research—accounting for the lack of research available on the topic (Wolffensperger & Patkin, 2013). A search for academic articles published on the subject of team teaching in social work yielded limited findings. An even more significant deficit was found in the number of studies highlighting the learner’s perspective within team-taught classroom instruction (Baeten & Simons, 2016).

Limited research exists regarding the advantages and disadvantages of team teaching and student preferences for individual or team-taught instruction (Money & Coughlan, 2016). Previous research on team teaching highlights existing gaps within this subject in that many studies have not compared specific team-teaching models in social work. Most studies focus on a singular teaching model and lack specificity in identifying the teaching model studied (Baeten & Simons, 2016), even as higher education instruction allows for little room to implement innovative and creative teaching methods of professional teams (Wolffensperger & Patkin,

2013). Additionally, little is known about team teaching that occurs specifically between diverse social work educators (Garran et al., 2015; Ouellett & Fraser, 2011).

The lack of empirical data on co-teaching is primarily attributed “to the fact that co-teaching is not conducive to large-scale, standardized research” (Hanover Research, 2012, p. 13). Varying definitions of co-teaching across the literature (e.g., team teaching, co-education, co-instruction) and classes that are too dissimilar to provide meaningful comparative data contribute to the lack of quantitatively measured data outcomes (Hanover Research, 2012). These limitations contribute to the lack of research available on team teaching efficacy. The literature review on co-teaching conducted by Hanover Research (2012) concluded that this mode of instruction's effectiveness and benefits on academic and social achievement remain mostly unknown.

This study explored Master of Social Work (MSW) student perceptions of team teaching efficacy using a descriptive mixed-methods design. The study surveyed MSW students who participated in one of three social work courses taught by a team of social work instructors and examined factors that contribute to team teaching efficacy. By analyzing data collected from students enrolled in a team-taught course, this study exposes the gap in research deficits by examining traditional versus team-taught classroom instruction methods. This study also aims to describe student perception of the utility of team teaching in social work education to enhance student learning. The research questions explored in this study include what are MSW student perceptions of team teaching efficacy and what factors do students perceive as contributors toward team teaching efficacy?

Literature Review

In 1982, the Council on Social Work Education required that all faculty teaching social work practice courses have a Master of Social Work degree and subsequent, direct practice experience (Holland & Fronst, 1986). Teachers, after all, must hold knowledge and expertise in their respective fields (Boyer et al., 2016). Ironically, however, the art and science of teaching seem lost within the academy as it remains undervalued compared to research (Boyer et al., 2016). Although teaching and research expectations depend on the academic institution, Boyer et al. (2016) argue, the academy rewards research through tenure following publication; teaching is not. Boyer et al. (2016) recognize this inequity and acknowledge the value of team teaching and collaborative research.

Team Teaching Defined

The concept of team teaching may be explained, at a rudimentary level, as the process of at least two or more teachers being accountable for instructing a class of students and their cooperative engagement (Zapf et al., 2011). Additional synonyms for team teaching include *team instruction*, *collaborative teaching*, *co-teaching*, *co-instruction*, and *co-education*. Other researchers propose specific models for team teaching:

In the existing literature, the term ‘team teaching’ can broadly be associated with one of three forms: (1) simultaneously taught content which involves two or more academic practitioners present during each session (co-teaching approach); (2) one academic practitioner being present in each session, but taking it in turns to deliver sessions between two or more people over the duration of the course (tag rotation approach); and (3) a combination of these two models (hybrid approach) (Dugan and Letterman 2008). Guest lectureships may also feature as a form of team teaching, but has been found

difficult to evaluate (Jacob, Honey, & Jordan, 2002). The tag rotation approach (TRA), i.e., requiring one academic practitioner to be present at a time, is perhaps the most commonly used form of team teaching in higher education (Murawski, 2005). (Money & Coughlan, 2016, p. 798).

Research on Co-Teaching in Primary Education

A literature review conducted by Hanover Research (2012) examined co-teaching as a method of instruction and its effectiveness as a model for teaching students with and without disabilities. The literature review defined co-teaching as “a mode of instruction in which two or more educators or other certified staff members share responsibility for a group of students in a single classroom or workspace” (Hanover Research, 2012, p. 2). Co-teaching may be applied at any grade level. However, it is most commonly implemented in elementary and middle schools (Ginther et al., 2007; Hanover Research, 2012). The author(s) suggests that most studies on co-teaching focus on the method's emotional benefits or perceptions of effectiveness, neglecting the educational benefits. There exists a general lack of quantitative data on co-teaching (Hanover Research, 2012).

In a meta-analysis synthesizing data-based articles about the effectiveness of co-teaching between general and special education classrooms, Murawski and Swanson (2001) found that of 89 articles examined, a mere six provided sufficient quantitative information for an effect size to be adequately calculated. Findings from the meta-analysis suggest that co-teaching is only moderately effective in influencing student outcomes (Murawski & Swanson, 2001). Weiss and Brigham (2000 as cited in Murawski & Swanson, 2001) identify six recurring themes that appear consistently within the research on co-teaching that impact research accuracy, including 1) the omission of vital information on the measures applied in the study, 2) potential bias of teacher

interviews where co-teaching is considered “successful,” 3) teachers’ personalities are the primary variable determining the success or failure of a co-teaching program, 4) a lack of clarity and agreement of terms defining co-teaching or collaboration, 5) research designs frequently state outcomes qualitatively, rather than quantitatively, and 6) few studies describe teacher actions during the co-teaching process.

Research on Team Teaching and Social Work Education

Minimal studies on team teaching in social work education exist, and even less exist on its impact on student learning outcomes and team-teaching effectiveness (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Ginther et al., 2007). A review of the literature on the subject of team teaching specifically to social work education within the past 18 years produced eight articles (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Curiel & Ashley, 2020; Dill et al., 2017; Durkin & Shergill, 2000; Garran et al., 2015; Ginther et al., 2007; Ouellett & Fraser, 2011; Zapf et al., 2011). Research on team teaching in social work education is limited to case studies examining one class taught by at least two instructors without a control group or comparison group (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Garran et al., 2015; Ginther et al., 2007; Ouellett & Fraser, 2011). Research examining team teaching in social work education lean strongly toward a qualitative design (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Garran et al., 2015; Ginther et al., 2007; Ouellett & Fraser, 2011; Zapf et al., 2011). These limitations make it difficult to determine the effectiveness of team-teaching outcomes.

Diversity and Benefits of Team Teaching in Social Work Education

The national accrediting body for social work education, better known as the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), mandates that diversity be addressed as a fundamental component of social work education (Ouellett & Fraser, 2011). Given this CSWE mandate, both

the implicit and explicit curriculum for diversity education warrant further exploration (CSWE, 2015). As a requirement for social work education, it is necessary to improve methods for teaching diverse students in the classroom setting. Team teachers with different backgrounds can serve as role models for students working with diverse populations (Curiel & Ashley, 2020). However, team teaching as a phenomenon has been studied primarily in elementary and middle schools (Ginther et al., 2007; Hanover Research, 2012). The literature on team teaching specifically to social work education suggests that further exploration is needed to determine how team teaching influences student learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). It also remains unknown whether specific social work education courses are a better fit for a team-taught approach or other factors related to how the method is implemented are more influential than the course content itself (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013).

However, existing research on team teaching in social work education claims advantages related to professional development and increased confidence and self-efficacy of doctoral students preparing for academic careers (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). Additionally, team-teaching has been shown to promote cross-training opportunities where professors learn by modeling their peer educators' behaviors and learn alternative pedagogical styles (Ginther et al., 2007). Also, team-teaching has been found to enhance teaching quality as multiple perspectives applied within the course help deepen collegial relationships (Garran et al., 2015). Furthermore, social work often relies on a team approach that may include racially and ethnically diverse members. Therefore, it is necessary to examine a team-teaching approach to social work education and compare it to traditional teaching methods. Doing so can determine its potential to model teamwork and enhance the professional development of burgeoning social workers.

Theoretical Framework

Community of Inquiry

This study was guided by the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework. The CoI framework explains the process of creating a deep and meaningful (collaborative-constructivist) learning experience through the development of three interdependent elements that include *social*, *cognitive*, and *teaching presence* (Garrison et al., 2010). A community is defined as “a general sense of connection, belonging and comfort that develops over time among members of a group who share purpose and commitment to a common goal” (Conrad, 2005, p.1). Garrison (2013) suggests that learning, in the context of education, is a social activity and that the Community of Inquiry “is an ‘environment’ where participants collaboratively construct knowledge through sustained dialogue” (p. 3). An educational community of inquiry may also be explained as a group of individuals who collaboratively engage in purposeful critical discourse and reflection to construct personal meaning and confirm mutual understanding (Community of Inquiry Framework, n.d.).

Three key concepts central to the CoI framework are social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence (Garrison et al., 2010). *Social Presence* is defined as “the ability of participants to identify with the community (e.g., course of study), communicate purposefully in a trusting environment, and develop inter-personal relationships by way of projecting their individual personalities” (Garrison, 2009, p. 63). *Cognitive Presence* is defined as “the exploration, construction, resolution and confirmation of understanding through collaboration and reflection in a community of inquiry” (Garrison, 2009, p. 65). *Teaching Presence* is the “design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 5). These concepts distinguish the CoI theoretical framework from other educational theories

and its assertion that learning occurs within community through the interaction between this conceptual triad (Garrison & Anderson, 2003).

In CoI, the *micro*-level can be viewed as the interpersonal exchanges that occur between individual group members. The *mezzo*-level may be equated to a social institution where individuals hold membership within a community or group (i.e., a community of learners). And lastly, the *macro*-level may take form as the course itself, including the course syllabus stipulating policies, expectations, and learning objectives pre-determined by the academic institution for the CoI. CoI assumes an existing “inseparability of the individual and group in achieving a community of inquiry” (Garrison, 2013 p.2); it considers the interactions of individuals (micro) in the collective that influence the dynamic of the group, which in turn shapes the ‘community’ culture (mezzo) in the manner in which the group complies with the expectations as stipulated by the course design or rules (macro) in a CoI.

A primary goal of CoI is for members of the learning community to reach a state of consciousness described in a critical concept as *metacognition*: “knowledge of one’s knowledge, processes, and cognitive and affective states; and the ability to consciously and deliberately monitor and regulate one’s knowledge, processes and affective states” (Akyol, 2012, p.31). The purpose of achieving this goal is to promote transformative learning through conscious accountability within the community where participants engage in intellectual exchanges. Regulation of cognition is achieved by the interactions between the three key concepts: cognitive, social, and teaching presence (Akyol, 2012). The overarching research questions examined in this study include what are MSW student perceptions of team teaching efficacy and what factors do students perceive as contributors toward team teaching efficacy?

Methodology

This descriptive study explored team teaching using mixed methods to collect, analyze, and integrate qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). A mixed-methods approach is a practical choice for this study, considering the limited knowledge of team teaching within social work education. Qualitative data was used to explore student experiences and perceptions as participants in a team-taught class through mixed methods. Team-teaching outcomes were analyzed through a mixed-method survey instrument that included both qualitative and quantitative questions. This design is most appropriate for this study, given that research on team teaching in social work is only at its initial stage. A mixed-methods design provided additional narrative information from participants that would otherwise be excluded from a quantitative research design. As stated by Creswell & Plano-Clark (2018), using mixed methods serves to bridge qualitative and quantitative research and answer questions that either approach cannot independently answer. It is assumed that a mixed-methods design would offer quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions more clearly than previous research conducted relying primarily on qualitative data (Baeten & Simons, 2016; Dugan and Letterman, 2008; Murawski, 2005; Zapf et al., 2011). Capturing students' perceptions of their experiences enrolled in a social work course taught by a pair of faculty provides additional knowledge on social work curriculum development and course structure.

Population

The sample population included graduate students ($n = 76$) enrolled in Master of Social Work (MSW) coursework. The sample was selected from students enrolled in one of three team-taught classes offered in an accredited MSW program at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). The feasibility to access classroom environments where MSW teacher and MSW

student populations congregate in live academic semester coursework within the university setting serves as a rationale for selecting this sampling method.

Participants included second-year students enrolled in three courses taught in the MSW program; the courses selected were one family therapy class and two policy courses. These courses were selected based on the instructor's agreement to team-teach the course throughout the academic semester. Students chose their classes and were aware they were registering for a team-taught class based on their registration time. Participants had no prior experience in a co-taught academic course within the MSW program. Participants received a link to complete the pretest at the beginning and post-tests at the end of each respective class. A total of 76 participants completed the pretest, and 58 completed the post-test. All participants were full-time MSW students. Demographic information was not collected to protect participants' anonymity and encourage their participation in the study.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The study's sampling method was non-probabilistic, relying on a convenience sample of students enrolled at CSUN's MSW program. The sampling method selected is an appropriate fit for this survey research exploring student's perceptions of team teaching efficacy and perceptions of factors that contribute to team teaching efficacy in social work education (Rubin & Babbie, 2017). The sample included MSW students enrolled in a class taught by two MSW instructors throughout the academic semester. Also included were MSW students enrolled in a program that required in-person class attendance. Excluded from the study were MSW students enrolled in online/distance education. Also excluded from the study were non-MSW students and students not enrolled in a team-taught course selected for the study; and students who declined to participate.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participants for this study were recruited based on their active enrollment status in the MSW program at CSUN and their participation in a traditional full-time, two-year, in-person class attendance MSW program model. Initially, MSW instructors agreed to team-teach for this study (or had previously arranged to team-teach on their own accord) a course in the MSW curriculum with another MSW instructor. The researcher recruited participating instructors during faculty meetings by providing prospective participants with information regarding the study's nature and obtaining their agreement for participation with informed consent. Based on these identified courses taught by instructor teams, students enrolled in each respective course were recruited.

Surveys consisted of questions exploring students' experiences in a team-taught course. The survey instrument was modified from Curiel & Ashley's (2020) study examining team teaching. The survey was altered for this study and, therefore, not pretested for its reliability or validity. However, the tool was created by multiple social work educators to ensure content validity was established (Rubin & Babbie, 2017). Survey responses were listed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from '*Not Effective At All*' to '*Extremely Effective*,' with a text box following each question for narrative comments. Surveys were distributed exclusively to students enrolled in a team-taught class. Data on team-taught courses were collected twice during the 16-week course semester. Students were initially invited to participate in the study via email and encouraged to complete the pretest before starting the course. Students were informed that they would be provided with a post-test upon completing the course at the end of the semester. Students who agreed to participate in the study were allotted time on the first day of class to complete the survey if they had not done so before starting the course. Students were also

provided time during class on the final day of the course to complete the post-test survey. The survey took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete, with no incentives offered to participants.

Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis were conducted using Qualtrics data analysis software program (<https://www.qualtrics.com>). Descriptive statistics allowed for summarization and description of the quantitative data. Thematic analysis was applied to analyze the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a process used to analyze, identify, and report patterns revealed within data, providing a rich and thorough explanation of the data (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Grounded theory methodology provided systematic measures for configuring quantitative and qualitative data to link the research process with theoretical development (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007).

Findings and Lessons Learned

In this study, Master of Social Work (MSW) student perceptions of team teaching efficacy was explored using a descriptive mixed-methods. The study surveyed MSW students ($n = 76$) enrolled in social work courses taught by a pair of social work instructors within an academic semester. The main research question was: what are MSW student perceptions of team teaching efficacy, and what factors do students perceive as contributors toward team teaching efficacy? Data was collected from surveys administered to MSW students enrolled in three distinct team-taught social work courses. Data was drawn and arranged into categories, patterns, themes, and relationships emerging from and grounded in data with an a priori focus on two themes: *pre-course student perceptions of efficacy* (on team teaching as a model of instruction within a social work course), and *post-course student perceptions of efficacy* (on team teaching as a model of instruction within a social work course).

Thematic analysis revealed five categories identified as recurring topics relevant to participant's perceptions of team teaching efficacy within social work classroom instruction. The categories were grouped into two major themes. One theme describes student perceptions of team teaching efficacy before starting the course (inexperience with team teaching and expectations for team teaching). A second theme describes student perceptions of team teaching efficacy at the end of the course (teaching partnership, knowledge and expertise, and diverse perspectives). The following sections describe the theme and categories derived from the questionnaires and are illustrated using participant quotations.

Theme 1—Pre-Course Student Perceptions of Team Teaching Efficacy

Although little is known regarding team teaching efficacy, there exists some knowledge regarding factors that can pose challenges to team teaching partnerships. These factors include individual values and beliefs, differences in teaching philosophies, and a lack of consideration to intersectional variances between teachers (Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). However, factors that students perceive as contributors toward team teaching efficacy are relatively unknown as most studies on team teaching focus on teacher perspectives, not the learners' (Baeten, & Simons, 2016). The following categories describe and highlight student perceptions of team teaching efficacy before and after experiencing a team-taught course to address this limitation.

Given the number of synonyms applied to describe a pair of teachers engaged in educating a class of students within the same course, the survey tool referenced the terms *team teaching* and *co-teaching*. These terms are most prolific in team teaching scholarship (Money & Coughlan, 2016). Also, both team teaching and co-teaching refer to a specific instruction model whereby two teachers instruct the same course during each session (Dugan and Letterman 2008).

Participants were asked during the pretest and post-test to identify the factors they thought would contribute toward effective team teaching or co-teaching.

Inexperience with Team Teaching

When asked about their familiarity with a co-teaching or team teaching model of classroom instruction, pretest results revealed 38.16% of participants offered a *'Neutral'* response. In contrast, post-test results yielded a 77.59% *'Definitely Yes'* response. By far, most pretest responses indicated a lack of personal and academic experience as students in team-taught classes. Consequently, participants could not offer explicit information on specific factors they believed made for effective team teaching. For example, one participant stated "I do not have any experience with co-teaching [team teaching]...I do not feel comfortable providing an opinion at this point. I should have more insight toward the end of the semester."

Another participant explained "I haven't experienced co-teaching in the classroom. This semester will be the first time." An additional participant reported "I have literally never experienced a co-taught class. This [class] will be my first experience, and thus, I put neutral responses to all [pretest survey] questions so I can respond more accurately post survey." Multiple participant responses were brief and directly stated "I have no experience with co-teaching [team teaching]" and offered no further information regarding factors they thought to contribute toward team teaching efficacy. The lack of experience with team teaching as a pedagogical model within social work education described by participants highlights the fidelity to traditional teaching methods within higher education settings (Curiel & Ashley, 2020).

Expectations for Team Teaching

When asked to rate team teaching effectiveness concerning their overall educational experiences, at the pretest, 46.05% of participants reported *'Neither Effective nor Not Effective.'*

However, post-test results revealed 47.37% of participants perceived team teaching efficacy as *'Extremely Effective.'* some participants expressed enthusiasm for the teaching method and shared their expectations for the class before experiencing it. For instance, one participant stated "I have had no co-teaching exposure prior to this classroom so I'm pretty stoked about the idea and the fact that both professor[s] work in complimentary [ways]." Another participant commented by saying "I have not been part of a co-teaching class before; this is my first. But I definitely think having two knowledgeable professors makes the class more interesting. There are different viewpoints that could open up a variety of discussion and processing."

Additionally, another participant said "This will be the first time I experience a co-teaching class in my educational career, but I am excited because I will [be] able to gain experience from two different teaching styles and perspectives." Some participants provided more elaborate examples of their expectations for team teaching and said "I have never had a class where I had a co-teaching environment but I do believe that it could be most effective in terms of sharing different experiences and perspectives." Another participant explained "I've [n]ever experienced co-teaching before. However, I imagine that central to the method's effectiveness is the energy shared between the two teachers, their enthusiasm to share space, and their general team synergy." Previous research on team teaching in social work education by Curiel & Ashley (2020) found that students unfamiliar with a co-teaching method of instruction can experience ambivalence toward the instruction model initially followed by enthusiasm once emersed in the team teaching process.

Theme 2—Post-Course Student Perceptions of Team Teaching Efficacy

Pre and post-test responses are presented in Figure 1. Thematic data analysis results from post-tests revealed factors perceived by students that contribute toward team teaching efficacy.

Categories identified by participants were more explicitly stated and included teaching partnership, knowledge and expertise, and diverse perspectives. Consistent with the literature, attributes of team teaching efficacy reported by participants comprised collegial relationships, enhanced teacher knowledge, and multiple perspectives (Garran et al., 2015).

Teaching Partnership

At the pretest, 50.00% of participants indicated the faculty pair teaching the course was ‘Somewhat Effective’ in establishing classroom dynamics that promote learning. However, post-test results yielded a 50.00% participant response rate indicating that teaching teams were ‘*Extremely Effective.*’ Participants identified the teaching partnership between faculty as an essential factor that contributes toward team teaching efficacy. One participant stated “I think it [team teaching] works well when the professors have good chemistry.” Another said “Having two professors made the [classroom] environment comfortable and fun to learn.” Another participant explained that “The partnership my teachers had was very effective,” whereas a different participant described their professors’ “genuine relationship” as integral to team teaching efficacy.

While many participants stated that the “Professors worked well together,” several participants focused on the instructors’ “Good energy and chemistry.” One participant described an effective teaching partnership like this “[Team teaching is effective] when both teacher’s teaching styles complement each other...balancing power dynamics.” Findings from previous research support the idea that faculty who are open to team teaching models are more effective collaborators (Walters & Misra, 2013). Additionally, in a study examining paired teaching, Holland et al. (2018) found that the relationship between teaching partnerships was an essential element for effective team teaching experiences.

Knowledge and Expertise

Participants were asked to compare team teaching to the traditional teaching model in terms of effectiveness to expose students to an array of experience and knowledge. At pretest, 46.05% identified team teaching as '*Somewhat Effective*' compared to post-tests which identified team teaching as 65.52% '*Extremely Effective*.' One participant said "This [team teaching] experience provided an array of knowledge and experience" compared to traditional teaching methods. Many participants identified the team teachers' ability to link their theoretical knowledge and practice expertise to the course content as an essential factor contributing to team teaching efficacy. One participant remarked "Two professors...provide a more balanced and expanded view of social work theories and practice...[through their] ability to link classroom instruction with readings and assignments." An additional participant stated "Connecting what we learn into practice/real world...using different modalities of teaching...is also very helpful [to team teaching efficacy]."

Also, a different participant articulated "[Two] professors have a lot of knowledge and therefore...I was able to learn from both not just one." Also, one participant identified the instructors' knowledge and expertise in relation to the curriculum as a notable factor for team teaching efficacy, explaining that "They [teachers] are able to bounce ideas off each other and provide appropriate examples to further enhance the curriculum." Like previous research on team teaching, these results suggest that enhanced knowledge and shared expertise between instructor pairs are advantages to having two instructors teach the same course (Holland et al., 2018).

Diverse Perspectives

Diverse perspectives between teaching pairs were another category identified by participants as contributing to team teaching efficacy. At the pretest, 42.11% of participants indicated the faculty pair teaching the course were '*Neither Effective nor Not Effective*' in conveying their teaching responsibilities. However, post-test results yielded a 37.93% participant response rate indicating that teaching responsibilities conveyed were '*Extremely Effective*.' As one participant stated "Having two professors share their experiences and different perspectives was very effective." Another participant said "I thought it was really interesting to have two different professors bring in their different experiences and perspectives into one class. I really enjoyed learning from both."

Similarly, one other participant claimed that "The most effective [factor in team teaching] was having more experiences to learn from [on the same subject]." And another participant explained that "[Faculty] personalities/perspectives that are different enough to provide a varied educational experience; and teaching styles that are similar enough that there is no confusion about what students are expected to do" contribute toward team teaching efficacy. Furthermore, a different participant stated "Co-teaching is useful to the [MSW] program and it gives two different perspectives." Other participants identified "[Instructors'] different opinions" and "[Professors'] diversity of research/experiences" as salient factors to team teaching efficacy. These results align with previous research on team teaching in social work education that identifies instructors' diverse perspectives as advantages and facilitators to team teaching partnerships (Curiel & Ashley, 2020; Liebel et al., 2017).

Participants' qualitative information regarding their perceptions of team teaching effectiveness in grading, at pretest, 44.74% indicated a '*Neutral*' response. In contrast, at post-test, 36.21% identified fairness in grading as '*Extremely Effective*.' It remains unclear what

factors influenced participant responses, given that instructors' final grades had not been assigned to students at the post-test. However, Curiel & Ashley's (2020) study on team teaching found similar results regarding student perceptions of grading effectiveness.

Discussion

The present study identified categories and thematically coded MSW student perceptions of factors contributing to team teaching efficacy. The factors identified included teaching partnership, knowledge and expertise, and diverse perspectives. These findings align with previous research examining team teaching as a model for class instruction in higher education (Curiel & Ashley, 2020; Holland et al., 2018; Liebel et al., 2017; Walters & Misra, 2013). In this study, data analyzed was gathered from two distinct course types—family therapy and policy. It remains unclear whether team teaching is best suited for specific classes within the social work curriculum, as this author emphasizes that this study design is descriptive. However, as a pedagogical model, team teaching can be applied within diverse course contexts and can provide different perspectives to explain similar concepts by distinct instructors (Liebel et al., 2017). The categories that emerged from student perceptions on team teaching efficacy in this article provide clarity on factors to consider when developing effective teaching teams.

Ensuring an effective team teaching partnership requires various factors. For instance, Crow and Smith (2005) identify empathy and trust, equality in shared responsibilities, shared power, and ongoing critical reflection as essential elements for effective team teaching partnerships. Teaching within pairs requires high trust and respect between instructors (Liebel et al., 2017). To maintain effective and collegial teaching partnerships that support mutual pedagogical growth and support, open communication and continual reflection are necessary (Holland et al., 2017; Walters & Misra, 2013). Walters and Misra (2013) explain that forcing

faculty pairs to teach in tandem may yield adverse outcomes for students and teachers alike. The factors identified within this study that contribute to team teaching efficacy align with the three key concepts of Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical frameworks.

Concepts central to the CoI framework include social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence, and align with a team teaching model for classroom instruction (Garrison et al., 2010). Through social presence, teaching pairs can help participants develop a trusting environment and develop inter-personal relationships by modeling collegial and respectful behavior between instructors (Garrison, 2009). Under the collaborative nature of team teaching that necessitates mutual feedback and ongoing self-reflection, cognitive presence is reached (Garrison, 2009). Additionally, teaching presence can be achieved through team teaching partnerships by engaging students in heightened cognitive and social processes via diverse perspectives offered by co-instructors while simultaneously enhancing learning outcomes (Garrison, 2009). Furthermore, team teaching may support students and teachers in reaching a metacognitive state through different perspectives shared during intellectual exchanges that transform their learning by raising their consciousness (Akyol, 2012). However, there are some barriers to establishing team-teaching partnerships.

Although team teaching as a pedagogical approach to social work education may receive some opposition from students and teachers (Zapf et al., 2011), co-teaching benefits outweigh the barriers to implement structures of support for this method (Walters & Misra, 2013). For some academic institutions, funding may be an obstacle to the implementation of a team-teaching model. To address this issue, some researchers support the idea of incorporating team teaching as a professional development tool to enhance teaching development and onboarding new faculty (Liebel et al., 2017; Walter & Misra, 2013). Another proposed solution to mitigate

the institutional fiscal impact is to limit the number of team teaching courses offered per semester (Walters & Misra, 2013). As described in Holland et al. (2018), the return on investment in providing new faculty a team teaching opportunity in the short term is worthwhile for long-term gains observed in student learning and teaching satisfaction.

Implications for Social Work Education

Pedagogical innovation in higher education requires ‘out-of-the-box’ thinking. To transform education and improve student learning outcomes, creative teaching strategies that steer away from traditional teaching practices are needed. One option introduced in this study is team teaching. A radical restructuring of the single-teacher classroom may transform how social work education is delivered and improves learning outcomes. In social work, traditional solo-teaching methods do not align with the profession’s inherent interdisciplinary approach and fundamental certainty that team collaboration is critical for competent practice (McAuliffe, 2009; Robinson et al., 2012). A team-teaching model in the classroom setting would parallel the field education team comprised of field instructors, liaisons, and preceptors whose collaborative partnership serves to develop the burgeoning social worker (Dill et al., 2017). It is also equally important to consider implications for team teaching and the social work education team.

Social work instructors range from MSW to doctoral levels of education (Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education (GADE), 2013; Holland & Fronst, 1986). In the United States, social work programs are subject to criticism for inadequately preparing graduates to teach (Maynard et al., 2017). At the doctoral level of education, social work aims to prepare “stewards of the discipline” for responsibilities that include research and teaching (GADE, 2013, p. 1). Yet, there is little information to support effective doctoral education methods in social work to prepare graduate students to teach (Maynard et al., 2017). However, many doctoral

graduates pursue faculty positions within social work programs at teaching-oriented schools (Maynard et al., 2017). Despite the lack of evidence on effective teaching preparation for doctoral students, evidence exists to support the negative outcomes for students taught by ill-prepared faculty (Maynard et al., 2017). Although limited, research on team teaching in higher education identify advantages related to professional development and an increase in confidence and self-efficacy of doctoral students preparing for academic careers (Baltrinic et al., 2016; Burns & Mintzberg, 2019; Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Walters & Misra, 2013). A team-teaching model can help bolster teaching skills for social work educators at masters and doctoral levels of practice.

Limitations

Strengths of this study include instructor pairs' willingness to team-teach a course throughout an academic semester and their collegial relationships and familiarity with the course content. However, from this study's descriptive design, no inference of causality should be assumed, which is a primary limitation. An additional limitation to this study is the lack of consistency with participants' completion of survey questionnaires. Participant data gathered at pre-test ($n = 76$) outnumbered the data collected at post-test ($n = 58$). The missing data could reveal information that would yield outcomes that cannot be accounted for in this study.

Additionally, to protect participant anonymity and encourage participation in the study, questionnaires did not collect demographic information for either students or teachers. It is unknown whether participants' demographic differences or similarities could influence results in this data's absence. Therefore, the current research findings must be generalized with caution to other academic settings and social work education programs. A data triangulation method was applied to the study to strengthen its validity (Padgett, 2017). This study's data included three

separate classes taught by three distinct teacher pairings comprised of six different individual instructors to support the findings.

Conclusion

MSW student perceptions of team teaching efficacy were explored in this study. Findings and lessons learned suggest that factors perceived by students as contributors toward team teaching efficacy include teaching partnership, knowledge and expertise, and diverse perspectives. Like previous findings on team teaching, instructor pairs' relationship was identified as a salient factor to consider when co-teaching. The findings of this study align with key concepts applied in Community of Inquiry (CoI) Theory and suggest that CoI is a compatible theoretical framework to guide a team-teaching model. Also, this study's findings further show that team teaching can improve social work education and preparation for students entering the social work profession. Improved skills and knowledge experienced in the classroom setting translate directly into social work practice, potentially contributing to a more positive effect on client service delivery.

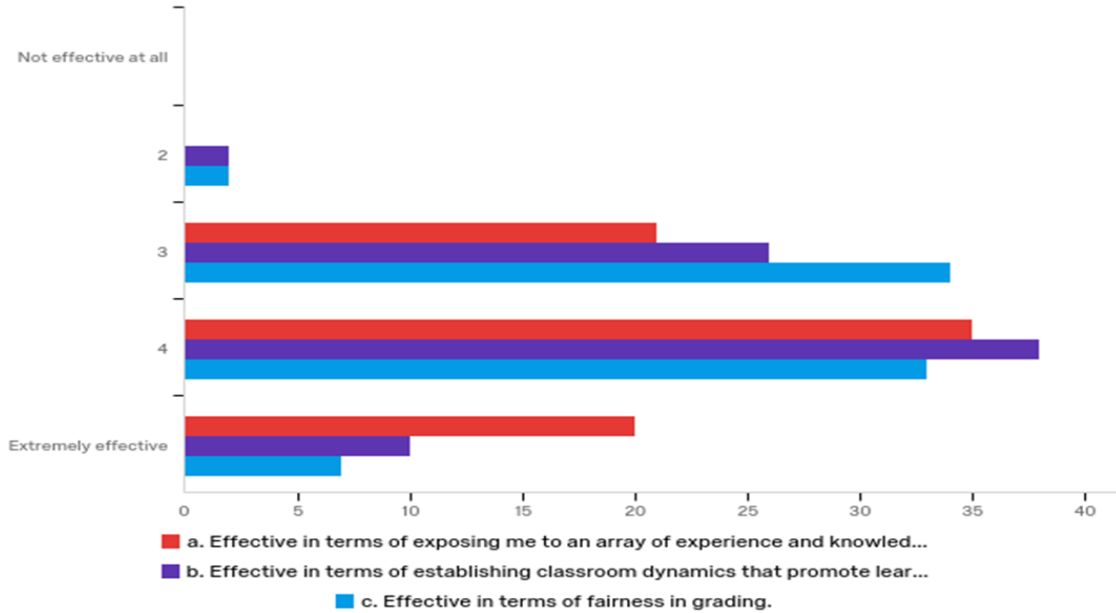
Team teaching can also enhance teachers' knowledge and pedagogical skills through their academic collaboration and intellectual exchange (Holland et al., 2018; Walters & Misra, 2013). By team teaching, diversity inclusion is modeled, enhanced, and promoted between teaching partnerships as personal identities, practice, theoretical lens, and lived experience between instructors vary (Curiel & Ashley, 2020). Furthermore, working collaboratively within diverse teams can reduce teacher bias and promote various teaching materials within the curriculum (Miller & Garran, 2017). Although fiscal budget issues may present as obstacles to structure and support team teaching within academic programs, creative solutions may be established to circumvent these barriers.

To further understand the benefits or disadvantages of team teaching as a pedagogical method in social work education, future research is needed to examine which classes are best suited for team teaching within the social work curriculum. Additionally, more research is needed on teacher and student cultural resemblance and its potential influence on student learning and teaching satisfaction. Furthermore, an experimental study with randomization may clarify learning and teaching effectiveness when comparing solo-taught and team-taught courses. Another area to explore in future research is team teaching's potential benefits to improve teaching skills within social work graduate programs.

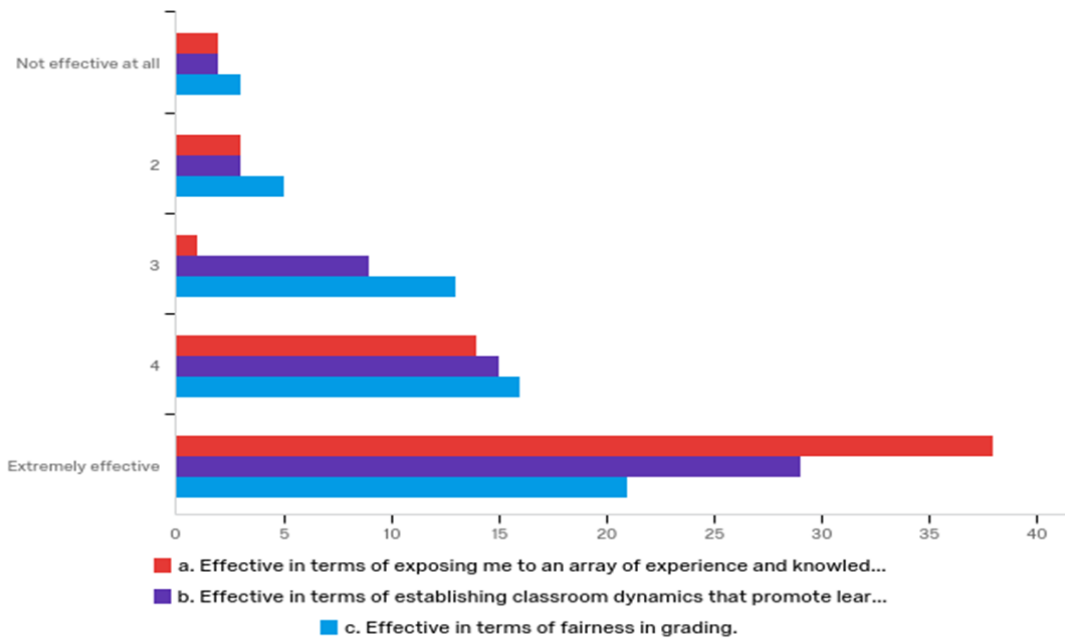
Figure 1

Research Question 3: Compared to traditional teaching, team teaching is:

PRETEST



POSTTEST



Note. Pre and post-test responses include results from all three team-taught courses combined.

**Interracial Team Teaching in Social Work Education:
A Pedagogical Approach to Dismantling White Supremacy**

Luis O. Curiel

School of Social Work, University of St. Thomas

Author Note

Luis O. Curiel is now at the Department of Social Work, California State University, Northridge. There are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Luis O. Curiel, Department of Social Work, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330, United States. E-mail: Luis.Curiel@csun.edu

Abstract

This article explores anti-racist social work education through interracial team teaching, where one instructor is White, and the other is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC). This pedagogical approach is presented as an emerging conceptual model to consider in anti-racist social work education. As an anti-racist approach to teaching, this model aims to engage students and faculty in a more active and accountable role in dismantling systemic racism and White Supremacy through social work education. A close examination of published articles on interracial team teaching revealed an absence of theoretical frameworks to guide this teaching method. Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged as a compatible theoretical framework for teaching anti-racism within an interracial team-taught model. Five CRT tenets from Solorzano et al. (2005) align with previous studies to support this emerging pedagogical approach as a viable option. Findings suggest that anti-racist education requires the explicit naming of terms like *White Supremacy*, *racism*, and *colonization* within the social work curriculum. Interracial team teaching necessitates shared power and authority between instructors and calls for White educators to examine their White identity and resist performing allyship. Academic institution hiring practices need a greater representation of BIPOC faculty to reduce overburdening faculty of color.

Keywords: interracial team teaching, social work education, anti-racist pedagogy, social work curriculum, dismantling white supremacy, critical race theory

**Interracial Team Teaching in Social Work Education:
A Pedagogical Approach to Dismantling White Supremacy**

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) asserts that teaching social work students to be competent in engaging in diversity and difference in practice requires explicit and implicit curricula (CSWE, 2015). “The explicit curriculum constitutes the program’s formal educational structure and includes the courses and field education used for each of its programs options” (CSWE, 2015, p. 11), whereas, “The implicit curriculum refers to the learning environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented” (CSWE, 2015, p. 14). Additionally, “The implicit curriculum is as important as the explicit curriculum in shaping the professional character and competence of the program’s graduates” (CSWE, 2015, p. 14). The concept of a hidden or implicit curriculum refers to the tacit or unspoken values, behaviors, and norms that exist in the academic setting (Alsubaie, 2015).

Educators may consciously or unconsciously use the implicit curriculum as a pedagogical strategy or method to influence student learning, including when teaching topics relevant to social justice (Alsubaie, 2015). However, the term *curriculum* itself is often obscured within higher education literature (Barnett & Coate, 2004; Smith, 2013). Similarly, the 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) developed by the CSWE for baccalaureate and master’s social work programs contribute to the erasure of specific and essential terms relevant to social work practice and education (CSWE, 2015). Words omitted from the CSWE EPAS lexicon include *White Supremacy*, *racism*, and *colonization*.

Although muted, these terms are foundational for learning about social justice issues as a principal social work value (NASW, 2017). Authors such as Barnett and Coate (2004) argue that curriculum reproduces society and reflects the social context in which it is located, benefitting

some over others. To address this erasure, social work educators must refrain from sanitizing the context for learning social justice to meet the profession's purpose. However, critical race scholars in education argue that some aspects of the implicit curriculum reinforce social inequalities related to racial hierarchies (Bhuyan et al., 2017). For instance, Jay (2003) explains that the 'hidden curriculum of hegemony' (p. 6) enables academic institutions to socialize students to adhere to the dominant groups' interests, reinforcing dominant ideologies, despite the explicit promotion of social justice. Social work education has an ethical responsibility to move beyond reproducing a cadre of vapid social justice groupies and moving toward developing anti-racist practitioners.

With explicit education on anti-racism, social workers are more likely to be armed with the knowledge to confront and dismantle barriers that impede the human rights and dignity of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) resulting from a system of White Supremacy. As an institution, academia is too often complicit in upholding systemic oppression. This reality positions conscientious social work educators to resist institutional curricular mandates by engaging in stealth pedagogical practices (i.e., through the implicit curriculum) and curriculum design (i.e., the explicit curriculum) (Barnett & Coate, 2004). For students to become ethical leaders in their communities, leaders in higher education must model ethical decision-making with racial justice in mind (Chenneville, 2017). Students learn to behave like professional social workers, both explicitly and implicitly, by actively observing their teachers and adopt the norms, values, and professional conduct they see modeled by their instructors (Anastas, 2010).

One way to model professional practice behavior within the classroom environment is by team teaching. In social work education, team teaching may take several forms, including teaching the same course in pairs, teaching distinct modules of a similar class, or working in

partnership with the field education team (Dill et al., 2017). Team teaching is the practice of at least two instructors engaging cooperatively and sharing the responsibility for teaching a classroom of students (Zapf et al., 2011). Research exploring team teaching in social work education by pairing faculty with diverse backgrounds is scarce (Garran et al., 2015; Ouellett & Fraser, 2011). Even more limited literature specifically examines interracial team teaching in social work education (Ouellett & Fraser, 2011).

Although limited, the research on team teaching in social work education with instructors who hold diverse, intersectional identities shows that team-taught courses broaden student perspectives (Zapf et al., 2011). This conceptual paper explores anti-racist social work education through interracial team teaching, where one instructor is White, and the other is a BIPOC. This pedagogical approach is presented as an emerging conceptual model to consider in anti-racist social work education. This model aims to engage students and faculty in efforts to dismantle White Supremacy—propelling the field of social work to take a more active and accountable role in the direct support of BIPOC.

Literature Review

Anti-racism Defined

To conceptually define *anti-racism*, it is necessary first to define *racism*. Giwa and Mihalicz (2019) offer the following definition “*Racism*, in its simplest sense, is the expression of racial prejudice by a White-dominant society against racial minorities based on phenotypic differences (e.g., race or skin color)” (p. 46). Other researchers propose a more elaborate way to define racism within a socio-political context that provides additional details on how racism manifests:

Racism is a system of privilege, inequality, and oppression based on perceived categorical differences, value assigned to those differences, and a system of oppression that rewards and punishes people based on the assigned differences. It is manifested politically, socially, economically, culturally, interpersonally, and intrapersonally in the history of the United States. (SCSSW, n.d., para. 1, as cited in O'Neill & Miller, 2015).

In direct opposition to racism, anti-racism, within the context of social work education and this paper, is interested in actions rather than inactions or mere cognitive understanding of how racism is defined and manifested within multiple social and political systems. Furthermore, juxtaposing these definitions elucidates the rationale for explicitly teaching anti-racism within an interracial team teaching method in social work education:

Antiracism efforts involve intentional, strategic, and determined actions to undermine racism embedded throughout intersecting individual, interpersonal, structural, and institutional levels of society. Antiracism necessitates an evolving critical awareness and analysis of social and structural location in relation to systems of power, privilege, and inequity (Donner & Miller, 2005). Dismantling racism implies a pedagogy that fosters a critical consciousness (Freire [1970]), including a critical analysis of systems of domination based on race and white supremacy (Hooks [2003]). As well, antiracism seeks human connection over disconnection. (O'Neill & Miller, 2015, p. 161)

These definitions help support foundational and contextual knowledge for the social work curriculum on anti-racism. They also offer further clarification for necessitating a teaching approach that includes an interracial pairing of instructors within this developing conceptual model.

Teaching Diversity in Social Work Education

Research examining the perceptions of who feels qualified to be a multicultural educator suggests that White, middle-class, heterosexual women feel more qualified to teach the subject than African American/Black or other people of color (Gorski et al., 2012). And, among multiple personal and professional experiences, “life experiences” are the only factor associated with White women’s teaching self-efficacy (Gorski et al., 2012). This finding raises questions regarding the experiences and perceptions of social work educators teaching diversity courses in the academy. According to Delgado (1996, as cited in Amos, 2010), “well-intentioned Whites can actually do more harm than good without even realizing it” (p. 34).

The field of social work is not dissimilar to teacher education, which aims to prepare professionals who are committed to the ideals of multicultural education and competence in their practice (Guyton & Wesche, 2005). As noted by Guyton and Wesche (2005), the need for teachers proficient in multiculturalism, much like social workers, has increased over time due to continued demographics and recruitment trends. As a result of these trends, the problem of educating teachers and social workers to teach cultural competence efficiently during pre-service training in college and universities will be that a majority are White, monolingual, and primarily female students (Guyton & Wesche, 2005).

Teaching Anti-Racism in Social Work Education

The national accrediting body for social work education, CSWE, mandates that cultural diversity and social justice be addressed as fundamental components of social work education (CSWE, 2015). Specifically, Competency 2, set forth by CSWE, requires that social workers understand systemic oppression and socio-political structures of power and privilege that serve to marginalize and discriminate some while empowering others (CSWE, 2015). Given this CSWE mandate and the rise of publicized racist acts against BIPOC, Ladhani and Sitter (2020)

recognize that it is vital for social work education to shift from an appreciation of cultural diversity and move toward reviving anti-racism within its curriculum. Social work acknowledges the significance of both the implicit and explicit curriculum (CSWE, 2015). Therefore, both warrant further examination for ways to teach anti-racism as a method to dismantle White Supremacy as an oppressive system of power and control. In a study examining the use of language in the curriculum to promote school change by comparing phrases like “culturally responsive” with the term “anti-racist,” Galloway et al. (2019) found that race-neutral language can lead educators to avoid critically examining racist systems and practices. They also found that applying the term “anti-racism” helps shift the educators’ focus from a race-avoidant practice to critically examining racism and White supremacy (Galloway et al., 2019).

According to Beck (2019), the erasure of terms like *White Supremacy* and *racism* from the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) governing social work education reveals the social work profession’s discomfort with these specific terms and concepts. Beck (2019) recommends that social workers be intentional about unveiling the invisible and sometimes subtle forms of White supremacy that exist without using a lack of recognition as an excuse for upholding racism. Similarly, Santas (2000) contends that racism persists to the degree that it is viewed as enduring. Further suggesting that once racism is brought to light and recognized as constructed, it can also be viewed as a system that can be deconstructed and dismantled (Santas, 2000). Consequently, omitting anti-racism as a term within the social work curriculum holds implications for how social workers understand and engage (or not) with the construct of racism in the absence of its opposite (Ladhani & Sitter, 2020). As a profession that values social justice, social work educators cannot remain politically neutral when addressing systemic racism (Kelly & Brandes, 2010).

Team Teaching in Social Work Education

As a phenomenon, team teaching has been studied primarily in elementary and middle schools (Ginther et al., 2007; Hanover Research, 2012). The literature on team teaching specific to social work education suggests that further exploration is needed to determine how team-teaching influences student learning (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). It remains unknown whether specific social work education courses are a better fit for a team-taught approach or if other course implementation factors are more influential than the course content itself (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). However, existing research on team teaching in social work education claims advantages related to professional development and increased confidence and self-efficacy of doctoral students preparing for academic careers (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). Additionally, team teaching promotes cross-training opportunities where professors learn by modeling their peer educators' behaviors and learn alternative pedagogical styles (Ginther et al., 2007). Furthermore, team teaching has the potential to enhance teaching quality as multiple perspectives are applied within the course, holding several advantages over traditional solo teaching (Garran et al., 2015).

Distinct approaches to team teaching exist within academic programs that include teams comprised of individuals holding various positions, such as the field education team comprised of field instructor and field liaison (Dill et al., 2017; Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). One team teaching method that assumes a high level of partnership and coordination is the co-facilitation or co-teaching model (Duran & Miquel, 2019; Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). Co-facilitation requires that instructors work closely in all aspects of the course, including selecting readings, creating assignments, teaching, and grading (Duran & Miquel, 2019; Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). As noted by Meizlish and Anderson (2018), both students and teachers may benefit from

a team-taught course's rich learning potential; however, it is unlikely to occur without proper planning and execution.

Additional challenges identified with team teaching partnerships include differences in teaching philosophies, individual values and beliefs, and a lack of attention to intersectional differences between instructors (Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). An example of challenges encountered between diverse teachers identified by Meizlish and Anderson (2018) includes the added burden of labor BIPOC faculty shoulder when disproportionately called upon as allies or advocates by BIPOC students. Recognizing the importance of mitigating power imbalances related to age, race, sex, and other intersecting identities between team teachers before teaching a tandem course is essential for a successful team-teaching partnership (Meizlish & Anderson, 2018).

Interracial Team Teaching in Social Work Education

Team teaching can serve as a model for students grappling with ways to manage difficult discussions by witnessing two instructors with distinct perspectives engage in mutual discourse while sharing power and authority in a classroom setting (Curiel & Ashley, 2020; Garran et al., 2015; Gollan & O'Leary, 2009). Similarly, interracial team-teaching partnerships are a pedagogically sound teaching intervention for addressing anti-racist education (Gollan & O'Leary, 2009; Miller & Garran, 2017; O'neill & Miller, 2015). For example, in a study on interracial team teaching in social work by Ouellett and Fraser (2011), the authors found that the outcome of teaching in an interracial team, from the student's perspectives, were that the observation of the instructor's collegial relationship was determined to be far more significant to their learning than the formal curriculum. Interracial teaching teams can serve as models of

shared power within the classroom and help students visually experience successful, mutually respectful interracial interactions (Ouellett & Fraser, 2011).

Some benefits identified with interracial team teaching include teaching the instructor's strengths in areas of expertise and fostering a deeper collegial relationship between team members (Garran et al., 2015). Another benefit is noted in the greater level of mutual support between team members in and outside the classroom (Miller & Garran, 2017). For instance, when discussing the concept of White privilege, if introduced by the White instructor, students may be more receptive to the discussion. In contrast, content on internalized racism may be best taught by an instructor of color (Garran et al., 2015). Interracial team teaching allows instructors to support one another and assist in buffering tensions if one instructor is triggered or becomes the target of student resistance (Miller & Garran, 2017). Additionally, interracial team-teaching partners can offer mutual feedback about unexamined biases related to race and racism (Miller & Garran, 2017).

Compared to traditional solo teaching, interracial team teaching, through modeling, contributes to students' recognition of Whiteness and racism and thereby supports their developing practice of self-accountability (Gollan & O'Leary, 2009). For example, Amos' (2010) study examined the interactions between students of color and White pre-service teachers in a multicultural education class taught by an instructor of color. Amos' (2010) research identified feelings of frustration, despair, and fear experienced by students of color due to Whiteness's overwhelming silencing power in the class. Even though students of color felt they had much to contribute to the class discussion, the hostility witnessed by these students from their White peers toward their instructor of color elicited fear of possible retaliation, influencing their silence (Amos, 2010). Amos (2010) argues that this is a condition with which White

students need not contend but students of color grapple with regularly. Similar to the emotional labor identified by students of color in Amos' (2010) study, Wingfield's (2010) study showed that White students perceive Black faculty members as inferior and unintelligent and consequently dispute Black professors' knowledge. As a result, Black faculty perform emotional regulation of their anger and frustration to adhere to professional standards, unlike their White counterparts (Wingfield, 2010).

Consequently, Miller and Garran (2017) offer cautionary advice about the risk of replicating racist patterns in the classroom if White instructors assert themselves in a dominant leadership position. They also acknowledge the comfort White students feel engaging with White professors, minimizing the role of the professor of color (Miller & Garran, 2017). They also warn of the threat of splitting when one teacher is idealized, and the other disparaged (Miller & Garran, 2017). Gollan and O'Leary (2009) posit that interracial team-teaching partnerships between Black and White instructors require White accountability to counter the threat of splitting. That is, White instructors must recognize their privileged position and understand the power of invisibility that Whiteness and institutional racism wield in shaping relationships between BIPOC and White people (Gollan & O'Leary, 2009). By engaging in critical self-reflection, White instructors can encourage White students to take ownership of racism as a White problem and relieve BIPOC from the burden of responsibility to eradicate systemic racism (Gollan & O'Leary, 2009). In so doing, White instructors can support White students with managing their discomfort and defensiveness that is likely to arise when naming White Supremacy (Gollan & O'Leary, 2009).

Additionally, interracial team-teaching partnerships between Black and White instructors help bridge the gap between theoretical concepts of power and privilege into practice and

personal-professional identity (Gollan & O’Leary, 2009). The social work profession calls for social workers to serve oppressed and marginalized communities and to promote social justice and cultural and ethnic diversity (National Association of Social Workers, 2017). Therefore, social work education is responsible for preparing students to work collaboratively in teams comprised of diverse individuals.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) guides this paper. CRT offers a framework to engage the problem of racial injustice through social science research resulting in awareness about how racism functions and consequently inspiring social agency to create a more just society (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017). CRT as a “movement” explains ways to study and transform the relationship between race, racism, and power and offers insight into how these relationships maintain and support racial inequality (Kolivoski et al., 2014). CRT provides a lens to challenge societal assumptions that the United States is a meritocracy and that equal opportunities are afforded to all who are willing to “work hard” and that social institutions are “color blind” and, therefore, unbiased (Patton, 2016). CRT provides conceptual tools for cross-examining how race and racism have been institutionalized and are upheld (Sleeter, 2017). Activists and scholars of CRT are interested in studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The CRT movement considers similar issues as conventional civil rights and ethnic studies. However, it places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, context, group and self-interest, and feelings and the unconscious (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Additionally, a central tenet of CRT recognizes historical and current institutional injustices imposed upon marginalized status identity groups to benefit dominant status groups. In the context of research, scientific methods mimic the dominant norms of “color blindness” that produce results that justify oppression or deny its existence (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017). CRT positions itself in opposition to a positivist approach to research, arguing that quantitative methods perpetuate racist sentiment and action (Valencia, 1997 as cited in Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017). To counter this, CRT includes the voices of BIPOC, their narratives, and context to bring meaning to explain the biased phenomenon. Narratives are an essential component of CRT research as quantitative methods alone cannot capture experiential knowledge valued in CRT scholarship (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017). CRT provides the opportunity to effectively teach and research diversity issues because it requires the professional to examine social structures, institutions, and assumptions (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017; Ortiz & Jani, 2010).

CRT's application to this conceptual paper is a good fit given that universities are a bastion of Euro-American values (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Universities are “vestiges of White privilege [and] continue to promote mediocrity on the one hand and demoralization on the other” (Mohan, 2009, p. 117, as cited in Ortiz & Jani, 2010). CRT moves beyond the superficial analysis of academic gaps between teacher education and BIPOC students in school settings (Sleeter, 2017). As an epistemological lens, CRT can be applied to study and transform higher education as a macro-level social justice plan (Patton, 2016). Lastly, CRT has been augmented and tested repeatedly and across situations, adding to its strength, rigor, and heuristic value for research and practice (Forte, 2014). Thus, allowing for the researcher’s internal evolution and transformation to deepen their perspective and approach to research and practice.

Method

The overarching question guiding this research was: What theoretical framework best aligns with anti-racism education via interracial team teaching? To address this, I examined a limited sample of published articles that describe interracial team teaching as a pedagogical approach to teaching anti-racism in social work education. As an emerging conceptual model for anti-racist social work education, I explored theoretical frameworks previously applied to anti-racist education within interracial teaching teams. Following an extensive search for published articles on teaching anti-racism in social work education through an interracial team model, I aimed to analyze common theories applied in the studies. However, noting an absence of theoretical frameworks applied to the existing studies, I shifted my focus instead to explore Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a compatible theoretical framework for an interracial team-teaching model.

To address this conceptual paper's goal and explore anti-racist social work education through interracial team teaching, I first identified publications that apply an interracial team-teaching approach to anti-racist social work education. To achieve this, I applied the search terms interracial team teaching, co-teaching anti-racism, co-teaching diversity, team teaching diversity, and team or co-teaching anti-oppression. I searched for articles using the search engines Google Scholar, ERIC, and PsycINFO. I searched exclusively for published articles, books, and book chapters to limit the search scope, excluding doctoral dissertations and audio and video media sources.

I relied on four specific criteria for selecting publications. One, the publication focused on social work education, including baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels of education, and excluded all other academic and professional disciplines. Two, the articles identified a team or collaborative approach to teaching that included at least two instructors teaching the same

course. Three, the course instructors shared distinct racial identities where at least one instructor was White and the other a BIPOC. Four, the course taught explicitly and specifically addressed anti-racism or anti-oppression—as these terms are often conflated. For example, I excluded articles that addressed courses that focused on teaching diversity, cultural competence, and multicultural education if they did not address racism directly. Additionally, I examined the reference list for each publication I found to locate additional articles that met these criteria. Using this search method yielded three articles that met the criteria. Notably, the limited sample produced is a limitation to this study. However, a strength is the precision of the search criteria that allow for a clear and direct focus on the existing publications.

Data Analysis

With each publication that met all four criteria, I engaged in a three-step process: First, I reviewed the article to identify any explicit reference made to a specific theoretical framework applied to the study. Second, I listed the implications for social work education and practice the authors discussed or implied that corresponded to one of CRT's five tenets. Third, I aggregated the list from step two, combining all articles, and conducted a frequency count of these tenets. Due to the limited number of articles found, I ran a manual count, color-coding each distinct tenet I found to distinguish them from each other. When determining how to designate which CRT tenets the authors employed in their respective studies, even if unintentionally, I identified the CRT tenets based on the best match with each corresponding CRT tenet definition. I define and describe all five CRT tenets applied to this paper drawing from the work of Sólorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera (2005), examining educational inequities in higher education.

Findings

Using an exploratory qualitative systematic review approach, data gathered from three previously published articles regarding anti-racist social work education within interracial teaching teams were reviewed for their theoretical framework content. Except for one article that briefly mentioned but did not expound on the person in environment perspective (Garran et al., 2015), a glaring absence of theoretical frameworks was noted in all three articles presented in these findings. By extrapolating from the five central tenets of Critical Race Theory identified by Solorzano et al. (2005) to the three articles examined in this paper, I assumed that all five CRT tenets, whether implied or explicitly stated, would be found within each study. The following sections describe the five CRT tenets. They list the explicitly discussed, or implicitly stated, implications for social work education and practice addressed by the authors that correspond to each CRT tenet. The CRT tenets found within the secondary data are illustrated using direct quotations found in the published articles and are cited accordingly.

CRT Tenet: Centrality of Race and Racism

“CRT acknowledges as its most basic premise that race and racism are defining characteristics of American society. In American higher education, race and racism are imbedded in the structures, practices, and discourses that guide the daily practices of universities” (Solorzano et al., 2005, p. 274).

By far, this tenet was the most frequently addressed by all three articles examined in this study—appearing in multiple sections throughout each of the publications. As the principal tenet for CRT, it lays the theory's foundation, placing race and racism at the forefront for examining the phenomenon. For example, when describing the team-taught course, one article stated “It [the course] considers the history of racism in the United States ... It considers the implications of racism for social work practice in agencies, communities, and clinical social work” (Garran et

al., 2015, p. 802). This course description explicitly acknowledges both the history of racism within the U.S. and its enduring legacies manifested in the prevalence of racism within social work practice settings.

Another article stated that “This course examines the individual, institutional, and cultural manifestations of race and racism and their implications for social work clinicians” (Ouellett & Fraser, 2011, p. 73). By making this declaration, the authors recognize the presence of racism that is endemic within the micro and macro levels of social work practice. In a third article, Gollan and O’Leary (2009) explain that “In developing this [interracial team teaching] approach we have had to overcome the challenges that the pedagogical methods underpinning this approach are not within the traditional frames of university education” (p. 708). The barriers described by the authors in developing an interracial team-taught course between a White and Black pair of instructors highlight the pervasiveness of racism deeply entrenched within higher education. Thus, aligning with the CRT tenet of centrality to race and racism.

CRT Tenet: Challenges to Dominant Ideologies

“CRT in higher education challenges the traditional claims of meritocracy, objectivity, colorblindness, race, neutrality, and equal opportunity” (Solorzano et al., 2005, p. 275).

Each of the three articles described a perspective and approach to challenging dominant ideologies, including examining individual and social power inequities. For instance, in the context of explaining the team teaching approach to social work education, the authors of one article remarked “Team-teaching requires a mindfulness about managing power differentials, so that societal power inequalities are not reproduced and, when they are, they are used in the service of everyone’s learning through transparency and self-reflection” (Garran et al., 2015, p. 800). A second study challenged dominant ideologies and explained them like this:

The aim here is to begin a learning process for white social workers to recognise [*sic*] and respond to the particular space they take up ... Application of this embodiment of knowledge in ways of relating in black/white partnerships is the critical contribution that Indigenous knowledge makes to social work education in this approach. (Gollan & O’Leary, 2009, p. 708)

Similarly, Ouellett and Fraser (2011) described their approach to challenging dominant ideologies through interracial team teaching by stating “It was decided to use...one faculty member from the dominant culture and one from an ethnically diverse culture” (p. 73). They further clarified the purpose of this decision by stating “We used our relationship to model a respectful interracial dialogue. We modeled trust, risk taking, and a conscious acknowledgment of our respective social power and authority” (Ouellett & Fraser, 2011, p. 76). These studies illustrate how challenging color blindness and managing power dynamics between interracial teaching teams within the classroom setting align with CRT.

CRT Tenet: Interdisciplinary

“CRT challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses in educational research. In the field of higher education, this framework analyzes race and racism in both a historical and contemporary context using interdisciplinary methods” (Sólorzano et al., 2005, p. 275).

All three articles explicitly acknowledged the history of race and racism and linked historical events to contemporary issues impacting BIPOC. Situating the context of the interracial team-taught course within a historical and current analysis of race and racism, one article noted:

First it is important to set some of the historical legacy of social work and its relationship with Indigenous people and the work of allied Indigenous and non-Indigenous social workers to improve this relationship. This history is not inconsistent with the experience of minority groups in other predominantly white societies. (Gollan & O’Leary, 2009, p. 709)

Another study challenged ahistoricism by situating the interracial team-taught course in history by explaining that “students have the opportunity to have robust conversations about oppression ... focusing on the enduring effects of enslavement, race, and racism on African Americans in the United States” (Garran et al., 2015, p. 802). The same article also drew a link to contemporary racism by identifying current racist “incidents involving young men of color killed by police in cities across the United States” (Garran et al., 2015, p. 802). A third article explained that students were required to learn about history by taking a course titled “Racism in the United States: Implications for Social Work Practice” as a way to challenge ahistoricism (Ouellett & Fraser, 2011, p. 73). These articles demonstrate how interracial team teaching corresponds with CRT as a theoretical framework by addressing past and present racism.

CRT Tenet: Experiential

“The application of a CRT framework in the field of higher education requires that the experiential knowledge of people of color be centered and viewed as a resource stemming directly from their lived experiences” (Sólorzano et al., 2005, p. 275).

The focus on BIPOC experiences was described in both implicit and explicit ways within the three studies. In Garran et al. (2015), the authors describe a team-taught course on racism as focusing on “the perspective of people who identify as people of color” (p. 802). Whereas, Ouellett and Fraser (2011) focus their attention on “a class that looks specifically at issues

central for clinicians of color” (p. 73). Also, Gollan and O’Leary (2009) describe an environment that promotes accountability among White people for restorative justice purposes in the following manner “This [White accountability] needs to happen in a climate that focuses on the experience of those who have been subjected to injustice, rather than a focus on the ‘good intentions’ or feelings of those from the dominant group (Tamasese and [sic] Waldegrave, 1993)” (p. 712). Like CRT, each article described, as essential for interracial team teaching, the decentering of Whiteness and a shift in focus to address racism through the lived experiences of BIPOC.

CRT Tenet: Commitment to Social Justice

“In higher education, these theoretical frameworks are conceived as a social justice agenda that struggles to eliminate all forms of racial, gender, language, generation status, and class subordination” (Sólorzano et al., 2005, p. 275).

A commitment to social justice was the second-highest CRT tenet identified among all three publications analyzed. Gollan and O’Leary (2009) demonstrate this tenet in reflection to maintaining a commitment to social justice among social work students stating that “Students frequently spoke about what the learning from the course meant for them in the future ... Most of the responses gave positive indications that students had insight into their responsibility to integrate the approach into everyday practice” (p. 717). On the other hand, Garran et al. (2015) focused on the faculty and institutional commitment to social justice beyond the interracial team-taught course on anti-racism, arguing the following:

The course does not exist in a vacuum—it is part of an institutional commitment toward becoming an anti-racism institution ... Part of the institutional commitment is a team-

taught online course available to all instructors to strengthen faculty skills in teaching about and integrating this material. (p. 803)

Additionally, Ouellett and Fraser (2011) attributed the success of their interracial teaching team to the commitment to social justice adopted by their academic institution stating that “The success of our teaching team was the support of the institution, both financially and pedagogically. The school has consistently funded two instructors...even in the face of budget fluctuations and competing financial demands” (p. 74).

This study shows that all five CRT tenets, whether implied or explicitly stated, were found within each published article examined for this paper. Despite the notable absence of theoretical frameworks within the published studies reviewed in the present study, the results yield preliminary evidence that CRT is a good fit for anti-racist social work education delivered via an interracial team-taught model. Moreover, as defined by Sólorzano et al. (2005), CRT tenets provide a natural fit for anti-racist social work education within the context of higher education.

Discussion

Anti-racist Social Work Education and Critical Race Theory

A close examination of the existing studies on interracial team teaching reveals an absence of theoretical constructs applied to guide this emerging pedagogical approach. However, upon further investigation, Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged as a compatible theoretical framework for teaching anti-racism within an interracial team-taught model. All five CRT tenets from Sólorzano et al. (2005) examining educational inequities in higher education were identified within the existing literature on interracial team teaching in social work education as presumed. It is worth noting that CRT focuses primarily on issues related to Black and White

racial differences. However, to address this limitation and expand the analysis to include other minoritized groups, other critical theories can be applied as guiding frameworks: LatCrit (Valdes, 2005), TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005), and AsianCrit (An, 2017).

Some students enter social work education, believing that social work is a helping and benevolent profession, then become disappointed when they learn of its embeddedness in power structures and the reproduction of oppressive conditions (Macias, 2013). They are troubled at the awareness of social work's role in colonial practices, including removing Indigenous children first to boarding schools and later to the child welfare system (Macias, 2013). Formal education teaches history from the perspective of the colonizers. Consequently, the reclaiming of history as a critical and essential aspect of decolonization is necessary (Sólorzano et al., 2005; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). CRT unveils racism while amplifying the voices of BIPOC and confronts dominant ideologies through a commitment to social justice (Sólorzano et al., 2005). To revive anti-racism within the social work curriculum requires the explicit naming of *White Supremacy*, *racism*, and *colonization* (Ladhani & Sitter, 2020). Doing so encourages social work educators to critically examine and interrogate politically, the institutions, and the social order within which we teach (Galloway et al., 2019; Macias, 2013).

As an interracial team-teaching model in social work education, the objective is to engage students and faculty in conscious and directed efforts to dismantle White Supremacy through social work education. After all, an education that liberates engages with oppressive forces and consists of cognition acts, not solely in transferring information (Freire, 2018). In so doing, social work may take a more active and accountable role in the direct support of BIPOC both inside and outside of the classroom environment. As a non-politically neutral profession, "Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have

equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully” (National Association of Social Workers, 2017, p. 3).

Therefore, reforming the CSWE EPAS to confront White supremacy and racism unambiguously provides social workers the opportunity to evolve into a revolutionary cadre of anti-racist social work educators, practitioners, and scholars.

Implications for Social Work Education and Practice

Freire (2018) posits that there can be no genuinely liberating pedagogy that remains distant from the oppressed by treating them pejoratively—also arguing that the oppressed must actively engage in the struggle for their liberation. Similarly, a social worker who proclaims a commitment to the cause of freedom but is unwilling to engage in communion with the people they regard with contempt is gravely self-deceived. According to hooks (1994), liberation and justice within education occur through an ‘*Engaged Pedagogy*,’ which promotes a mutual exchange between students and teachers. Both give and take from each other’s knowledge, grounded in their lived experiences.

Social work education primarily occurs in an academic setting confined by rules and guidelines that predispose, reinforce, and perpetuate the instructor's power and students' subordination (Campbell, 2002). Like other helping professions, social work is hierarchical. The social worker (teacher) is the expert who imparts knowledge and skills to the service recipient (student) who receives the information. The professional training and education received as social workers provide a level of expertise to help individuals, groups, and communities. However, how dominant ideologies shape perceptions about service recipients and how the *professional* role and title perpetuate power differentials in the helping relationship requires attention. As explained by Sakamoto and Pitner (2005), power itself does not mean aggravating

power differentials between the social worker (teacher) and the service recipient (student). Instead, it means social workers can select when and how to negotiate, relinquish, and exercise their power to help service recipients to empower themselves (Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005). Consequently, an understanding of power is critical to anti-racist practice, and modeling effective and responsible use of power and authority is an indispensable pedagogical strategy (Campbell, 2002; Garran et al., 2015; Gollan & O’Leary, 2009).

In social work education, the classroom becomes the practice location, and interracial team teaching can serve to model inclusion and the sharing of power and authority between instructors (Curiel & Ashley, 2020). It is the setting to demonstrate effective anti-racist practice and prepare students for action and abstractions (Campbell, 2002). Utilizing the classroom environment as a site to model anti-racist practices, deconstruct foundational knowledge claims, promote self-awareness, and negotiate power and authority, serves as the precursor to facilitating students transfer what they have learned in the classroom to their practice (Campbell, 2002).

To prepare burgeoning social workers for anti-racist practice, Campbell (2002) suggests that social work educators maintain congruency between three pedagogical components: what is taught (explicit curriculum), how it is taught (implicit curriculum), and what students learn (learning objectives). Without congruency between these components, students cannot bridge classroom education to their personal and professional lived experiences, making it impossible to contribute to racial justice, which is ultimately the goal of anti-racist education (Campbell, 2002). Moreover, to expect nascent social workers to adopt anti-racist practices after graduation requires social work educators to model this practice before graduation (Campbell, 2002). Interracial teaching teams can offer mutual collegial support between social work educators to improve their anti-racist knowledge and practice skills—transferring their skills to students.

Central to anti-racist content is understanding the dynamics of White Supremacy, racism, oppression, and power and one's relationship to these dynamics (Campbell, 2002). Developing awareness of one's contribution to oppression and power relationships and social work's role in upholding racial inequity frequently generates feelings of anger, guilt, regret, or discouragement (Campbell, 2002). If ignored, these feelings can obstruct learning, but exploring and understanding them produces profound self-awareness and growth among students and faculty alike (Campbell, 2002). By modeling anti-racist methods via interracial team teaching, instructors can provide examples of specific actions that are consistent with anti-racist social work, with the aim for students to transfer their learning to other practice locations (Gollan & O'Leary, 2009; Miller & Garran, 2017; O'neill & Miller, 2015).

Conclusion

From the colonization of Indigenous lands to the wholesale of enslaved Black people, historical racist acts of violence against BIPOC rooted in White Supremacy's myth have indelibly influenced every major institution within the United States—including academia and the social work profession. The recent and widely publicized racist acts of violence and murders of Black people (Ladhani & Sitter, 2020) should serve as a call to action to the social work profession and social work leadership. Teaching a mere appreciation of cultural diversity is insufficient preparation for future social workers to dismantle systemic racism and White Supremacy. Although interracial team teaching and anti-racist curriculum are not the standards to social work education, there is evidence to support this emerging pedagogical approach as a viable option (Gollan & O'Leary, 2009; Miller & Garran, 2017; O'neill & Miller, 2015).

Interracial team teaching pairs where one instructor is White and the other a BIPOC requires White educators to critically self-examine their White identity and resist the temptation

to perform allyship for recognition from BIPOC in place of engaging in anti-racist practice (Akamine-Phillips et al., 2019). To support interracial teaching teams, academic institutions will have to reevaluate their hiring practices to assure a greater representation of BIPOC faculty to prevent overburdening faculty who hold ethnic and racial minoritized status identities (Meizlish & Anderson, 2018). Failure to increase the number of faculty of color in social work education leaves the future of social work and its engagement with racial justice in the hands of a straight, White, middle-class, female majority (Gorski et al., 2012).

As a theoretical framework for teaching anti-racism within an interracial team-taught model, Critical Race Theory naturally aligns with this emerging pedagogical approach to dismantling White Supremacy in social work education. However, the recent executive order issued by Donald Trump, banning anti-racist education and training to federal contractors, places CRT and anti-racist education in a precarious situation (Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping, 2020). As the research on interracial team teaching in social work education grows, attention to the efficacy of this emerging pedagogical approach to teaching anti-racism is needed. A question to consider in future research includes how the complexity of teachers' and students' intersectional identities influences teaching and learning related to anti-racism and racial justice?

**Melanated and Educated:
A Scholarly Personal Narrative**

Luis O. Curiel

School of Social Work, University of St. Thomas

Author Note

Luis O. Curiel is now at the Department of Social Work, California State University, Northridge. There is no known conflict of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Luis O. Curiel, Department of Social Work, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330, United States. E-mail: Luis.Curiel@csun.edu

Abstract

In this article, I apply Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) as the research method to reflect on my academic trajectory and guide my self-reflection as a Latinx male within social work education—both as a student and teacher. I describe the four major components of SPN – pre-search, me-search, re-search, and we-search and apply them to discuss my experience within the academy and explain how these experiences have shaped my teaching pedagogy and impacted my identity as a scholar of color. This paper is grounded in Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit) and Intersectionality Theory frameworks. I apply LatCrit’s testimonio (narrative) approach to explain the four major themes that emerged: assimilation and acculturation, barriers to education, microaggressions and racial gaslighting, and cultural taxation. I conclude by making recommendations for the recruitment and retention of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) men in social work education and discuss the potential benefits between instructors and students sharing similar cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: scholarly personal narrative, social work education, men of color, Latina/o critical theory, intersectionality, testimonio

Melanated and Educated: A Scholarly Personal Narrative

My intersectional identities and personal lived experiences are inherently intertwined and consequently influence my social work practice. Historical events shape my current role as a social work educator and inevitably inform my future work in academia as I navigate the doctoral process. Similarly, social work's checkered history as a discipline reverberates in present-day practices. My experiences confronting racism within social work education explain how I arrived at this current personal and professional juncture. Currently, the visibility and rise of activist groups like the Black Lives Matter movement has heightened self-awareness influencing Black and Brown people to adopt terms like "melanated" to describe their love for their dark-colored skin" (Orey & Zhang, 2019, p. 2460). As a melanated and educated man persisting and resisting within the ivory tower, I offer my testimonio (narrative) to add to the few voices of Latinx men in social work education. This paper highlights the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender with my academic and personal development as a Latinx male.

I apply research integrated with personal identity investigation using Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) methodology throughout this paper. This method for self-exploration serves as the compass with which I identify the coordinates to my current social-historical locatedness (Wilson, 2017). I explain the four major components of SPN – pre-search, me-search, re-search, and we-search and apply them to discuss my experience with institutional racism within the academy as a Latinx male in social work education as a student and teacher. This paper also uses a conceptual framework grounded in Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit) and Intersectionality frameworks. The selected frameworks identified are complementary methods to interpret and analyze the overarching theme related to ethnicity, race, and gender diversity within social work education.

The relationship between social work practice and education has deep roots in the discrimination and exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Ignoring these historical tensions perpetuates them in the present and ensures their existence in the future. Recent findings from a survey of over 50 Master's of Social Work programs showed a majority of MSW graduates as White (57%), heterosexual (86%), and female (90%; CSWE, 2019). Changing demographics in social work over the past 30 years show a decline of men in the field and an increase of women in social work doctoral programs (Reisch, 2013). This demographic information suggests that the future of social work education and its engagement with interpersonal and systemic racism issues rests in the hands of a straight, White, female majority.

BIPOC students seeking to complete social work doctoral education in the U.S. face multiple barriers to succeed (Ghose et al., 2018). Primary factors identified as challenges generally fall into two categories: barriers to being admitted and challenges associated with retention (Ghose et al., 2018). In a study examining diversity in social work doctoral programs, Ghose et al. (2018) identified a lack of academic support and mentorship, a need for financial aid, and racist experiences as factors that negatively impact both the admission and retention of BIPOC students. The authors propose strategies to address these challenges, including increasing the number of faculty of color, establishing mentorship networks, and expanding academic and financial support to students of color (Ghose et al., 2018).

These findings support the need to explore further the intricacies experienced by BIPOC men in social work education. In conducting this SPN, I will shed light on my experience as a Latinx (Mexican) man in social work education in my role as a student and teacher of the discipline. Examining this dual role offers additional insight into melanated male students' and teachers' social work education needs. In this narrative study, I address the questions: What is the

experience of a Latinx male student-teacher engaged in social work education; how can men of color in social work be retained to achieve academic success?

Theoretical Framework

A theory is defined as a set of ideas whose primary purpose is to explain the nature of a given phenomenon and factors contributing to a phenomenon's manifestation (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017). This study applies the Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit) methodology of *testimonio* (narratives) to describe my social work education experiences. Perez-Huber (2009) explains this methodology in the following way “testimonio – [is] a verbal [or written] journey of a witness who speaks to reveal the racial, classed, gendered, and nativist injustices they have suffered as a means of healing, empowerment, and advocacy for a more humane present and future“ (p. 644). This study is grounded in LatCrit and Intersectionality frameworks.

Latina/o Critical Theory

As a theoretical framework, LatCrit helps interpret the marginality and invisibility experienced by Latinx men in social work education. LatCrit theory is a contemporary of Critical Legal Studies and evolved from Critical Race Theory (CRT) to address concerns of Latina/o's in legal discourses and social policy (Valdes, 2005). Closely interrelated to CRT, as a theory, LatCrit analyzes issues raised in CRT and expands on matters of language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, gender, and sexuality (Kiehne, 2016; Valdes, 2005). LatCrit scholars recognize the socio-legal inequalities institutionalized through generations of conquest and colonization that disadvantage Latinx communities (Valdes, 2005). LatCrit researchers aim to expose and confront the prevalence of discrimination and subjugation that produces disparate social and economic outcomes for Latinx people in the United States (Kiehne, 2016). LatCrit activists are committed to dismantling White supremacy and anti-racist

consciousness within and beyond Latinx communities (Valdes, 2005). With a primary goal of promoting social justice and equality, as a theoretical method, LatCrit aligns with social work values and provides a valuable perspective to analyze social work practice and education (Kiehne, 2016).

Intersectionality Theory

In addition to LatCrit, Intersectionality Theory guides this study. Intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, is rooted in Black feminism and CRT to address discrimination based on race and gender (Carbado et al., 2013). Intersectionality is multifaceted and regarded as a framework, a theory, a paradigm, a method, a perspective, or a lens to analyze (Bubar et al., 2016). As a framework, Intersectionality is critical for deconstructing institutional violence, power, and privilege (Bubar et al., 2016). Intersectionality reveals the differences in experiences of oppression and privilege within groups. It simultaneously situates social identities and social locations in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality, drawing connections to the role of oppressed and oppressor (Bubar et al., 2016). LatCrit and Intersectionality frameworks facilitate the interpretation and analysis of the overarching theme in this study related to men of color in social work education.

Literature Review: Re-Search

History

Social work's historical legacies as a profession have often been complicit in marginalizing and oppressing vulnerable groups. In the U.S., the foundation of the social work profession was in cross-cultural work with European immigrants; thus, early social workers encountered cultural differences in their efforts to help culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged people (Potocky, 1997). Consequently, assimilation methods in social work

practice demanded immigrants renounce their culture, language, and ethnic institutions, generating the new “American” cultural group (Potocky, 1997). Conversely, social workers in the Settlement House movement, like Jane Addams, focused on improving neighborhoods and changing social conditions and encouraged immigrants to maintain their cultural practices instead of reforming the individual (Potocky, 1997). However, the interventions applied by early social workers were directed toward White European settlers and deliberately excluded African Americans (Hounmenou, 2012). As social work strived to gain legitimacy as a profession, it aligned with a “scientific” approach in their practice. Adopting a pro-eugenics stance was sanctioned by the American Social Hygiene Association and endorsed by esteemed social work founders, including Jane Addams, Mary Richmond, Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Edith Abbott (Kennedy, 2008). In their alignment with eugenics, social workers of the time targeted poor, non-White, girls, and women and supported, in some cases, their forced sterilization and the deportation of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants (Kennedy, 2008).

Additionally, the federal Indian boarding school program supported by social work reformers believed that they were rescuing Indigenous children from unfit families and providing them the opportunity for a successful future—aligning with the eugenics project (Crofoot & Harris, 2012; Kennedy, 2008). Between the years 1958 to 1968, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs initiated efforts to adopt Native American children into White families (Crofoot & Harris, 2012). During this period, the CWLA required that a qualified social worker remained on staff. At the time, however, there were no requirements for cultural competency or title protection for social workers. Regardless, the trauma and cultural genocide inflicted upon Indigenous people by social workers through the

boarding school and Indian adoption eras left an indelible mark that persists in contemporary times (Thibeault & Spencer, 2019).

However, in the period following the Civil Rights Movement, there were concerted efforts to increase ethnically/racially minoritized social workers at both MSW and doctoral levels (Anastas & Kuerbis, 2009). Despite increased scholarship regarding multicultural social work practice, curriculum preparing students to practice in multicultural settings is disproportionate among different social work schools (Adams et al., 2013). To date, students and faculty of color remain woefully underrepresented in schools of social work (Adams et al., 2013; CSWE, 2019).

During the 60s and 70s social workers who earned their doctorates were more likely male (Anastas & Kuerbis, 2009). However, more recently, compared to women, the proportion of men in social work decreased in North America, The United Kingdom, and Australia (Giesler & Beadlescomb, 2015; Pease, 2011). Additionally, most social work students across the social work education continuum are women (CSWE, 2019; Pease, 2011). A barrier identified that deters men from considering social work as a career option is in its framing as a caring profession and the association of caring with women (Pease, 2011). Men are perceived to have a different relationship with caring than women due to the social construction of masculinity (Pease, 2011). Men in social work programs struggle with identity as they feel pressure to prove themselves as men while engaging in a traditionally female role of being caring and compassionate (Giesler & Beadlescomb, 2015).

A content analysis of men's portrayal in introduction to social work textbooks positions women (Jane Addams & Mary Richmond) as pioneers of the profession while simultaneously erasing male social workers (Giesler & Beadlescomb, 2015). Although some White men receive credit for contributing to the profession's evolution from the 1930s and beyond, these men are

presidents and legislators (i.e., Franklin D. Roosevelt & William J. Clinton), not men in social work (Giesler & Beadlescomb, 2015). Textbook depictions of social work uphold societal regards that it is a female-identified profession and suggests to male students pursuing social work education that they must assume positions of power—perpetuating patriarchal norms (Giesler & Beadlescomb, 2015). As men in social work, our collective responsibility is to be critical of hegemonic masculinity and conscious of gendered injustices associated with male privilege (Pease, 2011).

Latinx Male College Students

A deficit of information exists regarding the motivation to succeed and achieve academic and career goals among Latinx male college students (Pérez, 2017). Educators may erroneously perceive Latinx men as unmotivated, lacking educational goals, and unlikely to succeed in college—contributing to their lack of representation in higher education (Pérez, 2017).

Compared to other racial/ethnic groups, Latinx males are more likely to drop out of high school to pursue employment, forego academic opportunities due to financial need, and not achieve college graduation due to poverty (Pérez, 2017). Additionally, Latinx males are more likely to attend impoverished schools and less likely to receive necessary academic support to prepare them for higher education (Pérez, 2017).

The cultural value of *familismo* (familism) impacts Latinx males' educational attainment as it may deter them from enrolling in college to contribute financially to support their family (Pérez, 2017). However, other important values such as respect, chivalry, and humility instilled by Latinx parents to their children foster social goals instead of academic goals (Pérez, 2017). These values serve as a motivation to succeed and sustain a desire to serve others (Pérez, 2017). To succeed academically, Latinx males turn to peers to sustain familial and social capital relying

on peer networks rather than college faculty and administrators for support (Pérez, 2017).

Therefore, Latinx males' academic success depends on cultural wealth rather than institutional conditions (Olcoñ et al., 2018; Pérez, 2017).

Latinx Faculty

Despite comprising the largest ethnic group in the U.S., few Latinx people become faculty in university settings (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007). Often, those who become faculty concentrate in Hispanic Serving Institutions and 2-year colleges occupying low-status, non-tenure-track positions (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007). Even though becoming a Professor was ranked as the top choice for Latinx college seniors' occupations, few successfully navigate the academic pipeline to the professoriate—only .2% complete a doctorate (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Sólorzano et al., 2005). Barriers encountered by Latinx faculty include feeling isolated, marginalized, and tokenized due to their low representation—precluding them from being more positive role models for Latinx students (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007).

Additionally, BIPOC faculty who often teach coursework on multiculturalism and diversity are routinely evaluated harshly by students, reflecting negatively on teaching evaluations and tenure (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Morehouse-Mendez & Perez-Mendez, 2018). Furthermore, Latinx faculty barriers are related to the vast diversity within their broadly defined ethnic group, including differences in skin color (colorism), degree of acculturation, country of origin, and accent (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007). These attributes may contribute to differential treatment from colleagues and students (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Morehouse-Mendez & Perez-Mendez, 2018).

Latinx in Social Work Education

High demand for Spanish-speaking and culturally aware social workers exists throughout the U.S. to serve the growing number of Latinx communities (Calvo et al., 2018; Olcoń et al., 2018). At present, approximately 11% of active social workers identify as Latinx, restricting their capacity to effectively address the Latinx population's needs (Olcoń et al., 2018). Regardless of this deficiency, limited attention exists on recruiting and retaining Latinx professionals in social work (Olcoń et al., 2018). The racial and ethnic representation of social work professionals is not reflective of the diversity in the U.S. population (Olcoń et al., 2018). This gap is alarming, given that Black and Brown people are disproportionately affected by issues of poverty and oppression that social work aims to address (Olcoń et al., 2018). Growing the number of future social workers to meet Latinx clients and communities' needs requires more significant efforts to be placed on the recruitment and retention of Latinx students in social work education (Olcoń et al., 2018). BIPOC students face multiple barriers to gain access and achieve education, including full-time employment and family responsibilities (Olcoń et al., 2018). Therefore, social work programs need to modify the existing academic paradigm to promote a sense of belonging, offer an inclusive curriculum, and provide financial assistance (Ghose et al., 2018; Olcoń et al., 2018).

Personal narratives shared by Latinx scholars shed light on multiple barriers encountered in the academy and serve to validate and give voice to unaddressed structural and sociopolitical issues in higher education (Chandler et al., 2014; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Garcia, 2014; Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). However, the drawback to sharing one's narrative includes being rendered vulnerable and exposed, and personal stories are often not regarded as legitimate academic scholarly work by the academy (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007). The concept of distance in research is valued as it implies neutrality and objectivity on the

researcher's part—legitimizing what and who counts as research(er) (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Nevertheless, personal narratives tell a story that statistics alone cannot (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007). Also, given that having close personal relationships is a core cultural value for Latinx people, sharing one's own lived experiences as Latinx faculty is imperative (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007).

Method

Design

This study's general design is qualitative, applying Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) to collect, analyze, and synthesize data and derive the overall meaning portrayed by the data. SPN writing originates from early slave narratives and places the researcher front and center, legitimizing the first-person, singular perspective (Nash & Viray, 2013). SPN applies to studies that examine large institutions or analyze classroom-specific dynamics and the wider academic community (Ng & Carney, 2017). Similarly, in this paper, I apply SPN as a method to explore my experiences as a melanated man in the context of race and gender in social work education.

As a research method, SPN provides scholars a means for analyzing how personal experiences contribute to the educational context of their courses and academic institutions (Ng & Carney, 2017). Critical reflection applied to scholarly standards leads to a profound understanding of the circumstances and influences that shape faculty, educational environments, and student experiences (Ng & Carney, 2017). Some scholars argue the benefit for SPN as a methodology by which researchers conduct the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL):

SPN is a constructivist research methodology that integrates personal experience as a data source that can be analyzed to extend the reach of SoTL findings. The process of teaching

and learning are made more transparent through illuminating the interior, intellectual life of educators within their scholarly framework. (Ng & Carney, 2017, p. 1)

A SPN research method is a good fit for this narrative study. The SPN design contributes to the absence of scholarship, highlighting the voices of underreported experiences in academia by Black and Brown men in social work. This SPN helps explore the questions: What is the experience of a Latinx male student-teacher engaged in social work education? How can men of color in social work be retained to achieve academic success?

Sample and Sampling Procedure

As a unique approach to research, SPN centers the researcher as a participant. This method stems from the notion that the individual has direct and specific experiences with the situation of focus who can most precisely produce knowledge and derive meaning from their interactions between their lived experiences and thoughts (Louis et al., 2016). This narrative research focuses on examining my lived experience as a Latinx male in social work education. As such, the participant is also the researcher in this study and is referred to as the researcher-participant (Louis et al., 2016).

Researcher-Participant

I, the researcher-participant in this study, self-identify as a Latinx (Mexican) male. I am a first-generation college student and an English as a second language learner. I work at a large Hispanic Serving Institution in California and serve as a member of the field faculty and lecturer in the social work department, where I earned my Master of Social Work degree. To examine the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity, I will withhold from discussing other identity markers in this study. Also, identifiers such as the name of the institution, region of the State, and other elements are purposely omitted to preserve a level of anonymity.

Data Collection

Data was gathered through a collection of my personal stories and supported by the works of other scholars. Through deep reflection, I constructed a testimonio (narrative) about my experiences and explored their meaning. This study is the meaning of my experiences that are the primary focus and data source.

Pre-Search

Nash & Bradley (2011) describe “pre-search” as both “the internal and external actions of an SPN writer before even one word is put on the page” (p. 36). This initial self-reflection process by the researcher-participant guided the focus, topic, and direction of the present study. Additionally, in this phase, SPN was determined to be an appropriate methodology to explore the research questions addressed in this study.

Me-Search

The second component of SPN methodology is identified as “me-search” (Nash & Bradley, 2011, p. 6). This step calls for the researcher-participant to “insert myself into the center of my scholarly writing” (Nash & Bradley, 2011, p. 6). This self-revelation and storytelling process is essential for deepening understanding of how the researcher’s lived experiences connect to the themes and ideas identified in the existing scholarly work (Nash & Bradley, 2011).

Re-Search

According to Nash & Bradley (2011) the “re-search” component of SPN responds to the overarching question, “What scholars and researchers have informed my writing?” (p. 7). A review of the existing literature on men of color in social work education grounds this study. A focus on Latinx men aligns with my identities and links personal narratives to research findings.

At this point in the research, central themes that emerged in the writing were identified and thematically coded.

We-Search

The final component of the SPN methodology identified by Nash & Bradley (2011) is “we-search” (p. 7). A principal question guiding this methodological stage in SPN writing is, “What are the implications for my profession, or field of study, that can be generalized from my scholarly personal narrative?” (p. 7). At this phase of the SPN process, I transition from the solitude of self-reflection to a consciousness of my relationship with the reader (Nash & Bradley, 2011). The researcher-participant (“I”) remained aware of the audience (“we”) relationship during the writing of the SPN (Nash & Bradley, 2011). In so doing, conscious decisions to include specific subjective experiences as a Latinx male in social work education were included as potentially generalizable findings.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by applying Nash & Bradley’s (2011) four components of SPN writing guidelines for conducting an SPN, including pre-search, me-search, re-search, and we-search. This methodology involves a creative process of selecting relevant themes, sharing personal stories about those themes, connecting the stories to scholarly works, and generalizing the personal to the universal (Nash & Bradley, 2011).

Findings

Personal history is a fleeting element unless it is recorded. One concern is that one's personal experiences are of no value to anyone else and, therefore, do not need to be recorded in any way.

The problem with this kind of thinking is that the individual determines the value of such information, rather than allowing other interested parties to participate in that assessment.

-Alejandro Garcia, Ph.D., Professor of Social Work (2014, p. 80)

Pre-Search

As I reflected on the assigned reading materials in my doctoral course on the history of social work education, the most glaring observation was that I did not see myself reflected within the pages of social work history. Understanding the context of the time offered some answers to this erasure. However, this is not merely an issue that impacted BIPOC in the past, as it persists to date. Social work textbooks often proclaim inclusion; however, they marginalize BIPOC leaving us on the periphery (Bernard et al., 2014; Chandler et al., 2014; Garcia, 2014). In the literature written through a dominant perspective, words such as ‘we,’ ‘us,’ ‘our,’ ‘I’ exclude the BIPOC students I teach and me. History is told from the perspective of the colonizers. Decolonizing education calls for reclaiming history as a critical and essential aspect of assuring racial justice (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). In recognition of this exclusionary history, the need for BIPOC in social work education, particularly at the doctoral level, is made evident.

Critically reflecting on social work history raised several questions about finding my location within the social work profession as a melanated and educated male. If I wish to see a change in the ivory tower, I will have to be part of the solution—by giving voice to those placed at the margin and writing myself into the pages of the future of social work. As a developing scholar in the field of social work and “steward of the discipline” (GADE, 2013, p. 1), I am conscious of producing scholarship that gives voice to BIPOC and finding equitable solutions toward increasing the number of men of color in the social work profession, inspiring this SPN.

Me-Search

The academic knowledge acquired through formal education provides a foundational baseline for how and what we teach. In academia, the conditioning in a classroom setting serves to colonize our minds with our chosen discipline's doctrine. As educators, we perpetuate this colonization within the courses we teach. We subject our students without consent to the

ideology imposed upon us as pupils of the discipline and punish them when they deviate from the standard. As an academic institution, research serves as a tool to perpetuate colonization by rewarding researchers for distorting truths about people, granting academic research, authority, and expertise over entire communities, primarily Black and Brown (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).

The colonization of our minds is not limited to the classroom setting. Intellectual colonization occurs throughout our existence via the process of socialization, which, in turn, influences our identities. As individuals, we are at risk of becoming who and what is dictated to us by the professoriate. As social work stewards, our lives become the curriculum from which we teach. To Palmer's (1997) dictum that "we teach who we are," I would also add that we teach what we know or believe to know. Our social-historical locatedness is summoned during the transmission of our institutional knowledge and structures of feeling as we indoctrinate future colleagues into the profession (Wilson, 2017).

Through self-reflecting on my academic trajectory leading up to social work education, the following themes emerged: assimilation & acculturation, barriers to education, microaggressions and racial gaslighting, and cultural taxation. The themes are explained in the following:

Theme 1: Assimilation & Acculturation

I was raised by Mexican immigrant parents who gave their best effort to provide for their children despite their limited education and narrow employment opportunities. Like most children, I grew up in a family, perceiving my home life as the norm. Our father was the breadwinner, and my mother devoted time to parenting and caring for my siblings and me. The introduction to my elementary education occurred under a false identity. My first-grade teacher introduced me to peers as "Louis"—a name that persisted for years to come. As a monolingual

Spanish-speaking child, I deduced that “Louis” was the English language equivalent and translation of my given name, “Luis.” I embraced the name as I looked forward to mastering the English language to navigate peer relations better. Later, I would understand that misidentifying me as “Louis” was the beginning of the process of colonization enacted by benevolent White women to erase my Mexican identity. Jacobs (2005, as cited in Crofoot & Harris, 2012) describes the maternal colonialism enacted by White women, including teachers and administrators, who perceived themselves as saviors of Indigenous children from their deficient Indian mothers.

Middle school and high school were both social experiment projects designed by the public-school district to manufacture diversity and inclusion. The school district placed ethnic youth on buses allowing White suburban kids to interact with urban BIPOC youth. The early morning wake-up call, the long walk to the bus stop, and the hour-long bus ride to school served as a daily reminder that we were foreign visitors on a campus intended to keep *kids like us* out. The sea of brace-mouthed White gazes transfixed with curiosity at the caravan of yellow buses was reminiscent of zoo-like conditions; only we were the exotic creatures deserving of gawking. It occurred to me that the school district would never consider placing White students on buses and shipping them out to schools in poor urban communities.

In my efforts to engage in extracurricular high school activities and resist being wholly assimilated into the predominantly White school culture, I joined the campus MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán [Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán]) club. For BIPOC youth, ethnicity can positively influence identity development and serve as a protective factor, generating a sense of belonging and improving academic performance (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). This student-led club created an enclave for my peers and me to

be Brown and Mexican (or a Latinx diaspora member) in a predominantly White school. My experience in our theatre club and ensuing extracurricular activities afforded me the right to some self-expression and visibility. Theatre performances and rehearsals required much dedication and time spent after school. However, the bus ride home was regimented and exercised a zero-tolerance policy for late arrivals—"The bus is leaving!" became a familiar cry for many of us when the school bell rang. I spent a month parked in neighborhoods surrounding my high school campus, sleeping in my father's truck to ensure I was on time to participate in afterschool activities.

Theme 2: Barriers to Education—Poverty, Limited Options, Need for Mentorship

The period leading up to high school graduation was an uncertain time thinking about what direction to take academically—the only way out of poverty was to invest in my education. At the time, I did not have access to college-educated professionals in my immediate family or a social circle that would provide me career or academic guidance. Academic advisors offered two options at my public high school: join the military or enroll in trade school. A common theme among Latinx males is to join the military or workforce, surrendering educational aspirations (Pérez, 2017; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). After some research, I enrolled in general education coursework at the community college level.

As a first-generation college student, it was not within my reach to experience the "traditional" student life. I worked full-time to pay for tuition and books and contributed financially to help support my family. Time restrictions on my studying ultimately impacted my grades. It also contributed to my delay in transferring from community college to the university and graduating on time. Among ethnically/racially minoritized groups, particularly Latinx males, this is a common factor contributing to college student attrition rates (Pérez, 2017; Sáenz &

Ponjuan, 2009). School, work, and family obligations became barriers to academic and professional achievement; however, dropping out of school was not viable.

College coursework offered many directions for learning with little guidance, bolstering uncertainty about the focus of my academic degree and subsequent career options. A high school psychology course piqued my interest enough to sustain my curiosity about human behavior, becoming an introduction to my future academic pursuits. Academic coursework granted me access to internships in various mental health, substance abuse, and hospice service settings working directly with ethnically/racially diverse individuals and families in urban environments. Exposure to these settings became the catalyst to the justice objects I value (Wilson, 2017).

Social-political-economic justice, community activism, equity, and equality for BIPOC continue to drive my passion for change. My direct practice work with individuals and families fueled my desire to earn a bachelor's degree in psychology eventually. With an undergraduate degree secured, I worked in a non-profit organization with medically fragile/terminally ill children. The social workers I encountered at the agency encouraged me to pursue graduate school and social work as a career.

Theme 3: Microaggressions and Racial Gaslighting

History repeats itself. Like an echo from the past, as a student in my MSW program, efforts to colonize my mind and identity within the academy were once again perpetrated against me. There were three of us Latinx men in the class. Although we shared these similar identities, we were each born in different parts of the world, where our respective parents gave us distinct names. Like a Border Patrol Agent demands identification when one enters a foreign land, we were forced to relinquish our identities when we crossed the imaginary border created within the classroom space. "José" would become the only name our White female professor used to

identify the three of us, forcing us to share one identity as melanated men. We attributed this occurrence initially to the newness of our relationship with our professor, but it persisted throughout the course despite protests. Stripped of our individual identities, our collective invisibility was conspicuous. Everyday acts of racist aggression aimed at BIPOC, known as microaggressions, are ordinary at the university level and are relevant to faculty and students of color and their presence in the academy (Louis et al., 2016; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012).

As an MSW student, I was indoctrinated with mostly White female instructors' social work profession's ideologies. The structures of feelings inculcated in me through classroom theory were practiced and reinforced in field practicum (Wilson, 2017). There was no choice but to learn to care about Evidence-Based Practice interventions, even when the *evidence* excluded the very clients I served. Any attempts to refute them were futile as *scientific* proof is the gold standard in the academy, and a letter grade serves as a reward and punishment for upholding the status quo. Evidence-Based Practice and protocols are privileged as “scientific” over other epistemologies, and cultural practice wisdom found within communities of color (Aisenberg, 2008). An assumption of the universal applicability of treatment interventions for BIPOC based on White evidence may serve to exclude further researchers of color voices (Aisenberg, 2008).

At the doctoral level of social work education, I had hoped for a reparative experience from my MSW program. I was one of few BIPOC students and the only melanated male in my cohort of primarily White and female doctoral peers. As my first experience in social work education within a predominantly White institution, I was unprepared for the degree of microaggressions and racial gaslighting at this education level. The microaggressions commenced at the onset of my doctoral journey. During the initial course in the program, I shared my testimonio (narrative) as a melanated man confronting racism within the context of

class discussion. Before I could complete my narrative, a White peer interjected and co-opted my story by sharing the challenges of being White—without ever acknowledging her Whiteness and the power and privilege she wielded. Compared to BIPOC, White women are privileged in a sympathy evoking virtuous victim role (Accapadi, 2007). Therefore, it is common for people with privileged identities to deny, rationalize, and experience false envy and benevolence during difficult discussions surrounding social identities (Accapadi, 2007). Similar experiences were replicated in different ways with White peers and faculty, and so too was the White silence that enveloped the classroom. This experience is commonplace in the academy, as stated in Amos' (2010) study that identifies feelings of despair, fear, and frustration experienced by BIPOC students because of the power Whiteness wields to silence students of color in the class.

There were no acknowledgments or discussions had related to the widely publicized racist public executions of Black people (e.g., George Floyd) or protests over police brutality that ensued (Hughes, 2020). Although in vogue for Schools of Social Work to issue statements of solidarity in support of anti-racism, public statements repudiating White terrorism were notably absent following the US Capitol's siege by White supremacists (Barrett et al., 2021). I experienced the White silence and lack of critical examination of racism within social work education as forms of racial gaslighting. The experience was both interpersonal with primarily White faculty and peers and systemically within the predominantly White academic institution. Racial gaslighting serves to normalize White supremacy by obfuscating racist acts that occur at an individual micro-level that are part of a macro-level system structure (Davis & Ernst, 2019). Concurrently, racial gaslighting pathologizes those who resist accepting a color-blind agenda (Davis & Ernst, 2019). On a structural level, racial gaslighting denies BIPOC groups and communities' lived experiences and serves to uphold power imbalances and racial inequities

(Davis & Ernst, 2019). However, this degree of concerted denial of racism is endemic within social work education and the ivory tower—begging the question, to what extent is our value of social justice merely performative?

Theme 4: Cultural Taxation

In the past several years, I have worked for a large public university identified as a Hispanic Serving Institution. I have taught multiple courses to MSW students focusing on practice skills, served as field faculty, provided field instruction and academic advisement, and ongoing training to agency field instructors. I developed a graduate-level course to help clinicians and community organizers engage Spanish-speaking clients and communities better to improve their mental health needs, considering the Latinx community's key cultural aspects. As Latinx faculty members, we are chiefly dedicated to enhancing the Latinx community's living conditions via service (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014).

In my role as a social work educator, I have focused on working with students who are first-generation students of color, some living with mental health diagnoses. In academia, this is a sub-population that appears to go largely unnoticed and is attracted to the field of human services, including social work. An academic setting is not equipped to address the mental health needs of students. Therefore, this can become an obstacle for some students grappling with mental health and the challenges to achieving their academic goals. Thus, through a bridge program and Latinx student affinity group, I offer students coaching, mentoring, and support. I work within the educational institution to provide BIPOC students a chance at achieving their academic goals. Help I could have significantly benefitted from receiving as a student.

Latinx faculty, steered by a strong sense of responsibility to serve the Latinx community, may devote their time to activities not rewarded by the academy (Martinez & Toutkoushian,

2014). Time expended by Latinx faculty on teaching could overwhelmingly be spent on classes dealing with racial/ethnic issues (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014). Similarly, their time teaching and mentoring may be overwhelmingly consumed, serving BIPOC students (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014). As such, Latinx faculty may experience a penalty or “cultural taxation” for participating in such programs or mentoring activities (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014; Padilla, 1994; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). In turn, higher teaching, advising, and service loads can significantly reduce Latinx faculty member’s research output and subsequent prospects for tenure and promotion (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014).

Discussion

We-Search

The 2007 Task Force on Latinos/as in Social Work Education identified a paucity in representing Latinx students and faculty in social work education (Council on Social Work Education Task Force, 2007, as cited in Chandler et al., 2014). Additionally, the scarcity of men of color in academia, as illustrated in this narrative study, draws attention to the issue that Black and Latinx faculty are highly underrepresented—mostly Black and Brown men (in terms of numbers and an equity perspective Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). As the academy's racial and ethnic demographics change, so must its values reflect the ideals of diverse voices involved in the system, not only those who have historically maintained power (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014). To expect students and faculty of color to challenge and transform a system in which we have historically been marginalized seems dishonest at best (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007).

In the present study, I identified common themes that I experienced as a Latinx male in social work education, both as a student and teacher. Assimilation and acculturation were one

theme that emerged that are echoed in the pages of scholarly literature regarding the importance of cultural and social capital among Latinx men pursuing higher education as well as the protective factor ethnic identity have on academic success (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Olcoń et al., 2018; Pérez, 2017; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). A second theme identified in this study and underscored by scholars examining challenges encountered by students of color in academia included barriers to education related to poverty, limited options, and a need for mentorship (Ghose et al., 2018; Pérez, 2017; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). I address the microaggressions and racial gaslighting I have encountered in my social work education by White faculty and peers in yet a third theme. Similarly, experiences of microaggressions in academic settings were found in the scholarly work written by other males of color (Louis et al., 2016; Padilla, 1994; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). Cultural taxation was a fourth and final theme that emerged in my experience as a teacher in social work education. This phenomenon involves having to endure an excessive amount of time and emotional energy allocated to dealing with racial/ethnic issues as a teacher of color—an experience shared and recognized in similar research conducted by faculty of color (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014; Padilla, 1994; Reddick & Sáenz, 2012).

Limitations

This study included the perspective of one participant from one large public university. As a SPN, to establish transferability to the reader, the researcher-participant presented rich, detailed descriptions of his background and individual academic experiences within multiple educational settings. In so doing, the reader may consider the degree of transferability of the study's findings to similar contexts. Additionally, to minimize threats to validity and establish trustworthiness, a data triangulation method was applied to the study (Padgett, 2017). Beyond the researcher-participant's narrative and personal perspective, various authors' peer-reviewed

scholarly works were included in the study to support the findings. Moreover, academic and employment records verify the researcher-participant's educational and career trajectory, as described in the study's narrative portion.

Implications for Social Work Education & Practice

The benefits for BIPOC students in social work education to see themselves reflected among faculty of color may hold implications for social work education and practice that have yet to be thoroughly examined. Some BIPOC students engaging with faculty of color report feeling heard and validated in their lived experiences and valued for the insights and perspectives they contribute to the classroom (Bernard et al., 2014). Whereas some students of color report feeling devalued by White faculty, who expect them to assume the role of a 'race expert' and to disproportionately challenge racism—keeping silent in the classroom for fear of retaliation, further isolation, and being viewed as a troublemaker (Bernard et al., 2014). The racial composition of social work faculty may significantly affect the overall learning environment and learning experience (Bernard et al., 2014).

These factors may also influence the teaching and preparation of social workers in mental health service settings. An inability to engage BIPOC clients in mental health treatment has been identified as a significant public health concern (Aggarwal et al., 2016; Redmond et al., 2009). Some particularly formidable obstacles to seeking treatment include viewing clinicians as intimidating based on historical legacies of racism and patient concerns that ethnically different clinicians will not understand their cultural needs (Aggarwal et al., 2016). Clinician and client ethnic resemblance may encourage treatment engagement among BIPOC groups (Aggarwal et al., 2016). However, there is a deficit of ethnically and racially diverse clinicians available to provide mental health services to meet this need (Aggarwal et al., 2016). To address the lack of

engagement among BIPOC populations in mental health treatment, efforts to recruit and retain students and faculty of color in social work education need prioritizing. Additionally, further attention to improve the training and education of White social workers who do not share ethnic resemblance and engage with BIPOC communities is a matter of significant importance.

Conclusion

An increase in Latinx faculty representation who can serve as role models and mentors for Latinx students may significantly grow Latinx students' graduation rates (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014). Enhancing the representation of BIPOC faculty in social work programs is recommended to help mitigate the issues experienced by faculty of color related to microaggressions, racial gaslighting, and cultural taxation identified in this study. Academic institutions must strengthen their efforts to recruit and retain BIPOC males in social work education and include strategies to eliminate barriers to their education, namely racism. To assist in melanating the ivory tower, academic institutions require hiring more BIPOC faculty, establishing mentorship programs, and expanding educational and financial support to BIPOC students (Ghose et al., 2018).

Additional research highlighting Latinx men's social work education experiences is necessary to understand their needs better and improve ways to recruit and retain this decreasing segment of the social work profession's workforce. Featuring men of color's narrative experiences in academia may help other men of color visualize themselves as successful pupils and professionals in their fields of endeavor (Reddick & Sáenz, 2012). Lastly, future research is warranted to investigate previous findings identifying Latinx faculty as working more hours per week without pay at public institutions than their White faculty counterparts (Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014).