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Teacher Education Program Recruitment and Admissions:

A Multiple Case Study of Three Minority-Serving Institutions in California

By

Mayeen U. Quader

Claremont Graduate University

2023

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Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below which hereby approves the manuscript of Mayeen Quader as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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Abstract

Teacher Education Program Recruitment and Admissions:

A Multiple Case Study of Three Minority-Serving Institutions in California

By

Mayeen Quader

Claremont Graduate University: 2023

In response to a national agenda to increase diversity in the teaching workforce, this qualitative multiple case study critically examined the recruitment and admission of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) to teacher education programs (TEP) in three Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) in California. Specifically, this research explored the racialized discourses and factors that shape recruitment and admissions within TEPs and supports and barriers for BIPOC teachers.

This study is grounded in Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies with a Critical Discourse Analysis of recruitment and admissions policies on TEP websites and documents, four observations of TEP virtual information sessions, and twenty semi-structured interviews with TEP staff, faculty, and administrators. Participants included those who have served in an active role in TEP recruitment and admissions within the last five years. In interviews they described recruitment and admissions and highlighted methods to diversify the teaching workforce.

Findings suggest that TEP recruitment and admissions can be highly racialized, and that TEPs within MSIs operate as racialized organizations in complex ways. Two programs adhered strictly to state licensing regulations admitting candidates based on the presumption that everyone has an equal opportunity, measuring them against norms and prioritizing those who

possess the appropriate whiteness credentials. One program prioritized racial equity, aiming to creatively adhere to state licensing regulations while intentionally recruiting from local communities of Color to diversify their TEP student body and subsequently teaching. Admission at this TEP is based on the presumption that candidates bring rich, cultural experiences with them that benefits communities.

Despite regulations and institutional constraints, this dissertation offers recommendations for how TEPs can exercise flexibility in recruiting and admitting BIPOC teachers. Prioritizing racial equity and justice in the recruitment and admission of BIPOC, critically reviewing racialized policies and practices, and involving stakeholders across K-12 and post-secondary contexts can potentially improve the recruitment and admission of BIPOC to TEPs thereby enhancing ethnoracial and linguistic diversity of teachers.

Keywords: teacher education, teacher diversity, racialized discourses, racism, BIPOC teachers

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Mohammad Abdul Quader and Shaheen Quader. Everything I accomplish is for you. I draw from your courage, compassion, and advocacy to pursue justice in an often-unjust world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Statement of the Problem

America's teachers are whiter than the communities they serve. In 1987, 90% of the teaching workforce was white (Ingersoll, 2017). According to the Department of Education, as of 2018, teaching is still overwhelmingly white (79%) (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2021). Of 50 states, 44 have over 88% white teachers (WT) working in K-12 contexts (NCES, 2021). Most of these teachers are not only white, but also female (76%), middle-class, Christian, monolingual, heterosexual, cisgendered, and US born (Carter Andrews, et al., 2019; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll et al., 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Loewus, 2017; NCES, 2021; Sleeter, 2016), exerting a powerful ideological, political, and cultural influence on an increasingly ethnoracially and linguistically diverse student body (Hancock & Warren, 2016; NCES, 2021).

As of 2020, more than half (54%), of the K-12 student population are Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), due, somewhat to the burgeoning Latinx student population, which has steadily grown from 22% to 28% in the last ten years (Ingersoll, 2017; NCES, 2021). Latinx teachers, however, only account for 9% of the national teaching workforce, a moderate jump from 7% in 2008, but not representative (NCES, 2021).

The Asian student population accounts for approximately 5% of all K-12 students (NCES, 2021), yet Asian teachers represent only 2%, while Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders and American Indians/Alaska Natives both make up less than 1% of teachers (NCES, 2021). Furthermore, despite making up almost 15% of the student population, Black adults account for less than 7% of all teachers and, like their American Indians/Alaska Native counterparts, are a group whose representation is waning steadily (NCES, 2021), a trend, which scholars denoted as

“urgent” more than 20 years ago, yet continues today (Villegas et al., 2012). Consequently, in schools where most of the students are white, more than 90% of the teachers are white (NCES, 2021). In schools with majority students of Color, the teachers are primarily white (NCES, 2021).

To put this into context, today, out of 50 K-12 public school teachers, 40 would be white, 5 would be Latinx, 3 would be Black, 1 would be Asian, 1 might be multiracial, and none would be Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or American Indian/Alaska Native. The mismatch between the degree of ethnoracial diversity of the student population and teacher population, known as the *teacher diversity gap* (Goldhaber & Mizrav, 2021), has persisted for years, and most disproportionately affects urban schools.

For example, in 2017, in the nation’s largest urban school system, New York City Public Schools, for every 100 students, 84 are BIPOC and 16 are white, almost 60% of teachers are white (Meckler & Rabinowitz, 2019). Other major urban school systems in the U.S. also exhibit similar trends. In Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), nearly 90% of the student body is BIPOC, particularly Latinx (74%), however only 65% of LAUSD teachers are BIPOC with only 41% who identify as Latinx (Meckler & Rabinowitz, 2019). In Chicago, approximately 90% of students are BIPOC, yet only 48% of teachers are BIPOC (Meckler & Rabinowitz, 2019). Many American BIPOC students go through the education system never having had a teacher who looks like them, sounds like them, or shares their experiences.

The lack of BIPOC teachers has critical implications. Scholars have found that a majority white, primarily female teaching workforce contributes to racialized outcomes (Garza, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2019) as they engage in the deculturalization of minoritized and marginalized groups, delivering a standardized, race-evasive curriculum (Jupp et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings,

1998), simultaneously prioritizing and validating white norms and values thereby reinforcing the “powerful invisibility” of whiteness (Hancock & Warren, 2016; Omi & Winant, 2014). A dearth of literature in schools celebrates Black excellence (Ladson-Billings, 1998) and Black history is relegated to February with units on “slavery, conquest or colonization” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 17).

Given the dominating presence of whiteness in teaching, it is not surprising that Black and Latinx students are overrepresented among those identified with learning disabilities compared to white students (Aud et al., 2010), and face higher suspension and expulsion rates for violations, for which white students are mildly penalized (Nelson & Lind, 2015). Tension and mutual feelings of alienation arise when predominantly white teaching staff and BIPOC students draw from fundamentally different perspectives and experiences about school (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). Research from social psychologists and scientists suggests that when students consistently experience feeling invisibilized in school, the negative impact on their mental health is long-lasting, hampering aspirations for college and participation in the economy (Engberg & Wolniak, 2010; Long et al., 2012).

Teacher Diversity Matters

Increasingly, research indicates that BIPOC students benefit from engaging with and learning from teachers who not only look, but also speak and act like them (Dee, 2004; 2005; Gershenson, et al., 2016; 2018). In a study of student perceptions of BIPOC teachers and WTs, Cherng and Halpin (2016) found that students of Color and white students have more favorable perceptions of BIPOC teachers, in particular, Black and Latinx teachers than WTs. Students who have BIPOC teachers are happier, feel motivated and cared for (Anderson, 2015; Egalite & Kisida, 2018), perform better academically (Dee, 2004; 2005; Gershenson, et al., 2016; 2018)

face less exclusionary discipline (Shirrell et al., 2021; Wright, 2015), and are more likely to finish high school, and attend college (Gershenson, et al., 2016, 2018). Despite the critical research suggesting BIPOC teachers can change the trajectory of student's lives (Dee & Penner, 2017; Grissom et al., 2020) initiatives to recruit more BIPOC teachers to the profession are fraught with challenges.

Teacher Preparation is Complicated

As of 2018, there are over 21,000 programs available in the US preparing future teachers (Office of Postsecondary Education [OPE], 2022). Most, 72% are categorized as *university-based*, in that they usually operate within institutions of higher education. More than 83% of the nation's teachers are prepared via these university-based teacher education programs (TEP) (King & Hampel, 2022; Labaree, 2004; 2008; OPE, 2020a), which typically offer 4-year undergraduate pathways, post-baccalaureate 5-year pathways, and subject and specialty specific 2-year graduate pathways, with some offering advanced degrees in conjunction with state teacher licenses or credentials. Within and across programs, a variety of models and routes are available for aspiring teachers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2022).

Focusing specifically on local district and community needs, programs known as urban teacher residencies (UTR) are hosted on college and university campuses or by non-profits and lead in collaboration with community and school district officials. Such partnerships often concentrate on serving under resourced urban and rural schools (Zeichner & Payne, 2013). Some examples of UTRs are the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR), North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program, Pathways2Teaching, the Bilingual Teacher Pipeline Project, and Call Me MISTER (Gist & Bristol, 2022).

Non-university-based pathways, such as Teach For America (TFA) (Lahann & Reagan, 2011) and New York Teaching Fellows (Brantlinger & Smith, 2013; Brantlinger et al., 2022) recruit, particularly “outstanding” (Lahann & Reagan, 2011, p. 16), “elite college graduates” (Brantlinger et al., 2022, p. 20) who learn on the job (Cochran-Smith, 2021a) and commit to teaching in schools for two years, primarily in rural and urban areas. Such programs often require less coursework than university-based programs (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Recently, *New graduate schools of education* (nGSE) (Cochran-Smith, 2021a) have formed, intent on disrupting the “monopoly” of university-based teacher preparation with the goal of remedying teacher shortages and improving teacher quality (Cochran-Smith, 2021b). Though they are not linked to colleges or universities, many offer master's degrees and recommend candidates for state certification. Many have grown out of charter management organizations or charter schools (Cochran-Smith, 2021a; Cochran-Smith, et al., 2022; Zeichner, 2018). Despite the variety of programs, most aspiring teachers must navigate a complex, lengthy, maze of coursework and costly teacher licensure exams to become a teacher.

Scholars suggest that teacher preparation might as well be wrapped in caution tape (Epstein, 2005; Sleeter, 2016). Supposedly rigorous TEP admissions requirements, such as teacher licensure exams, place an undue financial burden on aspiring teachers (Gitomer et al., 1999; Nettles et al., 2011; Sleeter, 2016), and have been shown time and again to disproportionately exclude BIPOC teachers (Angrist & Guryan, 2008; Bennett et al., 2006; Brown, 2013; 2014; Jacullo-Noto, 1991).

Despite a recent increase in the graduation rates of BIPOC via spaces such as Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI), as of 2020, only 32% of university-based TEP enrollees are BIPOC

(NCES, 2021). MSIs, which typically serve more BIPOC students than predominantly white institutions (PWI) (Bitar et al., 2022), are well positioned to assist BIPOC students in navigating historical, discriminatory hurdles to social and economic opportunities (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017), however they continue to admit and prepare mostly white, female aspiring teachers, “culturally, linguistically, ethnically, racially, and economically different” from the students they serve (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p. 230). Missing from the research is an in-depth analysis of how processes such as that of recruitment and admissions to TEPs within such MSIs might contribute to racialized outcomes.

Performance on licensure exams have been shown to have little to no correlation with K-12 student achievement (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010; Petchauer, 2016). However, TEPs often impose such admissions requirements, citing the need to weed out those who underperform due to a racialized perceived lack of adequate academic preparation (Garcia, 1986), families with healthy social dynamics, suitable morals, or a good work ethic (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Ironically, much of the English text used in TEP recruitment and admissions material is significantly more complex than the level of English assessed on licensure exams for TEP admission (Loring, 2013).

Victor Ray (2019) outlines in his theory of racialized organizations that such requirements can be constituted as *race-targeted burdens* which have disproportionate outcomes for marginalized and minoritized communities. Consequently, due to these burdens, white, monolingual aspiring teachers are admitted to TEPs more than any other ethnoracial group, thus contributing to the “teacher prep diversity gap” (The New Teacher Project [TNTP], 2020).

Teacher Prep Diversity Gap

In a recent report analyzing the gap between K-12 student and TEP student ethnoracial diversity, TNTP (2020) found that 43 of 50 states have a significant ethnoracial gap between K-12 students and TEP candidates enrolled. The largest, 30 percentage point gap, exists in Washington D.C., Mississippi, and Louisiana (TNTP, 2020) coincidentally, states with complicated histories related to school segregation (Anderson, 2016) and currently, the largest Black student populations according to the US Census Bureau [USCB] (2022).

The Center for American Progress (Fiddiman et al., 2019) maintains that to ensure an ethnoracially diverse pool of teacher candidates, it is crucial that BIPOC receive support in completing their college degrees. However, despite the increase in BIPOC college graduates, out of approximately 407,000 enrolled in traditional university based TEPs, only 11% were Latinx, 6% were Black, 2% were Asian or Multiracial and less than 1% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or American Indian/Alaska Native (OPE, 2020a), closely mirroring the teaching workforce. Research shows that white women college students are still twice as likely as BIPOC to major in education, take licensure exams, and apply to TEPs, while Black male and Latinx college students are least likely to major in education (Redding & Baker, 2019). It is evident that the accumulation of racial inequities throughout a BIPOC's educational career contributes to the paucity of BIPOC teachers in America's schools.

University-based TEPs operate within 33% of MSIs nationwide (OPE, 2020a; Rutgers Graduate School of Education [Rutgers GSE], 2021). MSIs frequently use non-traditional methods to recruit preservice BIPOC teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2020) and their efforts to diversify teaching have been fruitful (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017). Some engage undergraduates by providing a foundation of subject-specific coursework, while others work to

cultivate local pathways with high schools, school districts, community colleges, and community organizations. In many of these MSIs, financial aid is offered to undergraduates who major in education and plan to become teachers. Some, particularly Grow Your Own (GYO) programs working within or in conjunction with MSIs, show promise in diversifying the teaching workforce (Bianco & Goings, 2022; Garcia et al., 2022; Gist & Bristol, 2022; Lightfoot & White, 2022). Granting incentives has proved to be an effective approach for reducing the teacher prep diversity gap.

This study investigated the complexities along the teacher development continuum (Gist & Bristol, 2022), specifically related to recruitment and admissions within MSIs, as they are spaces that are currently wrestling with, and albeit, very slowly improving, representation in the white world of teaching (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017).

white World of Teaching and Teacher Education

Though the teacher prep diversity gap is known, TEP admissions requirements rarely change (Sleeter, 2016). An overwhelmingly white candidate pool continues to enter and graduate TEPs, joining the workforce at alarmingly higher rates than BIPOC. According to scholars, the recruitment and admission of prospective BIPOC teachers to TEPs has received limited attention (Carter Andrews et al., 2019; Demetrulias et al., 1990; Gist & Bristol, 2022; Kohli, 2021; Van Overschelde & López, 2018). Since TEP personnel primarily consist of veteran teachers, many who are white women (Hancock & Warren, 2016; Morey et al., 1997), researchers suggest an exploration is needed into the ongoing maintenance of a white world of teaching and teacher education via recruitment and admissions processes (Epstein, 2005; Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Matias, 2016; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Sleeter, 2016).

What is understudied is how staff, faculty, and administrators, specifically those serving in active roles during the TEP recruitment or admissions process, might maintain the continuous enrollment of a majority white, female, middle class student body, thus contributing to the teacher prep diversity gap (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Sleeter, 2016). More specifically, what must be surfaced and examined are the racialized discourses related to teaching, for example, discourses related to who can and should be admitted to become a teacher, and what an ideal teacher represents (Feagin, 2020; Omi & Winant, 2014). Moreover, research is needed to identify the racialized factors such as policies and practices that inhibit or facilitate the recruitment and admission of BIPOC in such spaces (Ray, 2019).

Research on how those serving in various roles in the TEP recruitment or admissions process might construct and maintain the structural advantage of whiteness via racialized discourses, or text and speech acts that “reproduce unequal power relations” between ethnoracial groups through the ways in which they “represent things and position people” (Wodak & Meyer, 2015, p. 6), thereby maintaining racial homogeneity in teaching, is an area underexplored (Haddix, 2017; Kohli, 2021).

Such research is critical, especially for TEPs operating within MSIs, with significant undergraduate populations of Color, so that ethnoracial diversity might soon emerge in the “foreground” (Ahmed, 2012) and the absence of BIPOC representation can be attended to in meaningful, long-lasting ways.

Purpose and Nature of Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore the racialized discourses in the recruitment and admissions processes and the racialized factors that shape them within three California-based TEPs operating within MSIs. This study focused on the ways in

which whiteness may be embodied and challenged in efforts to recruit BIPOC teachers. In addition, this study considered the recruitment and admission policies and practices, as well as the supports and barriers for BIPOC. Data collected for this study included observations of virtual recruitment information sessions hosted by TEPs, review of TEP websites and recruitment and admissions policies and included in-depth, semi-structured interviews with university staff, faculty, and administrators, and review of TEP webpages and recruitment and admissions policies.

Research Questions

Given the purpose of this study, the following broad research questions were included:

1. *What are the racialized discourses in the TEP recruitment and admissions processes in three California-based MSIs?*
2. *What are the racialized factors that shape recruitment and admissions of BIPOC in TEPs?*
 - a. *What are the policies and practices that support the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers or are specifically aimed at recruiting BIPOC teachers?*
 - b. *What are the barriers or perceived barriers for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers?*

Key Findings

This study finds that TEPs within three MSIs in Southern California operate as racialized organizations through discourses and factors that shape their recruitment and admissions processes (Ray, 2019). Multiple racialized discourses coexist in sometimes contradictory ways via recruitment and admissions policies, practices, and by narratives of both white and BIPOC participants. Dominant discourses of teacher quality emphasize equal opportunity and deflate diversity initiatives via strict adherence to state licensing regulations. Teacher education programs focused on measuring candidates against white normed dispositions reveal the complex, invisible, cultural superiority of white teacher candidates whose recruitment and

admission are not questioned. Some programs view the necessity of targeted recruitment efforts as an urgent concern due to the vast majority of white candidates continuously admitted to programs, while others do not.

In Melon University's TEP there is an overrepresentation of white candidates. The program's broader discourse emphasizes the need for teacher candidates who are exceptional English writers and speakers, good test takers, polite, punctual, professional, with exceptionally high navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). The program maintains a hyper focus on teacher quality via the lens of equal opportunity. There exists an unquestioned anticipation of white, primarily female applicants, and boosting ethnoracial diversity is regarded as a challenge to this norm. The lack of BIPOC candidates is given less attention, due in part to the discourse of equal opportunity which minimizes the barriers BIPOC may experience. Melon staff, faculty, and administrators participate in racialized discourses that often struggle with whiteness, but nevertheless recenter white norms and values to determine fit to be a "good teacher" for admission. This emphasis places whiteness at the forefront of the evaluation of TEP applicants, a practice I refer to as "whitekeeping".

Nectarine University's TEP enrollees represent a wider range of BIPOC backgrounds, however white TEP enrollees are overrepresented in comparison to the local K-12 student body (Brown, 2014). The dearth of BIPOC candidates is minimized and a discussion of systemic racism and racialized consequences experienced by BIPOC is circumvented by the teacher shortage. A primary focus for recruitment and admission evident in the program's discourse is on preserving teacher quality through strict adherence to state regulations and screening mechanisms. Despite core values of justice, diversity, equity and inclusion (JEDI) staff, faculty, and administrators enact whitekeeping as they minimize the historical racial exclusion of BIPOC

in post-secondary spaces. Although program officials recognize that rigorous standards are costly burdens for BIPOC, they believe that flexibilities allow less qualified individuals to enter the program thus impacting the institution's prestige and overall teacher quality.

Applicants at Nectarine are framed as customers, each of whom is regarded as having an equal opportunity to be admitted. Decisions are based on the presumption that everyone, despite circumstance, is given a fair and equal opportunity, and that the ideal teacher is a strong English speaker, professional, and knowledgeable about requirements. BIPOC candidates are framed as incapable of helping themselves and need saving.

Apple University's TEP, one of the most ethnoracially diverse programs in the state, counternarratives abound, as policies, practices, and discourses encourage the consistent recruitment of BIPOC for BIPOC communities. Their commitment to justice and equity is apparent in the flexibility offered to candidates and in the personalized support they provide. The student services department in conjunction with faculty and administration collaborate to offer prospective teacher candidates with flexibility in the form of extended deadlines and conditional admission if they are missing prerequisites or if they have a low GPA. In addition, Apple TEP's student services staff provides applicants with individualized assistance by allowing them to call or email them directly, and by promptly responding to student inquiries. They offer ongoing information sessions focusing not just on recruitment, but also BIPOC teacher retention. They collaborate with the community and school districts to stay in touch with graduates and focus on retaining BIPOC teachers in the profession.

Apple considers TEP enrollees who are drawn from communities to have cultural knowledge and assets that they bring to the local areas. Their various partnerships are symbiotic. Such narratives, however, are limited by neoliberal structures embedded in higher education

which shape most TEP policies for admission, in not just Apple, but Melon and Nectarine. Apple therefore also engages in whitekeeping the teaching workforce in various ways.

Study Significance

This type of in-depth study of teacher education recruitment and admissions processes within MSIs has policy and practice implications for equitable access to teaching opportunities. Particularly this research within three university-based TEPs provides a nuanced understanding of how program staff, faculty and administrators engage in racialized discourses of race-evasive TEP admissions requirements (Chang-Bacon, 2022). This study is crucial if we are to reveal dimensions of racialization in organizations (Ray, 2019) and critically redesign teacher preparation (Zeichner, 2018; Zeichner et al., 2015) at the national, state, and program levels to enhance meaningful representation of BIPOC in America's teaching workforce (Ahmed, 2012; Feagin, 2020).

National and state education agencies and accrediting bodies might benefit from gleaning insight from this study. With an increasingly ethnoracially diverse K-12 student body, the historical racial exclusion caused by obsolete teacher quality screening mechanisms for university-based TEP admission demand inspection. Aspiring teachers must navigate through complex hurdles to enter TEPs, and while previous research has explored the teacher development continuum (Gist & Bristol, 2022; Gist et al., 2021), insufficient attention has been paid to the teacher education policy discourse regarding university based TEP recruitment and admissions processes, and how specific discursive moves are made which maintain a white teaching workforce. Findings from this study might assist states seeking justification to renew racial equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives and ease entry requirements due to major teacher shortages exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Carver-Thomas et al., 2022).

Education policymakers might benefit from the critical review of literature and subsequent findings from this study. For those seeking to reflect upon state law and address mechanisms that contribute to racial inequality, this in-depth multiple-case study of racialized discourses within teacher education, unlike previous studies, highlights not what racism does and its harmful impact on BIPOC, but rather focuses on what it is, and how institutions might construct and maintain white supremacy in invisible ways. The methodology of identifying and analyzing racialized discourses via Critical Discourse Analysis may be useful to policymakers who are committed to racial justice.

Teacher education scholars and practitioners might benefit from findings of this study, specifically the methodology to conduct an analysis of racialized discourse. University-based TEP staff, faculty, and administrators might consider the literature reviewed here on the impact of teacher licensing requirements on BIPOC, and specifically how racialized discourses might construct and maintain a white student body. Also, this exploration of racialized discourses of teacher education can highlight methods both TEP personnel and BIPOC might engage in to urgently work toward a more heterogeneous teaching workforce.

Since there is limited agreement among experts regarding the specific efforts TEPs can engage toward meaningful inclusion (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Boser, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gist & Bristol, 2022; Goldhaber & Mizrav, 2021; Juárez et al., 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Milner, 2010; Putman & Walsh, 2019; Sleeter et al., 2014; Villegas & Irvine, 2010), and much of the research centers on increasing teacher diversity efforts at an individual level (Branch, 2001; Rogers-Ard et al., 2013; Sleeter & Milner, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2019), with limited discussion about the omnipresence of racialized discourse as it impacts teacher education (Matias, 2016) this in-depth exploration of the recruitment and

admissions processes highlights important avenues to promote anti-racist, equitable university-based TEP recruitment and admissions policies and practices. K-12 school and district stakeholders seeking to diversify their workforce might consider the findings of this study and meaningfully apply them to their own unique contexts.

A racially homogenous teaching workforce continues to limit the capabilities of learners, defining what it means to be BIPOC or a person with white skin (Mazzei, 2008). Expanding the teaching workforce to include the voices and experiences of BIPOC will undoubtedly enhance the experiences of both BIPOC teachers and BIPOC students (Lac, 2022). Critical, justice oriented BIPOC teachers might engage students via asset-based pedagogies such as culturally relevant, culturally sustaining, and ethnic studies pedagogies, thus cultivating trust and understanding for BIPOC students' households and communities (Kohli, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Tintiango-Cubales & Duncan-Andrade, 2021; Yosso, 2005). The increased representation of minoritized groups might enhance collaboration on policy and influence more accurate interpretations of student ability and behavior. Meaningful inclusive experiences in the K-12 system, might encourage more BIPOC students to seek careers in education.

Researcher Positionality

As an able bodied, brown-skinned, second generation, Muslim, Pakistani-American, cisgender woman teacher, teacher educator, and researcher who veils, having been admitted to, and prepared in, and now currently working within, a university-based TEP, I am acutely aware of how my background and experience has shaped this study.

I grew up in Southern California and have navigated through the complex state teacher licensure process as a Brown woman teacher belonging to a highly marginalized and minoritized group.

I undertake this project with a deep appreciation of Critical Race Theory (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Crenshaw et al., 1995; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Sleeter, 2016) and Critical Whiteness Studies (Cabrera, 2014; Delgado & Stefancic, 1996; Feagin, 2020; Matias, 2016) and specifically employ the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2013; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2004) to examine the covert prejudice in discursive practices that might impact aspiring BIPOC teachers access to teaching opportunities. Through this lens, I hope to formulate a better understanding of the contours of whiteness within recruitment and admissions as they continue to exclude aspiring BIPOC teachers from the teaching workforce. I dare to dream of the future we can and must create.

As a woman with brown skin, I am positioned outside the center of the dominant America of white men and women. I am also marginalized within my group of South Asian Americans. The preference for lighter skin in India and Pakistan immigrated along with my family. Throughout my youth I experienced colorist narratives and listened intently to counter-stories about my grandfather's light-skin-as property, or well known in our family as his "ticket to America". Interestingly, his experience with American bathroom segregation in the 1960s, was the louder anecdote amongst the noise of colorism that resonated with me. Accompanied by his relatively dark-skinned Indian friend who hailed from the same neighborhood in India, my grandfather was routed by "white folks" to use the "whites Only" restroom, while his friend was directed to the "colored" restrooms. A tragic experience for both, my grandfather once relayed to me that he felt he was rewarded for that which he did not earn, while his companion suffered.

Skin tone consciousness and light skin bias has shaded my understanding of what it means to "look professional" as my family would perpetuate, what I now understand to be, a discourse of whiteness (Feagin, 2020; Hunter, 2007). I therefore undertake this work after critical

self-reflection and deep appreciation of the struggles of many talented, passionate aspiring BIPOC teachers who seek university based TEP admission so they may teach students who look and sound like them.

Since K-12 public schools are diversifying, TEPs must increasingly draw from the community and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) of students and communities to manage ongoing uncertainties more effectively. To address the teacher diversity gap, TEPs must critically examine their own teacher prep diversity gap, and reflect upon how they might recruit, admit, and prepare teachers who represent students and their communities (Gist & Bristol, 2022; Kohli, 2021; Sleeter, 2008).

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are used throughout the study:

Discourse: language use in speech and writing, a form of social practice (Fairclough, 2013; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2004). According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997) it is “socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people...it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it” (p. 6).

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (Carter Andrews et al., 2021).

Racial Equity: “is a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of Color” (Center for Social Inclusion, 2017).

Racial Justice: “a vision and transformation of society to eliminate racial hierarchies and advance collective liberation, where Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, in particular, have the dignity, resources, power, and self-determination to fully thrive” (Center for Social Inclusion, 2017).

Racialization: “the process or processes through which a group comes to be understood to be a major biological entity and human lineage, formed due to reproductive isolation, in which membership is transmitted through biological descent” (Hochman, 2019, p. 1246)

Teacher Education Program (TEP): A state-approved course of study, the completion of which signifies that an enrollee has met all the state’s educational and/or training requirements for initial certification or licensure to teach in the state’s elementary, middle, or secondary schools (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CTC], 2023b).

Whiteness: a form of property that creates and maintains inequalities through the conjoining of race and class (Harris, 1993).

White spaces: spaces “where a majority of...occupants’ characteristics and their normative structures are racialized spaces where whites rarely think about...discriminatory reality” (Feagin, 2020, p. 163).

Chapter 1: Summary

In this study, I explored the racialized discourses and factors in three university based TEPs operating in MSIs in Southern California.

In Chapter 2, I present a critical examination of the literature of teacher education quality and accountability, admissions policies, and recruitment initiatives for BIPOC and discuss the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided this study.

In Chapter 3, I present the research purpose, design, and methodology in depth. Detailed descriptions of each of the case study sites, data sources, data collection, and procedures for data analysis are included.

In Chapter 4, I present major findings for each case as a result of the CDA including a detailed description of the racialized discourses and factors found. Each of the three cases is presented individually. The case studies consisted of observing virtual information sessions offered by each TEP, analyzing pertinent recruitment and admissions policies via TEP websites and documents, and conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five to ten individuals from each TEP.

In Chapter 5, I present a cross-case analysis of three TEPs: Melon, Nectarine and Apple. I respond to the study's research questions and elaborate on the Critical Discourse Analysis findings based on an examination of TEP recruitment and admissions procedures, interviews with staff, faculty and administrators, and observations of virtual information sessions.

In Chapter 6, I present an interpretation of the findings regarding what is known about the research on teacher diversity and recruitment and admissions, as well as highlight the new understandings and insights that evolved as a result of the study. I discuss the significant implications these findings have for policy and practice in the field of teacher education and make recommendations for how findings might be utilized to advance racial equity and racial justice in teacher education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Frameworks

Despite a dramatic shift in the demographics of American K-12 classrooms, stark racial disparities in teaching persist. A review of existing literature in teacher education related to teacher diversity is included here to provide background and context to this teacher prep diversity gap. Specifically, research addressing the socio-political and historical context of teacher education is presented with a specific focus on structural barriers within recruitment and admissions that might contribute to the maintenance of a racially homogeneous teaching workforce.

Literature included in this review has been collected from a variety of sources. Search terms used separately and in combination included ‘teacher education’, ‘ethnoracial diversity’, ‘teacher diversity’, ‘recruitment’, ‘graduate admissions’, and ‘teacher education admissions’. Literature was excluded if it did not explicitly discuss graduate or teacher education program recruitment, admissions, or teacher diversity.

In the first section, literature is reviewed concerning teacher quality and accountability embedded in American teacher education policy discourse. This is followed by a summary of research on salient TEP admissions requirements, methods of TEP recruitment and a summary of research on teacher preparation for diversity and equity. A brief synthesis of the literature concludes this section followed by a discussion of theoretical and conceptual frameworks employed in this study.

Teacher Education Quality and Accountability

The notion of *teacher quality* is rooted in early American ideology about what it meant to be a *good teacher*. According to historian David Tyack (1974), early in the 20th century, unprecedented European immigration exerted extra pressure on existing infrastructures. At the

same time, white women teachers flooded American schools, seeking “respectable occupations” eventually constituting 86% of the workforce, primarily in urban areas (Tyack, 1974). In a white male dominated society, women were willing to put in long hours for less pay (Meiners, 2002; Tyack, 1974). The primary quality for entry into teaching was simply and strategically white skin. An assumed moral superiority based on notions of white racial purity (Meiners, 2002), granted them the crucial responsibility as “eyes of the state” (Hancock & Warren, 2016, p. 50), controlling and surveilling children, especially those of workers and immigrants (Hancock & Warren, 2016). The ideal teacher was a white woman, who could not only control children, but also be controlled by white men (Hancock & Warren, 2016; Meiners, 2002). Little thought was given to BIPOC inclusion in the teaching workforce.

Throughout the 20th century, the path to becoming a teacher was primarily managed by local, all white, male governing bodies (Ravitch, 1995, 2002). Normal schools, once responsible for preparing white women teachers for public school classrooms, slowly transformed into the regional and elite universities we are familiar with today (Labaree, 2004, 2008). Segregated teacher programs varied in efforts to prepare teachers, populating the workforce with consistent bodies of white, Standard American English (SAE) speaking, middle class, cisgender women (Fraser, 2006).

During the 1980s, neoliberal discourse often placed blame for mediocre academic achievement on the competence of teaching staff (Sleeter, 2008). The American education system and teachers were criticized as “mediocre” and “lackluster” in the 1983 A Nation at Risk Report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), sounding the alarm for quality control in the teaching profession (Gardner, 1983). One agenda emphasized the need to “professionalize” teaching by developing clear standards, establishing strict teacher program

admissions, licensing regulations, and performance assessments with targeted professional development to maintain teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Zeichner, 2009). The alternative, more conservative “deregulation” agenda (Zeichner, 2009), sought to circumvent the influence of teacher unions, deregulate teacher preparation, dismantle the *monopoly* of teacher education, and push for alternative certification and ease of entry (Cochran-Smith, 2021c). Supported by “think tanks and foundations...presented in direct opposition to the professionalization proposals” (Zeichner, 2009, p. 12), deregulation advocates contended that college graduates could simply learn on the job and campaigned for the abolition of licensing criteria and state certification, pushing for alternative, faster routes to teaching (Zeichner, 2009).

The “social justice” agenda originated with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Association of Teacher Educators, as well as other academics (Cochran-Smith, 1998; Irvine, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Zeichner, 1993) focused on preparing teachers to teach in “culturally diverse schools” (Zeichner, 2009, p. 17). Advocates highlighted the need for targeted BIPOC recruitment and over the years have prioritized the development of high-quality programs, both traditional and alternative, that center equity and honor cultural and language capacities of teachers and students (Zeichner, 2009).

Since the 1980s, teacher quality has dominated education discourse (Cochran-Smith, 2021c). The 1986 Carnegie Commission's report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, set new professional standards for teachers and states responded with standardized exams for both students and teachers (Carnegie Commission, 1986; Ravitch, 2002). The dominant narrative was that screening for teacher quality was an absolute necessity, so that prospective teachers could demonstrate their worth (Cochran-Smith et al., 2020). Newer, more rigorous basic skills and subject matter licensure exams exploded onto the national stage,

emerging as unique, state-specific tests, strengthening the discourse of teacher quality (Cochran-Smith, 2020). Unfortunately, licensure exams operate as designed, and continue to reroute thousands of aspiring BIPOC teachers from the teaching profession (Petchauer, 2016; Sleeter, 2016; Witty, 1986).

Historically racist education policies and practices remain codified in federal education via racialized discourse within state-level education laws (Kohli, & Pizarro, 2022; Sleeter, 1994). While most policymakers, state, and national stakeholders agree that BIPOC teachers are needed, admission requirements to TEPs, and state certification regulations, which are evidently racially exclusive, continue to be lauded as necessary screening mechanisms to maintain teacher quality (Epstein, 2005). Teacher quality and teacher diversity are at seemingly opposite ends of a tension force and accrediting bodies have assumed the role of maintaining quality at all costs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2020).

Accreditation

Nationally, TEPs are primarily accredited by one of two teacher preparation accrediting bodies, the nascent Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) and the well-established Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (Will, 2019) and are reviewed every seven to ten years (Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation [AAQEP], 2022; Cochran-Smith & Reagan, 2022a; Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2022). The primary goal of TEP accreditation has been to ensure that programs maintain a high level of quality and contribute to ongoing process of development (Cochran-Smith & Reagan, 2022a; Cochran-Smith et al., 2008). AAQEP and CAEP standards require that TEPs ensure admitted teacher candidates develop content and pedagogical knowledge, have ample time and practice to refine instruction, develop professional

responsibilities, and engage in clinical experiences in K-12 schools. Standards are often displayed prominently within messaging for TEP admissions requirements.

Accreditation standards vary regarding teacher licensure exams for TEP admission. Widely, TEPs are given freedom to demand any passing exam score prior to admission as a mechanism to screen for teacher quality. Researchers question the validity of the purported *evidence-based standards* (Cochran-Smith, 2021a; Cochran-Smith et al., 2008) and have called into question the lack of empirical evidence showing program improvement, claiming that institutional interdependent policies gatekeep entrance into the teaching profession (Cochran-Smith & Reagan, 2022a; Cochran-Smith et al., 2008).

Both AAQEP and CAEP encourage TEPs to evaluate the needs of their local and district community requiring evidence that they actively seek diversity in recruitment and admissions policies and practices, however, there has been limited research on how standards are reflected in teacher education recruitment and admissions.

Teacher Education Admissions

Historically the primary goal of admission to graduate school has been to cultivate candidates with specific skills who make potential contributions to research and enhance an institution's prestige (Michel et al., 2019). Scholars suggest that in many ways, graduate admissions processes are like a "black box. The process is conducted in secret, like a papal conclave: Only the results are made public" (Cassuto, 2016, p. 1). In surveying more than 1700 graduate program deans and directors, Okahana and Kinoshita (2018) found that admissions committees tend to primarily review a student's academic records, test scores, and resumes for program related traits, that letters of recommendation and personal statements are utilized more broadly, but all of this is done in different ways. It remains unclear, in what ways data is

considered when making admissions decisions. Researchers suggest that committees engage in “homophily, or love of the same...they choose people just like themselves” (Posselt, 2016, as cited in Cassuto, 2016).

Policies and practices for graduate admissions such as those governing teacher education have traditionally been subject to a significant amount of faculty and administrative input (Cassuto, 2016; Posselt, 2016). Without clear guidelines, only general guidance from accrediting bodies, TEPs design their own admissions policies and practices. Much like graduate admissions, decisions are nearly entirely based on the interpretation of admissions requirements by committees whose primary responsibility is to assess the candidate's academic merit and dispositions for teaching, or *fitness to teach* (Fenwick, 2021).

The status quo of TEP admissions has been to require passing basic skills licensure exam scores prior to admission as a mechanism to screen for teacher quality (Fenwick, 2021). Most states with basic skills requirements that do not have their own state-developed exams, such as California's CBEST, Georgia's GACE, and Illinois' ILTS, require the Praxis exam (CTC, 2023b). Such licensure exams assess a candidate's competency in reading, writing and mathematics (Bennett et al., 2006). Traditional academic factors such as GPA and transcripts remain significant, along with letters of recommendation (LOR) and personal statements of experience (PSE) such as a teaching philosophy (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015; Michel et al., 2019).

Many TEPs also require prospective teachers to attend group and individual interviews with a myriad of individuals, including, but not limited to, academic professors, clinical instructors, advisors, and field supervisors, who collectively or individually make final admissions decisions (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015; Sleeter, 2016). In some interviews,

potential teacher candidates are also asked at times to complete small group tasks to assess “verbal, interpersonal, and leadership qualities” (Byrnes et al., 2003)

Ironically, despite emphasizing the practice of holistic file review through the requirements of qualitative data (Posselt, 2016), much like graduate admissions, TEP admissions committees primarily follow a race-evasive contest mobility approach, whereby candidates with the highest scores on licensure exams are prioritized (Guinier, 2003; Van Overschelde & López, 2018).

Testing and Assessment

Many prospective BIPOC teachers are unable to navigate through hurdles such as licensure exams to gain admission into TEPs (Tintiangco-Cubales & Duncan-Andrade, 2021). America’s first teacher quality screening device, the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), overwhelmingly excluded BIPOC. Scholars in the 1980s and 1990s analyzed teacher licensure regulations, warning that exams were being designed as political weapons to maintain a white teaching workforce, were counterintuitive since states differed on passing scores (Goertz, 1988), and that a “pernicious preoccupation with quantifiable indices” (Demetrulias et al., 1990, p. 71), such as passing scores blocked BIPOC from the profession. Scholars cautioned that if states did not remove structural barriers into teaching, the teacher diversity gap would widen over time (Fraser, 2006; Garcia, 1986; Ravitch, 2002).

In 1988, The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and National Education Association (NEA) research found that using standardized test results to determine teacher eligibility was the most significant barrier to diversifying the teaching force and that the tests excluded more than 37 thousand aspiring BIPOC teachers (Howey, 1988). However little changed.

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 2002, as No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), it mandated that all teachers be highly qualified and imposed strict teacher licensure requirements, disproportionately impacting BIPOC (Rogers-Ard et al., 2013; Sleeter, 2016). It exacerbated racial inequalities by tying federal funding to student achievement and sanctioning low-performing schools, where BIPOC students are disproportionately represented (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2005).

The mandate of such exams comes at a detrimental cost to aspiring BIPOC teachers (Amos, 2018; Dixson & Dingus, 2008). In examining the relationship between teacher diversity and teacher quality, Bennett et al. (2006) discovered that teacher licensure exams are a key barrier for aspiring BIPOC teachers and that eliminating them would dramatically boost BIPOC TEP enrollment. Ironically, registering for exams often requires a level of Standard American English language competency far higher than the level of competency assessed within such exams.

In an analysis of state licensure requirements, Angrist and Guryan (2008), concluded that licensure exam scores had no relationship to teacher quality and significantly increased racial gaps in TEP enrollment. Similarly, Goldhaber and Hansen (2010) explored the relationship between teacher candidate achievement and student achievement data over an 11-year period, concluding that TEP licensure exams, specifically those required for TEP admission, have little to no correlation to student achievement. Additional data revealed that Black students significantly benefited from being matched with a Black teacher (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010).

Despite the lack of predictive validity, many TEPs continue to employ teacher license criteria, notably licensure exams (Petchauer, 2016). Gleaning insight from the vast literature on licensure exams (Angrist & Guryan, 2008; Bennett et al., 2006; Epstein, 2005; Garcia, 1986;

Jacullo-Noto, 1991; Mikitovics & Crehan, 2002; Sleeter, 2016), it seems scholars agree that scores serve only to help TEPs screen for aspiring teachers who can successfully navigate the thick, counterintuitive, teacher education policy discourse, rather than demonstrate teaching skills and abilities.

Even with the well-established research illustrating that licensure exams lack predictive validity and are unfavorable to aspiring BIPOC teachers posing as structural barriers to the teaching profession, thereby maintaining racial hegemony in the profession, licensure exams continue to be required for TEP admission, serving as a strong pillar of teacher quality (Cochran-Smith, 2021a). Aside from licensure exams, additional teacher quality screening mechanisms complicate the journey to TEP admission for aspiring BIPOC teachers such as the GPA requirement.

GPA Requirement

For a majority of TEPs, GPA remains a leading criterion for admission (Laman & Reeves, 1983; Michel et al., 2019). In the last 20 years accrediting bodies, state departments and organizations such as the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have called for increases to minimum GPA requirements for TEP admission, claiming that students deserve “higher quality” teachers who possess higher GPAs (Van Overschelde & López, 2018). Researchers, however, have questioned the predictive validity of GPA as it relates to teacher performance (Kane et al., 2008), specifically instructional preparedness and teacher effectiveness (Ronfeldt et al., (2013) and evaluations by supervisors and cooperating teachers (Byrnes et al., 2003).

Research illustrates that raising minimum GPA requirements ignores systemic differences in GPA between undergraduate BIPOC students and their white counterparts, and between male and female undergraduates (Ladson-Billings, 2005) essentially ensuring the

continued enrollment of a white, female TEP student body operating like a “job reservation and segregation system for whites...select[ing] for race more than competence” (Epstein, 2005, pp. 95-96).

The drive for GPA increases highlights how deeply the system is rooted in structural racism (Epstein, 2005). Scholars suggest screening for teacher quality for TEP admission via licensure exams and GPA act as deterrents for BIPOC, however the process is locked in (Roithmayr, 2014; Van Overschelde & López, 2018). For those BIPOC who do successfully meet requirements such as exams and GPA, they encounter a complicated maze of additional requirements to prove they are *fit* to teach.

Personal Statement of Experience (PSE)

In addition to meeting GPA thresholds and minimum exam scores, TEP candidates are often asked to share their personal and professional growth, academic background and ambitions, education experiences, and career goals in what is commonly known as a Personal Statement of Experience (PSE). Researchers suggest that the PSE is an important criterion for use in admission other than GPA (Smith & Pratt, 1996), however despite revealing more about a teacher's disposition, PSEs are insufficient as admissions criterion since committees often have little consensus and a great deal of variety in evaluating statements (Posselt, 2016). When referencing rubrics, some raters might award points to students in various ways (Posselt, 2016). What remains unclear is the training TEP admissions committee members might receive to appropriately assess PSEs.

Complicating matters, in a corpus analysis of more than 240,000 candidate PSEs, Alvero and colleagues (2021) discovered that household income and PSE content and style are highly interrelated, and that much can be gleaned about an applicant's background from their PSE. This

has implications for students who might be of low-socioeconomic status and has consequences for aspiring BIPOC teachers from various subgroups. Nevertheless, assessing the fit to teach via such character or dispositional assessments are common in TEPs. In addition, candidates are often asked to submit at least two letters of recommendation from professional acquaintances.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation (LOR) are widely implemented as a criterion for admission to TEPs as “windows” into candidates' dispositions (Michel et al., 2019). Some TEPs use institution-specific forms for LOR submission while others provide candidates with general guidance on submission (Sleeter, 2016). Despite their popularity, however, relatively little is known about the LOR’s ability to forecast outcomes for teachers. Even less is known about the challenges of securing letters experienced by non-traditional students, transfers, and part-time students. Furthermore, there seems to be limited research about how LORs are used in the selection of TEP candidates or how they might influence admissions interviews (Posselt, 2016).

Interviews

Like LORs, interviews serve as *windows* into a candidate's fit into a program in graduate admission (Michel et al., 2019). Much like job interviews, they aim to “capture or otherwise assess social and emotional skills, attitudes, and values” (Michel et al., 2019) of candidates. Consistent with the lack of research on graduate admissions, it is unclear how many individuals are involved in admissions interviews (Baskin et al., 1996) and how TEP committees might be trained in interview methods (Michel et al., 2019).

What is known is that interviews may be conducted individually, in groups, or both. Group interviews are seen as cost saving scenarios especially when many candidates need to be assessed in a short period of time. Some group interviews include challenges or tasks group

members must solve related to teaching (Roose et al., 1985) and are based on the original teacher education group assessment formulated by educator and counselor Tzipora Shechtman (Shechtman & Sansbury, 1989). The original 90-minute group assessment, requires students to introduce themselves, discuss an educational issue and social issue, collaborate on a problem-solving task, and engage in self-reflection about their performance. Students' abilities, interpersonal skills, and leadership qualities are rated by trained assessors.

Transparency and Interactions in TEP Admissions

To meet TEP admission prerequisites outlined above, an aspiring teacher's journey to become an admit begins with their first interaction with the TEP. Based on a review of admissions in teacher education Caskey and colleagues (2001) determined that there is a need for improved communication with candidates about admissions methods and rationale. The researchers suggest that programs should try to increase clarity by providing candidates with detailed instructions and explanations of each stage in the admissions process.

Prospective students might communicate with a plethora of TEP representatives to complete applications for admission. TEP staff members, such as recruiters, serve an important role in this process both in-person and online, often offering information sessions virtually and in-person. While research has highlighted improvements needed in recruitment efforts and program design, the internal operations of recruitment and admissions within TEPs is underexplored. Because university-based TEPs prepare the most teachers in the nation, it is imperative this is where exploration occurs (Cochran-Smith, 2020, 2021a).

What has not yet been well researched is which factors of TEP admissions are given the most weight discursively, by staff, faculty, and administrators serving in active roles in the TEP recruitment and admissions processes, and precisely how this might relate to the ethnoracial

demographic makeup of TEP students. Additionally, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has recently compelled governments and institutions to relax admissions requirements; it is uncertain if this is a temporary or permanent adjustment and how this has enhanced or hindered the recruitment of more BIPOC.

Recruiting and Preparing BIPOC Teachers

Since the 1950s, at the federal, state, and local level, politicians, predominantly white, middle-and upper-class men, engaged in creative tactics to stall and defy implementation of the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to desegregate America's schools (Anderson, 2016). The administrations of Nixon, Reagan, and Bush promoted race-neutral structures maintaining whiteness firmly at the center (Anderson, 2019; Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Each administration exercised creative methods to extract much needed resources from urban neighborhoods and integrated schools promoting neoliberal market-based systems of school choice such as charter schools and private schools based in a white-centered collective disgust to avoid interracial dynamics (Anderson, 2016; Orfield & Yun, 1999).

The teaching workforce whitened as more than thirty thousand Black teachers lost their jobs (Cole, 1986; Hancock & Warren, 2016) and Black schools shuttered (Fraser, 2006; Garcia, 1986; Ravitch, 2002). Coincidentally, more Black teachers from Black schools held master's and advanced teacher licenses than WTs (Cole, 1986; Fenwick, 2021). To prevent brilliant Black educator employment in desegregating schools, "white school boards, superintendents, and lawmakers" (Fenwick, 2021), sought to maintain a white majority teaching workforce of *quality* by imposing strict regulations for teacher licensure and designing mechanisms to exclude BIPOC from positions of *influence* on children (Feagin, 2020; Foster, 1998), engaging in intentional "anti-Black, white supremacist practices...a state-sanctioned pushout" (Carter Andrews et al.,

2019, p. 6) of Black teachers at an unprecedented level. The agenda was clear (Cole, 1986; Foster, 1998). Education policy was designed to accommodate, elevate, and amplify anti-Black segregationist sentiment and maintain purported white racial purity (Cole, 1986; Feagin, 2020; Foster, 1998; hooks, 1994; Love, 2019; Ravitch, 2002).

The whiteness of the teaching profession and experiences of BIPOC teachers have been well researched (Battey & Leyva, 2016; Boser, 2011; Brown, 2013; 2014; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Garza, 2018; Juárez et al., 2008; Kohli, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Milner, 2010; Rogers-Ard et al., 2013; Sleeter, 2016; US Department of Education, 2016) however teaching remains primarily white. Despite calls for increased BIPOC teacher recruitment initiatives in the 1980s, only 45% of TEPs actively recruited BIPOC via official programs. An anticipated preponderance of white female candidates and hyperfocus on teacher quality screening mechanisms (Laman & Reeves, 1983) limited progress. Consequently, despite increasing ethnoracial diversity in K-12 schools, the 1987 teaching workforce was primarily white (90%) (Ingersoll et al., 2018).

In 1996, a National Commission on Teaching & America's Future report concluded that recruitment and preparation of America's teachers was not only subpar, but also in desperate need of reinvention, specifically because of the broad cancellation of recruitment incentives such as scholarships and forgivable loans which were especially beneficial for low-income and BIPOC students (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996). This coincided with a systematic "dismantling of state support for immigrants, people of color, and working people, as well as...deindustrialization, downsizing, and free-market reforms" (Giroux, 2020, p. 5). During this time of accountability and an explosion of newer, more rigid licensure screening mechanisms, unfavorable to BIPOC (Sleeter, 2016), TEPs continued to dedicate insufficient

effort to recruitment of BIPOC teachers and increased implementation of mechanisms to screen for teacher quality (D'amico et al., 2017). Current teacher licensure mandates are deeply rooted in this racialized system and thus operate as designed, exclusionary to BIPOC and welcoming to a consistent white majority (CTC, 2017; OPE, 2012; 2022; Sleeter, 2016).

Despite nationwide increases in teacher recruitment programs for BIPOC (Villegas & Irvine, 2010), by 2010, only 27% of the nation's TEP enrollees were BIPOC (OPE, 2012). As of 2020, this number only slightly increased to 32% (OPE, 2020a). What is alarming in a comparison between 2010 and 2020, is that the only ethnoracial group for which TEP enrollment is declining sharply is that of Black aspiring teachers, most drastically in the following states: Alabama, Arizona, Mississippi, Florida, and Georgia, each with significant Black student populations and MSIs which operate TEPs (OPE, 2020a; 2020b; Rutgers GSE, 2021; USCB, 2018).

Over time, creative efforts have emerged to support and recruit BIPOC teachers, such as local partnerships with schools, districts, community colleges, and organizations (Villegas et al., 2012). When TEPs incentivize BIPOC college students with supports such as academic advising, scholarships, financial aid, and childcare accommodations, they are more likely to major in education (Sleeter & Milner, 2011). However, researchers claim many BIPOC are rerouted from teaching due to barriers such as high costs and licensure exams or deterred by TEP reputations, specifically TEP efforts to "whitewash" and standardize curriculum, maintaining white, imperialist, capitalist, patriarchal standards of teaching, taught by primarily white faculty (hooks, 1994).

Today, state teacher licensure regulations support a predominantly white, female middle class teaching workforce via less overtly racist, and more covert race-neutral "equal opportunity"

messaging, much of which permeates teacher education policy discourse within university-based TEPs (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Matias & Zembylas, 2014). American TEPs operate in a “white world” (Juárez et al., 2008) with white staff, faculty, and a predominantly white student body. For those BIPOC teachers who gain admission, they encounter a “diversity paradox” of majority white spaces dictated by white cultural norms and values communicated via white racial discourse (Feagin, 2020). BIPOC TEP admits who struggle academically are faulted by a perceived lack of education, healthy family dynamics, proper values, and work ethic (Bonilla-Silva, 2018).

Due to the recent drop in TEP enrollments (OPE, 2012, 2020a), TEPs require structural changes to improve the racial composition of their student body. Scholars have suggested methods such as increasing faculty diversity (Ladson-Billings, 2005), faster routes via BA degrees in community colleges, or crossing boundaries and developing partnerships between universities and community colleges (Zeichner et al., 2015). Underexplored are the precise methods TEPs employ in conjunction with partnerships to recruit BIPOC, as well as how admissions requirements might play a significant role in this process (Gist & Bristol, 2021). Grow Your Own (GYO) initiatives and the work of MSI’s have been a focus of recent research regarding improving diversity initiatives (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017; Sleeter et al., 2014).

Grow Your Own Programs

After World War II, states and local governing bodies struggled to make teaching attractive. With the baby-boom and increase in school population, thousands of positions were challenging to fill. In efforts to recruit the younger generation, high school campus Future Teachers Association (FTA) clubs, historically tasked with appealing to patriotism, rerouted efforts to focus on young activism and social justice (Zeichner, 2018), emphasizing the

nonmaterial awards of teaching and sense of civic duty, while downplaying the lack of prestige, dismal salaries and overcrowded working conditions (Gelber, 2022).

In the 1970s, BIPOC activists, determined to cultivate teachers from their own communities, co-opted the methods of FTAs, and designed what would become Grow Your Own initiatives as we see some of them today. Today's Grow Your Own (GYO) initiatives grew out of these FTA clubs yet have transformed into a critical recruitment tool for BIPOC teachers.

Bartow et al., (2015) emphasize the critical need to prepare teachers from community neighborhoods to acknowledge their community and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). The goal of such programs is to empower educators to work together toward a "common vision" of educational justice against the backdrop of systemic racism.

Through The Future Educator's Program, a teacher pipeline program focusing on developing high school students of Color into teachers, Lac (2022) finds that when youth are given opportunities to conduct research on institutional racism and educational inequities through youth participatory action research (YPAR) students start to consider teaching as a profession. Similarly, the Pathways2Teaching (Lightfoot & White, 2022) high school GYO, encourages students to conduct research on community needs. Programs illustrate how critical pedagogies in K-12 contexts can enhance the recruitment of BIPOC teachers.

The University of Houston–Clear Lake (UHCL)'s GYO program for Latinx students Browning (2017) stresses the importance of faculty in building connections with students and sharing the responsibility of assisting them on their journey to become teachers. Bolstered by rich partnerships with four community colleges, and four local school districts, the program reaches out to students early in high schools and supports them until they attend (UHCL) and obtain a teaching license. Multiple support systems use data-based decision making to enhance

the program. Scholarships, academic advising, professional preparation, mentoring, and field experiences are meaningfully provided by devoted individuals.

According to teacher education scholars Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), GYO models of various types have been helpful in routing high school students toward teaching as a career early on, as well as recruiting paraprofessionals, after school program staff, and community members to enter the teaching profession, and contribute to increased ethnoracial diversity in the profession. Programs offering financial incentives have helped many obtain teaching licenses and, in California, particularly, this has proven effective, as many program completers have remained in the profession for longer periods of time. Some GYO programs are well connected in the nation's MSIs.

Minority Serving Institutions

Originally historically white institutions (HWI), some MSI's have been redesignated due to demographic shifts. Currently over 500 MSIs offer 2-year and 4-year programs to over 25% of the nation's college students (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017) and approximately 40% of MSI students are from communities of Color (Gasman & Jones, 2020). The majority are first generation, low-income, and Pell Grant eligible (Gasman & Jones, 2020). MSIs claim to have diverse learning environments at all levels of the institution with enhanced, academically rigorous learning experiences designed specifically to accommodate the needs of minoritized and marginalized students at an affordable cost. Some offer "effective remediation programs, meaningful community-centered research projects, and accessible faculty members committed to teaching" (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017, p. 3). Most enrollees attend universities in California which boasts 175 MSIs (Gasman & Conrad, 2013; Gasman et al., 2018; Rutgers GSE, 2021).

Many TEPs in MSIs put significant effort to recruit and prepare BIPOC students through the lens of social justice (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017). Some develop pathways at the undergraduate level with specialized course offerings related to teaching. Others foster connections with local high schools, school districts, community colleges, and community organizations to initiate interest in the teaching profession. Many develop relationships via hosting events in the local community to outreach about their unique programs. Additional strategies include faculty development, peer support, financial assistance, and job search assistance, placement, and ongoing support after graduation (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017).

MSIs have been successful in their efforts to diversify the teaching workforce as they engage the community early, and help students navigate often challenging financial aid requirements (Ginsberg et al., 2017). Because they intentionally maintain a critical awareness of the sociocultural and sociopolitical realities of those who are marginalized and minoritized within communities, they are better able to develop partnerships with local community members and encourage students to seek careers in education (Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017; Robinson & Gonzalez, 2022). The candidates recruited via program support such as that provided by MSIs, enter TEPs with higher academic credentials, become more effective educators, and remain in the profession longer than other teachers (Ginsberg et al., 2017; Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017). Furthermore, these candidates are more likely to graduate and teach in higher performing and low poverty schools. The researchers caution however, that scholarships with contingencies about working in high needs schools have been shown to deter some potentially excellent BIPOC teachers (Henry et al., 2012).

Non-university-based pathways such as online fast-track programs, urban residency programs, and local district programs are also common (Guha et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond,

2020). Some, specifically GYO programs embedded within TEPs, K-12 school systems and communities, illustrate promise in diversifying the teaching workforce (Gist & Bristol, 2022; Gist et al., 2021), but still trail behind university-based TEPs in preparing America's teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2004; 2020; 2021a; OPE, 2020a). Such incentives have proven to be effective methods to reduce the teacher prep diversity gap, however the overwhelming majority of white TEP enrollment remains (OPE, 2020a; Petchauer & Mawhinney, 2017).

It is clear from GYO and MSI initiatives that accumulating racial disparities in an aspiring BIPOC teacher's educational career contributes to the lack of teacher ethnoracial diversity. Addressing these complexities requires a multi-pronged approach; multiple nodes of the teacher pipeline must be examined and repaired to reduce the racial mismatch of TEP candidates and K-12 students (Gist & Bristol, 2022; Gist et al., 2021; Goldhaber & Mizray, 2021). Despite calls to ease entry into teacher education to encourage a more ethnoracially diverse group of prospective teachers into the pipeline, there has been little agreement on how to achieve this endeavor without compromising teacher quality (Cochran-Smith, 2020, 2021).

Synthesis of the Research

Much research has been conducted on racism and whiteness of teacher education (Boser, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Garza, 2018; Juárez et al, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Milner, 2010; Rogers-Ard et al., 2013; Tyler, 2011; US Department of Education, 2016). Missing from the literature, however, is an understanding of the internal operations of TEP recruitment and admissions processes, both informal and formal, in the white world of teacher education, and how this relates to teacher ethnoracial diversity. Universities and national and state policy makers have largely ignored the lack of predictive validity of common prerequisites for TEP admission. It seems the desperate quest to maintain teacher quality has

pushed the racial imbalance of the teaching profession out of minds and off political agendas. The primary focus has been on maintaining teacher quality via screening mechanisms to weed out the teachers who do not fit a certain ideal teacher type which limits BIPOC opportunities to enter classrooms.

Teacher quality is a complex definition that is subjective and localized, lending itself unfortunately to a plethora of misunderstandings of what it means to be a *good teacher* (Tyack, 1974). A white and female dominated field, the teaching profession is highly racialized and gendered (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Sleeter, 2016). Ethnoracial diversity initiatives are measured precisely by their proximity to this standard and define what it means to be an ideal candidate (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Competing definitions about this ideal is further validated by majority white TEPs as they continue to passively admit a predominantly white and cisgender women student body. While the lack of ethnoracial diversity in teaching has been well-documented, shifts to focus on accountability (Cochran-Smith, 2020) specifically measurements of teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2020), tied to neoliberal market-oriented reforms (Giroux, 2020), obscure the professional licensure process (Katz, 1966).

Not only do screening mechanisms actively gatekeep the teaching workforce, but they also maintain white racial hegemony which exacerbates racial tensions in classrooms and society writ large. When emerging non-university-based teacher certification programs are validated by their ability to prepare and certify more Black and Latinx teachers than traditional programs, university-TEPs maintain a strict focus on teacher quality instead of designing methods to improve representation. If TEPs and stakeholders ignore improving ethnoracial teacher diversity, minoritized groups, despite growing as a majority, will remain underrepresented until 2060 (Putman & Walsh, 2019).

Based on the literature reviewed, one can appreciate that there are clear complexities in studying the phenomenon of racialized discourse within higher education, and specifically teacher education as it currently operates (Ahmed, 2012). While scholars recognize that systemic racism is deeply embedded into higher education and teacher education, that university-based TEPs are overwhelmingly white, and aspiring BIPOC teachers are negatively impacted in a myriad of ways, first by prerequisites for admission, then by overwhelmingly white spaces (Kohli, 2021), what happens within predominantly white university-based TEPs as staff, faculty and administrators navigate complexities regarding recruitment and admissions processes, specifically that of admitting BIPOC teachers, is a complex, undertheorized and understudied phenomenon, lending itself well to qualitative analysis via multiple-case study.

When an overrepresentation of whiteness exists in an institution such as TEPs, aspiring BIPOC teachers will undoubtedly be missing from the picture. Systemically, this then frames the narrative regarding what it means to teach, who can and cannot teach, and who should and should not teach. Such a narrative culminates into policy discourse which is further reinforced by institutional arrangements made by policy makers, accrediting bodies, and those serving in active roles to admit aspiring teachers to TEPs. How racialized discourses manifest, and more specifically how different university based TEP recruitment and admissions processes might construct and maintain the white world of teacher education warrant critical investigation. Frameworks that surface the social construct of race as well as the power it still holds in dominating discourses in institutions such as universities are appropriate for this study and are outlined below.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study adopts a race-centered approach to provide an accurate portrayal of racialized discourse as it is embodied and challenged during university-based TEP recruitment and admissions processes, drawing from 1) Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Bell, 1992; Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Crenshaw et al., 1995; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Milner, 2010; Milner et al., 2013; Yosso, 2005), 2) Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) (Feagin, 2020; Matias, 2016; Matias & Zembylas, 2014), and 3) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2013; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2004).

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) challenges white supremacy and argues that institutions are not objective, merit based, race-evasive environments that offer equal opportunity for BIPOC. Rather, CRT posits that racism is endemic and permanent in American society, the interests of BIPOC only advance relative to those of whites, the perspectives of BIPOC are critical to understanding and analyzing racialization, and systems and structures of discrimination that serve as barriers to BIPOC achievement demand inspection using interdisciplinary methods (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Milner, 2008; Milner et al., 2013; Solórzano, 1997; Yosso, 2005).

The work of CRT theorist Bonilla-Silva (2018) on *color-blind*, or more accurately termed *race-evasive* (Jupp et al., 2019) frames or discourses which are utilized interchangeably by more than just white folk, guide analysis. The following four color-blind/race-evasive logic frames of discourse are particularly useful:

1. **Abstract Liberalism** or more commonly understood as the idea of equal opportunity, permeates discourse, especially in education, where each person is seen as a unique individual with the luxury of choices. This idea is promoted by those opposing

- affirmative action initiatives and ignores internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018).
2. **Naturalization** suggests that racial phenomena are natural occurrences and rationalizes preference for homogenous grouping dynamics as “the way things are” (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 14).
 3. **Cultural Racism** rooted in problematic concepts of biological determinism, is the notion that certain groups of people have proclivities. Today, it is invoked by white supremacists more overtly, yet in jokes and every day talk by folks from all racial and ethnic groups more casually (Bonilla-Silva, 2018).
 4. **Minimization of Racism** suggests that we live in a post-racial society and that racism is a thing of the past. Whites who ascribe to this claim BIPOC frequently use the “race card” and are “hypersensitive”. This also involves when individuals regard only overtly racist acts as problematic and indicative of “bad apples” (Bonilla-Silva, 2018, p. 40).

Because such an endeavor necessitates depth in understanding regarding racism and whiteness, this study is also informed by Critical Whiteness Studies.

Critical Whiteness Studies

CWS has grown out of whiteness studies, and aims to not only examine white privilege, but also interrogate white supremacy and the powerful invisibility of whiteness (Baldwin, 1984; DuBois, 1986; Feagin, 2020; Matias et al., 2014; Leonardo, 2009). DuBois (1986) described whiteness as a violent, insatiable, selfish, dominant, disempowering, omnipresent ideology that not only constructs, but also exacerbates racial inequalities to maintain white supremacy. According to DuBois (1986), whiteness acts as a form of compensation, or wage, held back from BIPOC yet reserved for those with white skin. Baldwin (1984) echoed this sentiment, describing how whiteness systematically replaced the ethnic heritage of European immigrants, thereby perpetuating the denial of the presence and value of Blackness and provided justification for the enslavement of Black bodies.

CWS finds Peggy McIntosh’s (1988) popularization of “white privilege” inadequate to highlight the invisibility and ubiquity of whiteness, and CWS scholars offer instead the conceptualization of “white immunity” (Cabrera, 2014), as it requires a deeper conversation

about systemic forces at play that provide protection for those with white skin from disparate treatment, and leniency for white violence and covert and overt racism.

CWS theorist Joe Feagin's (2020) conceptual framework on whiteness, the white racial frame, is used throughout this study. Feagin (2020), defines the white racial frame as the "overarching white worldview that encompasses a broad and persisting set of racial stereotypes, prejudices, ideologies, images, interpretations and narratives, emotions, and reactions to language accents, as well as racialized inclinations to discriminate [against those who are not white]" (p. 11). As an analytical and interpretive concept, the white racial frame can be applied to investigate the operation of racial oppression in society through discourse and make sense of racialized actions and interactions (Feagin, 2020). Relevant themes in the white racial frame that inform this study:

1. **Belief in a Great Chain of Being:** assumption that white institutions are the epitome of human accomplishments and that interactions with BIPOC are approached from a strongly paternalistic frame. Adherents believe that the white worldview is the natural order of society and BIPOC should accommodate and assimilate to it (Feagin, 2010, as cited in Otto & Perkins, 2011).
2. **Negative stereotyping and continuous white framing of BIPOC:** assumption that the recurring suspicion of BIPOC as immoral is normal. Examples of narratives include but are not limited to: Indigenous people are invisible and can be mocked, the phrase "people of Color" is equated to Black or African American, Black American populations are exaggerated, association of Black Americans with animals, deviant gender roles, hypersexuality, criminality, violence and danger, dirt and ignorance, ungrateful and oppositional orientation, and incapacity for self-determination, Black Americans require white paternalism and care. Black Americans are to be feared, Asians are an alien body and a threat to America, a model-minority, and are incapable of normal human communication, Asian languages, speech patterns and accents can be mocked, Latinx people are lower scale, lack ambition and mental capacity, they are invaders who carry disease and burden white society, Latinx languages are ridiculous, and accents can be mocked, and any BIPOC achievement is viewed as an exception to their race (Feagin, 2010, as cited in Otto & Perkins, 2011, Feagin, 2020).
3. **Virtuous whiteness:** assumption that whites are typically more American, moral, intelligent, rational, attractive, and/or hard-working than other racial groups, especially African Americans and other dark-skinned Americans (Feagin, 2020). Examples include: having no conscious awareness of, or major minimization of, the actual racist behavior being enacted by oneself or others in one's white community, a

- strong sense of personal and group entitlement to what whites have – with an underlying assumption that this is fair- while willfully ignoring (intentionally forgetting, remaining “invincibly ignorant” of the horrific history and the ongoing injustices that, in fact, produce these things (Feagin, 2010, as cited in Otto & Perkins, 2011).
4. **Denial of racism’s magnitude:** major assumption is that the white experience is the universal experience. Examples include, misperceiving and rarely thinking about the devastating destruction wrought by racism and that racism is only experienced by individual BIPOC (Feagin, 2010, as cited in Otto & Perkins, 2011).
 5. **Colorblind, “un-raced” nature of white thinking and acting:** belief that society is post racial. Adherents of this frame exhibit reluctance to discuss racism. They have learned pronounced discomfort in talking critically about white racism (Feagin, 2010, as cited in Otto & Perkins, 2011).
 6. **Counter-Framing by Communities of Color:** accent the humanity and strengths of communities of Color and their historical forebears, engage in aggressive countering of negative stereotyped framing, evoke “liberty and justice for all” frame with critique of hypocrisy in America, acknowledge and analysis of “unjust enrichment of whites”, critique of white social structures and conventions, critique of claimed morality and wisdom of whites, and make calls to revolutionary action (Feagin, 2010, as cited in Otto & Perkins, 2011).
 7. **Counter-Framing by whites,** suggests that adherents have a strong analysis and critique of white oppression, vigorous countering of anti-black framing and a positive assertion of the humanity of all people and their right to real freedom and justice (Feagin, 2020).

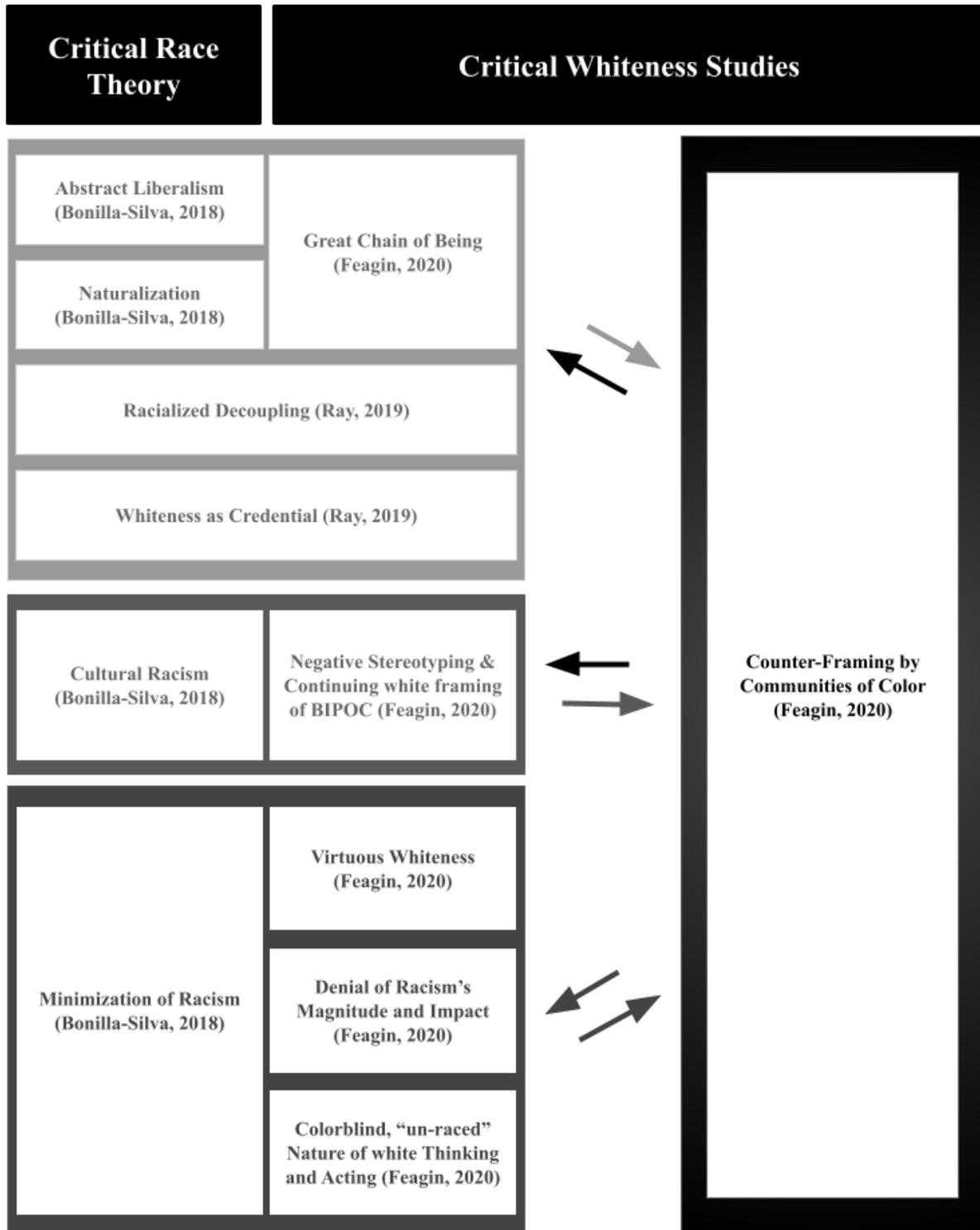
Additionally, the recent work of critical race sociologist Victor Ray (2019) informs this study. According to Ray (2019) organizations, such as universities, are not race-neutral, but rather constitute and are constituted by “racial processes that may shape both the policies of the racial state and individual prejudice” (Ray, 2019, p. 27). Ray’s (2019) work draws from both CRT and CWS and therefore informs this study’s purpose to explore, via discourse, the “sometimes-hidden mechanisms produc[e] racial stratification” (p. 48), such as those in teacher education program recruitment and admissions processes. His Theory of Racialized Organizations (Ray, 2019) has four tenets that inform this study:

1. Racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups
2. Racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources
3. Whiteness is a credential
4. The decoupling of formal rules from organizational practice is often racialized (p. 26).

A framework for exploring racialized discourses in teacher education presented in Figure 1 was formed through an iterative process drawing from concepts from Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies as described in this chapter.

Figure 1

Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies Logic Framework



To analyze qualitative data with conceptual understandings of CRT and CWS an interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological comprehensive framework is necessary. The methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is therefore employed in this study and is outlined in the next chapter. Additionally, Chapter 3 presents the research methodology and design, population and site information, research methods, and data collection procedures. I also consider the limitations of the methods and ethical considerations regarding the research.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

Methodology

Research Purpose

The goal of the study was to explore the racialized discourses in recruitment and admissions processes across three university-based teacher education programs operating within MSI's in Southern California.

Over a five-month period, I conducted approximately five hours of observations, 20 interviews with staff, faculty and administrators of teacher education programs, and reviewed recruitment and admissions policies available on university websites. In this chapter, I describe the research design and methods used to investigate TEP recruitment and admissions. I begin with an overview of the study and design, including sample processes and site selection, followed by a detailed description of the methodologies utilized to answer the research questions. I conclude with an explanation of the data analysis process.

Research Questions

Given the purpose of the multiple case study, the following research questions and sub questions guided research design:

1. *What are the racialized discourses in the TEP recruitment and admissions processes in three California-based MSIs?*
2. *What are the racialized factors that shape recruitment and admissions in TEPs of BIPOC?*
 - a. *What are the policies and practices that support the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers or are specifically aimed at recruiting BIPOC teachers?*
 - b. *What are the barriers or perceived barriers for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers?*

Research Design

This study employed a multiple-case study design (Stake, 2013; Yin, 2017) to explore the experiences of university staff, faculty and administrators who served within the last five years in

an active role in TEP recruitment or admissions to gain a richer understanding of the recruitment and admissions processes within three different MSIs. In line with multi-case study methodology, the research phenomenon or quintain (Stake, 2013) of this study is the recruitment and admissions process within TEPs. In a multiple-case study, the quintain binds the cases together and highlights the details of each case (Stake, 2013).

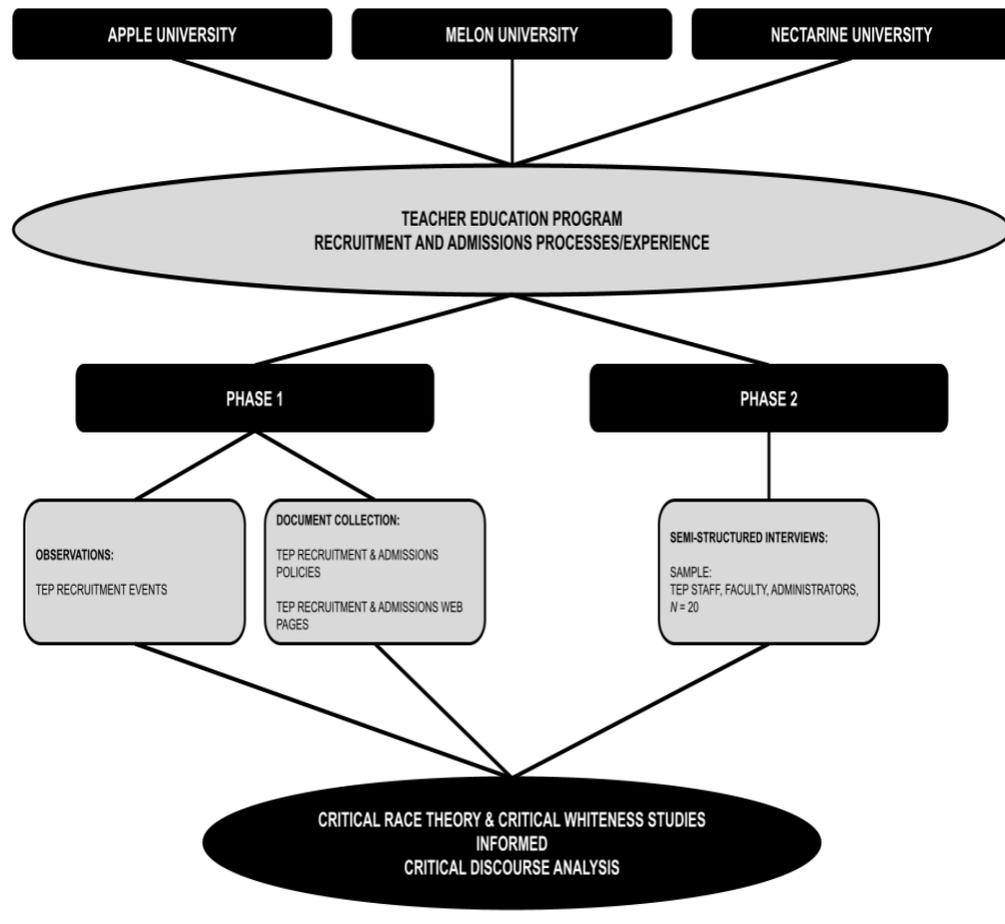
The choice of case study as my methodology is intentional because little is known about the complex phenomenon of recruiting and admitting students to TEPs as it is understood by staff, faculty, and administrators in their actual settings (Bianco & Goings, 2022; Gist & Bristol, 2022). This method was selected, as it enabled me to explore the varying ways racialized discourses are embodied and challenged by multiple individuals in different contexts and allowed for a robust analysis of how racialized factors shape the recruitment and admissions of BIPOC teachers in three separate MSIs (Yin, 2017).

Despite similarities between the universities, their teacher education programs are very different. Within each university, I was exposed to a variety of people's points of view, which helped me triangulate data. Participants in the research comprised both staff, faculty, and administrators. Finding out what racialized discourses are operationalized in contexts such as TEPs during the recruitment and admissions process and how this has significance for BIPOC teaching workforce was the primary subject of this investigation.

Because the selected theoretical frameworks emphasize using in depth analysis to highlight instances of internalized interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism, I draw from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is a theory and methodology that views discourse as a form of social practice that helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo for analysis. Figure 2 outlines the research design of the study.

Figure 2

Research Design



Critical Discourse Analysis

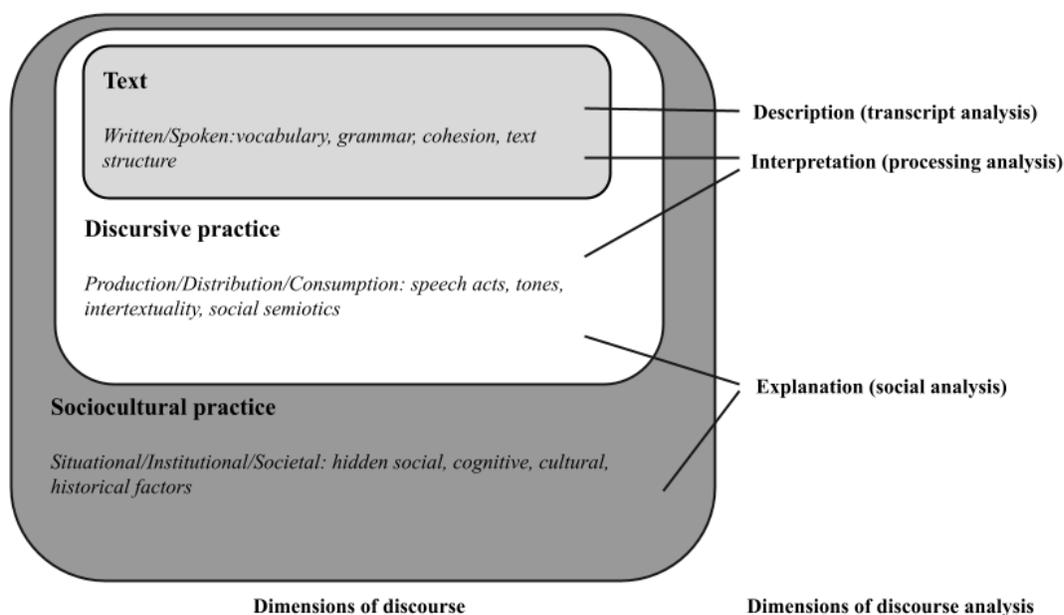
Using the framework lenses of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), I employ the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the racialized discourses embodied and challenged within three university-based teacher education programs within the recruitment and admissions processes for prospective BIPOC teachers.

Through CDA one can explore a central phenomenon via the study of text, written and spoken, in context, particularly, the ways in which discourse, as a form of social practice, constructs, maintains, and legitimizes social inequalities through the ways in which things are

represented and people are positioned (Fairclough, 2013; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2004). The position of a critical discourse analyst is explicit, as they evaluate how through language, “social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Schiffren et al., 2015, p. 466). The aim of a critical discourse analyst is “to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality” (Schiffren et al., 2015, p. 466). The visual example in Figure 3 illustrates relationships and how the concepts and theories that inform the study interact.

Figure 3

Fairclough’s 3 Dimensions of CDA



As shown in Figure 3, the use of CDA allows for an in-depth analysis of the micro (text), meso (discursive), and macro-level (sociocultural) interpretation of racialized discourse as it is embodied or challenged during university based TEP recruitment and admissions processes. Since the context, or sociocultural practice is made up of more than what is being said, the analysis includes a focus on larger teacher education policy discourse inherited from university

specific policies which forms the shared beliefs and culture of TEP recruitment and admissions. This is also known as the “Big Discourse” or “Big D” and is informed and perpetuated by smaller “d” discursive practices and text events such as informal and formal discussions, processes and routines followed by TEP staff, faculty, and administrators (Gee, 1996). Taking this entire context into consideration allows for a more accurate, thick description of the phenomenon of TEP recruitment and admissions processes (Geertz, 1973).

Context

In the state of California, teachers earn credentials via Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), local districts, or county offices of education, all of which are regulated by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). According to the CTC, the primary pathway taken by credential holders continues to be via university based TEPs (CTC, 2020). As of 2019, California’s 74 regionally accredited university based-TEPs prepared and credentialed nearly 80% of California’s teachers (CTC, 2020). Southern California is home to 38 programs where most of the state's teachers enroll (CTC, 2020). TEPs within the region of Southern California therefore are relevant sites for research on TEP recruitment and admissions processes.

In 1982, the state of California implemented the reading, writing, and mathematics, basic skills licensure exam, the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), to ensure teacher candidates admitted to programs have skills “usually acquired through academic experience in high school or in the course of completing baccalaureate degree requirements” (CTC, 2017). The passing rates on the CBEST have since reflected a disturbing trend. In 1997, nearly half of BIPOC test takers did not pass, thus rendering them ineligible for TEP admission. Between 1982 to 1997 approximately 40,000 Black, Latinx, and Asian aspiring teachers were rerouted from teaching due to the CBEST (FairTest: The National Center for Fair and Open Testing, 2008).

After 24 years, in 2006, the CTC amended the policy allowing for alternative means of satisfying the competency requirement, namely the allowance of out of state basic skills scores, as well as the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET) exams, albeit more rigorous in design than the CBEST, to satisfy licensure requirements. As of 2014, the SAT, ACT, and AP exams were acceptable for TEP admission (CTC, 2017).

To provide flexibility during the COVID-19 pandemic, in July of 2021, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 130 (CTC, 2021). According to AB 130, California TEP candidates are exempt from taking the CBEST for admission if they can demonstrate university or college coursework in reading, writing, and mathematics or subject matter with a grade of B- or higher, or if they combine appropriate coursework with sections of the CBEST that satisfy the reading, writing, and mathematics areas. AB 130 also permits prospective teacher candidates to submit coursework in lieu of the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET) as evidence of background in subject matter (CTC, 2021).

Despite additional pathways and flexibilities, however, TEPs often encourage aspiring teachers to take exams, citing validity, objectivity, and reporting. In a quick survey of TEP websites, one can see that the CBEST is often listed as the #1 option for fulfilling the basic skills requirement. Additionally, most California school districts require substitutes to take the CBEST prior to employment. Since research tells us substitutes largely become TEP candidates (Goldhaber & Mizrav, 2021) the CBEST remains a major screening mechanism for teacher quality.

Research tells us that aspiring teachers primarily attend TEPs close to their homes and eventually teach locally as well (Boyd et al., 2005). Therefore, to determine sites for the multiple-case study, the most recent enrollment demographic data of California's TEPs was

compared to current CA K-12 school district student enrollment demographic data. This method is like that one outlined by the Center for American Progress's Teacher Diversity Index (Boser, 2011), but differs in that it considers specific numbers instead of percentages to compare school enrollment. California's K-12 student population is approximately 77% BIPOC; however, the state's teachers are primarily, white (61%) (Bissell & Freedberg, 2020; EdTrust, 2022).

Additionally, white preservice teachers have the highest representation in TEP enrollment, 42% of all ethnoracial groups across the state (CTC, 2019). According to the CTC, as of 2019, 26,000 university based TEP enrollees were reported to be white (47%), Latinx (34%), Asian (9%), multiracial (5%), Black (4%) and less than 1% American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native American, Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander (CTC, 2019; OPE, 2020b). Although the whiteness of the CA TEP enrollment pool has decreased in the last ten years, (OPE, 2012, 2020b), it is still the largest represented group of aspiring teachers in California's TEPs. Black aspiring teachers are extremely underrepresented and since 2011, Black teacher representation has seen the largest decline of any BIPOC group at 1%.

In 2018, private independent colleges and universities prepared 55% of California's teachers. Approximately 38% were prepared by California State Universities and 3% were prepared by the UCs (CTC, 2020). Out of 74 accredited university based TEPs in the state, the majority (53%) are in the Southern California region (CTC, 2020). Additionally, Southern California TEPs account for more than 46% of TEP enrollments. The majority, nearly 19% of California's teachers recently credentialed, are hired in Los Angeles County alone, while 8% are hired, just in the county of San Diego (CTC, 2020).

Site Selection

The three case study sites are part of one public university system in California, and each represent a range of contexts. The three sites studied were set large public MSIs in Southern California. Three institutions were chosen based on their level of representation of various ethnorracial groupings. Each of these universities is designated as an MSI and therefore is a complex entity located in its own context.

For this multiple-case study, proximity, and specific, theoretically driven criteria guided the selection of three MSI TEPs for qualitative analysis. TEPs were classified as having a low, moderate, or high presence of ethnorracially diverse student enrollment based on available data from the CTC. TEP student enrollment data is reported as the following racialized demographic categories, as those outlined by the CTC: white, Latinx, Black, Decline to State, Asian, Two or more Races, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN).

How MSIs, with radically different TEP enrollment demographics (See Table 1), might be addressing the teacher diversity gap via recruitment and admissions processes in the state of California is intriguing (Ginsberg et al., 2017). California TEPs typically offer a wide variety of credentials and certificates, however the majority of pre-service teachers obtain the Multiple or Single Subject credential (CTC, 2020). Thus, in determining selection of sites for this study the enrollment demographics focused on these groups, as seen in Table 1.

Across 74 TEPs in California, the following three programs operating within MSIs were chosen: Apple, Melon, and Nectarine, all pseudonyms. Programs range in size from very small, certifying up to 180 teachers, to large, certifying more than 350 teachers per year.

Table 1*TEP Multiple and Single Subject Candidate Enrollment Demographic Profile (2021)*

	Apple TEP	Melon TEP	Nectarine TEP
Gender %			
Female	72%	77%	73%
Male	29%	23%	27%
Ethnoracial Identity %			
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	<1%	<1%
Asian	11%	2%	8%
Black	4%	2%	3%
Latinx	68%	39%	50%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0
Not Reported	4%	2%	6%
Multiracial white	0	6%	3%
	13%	48%	32%

Note: Data is estimated to protect the identities of case study sites.

Apple University, a thriving MSI prepares the most BIPOC teachers of the three cases (CTC, 2023a; OPE 2020b). The most recent TEP enrollee demographics of Apple were reported in 2022, and comprised, approximately, Latinx (73%), white (9%), Black (3%), and Asian (10%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1%), and no Multiracial or American Indian/Alaskan Native students (CTC, 2023a). Local K-12 school district students however differ in demographic, at Latinx (65%), white (13%), Black (7%), and Asian (10%), Multiracial (3%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (<1%) and American Indian/Alaskan Native students (<1%) (OPE, 2022). Latinx TEP enrollees are overrepresented in comparison to the students they serve, and white students are surprisingly underrepresented in the university TEP. The starkest gap, however, is in Black TEP enrollee representation, with 4%. Similar gaps are seen in Melon and Nectarine TEPs for Black teachers.

Nectarine TEP graduates go on to serve in Southern California schools. The TEP enrollment data, reflect an overrepresentation of white preservice teachers in comparison to the

local area demographic data for K-12 students. The TEP enrollees at Nectarine are Latinx (50%), white (32%), Multiracial (3%), Asian (8%), Black (3%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native (<1%) (CTC, 2023a). The overrepresentation of white enrollees at 32%, in comparison to the white (13%) student body in the region, and underrepresentation of Latinx, Black, and Asian students is significant.

As of 2021, the TEP enrollment of Melon, was reported to be white (48%), Latinx (39%), Multiracial (6%), Asian (2%), Black (2%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native (<1%) (CTC, 2023a; OPE, 2020b). Local K-12 school district students are - Latinx (50%), white (30%), Asian (10%), Black (5%), Multiracial (6%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (<1%) and American Indian/Alaskan Native students (<1%). The disparities between Latinx teachers and students of 11%, Asian teachers and students of 8% and Black teachers and students of 3%, is particularly noteworthy. A critical examination of recruitment and admissions processes occurring within these three MSI's is warranted.

Protection of Human Subjects

To protect the rights of participants, the following measures were emphasized: (1) voluntary participation and withdrawal at any time; (2) research objectives; (3) consent form; (4) study description and data collection methods; (5) confidentiality; and (6) potential risks. As a note, all names of university based TEPs and participants were de-identified, and pseudonyms were used.

Procedures for Participant Recruitment & Data Collection

Purposive sampling was used to recruit interview participants from three MSI TEPs in Southern California. As I awaited IRB approval, I finalized contact information of TEP staff, faculty, and administrators from each school or college of education website and prepared three

separate lists to document communication and log it in a Google Sheet. Additionally, I attended and observed one virtual TEP recruitment event hosted by each site and reviewed each university's TEP website, specifically focusing on the recruitment and admissions webpages.

Upon IRB approval, I reached out to administrators of teacher education programs to confirm a list of participants from the publicly available website contact information. I then sent them and additional participants, an initial recruitment email inviting them for an interview or to consent to an observation of a virtual information session (See Appendix A). The purpose of the study, informed consent procedure, description of the interview protocol, and a link to schedule the interview were added to this email.

Participants who currently work or have worked closely with a university based TEP and those who have served in an active role in TEP recruitment or admissions processes within the last five years participated in the study. Each participant selected a mutually convenient date and time for one approximately 90-minute remote, Zoom interview between June and October of 2022. See Tables 2 - 4 for participant information. Participant identities are pseudonymized.

Melon TEP Participants

Table 2

Melon Case Study Participant Data

Participant Characteristics - Self Reported	n = 8
Gender Identity	
Female	6
Male	1
Not Disclosed	1
Ethnoracial Identity	
Black	1
Latinx	0
white	6
Not Disclosed	1
Role	
Staff (Advisor, Analyst, Recruiter, Specialist)	1
Faculty (Full-Time, Part-Time)	5*
Administration/Leadership (Chair, Coordinator, Dean, Director)	5*
Years in Role	
(<2)	1
(2-5)	3
(6-9)	3
(10+)	1

Note. *Some participants identified as both Administration/Leadership and Faculty (Administrative Faculty). Years in role when interviewed does not account for years in the department as faculty or in any other role. TEP Administrators and Faculty often identify as both.

Out of 13 individuals I reached out to at Melon University's Teacher Education Program (Melon), eight scheduled and were interviewed. I interviewed two individuals who identify solely as administrators, and three administrators who also identified as faculty. I interviewed one staff member, and two faculty members who primarily teach.

Nectarine TEP Participants

Table 3

Nectarine Case Study Participant Data

Participant Characteristics - Self-Reported	n = 6
Gender Identity	
Female	4
Male	1
Not Disclosed	1
Ethnoracial Identity	
Black	1
Latinx	3
white	2
Not Disclosed	0
Role	
Staff (Advisor, Analyst, Recruiter, Specialist)	3
Faculty (Full-Time, Part-Time)	1*
Administration/Leadership (Chair, Coordinator, Dean, Director)	3*
Years in Role	
(<2)	1
(2-5)	1
(6-9)	3
(10+)	1

Note. *Some participants identified as both Administration/Leadership and Faculty (Administrative Faculty). Years in role when interviewed does not account for years in the department as faculty or in any other role. TEP Administrators and Faculty often identify as both.

Six of the 24 persons I contacted at Nectarine’s TEP agreed to be interviewed. I spoke with one administrative faculty member and two who identify primarily as administrators. I interviewed three staff members.

Apple TEP Participants

Table 4

Apple Case Study Participant Data

Participant Characteristics - Self-Reported	n = 6
Gender Identity	
Female	1
Male	1
Not Disclosed	4
Ethnoracial Identity	
Black	0
Latinx	2
white	1
Not Disclosed	3
Role	
Staff (Advisor, Analyst, Recruiter, Specialist)	1
Faculty (Full-Time, Part-Time)	3
Administration/Leadership (Chair, Coordinator, Dean, Director)	2
Years in Role	
(<2)	1
(2-5)	3
(6-9)	2
(10+)	0

Note. Some participants identified as both Administration/Leadership and Faculty (Administrative Faculty). Years in role when interviewed does not account for years in the department as faculty or in any other role. TEP Administrators and Faculty often identify as both.

Out of 19 individuals I reached out to from Apple's TEP, six agreed to participate in 90-minute interviews on Zoom. I spoke with two administrators, three faculty members and one staff member. In my interviews, I quickly learned that some of these roles are fluid and individuals often work collaboratively when needed.

Data Sources and Analysis

The data sources are of various types including observations of virtual recruitment information sessions, document collection of recruitment and admissions policies, review of TEP recruitment and admissions webpages, and finally, transcriptions from in-depth one-on-one semi-

structured interviews with university personnel associated with TEP recruitment and admissions. See Table 5 for Data Sources and Analysis.

Table 5

Data Sources and Analysis

Unit of Analysis	Phase 1		Phase 2	
	Observations	Document Collection	Interview Transcripts	Methods of Analysis
TEP <i>n</i> = 3 (Apple, Melon, Nectarine)	Virtual Information Session(s)	Recruitment and Admissions Policies/ Webpages	Semi-Structured Interviews with staff, faculty, administrators	CRT/CWS informed CDA See Figure 1

Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview protocol asks participants broad questions regarding their role in recruitment or admissions process in their TEPs. Additionally, participants provided a description of an ideal teacher candidate for admission and reflected on effective and ineffective recruitment and admissions processes. Furthermore, participants were asked about any recruitment and admissions training they may have participated in. To evaluate discursive moves based on the research questions, the interview items asked participants to reflect on disparities in teacher preparation and elaborate on whether they think disparities in teacher preparation exist, and if they think race plays a role in the recruitment and admission of students to TEPs. To help extend and deepen an understanding of teacher diversity discourse within the “Big D” teacher education policy discourse, the final interview question asked participants to share methods to diversify the teaching workforce.

Permission was obtained to audio record interviews on Zoom and as much as possible, verbal, and nonverbal nuances were captured via note taking for critical discourse analysis. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. All observational data, documents, and transcripts were

analyzed in line with the method of CDA (Fairclough, 2013; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2004).

Figure 4 outlines the interview protocol matrix. Transcriptions were provided by the Zoom transcription tool and Otter.ai. Transcripts were analyzed in line with the method of CDA (Fairclough, 2013; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). All interview, observational, and document data were de-identified and analyzed using CDA. See Figure 5 for the sample coding technique.

Figure 4

Interview Protocol and Matrix

Research Questions	
1. <i>What are the racialized discourses in the TEP recruitment and admissions processes in three California-based MSIs?</i>	
2. <i>What are the racialized factors that shape recruitment and admissions in TEPs?</i>	
Interview Questions	Research Question #
<i>Please could you begin by telling me about your role at the university?</i>	2
<i>How long have you served in your current role?</i>	2
<i>You let me know you have been a part of the TEP recruitment or admissions process at your university. Could you please generally describe the TEP recruitment or admissions process?</i>	1, 2
<i>Could you tell me about your role with TEP recruitment or admissions?</i>	1, 2
<i>What type of criteria do you typically use to determine admissions?</i>	1, 2
<i>Who and where is the program recruiting prospective candidates from?</i>	1, 2
<i>What factors lead to not recommending a student for admission?</i>	1, 2
<i>How long does it take for you to make a decision about admissions?</i>	1, 2
<i>Please describe for me the ideal TEP candidate recommended for admission.</i>	1, 2
<i>Please describe an effective TEP recruitment and admissions process.</i>	1, 2
<i>Please describe an ineffective TEP recruitment and admissions process.</i>	1, 2
<i>Do you receive training about the university based TEP recruitment and admissions process from your university in terms of making decisions?</i>	1, 2
<i>How do you keep yourself updated about teacher education admissions?</i>	1, 2
<i>Is there anything you really want to try out during the TEP admissions process that you have not been able to?</i>	1, 2
<i>Did you ever apply to a teacher education program? If so, what were the TEP recruitment and admissions processes like for you?</i>	1
<i>What do you see as some of the most important issues regarding recruitment or admissions that your university based TEP is trying to address or change?</i>	1, 2
<i>How do you see yourself involved in helping these changes to come about?</i>	1, 2
<i>Do you believe that there is a disparity in access to pathways to a teaching credential?</i>	1, 2
<i>Do you think race plays a role in TEP recruitment and admission?</i>	1, 2
<i>In your opinion, what can be done to diversify the teaching workforce?</i>	1, 2

Figure 5

Sample Coding Technique

Excerpt: Faculty - Melon University	Initial Code(s)	Theoretical Code(s)
<p>In response to factors for admissions denial:</p> <p><i>I think this is really cultural or very like they want people who are gonna sit and wait their turn right? And they want people who you know are polite and have sort of been taught. There's some people who like...like...know some things, right? Like they know how you're supposed to behave in those environments</i></p>	<p>Performance of Good Student</p> <p>Interview is “Pre-Service Teacher” Audition</p> <p>White norms - behavior</p> <p>Professional = whiteness</p>	<p>Equal Opportunity</p> <p>Virtuous Whiteness</p> <p>Whiteness as Credential</p>

The analysis occurred in three phases. The first phase, thematic analysis, uncovered reoccurring themes in recruiting and admissions processes within cases (Stake, 2013). The second stage, critical race and critical whiteness, critical discourse analysis, intended to show the many, often contradictory understandings of the staff, faculty, and administrators within cases (Stake, 2013). The third phase of analysis undertaken was that of a cross-case analysis (Stake, 2013). To build a matrix and determine how the cases are comparable to one another and what patterns arose, I looked at the common themes that developed throughout all the cases (Stake, 2013).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Interviews were recorded using Zoom and transcribed using Otter. Transcripts were subsequently imported and managed in NVivo 20. The data was coded thematically and led to many different themes. This was indexed and next a discourse analysis using CRT and CWS followed (Saldaña, 2015)

First, I applied Bonilla-Silva’s (2018) color blindness analysis to understand the institutions themselves. Second, I drew from Feagin (2020) and (Feagin, 2010, as cited in Otto &

Perkins, 2011) to analyze the *contours of whiteness* through discursive practices, see Figure 1. Specifically, what was analyzed is how power is exercised in the system to maintain white teaching force. The analysis focused on ways in which recruitment and admission discourses serve as barriers or supports for BIPOC teachers.

I transcribed and coded interview transcripts using CDA, wrote memos prior to drafting preliminary findings. I constructed the full case study version with this data. I identified themes across cases and presented preliminary cross-case findings to colleagues. I then linked these to the CRT and CWS framework outlined in Figure 1 and developed recommendations and guidance toward more anti-racist recruitment and admissions policies. The names of individuals referenced in the study are pseudonyms to protect all identities.

CDA does not require analysts to use specific step-by-step techniques or procedures, and it rejects a single approach due to its poststructural foundations (Graham, 2018). Informed by Joe Feagin's (2020) work on racialized discourse, the white racial frame, and tenets of CRT (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and CDA (Fairclough, 2013; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2004), data analysis generally followed these steps:

1. Conduct remote interviews of Cases 1-3. Memo during interviews.
2. Review memos made during interviews.
3. Transcribe all audio (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Ochs, 1979).
4. Play audio and listen for the linguistic processes of both the participants and the researcher.
5. Clean any errors.
6. Focus on the micro-level strategies used by participants in discussing TEP recruitment and admissions processes. Specifically, examine how they might reproduce, consolidate, or artificially recreate existing power structures. A specific focus was the participants' understanding of institutional hierarchy and equality, specifically that admissions decisions are made based on merit alone, without a focus on race.
7. Focus on the emotions of participants, highlighting issues and concerns they raise as well as positive associations.
8. Code for themes and draw from CWS, CRT, logic frameworks (Figure 1) to code and reflect.

9. Identify patterns that are important and interesting and make interpretations. Specifically, analysis focused on how the lack of ethnoracial diversity in the teaching profession might be related to racialized discourse in social and political contexts of TEPs.

TEP Website Review

As a result of ever-evolving COVID flexibilities related to regulatory compliance for teacher preparation and certification in the state of California, TEP websites have been experiencing ongoing revisions. For this reason, an analysis of all three case study university websites were conducted on the same day.

To conduct a website analysis, I loosely followed usability scholar Jørgensen's (1989) work on usability testing via thinking-aloud, and designed a protocol, outlined below, as I, as a user, navigated each university's website to look for information on recruitment and admission. According to Jørgensen (1989) when users think aloud, they reference what they are doing and why they are doing it. For the purposes of my research to explore racialized discourses presented in the TEPs, I thought aloud, recording my verbalizations as I navigated each TEP website and conducted an analysis by following the steps outlined below:

1. Turn on audio-recorder Otter.ai to capture thinking-aloud.
2. Visit Google.com.
3. Type in "[Name of University] teaching credential".
4. Click the first publicly accessible link related to this search.
5. Navigate the site for program recruitment and admissions information.
6. Navigate until application instructions appear.
7. Navigate until the recruitment information session appears.
8. Transcribe and clean the transcript.
9. Conduct CDA based on CRT and CWS.

Using data triangulation, my interpretation of the website was informed by interview data. Data from the website was compared with information gathered during interviews to ensure that my understanding of recruiting and admissions policies and practices was correct.

Recruitment and Admissions Policies

I visited each TEP website and downloaded any materials that were accessible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the many texts that are used to guide the recruiting and admissions processes inside the TEPs. As a result, there was relatively little that needed to be analyzed, as a significant portion of the documentation pertaining to recruiting and admissions are presented on program webpages. I analyzed all the documents according to their relation to the study (Stake, 2013) more specifically, how they relate to the discourse about recruitment and admissions within the TEP, and how they might provide further insight into how aspiring BIPOC teachers are recruited and admitted.

I used NVivo qualitative analysis software to code and analyze the data that was consistent with the discursive logic framework illustrated in Figure 1.

The first codes were extracted from participant interviews *in vivo*. This resulted in over 2,000 initial codes from all cases. I then conducted axial coding (Saldaña, 2015), developing categories and subcategories by grouping and sorting codes based on redundancies within each case. Finally, I drew from theoretical frameworks in Figure 1 to identify racialized discourses and factors related to TEP recruitment and admissions processes present in the data.

The findings contain significant concepts and discursive themes. In the following sections, I provide a summary of findings of the three-case study TEP recruitment and admissions processes. Brief excerpts are included for each case study to illustrate the variability of discourses. See Tables 6-8 for Case Study Participant Information.

Limitations

This multiple-case study has the potential to shed light on gatekeeping within teacher preparation, however it is not without limitations. Firstly, the study is limited to three California MSIs, each with a TEP in the region of Southern California. Each has a unique organizational

culture, which might limit how generalizable or transferable findings are to other university based TEPs in the geographical area (Stake, 2013).

Further, interviews were conducted with only 20 participants, and were limited only to those who have worked or currently work as staff, faculty, or administrators at the universities, who have served in some type of an active role in the university's TEP recruitment or admissions process within the last five years. To recruit a broad range of participants for interviews, I contacted university personnel via their publicly accessible emails available from university TEP contact lists. Additionally, I sought assistance from university gatekeepers, who may or may not have facilitated access to specific participants for their own reasons. An additional limitation is voluntary response bias since the study is limited to university personnel with the interest, means, and time to participate in one remote Zoom interview.

Furthermore, interviews relied on the ability of each participant to recall information about TEP recruitment and admissions processes, accurately and honestly, with myself, a researcher with whom they are unfamiliar. This self-reported data might have been subjected to biases such as selective memory, telescoping, attribution, and exaggerations (Price & Murnan, 2004).

In addition, my participation in virtual recruitment sessions could have inadvertently influenced the participants' behavior (Yin, 2017). Furthermore, session topics were navigated by study participants in different ways, often relying on the questions of those aspiring teachers in attendance with the time and means to participate.

This study and subsequent analyses were based on the participants' experiences as they described them. Consequently, all information on recruitment and admissions is filtered via the perspective of the staff, faculty and administrators, and my own interpretive lens. The

perspective of aspiring teachers, or those not admitted to TEPs was not accounted for in this study which is an important consideration for future research.

Additionally, this analysis is based on a snapshot in a brief 5-month period. These findings are also nestled within the pandemic experience. As interviews transpired, some of the policies changed. Therefore, findings outlined in the next chapter, may not reflect the universities' most recent efforts related to ethnoracial diversity in teaching.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter outlines findings based on the research questions and sub questions (1) What are the racialized discourses in the TEP recruitment and admissions processes in three California-based MSIs? (2) What are the racialized factors that shape recruitment and admissions in TEPs? (2a) What are the policies and practices that support the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers or are specifically aimed at recruiting BIPOC teachers? (2b) What are the barriers or perceived barriers for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers?

To answer these questions, I observed TEP virtual recruitment information sessions, reviewed and analyzed recruitment and admissions policy documents available on TEP websites, and conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 staff, faculty, and administrators working in active roles in recruitment and admissions in three MSIs in Southern California. This chapter is organized as follows: (1) descriptions of three TEPs, Melon, Nectarine and Apple, providing context, outlining the recruitment and admissions processes, including barriers and supports and (2) presentation of the racialized discourses and factors that shape recruitment and admissions processes based on analyses of information sessions, recruitment and admissions policies in documents and websites, and interview transcripts using CDA drawing from the theoretical frameworks of CRT and CWS. In the chapter that follows (Chapter 5), I outline a cross-case analysis detailing themes across the three cases.

Case 1: Melon: A Case of Homophily

An analysis of data from Melon reveals that structurally, Melon engages in the passive recruitment of similar others, white TEP candidates via strict adherence to racialized compliance requirements (Ray, 2019). The promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion is obscured by structural barriers to admit students who are linguistically and ethnoracially nondominant in the

space (Anicich et al., 2021). Melon University’s TEP is a case of homophily (Posselt, 2016, as cited in Cassuto, 2016). The admissions interview expressly frames the TEP setting as one that inhibits the admittance of students who do not adhere to white norms. This is further complicated by the TEP’s stringent adherence to quality screening mechanisms, as well as use of a rubric intended for transparency, but employed as an exclusionary mechanism.

In the following section I outline the admissions requirements, recruitment strategies, narratives, supports, and barriers present in Melon as presented on websites and documents, demonstrated via virtual information sessions, and discussed by eight faculty, staff, and administrators in interviews. See Table 6 for participant pseudonyms and roles.

Table 6

Melon Case Study Participants and Roles

Pseudonym	Role
Rebecca	Staff
Kiara	Faculty
Ophelia	Faculty
Keith	Administration
Terry	Administration
Deborah	Administrative Faculty
Kelly	Administrative Faculty
Paula	Administrative Faculty

Melon TEP Program Design

Melon University’s TEP (Melon) offers post-baccalaureate general elementary and secondary teaching credentials as well as specialist credentials. According to the CTC, in 2021 the majority of Melon enrollees in the Multiple Subject program were white (47%), followed by Latinx (32%). Single Subject program enrollees were white (51%) and Latinx (36%). One Melon interview participant, claiming to have knowledge of the student body, estimated incorrectly that over 50% of the student body had “the various Hispanic related backgrounds, Latinx” (Kelly).

Such an exaggeration is common in the transcripts at Melon, and, according to Feagin (2020) is likely due to the hypervisibility of BIPOC, especially in predominantly white spaces such as that of Melon, where most staff (48%) and faculty (61%) are white.

Participants shared that the TEP collaborates with the Student Services Division (SSD) to ensure recruitment and admissions policies are in line with recent regulations from the CTC, such as the requirement to ensure TEP candidates have a minimum GPA, subject matter coursework and basic skills competency in addition to the necessary background checks. These policies, participants indicated, regulate the admissions processes of the TEP. Admissions requirements and processes are outlined in Table 7.

Melon TEP Admission

Table 7

Melon TEP Admissions Requirements and Processes

Policy	Criteria
Compliance Related	GPA minimum of 2.5 Subject Matter evident in Coursework, Waiver, or Exam Basic Skills evident in Coursework, Waiver, or Exam Certificate of Clearance TB Clearance US Constitution Requirement - Only for outside candidates CPR or First Aid Certification
Program Specific	Letters of Recommendation (2) Personal Statement of Experience Prerequisite Courses (3) Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted With Program Specific Committee - Individual or Group - Group Includes Assessment (Presentation for Back to School Night) - Includes On-Demand Writing Prompt (Reflect on Dispositions) - Includes Panel Interview - Committee Uses Interview Rubric

The Melon administrative faculty and faculty work alongside the Student Services Division (SSD) to admit students. After an aspiring teacher submits two applications, one for

Melon and one for the university, applications are reviewed by the SSD, which comprises three staff members and one administrator. These individuals ensure compliance with the criteria outlined in Table 7 and connect with students if materials are missing. Next, SSD staff email students inviting them to an interview, which as of June 2022, were being conducted on Zoom.

The admissions interview is held individually or as a group, depending on the specific program the aspiring teacher applied to and is entirely run by faculty and administrative faculty. In these interviews, candidates are introduced to the program briefly and asked to participate as a group in an assessment to prepare a presentation for parents for back-to-school night. Throughout this process, interview participants shared that students are “watched” (Deborah, Kelly). One participant outlined how they “watch their interpersonal interactions” (Paula) for “dispositions” (Deborah, Paula) to ensure they don't have any “red flags” (Deborah, Kiara, Paula) and the focus is on “how well [applicants] play with others?” (Paula).

Administrative faculty and faculty individually score the candidate's performance during interviews using a rubric designed which includes measurement for dispositions. Final decisions are then made collectively based on interview performance and the candidate's files prepared by the SSD. Participants shared that priority is given to those who have met basic skills and who perform well in the interview. Some students are offered conditional admission if they have yet to meet prerequisites. These flexibilities are offered for students who have not completed basic skills or subject matter exams or coursework, not for GPA, or any other criteria listed in Table 7.

Participants shared that applicants are denied admission for a variety of reasons. The most prominent reason, shared by participants, is the lack of “appropriate” (Kiara) or “professional” (Deborah) disposition in the interview, second only to “concerning” (Deborah, Paula) letters of recommendation.

Melon TEP Recruitment Strategies

In addition to undergraduates, local school district personnel and community college students apply to Melon's TEP. Prospective students might call the numbers available on the TEP website, or email SSD administrator, Keith, or members of the SSD, and are often redirected to attend information sessions. If they are unable to attend, they are asked to schedule appointments with the SSD team.

All SSD team members are members of a CTC email listserv, so they are updated regarding changing compliance regulations. Administrators and faculty shared that they often reroute interested students to the SSD since the division is more informed on new flexibilities related to COVID-19, such as eased requirements for basic skills and subject matter (CTC, 2021). To help students make judgments or find some flexibility in waiving tests or courses, the SSD concentrates primarily on providing applicants guidance on logistical, compliance related information.

Keith also serves as the TEP's primary recruiter and manages a team of three staff members, one of whom is currently on leave. Keith recently inherited the additional responsibility of leading undergraduate recruitment at the institution. He explained that as a result, he is now focusing less on department-level recruitment and more on university-level recruitment. Currently, Keith visits undergraduate courses to recruit for the TEP, and shares information about teaching with one group of undergraduates he teaches in an introductory class for Melon freshman. Keith shared that he also engages on his own with the community, such as the local county offices of education.

Faculty involvement is limited to those who seek out SSD guidance regarding compliance. In general, the faculty and administration are less involved in recruitment, but generally quite involved in admission of candidates, in particular the interview.

Melon TEP Recruitment Narratives

Participants shared overwhelmingly about the difficulty of having too few people to do the work needed to recruit effectively, let alone recruit actively or in any kind of targeted manner. The SSD, according to staff, faculty, and administrators interviewed, is afflicted with staffing inadequacies, and the majority linked this to the COVID-19 pandemic. With a "short-staffed" (Rebecca) team of four people, amidst the ongoing uncertainty related to the pandemic, Keith shared, the SSD is currently engaging in minimal recruitment for the TEP. Participants at all levels expressed feeling "overwhelmed" (Deborah, Kiara). Three participants shared that practically all recruiting efforts are devoted to simply responding to queries from students who have shown interest.

Faculty interviewed shared they "don't know who does what" (Deborah) and need greater transparency about recruitment and admissions, while administrators shared that staff, faculty and administrators operate as a "collaborative team" (Terry). Some expressed concern about the TEP website, namely that it feels "separated" (Paula), "shabby" (Ophelia) and fails to make the program appear "innovative" (Deborah).

In an interview with SSD staff member, Rebecca, she specified that prior to COVID-19, the team was actively going into "high schools, junior colleges, job fairs, [and] career fairs". When asked about diversity initiatives, she referred me to the work of a single faculty member, Ophelia, who oversees a grant related to teacher diversity that is supported by a local nonprofit working to improve representation of, specifically, Latino teachers.

Overall participants shared that there is no method to track recruitment initiatives or follow up with students who express interest in Melon during events or presentations. When asked how students learn about virtual information sessions, Keith responded, “much of it is word of mouth”.

Melon TEP Supports for Recruitment and Admission of BIPOC

Overall, Melon engages in moderate recruitment of BIPOC in comparison with Apple’s TEP. Currently there is only one targeted initiative for Latino teachers, which is predicated on need established by the local school districts. Much of the support offered to students is compliance-related, and staff of the SSD indicated they have an “open-door policy” (Rebecca) and encourage students to call them directly with questions. The SSD authorizes for the extension of deadlines as necessary. Students are given information on the application and on the process of state teacher credentialing during virtual information sessions. The use of a rubric during interviews is meant to increase transparency, as it is also shared with the students and updated annually.

Melon TEP Barriers for Recruitment and Admission of BIPOC

Barriers for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC at Melon are exacerbated by institutional constraints, compliance regulations, and external factors. Constraints exist internally at the institutional level, as outlined by participants, including staffing inefficiencies, institutional pressures to increase enrollment, and the lack of faculty diversity. Participants shared that they lack time to collaborate internally, communicate across channels, and some feel their voices are not heard.

Barriers for BIPOC applicants identified by participants are consistent with literature on barriers (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Petchauer, 2016; Sleeter, 2016). The SSD staff and recruiter

specifically shared that for all candidates, due to the complexity of compliance with CTC regulations, messaging about requirements are complicated, and faculty added that the outdated website does little to mitigate this. Participants also shared that the program is rigid, following CTC standards which limits their own ability to offer flexibilities such as paid student teaching which can deter aspiring BIPOC teachers who might need to work or dedicate time to other responsibilities.

External factors perceived by participants as potential barriers to BIPOC admission include the lack of diversity as a priority for university partners, particularly local K-12 school districts, the general public's perception of teaching as having poor working conditions, and the profession's low wages. One Melon TEP administrator shared that the program has a high attrition rate, however little explanation was given as to the reasons for it. One administrator shared that TEP students, in particular “bilingual” (Deborah) students, often struggle with performance assessments. Overall participants reported that their program’s efforts to negotiate these external factors have been thwarted due to institutional constraints.

Melon TEP Case Analysis

Melon TEP Virtual Information Sessions Observation

After communicating with Keith, I was scheduled a virtual information session with the SSD team. I attended as a participant-observer and took notes with my video off. In the presentation, Keith introduced himself, the SSD, and proceeded to discuss the program in detail. The primary focus of the presentation was logistical. On the day of my observation there was only one prospective student present eager to find out about the program. This student asked only five questions during the one-hour presentation.

During the first part of the presentation, Keith provided a broad overview of the programs offered and the application process. Next, he demonstrated to the prospective student how to navigate the website and provided a detailed description of the many regulatory compliance related tasks that they would need to undertake for admission. For instance, when discussing the transcript requirement, Keith emphasized that transcripts should remain sealed and that this was “crucial”.

According to California Assembly Bill (AB) 130 (CTC, 2021) California TEP applicants do not need to take the CBEST for admission if they can show evidence of university or college coursework in reading, writing, and mathematics or subject matter with a B- or better, or they can combine appropriate coursework with sections of the CBEST that satisfy the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition, applicants may submit coursework in place of taking the CSET test in accordance with AB 130. However, an applicant’s undergraduate major must be closely related to the subject they desire to teach for them to be eligible for a Single Subject credential. Curiously, whenever Keith discussed the basic skills requirement during the information session, he focused on the CBEST, despite the long list of alternative exams, coursework, and waivers applicants can utilize due to COVID flexibilities (CTC, 2021). Nevertheless, Keith walked the prospective student through each document on the website and answered a few questions regarding waivers. In his responses, Keith emphasized the need to communicate with the SSD and download the shortened brochure document available on the site.

In discussing the required prerequisite courses for admission, Keith at one point diverged from the script sharing, “there was a time these could be taken in a community college” (Keith) and lamenting that now students must take them at the university. Later he introduced

information I did not find elsewhere, specifically that prerequisites could be taken as an extension student. This, he shared, could save a student money.

Despite being informative, the presentation was overwhelming, and my impression of the process was that it was quite complicated. Keith's technical terminology was noted by the prospective student who wondered what the word “matriculate” meant after hearing it more than three times in a row. Information during the presentation was delivered with the presumption of comprehension, and a slew of “insider-jargon” (Wodak, 2004) rendering a significant portion of the presentation inaccessible to those prospective students who may be considered “outsiders” (Wodak, 2004) to the world of teacher education.

Melon TEP Website and Document Review

After searching for “Melon University teaching credential” I was routed to a page entitled *Prospective Student* where I was prompted to apply or schedule an information session. The site matches the university's identity and is visually appealing. Scrolling on the page further I encountered a large button for *Application Instructions*, followed by a large table consisting of a list of credential programs, such as *Multiple Subject* and *Single Subject* with dates and deadlines. Further down are sections on prerequisite coursework, test preparation resources and the new changes of AB 130 tuition and fees, and a disclaimer that TEP admission does not guarantee a student will obtain a teaching license.

Upon clicking on *Application Instructions*, I was routed to a downloadable PowerPoint presentation created by the SSD with graphics illustrating how to apply. After returning to the original home page, I clicked *Information Sessions* and was prompted to join a Zoom meeting, but on the day of my website think-aloud, there were no dates or Zoom links available, only 11 page and 12-page pdf documents and a summarized pdf brochure. After returning to the original

home page, I clicked *Multiple Subject Credential Program Information* and was again routed to a long pdf.

The Multiple Subject Credential Program document lists the application requirements with a specific note, “We cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is to include each institution. When ordering transcripts. You will not be fully admitted to the university or be able to register for courses until all transcripts are submitted and reviewed”. This tone is significant in that it assumes a projected future action and clear regulative sanction. The phrase “fully admitted” is not further described in documents.

The document outlines information on the basic skills requirement including a brief description of subject matter competency. For the basic skills requirement, listed are exam options including the CBEST, ACT, and SAT, which are now, due to AB 130 and COVID flexibilities (CTC, 2021) unnecessary for many students with a college degree. This is misleading for students. The subject matter requirement section prioritizes exams and references them at the top, namely the CSET exam followed by a description of subject matter waivers. Further in the document is information about how to submit test results. The priority here is clear, despite flexibilities (CTC, 2021), passing exams is critical at Melon.

The middle of the document is program specific and will not be included in this summary due to confidentiality. At the bottom of the document compliance related regulations are described along with external links. However, in this document it mentions three letters of recommendation, which I learned from interview participants later was reduced to two. The document outlines that letters of recommendation must be on “official letterhead” from those who are “knowledgeable” about the candidate. An additional suggestion is that “It is highly recommended that one letter be written by a public-school teacher or administrator”.

The final section explains that the admissions interview will include a writing sample and may or may not be done as a group. This section makes explicit that interviews are only conducted for “qualified candidates” by “program coordinators, faculty and public-school teachers and administrators”. I asked about “public school teachers and administrators” after the observation and Keith shared that they are part of the clinical team at the TEP that support TEP students during clinical practice also known as student teaching. The document outlines that “all materials will be evaluated to assess an applicant’s qualifications for admission. However, no one indicator shall determine acceptance of an applicant”.

The document further clarifies that prospective students will be notified by mail or email to make arrangements for interviews. Presented is a disclaimer that if a student has a disability, and they need accommodations to take part in the interview, that they should reach out to Disability Support Services.

On the next few pages, the document outlines additional prerequisites such as the US Constitution requirement. A reference is included to a health education course that covers nutrition, tobacco, sociological effects of abuse, narcotics and drugs and CPR, but the font is very small and could easily be missed.

The document also outlines the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) exam for those pursuing elementary, Multiple Subject, or Education Specialist credentials (CTC, 2023c), with additional detail about what it looks like to take courses, grading policies and different authorizations, such as Bilingual. The primary method of satisfying the basic skills requirements according to the document is to take the CBEST, CSET, a university placement exam, or the SAT, ACT or AP exams, despite coursework being accepted due to AB 130 as stated earlier. This type of discursive move, prioritizing the CBEST and CSET exams, in texts

such as these pdfs, reinforce to students that without these they are compromising their chances of admittance.

Ironically, the section on Bilingual Authorization is riddled with complex English with a list of the courses and exams needed. The tuition section details a breakdown of all the fees involved with the application. The secondary Single Subject program description is almost identical and is also a 12-page pdf.

After reviewing the documents and the website, I was shocked that it had not been taken down, given it contains out-of-date and misleading information about the new COVID flexibilities (CTC, 2021). Many of my clicks led me to duplicate web pages and documents. At the conclusion of my think-aloud I questioned the necessity of several, long pdfs, especially the accessibility of information. As a teacher and teacher educator, I am considered an “insider” (Wodak, 2004), however I felt overwhelmed by the complex “insider jargon” (Wodak, 2004) on the TEP’s website and documents. Such complexity has the potential to reroute prospective students from the website and discourage their application for admission to Melon. In my analysis of the Melon website, I concluded that it presents an overwhelming amount of information in complex ways.

Interviews with Melon

The first part of the interview protocol asked participants to describe recruitment and admissions processes, therefore much of what was shared was technical in nature as outlined in previous sections. In an analysis of transcripts, racialized discourses manifested in varying ways when participants responded to the following six interview prompts:

1. What factors lead to not recommending a student for admission?
2. Please describe for me the ideal TEP candidate recommended for admission.
3. What do you see as some of the most important issues regarding recruitment and admission that your university based TEP is trying to address or change?

4. Do you believe that there is a disparity in access to pathways to a teaching credential?
5. Do you think race plays a role in TEP recruitment and admission?
6. In your opinion, what can be done to diversify the teaching workforce?

My first interview was with Keith, an administrator who leads the SSD. Second, I interviewed Rebecca, a staff member who collaborates with Keith to recruit students for Melon. Currently, Terry is the program administrator. Kelly, Deborah, and Paula, each with varied degrees of leadership and teaching responsibilities, were also interviewed. Lastly, I spoke with two faculty members, Ophelia and Kiara, whose primary roles, as they shared, are to teach.

The administrator of the program, Terry¹, an experienced former faculty member of Melon, responded to the question regarding admissions decisions, specifically the factors for denial, sharing,

There's not a lot of decisions like "Will this person be a good teacher?" That's really hard. That's a hard call. But there are times I mean, I've been in interviews when you go, this is not a person we want with kids. I mean, it is telling. But it's also hard to say no, unless you have a number or there's some criteria they didn't meet (Terry).

Here, she shared the process is case by case, and the rubric helps faculty and administrators to “have a number” to deny someone. This is an illustration of a problematic holistic admissions approach as the “number” is explicitly employed by faculty and administrators with the intent to provide justification for the exclusion of a candidate, rather than an assessment. Such discourse surrounding numbers as standards and measurements for the purposes of exclusion is in line with much of the discourse of neoliberalism pervasive in large universities and programs such as Melon (Sleeter, 2008). Furthermore, the definition of “a good teacher” is not elaborated upon, but it is clear it is a shared understanding amongst the program. The description of “I've been in interviews when you go, this is not a person we want with kids”

¹ Excerpts and analysis are presented. All proper names of the study participants have been replaced with pseudonyms and information contained within has been deidentified.

is telling, as it alludes to the role of TEPs as gatekeepers to the profession, consistent with the literature on the explicit agreement teacher educators are in with the state to provide teachers who are ready for the classroom (Goodwin & Oyler, 2008).

Responding to the same question regarding admissions decisions, and contradicting their administrator's view, faculty member Paula shared in their interview, "as a team, we usually say, "Okay, who are the red flags?", and then we talk about them". Later Paula expanded on the red flags sharing,

You know, they're, they're hard to describe, but it's almost like you know, that when you see them, but I know that they but it's, you know, it seems like in the in the presentation, someone who, you know, sat back and texted or looked or played on their phone, while the rest of the group was doing was, was getting ready. Or conversely, someone who literally just dominated the whole thing. Every time someone else tried to talk they interrupted (Paula).

After reflecting on reasons not to recommend students for admission they added,

*Letters of recommendation are a concern to us if if both letters are from family member that that that causes us to ask some questions, because you should be able to have you should have somebody that's not related to you, you can ask to write a letter of recommendation. We've had letters of recommendation in the past that seemed like they came from a professional, but they were on just a blank white piece of paper with no letterhead or anything. And then the signature was just literally the person's name and there was no contact information. That would be a red flag to us because we're like, we're how do we get in touch with like, "how, did someone else really write this?", **sure** (emphasis added) (Paula).*

It is evident from reading these excerpts that the admissions process is interpreted differently by two persons who appear to be deeply immersed in it. Despite claiming that candidates don't necessarily need experience, it is assumed they possess an in-depth understanding of institutional discourses related to securing letters of recommendation from former employers and teachers. Missing from this assertion is the issue of equity related to candidates who may have experienced marginalization or harm during their academic or professional experiences thus far. Salient in Paula's transcript is the use of the word "sure" as a

signifier of suspicion. The fear of a fraudulent LOR manifests time and again throughout the discourses in this study.

A counter-frame discourse about the admissions interview was offered by self-proclaimed “pain in the butt” faculty member, Kiara,

I think this is really cultural or very like they want people who are gonna sit and wait their turn right? And they want people who you know are polite and have sort of been taught. There's some people who like...like...know some things, right? Like they know how you're supposed to behave in those environments (Kiara).

Earlier in her interview, Kiara shared that her colleagues who make admissions decisions are majority white, as are most of her students. Her subtle acknowledgement of cultural racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) operating in the admissions practices is telling. In highlighting the complexity of the process, she acknowledged that students are made to perform politeness. Her emphasis on “behavior” is a nod to the expectation in predominantly white spaces, of white, middle-class values (Feagin, 2020). When probed further about admissions decisions, specifically what criteria is most important, Kiara quipped, “politeness wins”. Kiara’s reference to students who “know how to behave in those environments” references the in-depth knowledge of institutional discourses related to interviewing that students must have to succeed in predominantly white spaces (Feagin, 2020) and is evident of not just Equal Opportunity and Cultural Racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) discourses, but also Whiteness as Credential (Ray, 2019) regarding the required white normed behavior for entry. It is clear from participants' responses about admissions, in particular interviews, that whiteness operates as a ticket for entry to Melon’s TEP (Ray, 2019).

Following the question about factors leading to admission denial, participants were asked to describe an ideal TEP candidate for admission. Terry's transcript illustrates how impactful her understanding is as a leader of the TEP,

Wow. Well, they would have successfully completed a bachelor's, they would have met the minimum. CBEST I mean, I'm not as concerned about that, but they would have met the California criteria. And then, I mean, ideally, and a lot of them do, they've had some kind of experience like an AVID tutor or summer camp or like a before and after school program. They don't have to have that. But it's really nice if they do. They would have had, you know, good experiences in the prereqs....And then of course, I mean, you look for enthusiasm and...kid focused kind of dispositions. People that exhibit qualities that would help them to enact social justice and equity in the classroom. We hope they have diverse experiences; they don't necessarily have to be of diverse backgrounds, but have hopefully, you know, experienced the world outside of their own house or neighborhood (Terry).

Terry invoked discourses of equity and diversity, but hedged that candidates, “don't necessarily have to be of diverse backgrounds”, a reference to the program’s majority white student body.

Administrative faculty member Deborah was more straightforward in her description of an ideal candidate.

Professionalism needs to be exuded through everything you do from the email you compose to how you speak to a professor to the words you say in your coursework and clinical practice. We also felt that a lot of students felt that there was, and this is collective, because we had instructional meetings monthly, and we would talk about our notice things are wondering about what was happening in our cohort classes. And what we wondered about was like, what, what made everyone feel that they didn't have to do the work? (Deborah).

Distancing herself from her colleague Deborah, Kiara again, offered a counter-frame,

I wanted us to think about people who really wanted to be teachers, not just people who are like, I don't know what else to do with my life. So, I'll become an elementary teacher. I also wanted us to choose people who were more equity oriented in their perspectives. And the reason for that, of course, is there it has been widespread and very well established for decades, that teacher preparation is a pretty poor intervention for people who have you know, racist ideologies or, um, antisemitic, you know, any sort of ideologies that might harm children (Kiara).

Kiara’s diversion from her colleagues is significant. Referring again to the program’s predominantly white student body, she alluded to their choice to become teachers as a passive one and maintained that for her, an ideal candidate is not someone who accidentally becomes a

teacher due to their advantages. She presented a counter-frame to her colleagues, that she desires equity-oriented teachers and implied that TEPs are an ineffective remedy for racism. It is unclear whether she was referring to the need to diversify the student body. Nevertheless, her coworkers appeared to have entirely different viewpoints.

When asked about the most important issues regarding recruitment and admission that their university is trying to address, most Melon participants referred to the inaccessibility of information, the need to make the program less time consuming, and increased gender and ethnoracial diversity, however one, Ophelia highlighted, “we just need more diverse, diversity and teachers, we just need teachers of color. You know, I said, I don't care if they're blue, I don't care what color they are”. Humans are not blue. Such a discursive move minimizes the harsh realities of racism and those racialized, reducing it to a joke.

Faculty member Paula’s impression of important issues at the university, mirror that of Ophelia. Minimizing the lack of ethnoracial diversity in teaching, they quickly redirected the conversation to gender, claiming, “it's just it's tough. I think we're making huge strides in that direction, but I think it's still tough. The other thing I would say is also making sure we get enough men, you know?”.

Furthermore, SDD staff member Rebecca suggested the most important issues regarding teacher diversity have now been solved because of COVID-19 flexibilities (CTC, 2021) offered by the state, claiming,

the state coming along, and providing more options to meet the basic skills requirements, and the subject matter competency, that just took these two huge barriers, and put them aside. And I think, from this point on, we're gonna, we're not going to, it's really going to improve the numbers, because there's a lot of factors that go into passing these exams (Rebecca).

What began as an acknowledgment that removing barriers relates to increasing diversity was quickly obscured by Rebecca's discussion of enrollment and comment "it's really going to improve the numbers". Here, recognition of systemic racism and celebrating the removal of barriers as racial progress was quickly diluted by the focus on how such flexibilities relate to enrollments.

Similarly, administrative faculty member Deborah insisted that disparities in access to teaching don't exist sharing,

What I do think is a disparity is when they are admitted to the program, and they have to pass a lot of the standardized test for the CalTPA. The RICA, I found that our we just got CalTPA data sent over today. The students who are second language learners struggle most or have had, from the data I looked at just glancing at it have have taken the test way more times than our other candidates who are monolingual. And again, that's an assumption because I don't know who is bilingual, trilingual, or so on, because I don't have data. So, I would love to not make assumptions about candidates, that would be so awesome (Deborah).

Her reference to barriers is related to regulatory compliance for exit, specifically the CalTPA, or California Teacher Performance Assessment, required for state teaching credentials, not entry to the program. That this poses a significant burden to BIPOC teachers is not referenced in any direct way. Deborah's claim that "monolingual" students perform better on exams, than those who might be "bilingual, trilingual, or so on" reduces their linguistic abilities to labels. The conflation in a list of "bilingual, trilingual, or so on" was evocative of Ophelia's "I don't care if they are blue" statement.

The effort to minimize or dismiss racialized burdens (Ray, 2019) and simultaneously mock BIPOC students is a recurring theme in Melon transcripts. Paula's response, similarly, subscribes to these discourses, as illustrated when they are asked about the role of race in recruitment and admissions,

I don't want to sound naive, but I think, if anything, it, if you're from an underrepresented population, you have a leg up, because we're just so excited about the fact that we can start to diversify it more. But I think I'll speak only for myself; I want to be careful that race is not the only is that's not a deciding or even a top factor (Paula).

Paula's comment reveals layers of minimizing racism. They brushed aside the historical dominance white people have traditionally held for centuries, dismissed the ongoing pain and suffering BIPOC experience, and diminished the educational inequities for BIPOC in K-12 education contexts in their implication that BIPOC somehow have a "leg up" due to diversification efforts. However, they are not alone in expressing these views. Ophelia shared,

You don't just recruit the person, you recruit the family, you have to, in Latino communities, you need to talk to the family, because, and that one of the ways you recruit is how they will give back to their communities, that they want to rise up and help their community. And they don't see teaching as really rising up and being something to aspire to. And you have to help them see that it's a very noble profession, it's very stable. It's a way that you give back and make your communities better, you know...I don't know if you talk to the African American community in the same way. And we don't, we aren't savvy enough about that (Ophelia).

Expressions like this refer to Latinx culture but ultimately reduce it to a set of stereotypes related to their need to "rise up". Problematically, Ophelia's addition of the "African American community" as a whole entity who, they, as in program personnel, don't "talk to" in the "same way" falls into this trap, reducing and essentializing ethnoracial groups. Later, Ophelia added,

They [as in Latinx] don't want to be teachers, a lot of them because it's, you know, it's cultural. A lot of them think it's a feminine profession. And they didn't have good experiences in schools themselves. You know, so why would you want to do that. So, kind of helping them see education as a social justice and equity, you know, profession that you can make, you can affect the lives of people, children in a very positive way and make their experiences better, and make them more successful in education. So, it's kind of a different, you know, it's a different approach to trying to recruit into a profession that's not very, always very well regarded. And in the culture, and I think that's the case with African American, males especially. So...(Ophelia).

To provide a nuanced response to the work she does with targeted recruitment Ophelia oscillated between focusing on the inequities related to teacher diversity and explaining away racial

inequalities due to institutional racism embedded throughout educational systems. Similarly, responding to the question regarding the role of race in recruitment and admissions, administrative-faculty member, Deborah shared,

I honestly, I don't know I struggle with that because I feel that while all these attempts happen, there's still these barriers of like, for us specifically, it's documented...assume that you're a US citizen, right? Like, there's when I look at this area...these were my observations is that there are probably people who would want to be educators, but can't because of documentations. Right. And and I think that is a barrier. As far as recruitment of people of color of, you know, male, male or other gender. I'm not sure what, what it is. And honestly, it comes down to personal interest, right? Like, if you're not interested in being an educator, you know, you're, you're gonna go on different paths. So how, I guess how do we tap into find out who's interested in what and going to high schools is great. However, they have to complete four years of college before they can even be a teacher (Deborah).

Implicit in this transcript is the notion that many undocumented peoples are attempting, unsuccessfully, to become teachers. This inability for “them” to get “their” “documentations” obscure matters such as immigration. For Deborah, “diversity” is related to “immigration” and the misperception that BIPOC are unable to complete college. Locating herself as “new” to this “area” distanced her from the perceived foreigners with whom she must bother with (Van Dijk, 2008). In her response to a race-centered question, Deborah noted, “male, or other gender, I’m, I’m not sure what it is”, privileging a discussion of gender over race, conflating both. One explanation given for the lack of teacher diversity, according to Deborah, is the lack of “personal interest” revealing the assumption that BIPOC choose not to be teachers because they are simply not interested. Such assumptions draw from “the way things are” Naturalization discourses (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) that explain away inequities as natural occurrences, rendering those in power seemingly powerless, preventing introspection regarding the ability to combat racial inequities.

Countering this discourse, Keith, responded to the question about the role of race in recruitment and admissions with an assertion,

Haha not enough! I don't think we don't have enough people of Color in teaching. You know, at this is a Hispanic serving university and they have a lot more, I think, Hispanics, applying for teaching than we do Black folk, and you know. I don't know it's just it seems like that's just the way it is (Keith).

Later in responding to methods to diversify the teaching workforce Keith made a pointed reference to his colleagues, “You know, how can you get more people of Color and students of Color to become teachers and you don't have the faculty that Color?”. As the sole person of Color interviewed from Melon, serving in an administrative capacity within the SSD, Keith’s acknowledgement about the lack of faculty diversity as a major factor diverting Black students away from Melon is significant, however his relegation to “that's just the way it is” is evident of a Naturalization discourse (Bonilla-Silva, 2018).

Melon TEP Case Summary

Due to the contradictory nature of the discursive moves made by participants in Melon, often within the same interview, it was essential to capture In Vivo codes (Saldaña, 2015) and refer to my theoretical framework (See Figure 1) to make connections after axial coding (Saldaña, 2015) for the analysis of Melon transcripts. Racialized discourses emerged via line-by-line coding according to CDA, and referring to CRT, specifically Bonilla-Silva’s (2018) work on central frames of color-blind racism, and Feagin’s (2020) work on white racial discourse. See Figure 1.

The transcripts at Melon illustrate that removing obstacles to teaching is seen as a method to increase labor supply rather than a method to advance racial equity in the profession. Melon staff, faculty, and administrators circumvented acknowledgement of the potentially substantial role TEPs might play in improving the ethnoracial diversity of teaching.

From the CDA of Melon it is apparent that the program operates within the broader institutional discourse of neoliberalism in higher education (Sleeter, 2008), what Bonilla-Silva (2018) describes as Abstract Liberalism or Equal Opportunity (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and participants perceive race in different ways, namely drawing from discourses of Minimization of Racism, Cultural Racism, and Naturalization to explain racial disparities in teaching. According to Bonilla-Silva (2018) Equal Opportunity discourse constitutes:

ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., “equal opportunity,” the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters. By framing race-related issues in the language of liberalism, whites can appear “reasonable” and even “moral,” while opposing almost all practical approaches to deal with de facto racial inequality” (p. 40).

For Feagin (2020) this discourse operates “under the guise of [a] post-racial world where the playing field has been leveled, freeing everyone to enjoy ‘equal opportunity’ teasing across differences now assumed socially insignificant and detached from power” (p. 79).

Merit in Melon is manipulated (Bonilla-Silva, 2018), as participants subscribe to neoliberal notions of measurement and accountability to guide decisions to deny students. In Paula’s excerpt, we find that Melon candidates are made to pseudo-audition for the role of pre-service teacher, as their behavior is monitored throughout the interview. According to Feagin (2020) such decision making constitutes the reproduction of whiteness, as norms for behavior in such contexts are racially coded. Those who do not subscribe to purported appropriate behavior are sanctioned and excluded from opportunities.

Statements of Terry, are in line with neoliberal discourse of accountability, specifically related to state requirements such as a bachelor’s degree, basic skills, and subject matter. Additionally, she referenced and then quickly hedged regarding candidates’ various experiences. According to CDA theorist Teun Van Dijk (2008), *repairs* in speech are a type of *cognitive*

monitoring most often employed when individuals are sharing views on a delicate matter, especially those such as race. Repairs, and additional hesitations are replete in the transcripts of those asked about an ideal candidate throughout the study, illustrating the delicacy with which many approach the concept of “ideal”.

Melon staff, faculty, and administrators engaged in active discursive moves to provide explanations for racialized outcomes in teaching, subscribing to rhetoric of Cultural Racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) to reason for racial inequity, and a Minimization of Racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018), or race-evasive discourse (Chang-Bacon, 2022; Jupp et al., 2019).

Ophelia’s reference to BIPOC as “blue” expresses a common cavalier disregard for systemic racism by Melon’s primary faculty member working on targeted recruitment initiatives for BIPOC teachers and has the potential to have serious consequences for diversification efforts at Melon. Her exhibition of subtle “virtuous whiteness” (Feagin, 2020) assumes a shared understanding of BIPOC, specifically ideas related to Latinx and Black “cultures” (Ophelia) that “they don’t want to be teachers” (Ophelia) because it is a “feminine profession” (Ophelia). As the expert on BIPOC recruitment at Melon, as indicated by multiple participants, this “pseudo-ethnographic” (Van Dijk, 2008) description of “cultural” reasons why BIPOC are underrepresented in the teaching force has significant implications. Ophelia’s discursive choices are crucial, as her peers cite her as an authority on how to recruit, admit, and prepare BIPOC teachers.

Melon’s transcripts reveal that staff, faculty, and administrators presume racism to be in the past as they place a strong emphasis on the notion that students have equal opportunity, can assert their choices individually, and are assessed fairly based on their academic merit. The whiteness of the candidate pool, program enrollees, and larger teaching workforce emerges as a

significant issue for program personnel, only when local district leaders assert, “I need help. We need more Latinos period” (Kelly).

Methods at Melon to address the lack of BIPOC teachers are driven less by initiatives for racial equity and racial justice in teaching, and more by the need to supply local school districts with teachers. Further complicating efforts is the lack of ethnoracial diversity in Melon’s staff, faculty, and administration. The powerful invisibility of Melon’s whiteness is made painfully visible through the racialized discourses present in the data collected. Melon’s TEP is thus a case of homophily, as it reproduces the status quo, thus contributing to the overrepresentation of white teacher candidates.

This section reviewed the recruiting and admissions processes of Melon University's TEP as outlined on websites and documents, demonstrated via virtual information sessions, and discussed by faculty, staff, and administrators. Additionally, racialized discourses in the recruitment and admissions process were summarized. Subsequent sections outline the case analyses of Nectarine and Apple.

Case 2: Nectarine: A Case of Stasis

An analysis of data from Nectarine shows that teacher quality is maintained by strict adherence to regulations from the CTC. TEP candidates are framed as customers who, despite background and experience, are offered an equal opportunity at admission to the TEP. Despite professed commitment to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion, staff, faculty, and administrators minimize racialized outcomes as natural, and preserve an overrepresentation of white TEP enrollees relative to the districts they serve. The program prefers candidates that are well-informed, equity-minded with a strong command of English. I have designated them as a case of stasis. Despite professed dedication to educational justice and equity, Nectarine is

constrained and unable to develop due to ever-changing CTC regulations and hesitant to disrupt the status quo by instituting dynamic change in the service of diversifying the teaching workforce in long-lasting and substantive ways.

The following section includes a detailed explanation of Nectarine’s admissions process, recruitment strategies, narratives, supports, and barriers present as presented on websites and documents, illustrated via virtual information sessions, and shared by six faculty, staff, and administrators in interviews. See Table 8 for participant pseudonyms and roles.

Table 8

Nectarine Case Study Participants and Roles

Pseudonym	Role
Katie	Staff
Sherri	Staff
Maria	Staff
Edgar	Administration
Sophia	Administration
Diana	Administrative Faculty

Nectarine TEP Program Design

The TEP at Nectarine University is in an urban area of Southern California and offers elementary and secondary as well as specialists teaching credentials. According to the CTC, in 2021 the majority of Nectarine enrollees in the Multiple Subject program were Latinx (58%), followed by white (25%). Single Subject program enrollees were majority Latinx (49%) and white (31%). The majority of faculty at the university are white (52%).

The Student Service Office (SSO) (pseudonym) consists of one administrator, one assistant administrator and five analysts, and is responsible for all matters pertaining to compliance and teacher credentialing. Multiple advisers and credential analysts collaborate with administrators and faculty to ensure that admissions decisions are based on compliance related

criteria. Like Melon, Nectarine also prioritizes teacher quality in respect to adhering to CTC regulations, however its approach is significantly more comprehensive and stringent in this regard. See Table 9 for Nectarine’s admissions requirements and processes.

Nectarine TEP Admission

Table 9

Nectarine Admissions Requirement and Processes

Policy	Criteria
Compliance Related	GPA minimum of 2.67 Subject Matter evident in Coursework, Waiver, or Exam Basic Skills evident in Coursework or Exam Certificate of Clearance TB Clearance US Constitution Requirement - Only for outside candidates CPR or First Aid Certification
Program Specific	Letters of Recommendation (2) Personal Statement of Experience Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted With Program Specific Committee - Group (Rotating) - Includes On-Demand Writing Prompt (Reflect on Responsibility) - Committee Uses Interview Rubric

The SSO in Nectarine, like Melon, holds significant power over access to program entry. A tight knit relationship exists with the SSO administrator, Sophia, and the Nectarine administrative faculty team. Sophia often travels to the CTC in Sacramento to bring back updates to the team at Nectarine.

According to participants, the SSO handles all admissions paperwork for the credential programs. Despite discussing admissions policies as a whole group participants shared, they do not feel they have flexibility due to CTC regulations. The primary indicator for admission is a GPA of “2.75 in the last 60 units and or a 2.67 overall” (Maria). Diana shared that when offering

flexibilities, she worries that students might come in and “struggle academically...[yet] they still have to meet our academic bar” however emphasized concern about “ruling students out” in lieu of teacher shortages.

Nectarine applicants must submit two letters of recommendation, from “professionals” (Maria), and are reminded of this during information sessions. The PSE requirement asks students to reflect on why they want to teach and must be uploaded along with the application. After applying, prospective students are invited to interview for admission.

Participants described it as a “pretty quick” (Diana) “small group interview” (Edgar) with five students in 30 minutes. If faculty have concerns, candidates are “flagged” (Diana) and decision makers reach out to the SSO to communicate with the candidate again. One administrative faculty member shared that she flags students if she didn’t get a “read on them, or there's something that just concerns me about this person” (Diana). A second round of interviews is conducted with such cases.

Diana shared that most students do not get “weeded out” during interviews as long as they “can string together a decent answer to most of the questions”. English proficiency is highly prioritized. During the interview students are asked to respond to an on-demand writing prompt about teaching. During group interviews, they are asked five to six questions. Interviews are short and there is often not “enough time” (Diana) and at times they have had to “cut [students] off” (Diana) from speaking due to time constraints. TEP administrator Edgar shared that if students do not perform well in interviews it may lead to denial.

After criteria has been reviewed and candidates have been interviewed, decisions are made, and the SSO team is responsible for sending admission congratulations messages. Next, the SSO connects with each student to develop a plan of action. Due to COVID flexibilities

(CTC, 2021), the SSO has been tasked with evaluating applicants' information to waive requirements for basic skills and subject matter. Some Nectarine TEP interview participants expressed worry over the temporary nature of such flexibilities.

According to Nectarine, most TEP candidates who are admitted are former Nectarine University college graduates and many apply from the Liberal Studies undergraduate pipeline program. Staff shared that over 80% of Liberal Studies students are female and 90% of the students want to become teachers.

Nectarine TEP Recruitment Strategies

The School of Educational Studies primary recruiter, Katie, works under the Dean of the school, is now also the recruiter for the entire school and is a self-proclaimed, "team of one" (Katie) with a substantial workload. Katie and the SSO hold separate virtual information sessions. I attended both Katie's information session and one of the SSO.

Pre-service teachers are primarily recruited internally, or externally from local community colleges. According to the participants, aside from one grant, there are minimal targeted recruitment initiatives for BIPOC teachers. Nectarine's TEP offers a specialized undergraduate program with its own dedicated staff recruiter, however I was unable to speak with them for this study. Generally, participants supplied little information regarding Nectarine's undergraduate program, as many were vaguely familiar with it.

Nectarine TEP Recruitment Narratives

Prospective students are welcome to visit the program on campus and schedule appointments with the SSO. Faculty shared they attend information sessions at times, but that most of the initial interaction with prospective candidates happens during interviews. Some faculty welcome student questions, while others redirect them to Katie or the SSO.

Faculty often request Katie to speak to their undergraduate classes about teaching credentials, and she also frequently gives presentations to student groups and clubs on campus about careers in education. Katie shared that she often visits districts, high schools, and community colleges, and career fairs. She also meets students in college and career centers on campus. Participants acknowledged that occasionally candidates are referred by program alumni.

Nectarine TEP Supports for Recruitment and Admission of BIPOC

In case a student does not meet subject matter requirements or have a minimum 2.67 grade point average, Nectarine applicants can request to be considered as a special case for admission. If candidates apply as a special case, the administrative faculty works with the SSO to see what flexibilities can be offered. These cases are directed to administrative faculty who then weigh in on a final decision.

Diana shared that she personally calls Black and Latinx prospective students who attended information sessions and initiated applications but did not submit them. Katie's approach differs from the SSO administration in that she provides personalized support to prospective students via one-on-one sessions. She also follows up with them often via email.

As part of a university-systemwide grant, according to administrative faculty, efforts have been made to boost the number of Black and Latinx TEP enrollees. As of June of 2022, this specific grant program's information was not available on the website, and I was unable to interview the individual managing the grant or any other member related to it. What was shared by participants, was that students recruited via this grant, are guided throughout the TEP and after they find employment as teachers, all the way through to induction.

Nectarine TEP Barriers for Recruitment and Admission of BIPOC

Similar to Melon, Nectarine's TEP is experiencing institutional instability. Diana described that typically, faculty have “zero communication” with the “overworked” SSO team unless they have questions regarding credentialing.

When asked about methods to diversify the teaching workforce, one participant shared that TEP candidates are often “ill advised” (Sherri) to take child development courses while in community college and confirmed that such ill advisement “slows them down” (Sherri) when they get to teacher programs, because they must retake courses which is costly.

Through a preliminary thematic analysis of the Nectarine transcripts, I discovered that the program’s primary concern is regulatory compliance. Faculty and administrators prioritize the program’s reputation and institutional prestige over efforts to diversify their student body. They are confident that they are actively diversifying the teaching workforce and one administrator emphasized that without fiscal resources, they will be unable to enhance targeted recruitment efforts and will thus have to “continue to draw from the same population they have been drawing from” (Edgar).

Nectarine TEP Case Analysis

Nectarine TEP Virtual Information Session Observation 1

I attended Katie's virtual information session as a participant-observer. During the session, Katie introduced herself and promptly requested the lone prospective student there to do the same. She began by asking, "How may I assist you today?" and continued with a tone of support.

During the first portion of the session, Katie asked the student to discuss their career ambitions. She then described how a typical session works, in which she asks students what they

would like to concentrate on first. She was quite encouraging, saying,

One of the things I typically do is I kind of go over, just like a general overview of what the, you know, just kind of, of the program and the different pathways. And then usually after that, I kind of gives students a broader view of like, what's actually being asked to them for the application. And then I also like, go into detail about the different pathways. So, we could do that if you want (Katie).

Next, she demonstrated to the prospective student how to browse the Nectarine TEP website and provided a comprehensive explanation of the TEP's program pathways offering her opinion that some of the programs are more fast-paced and “intense” than others. Continuously, she connected the student’s interest in teaching science to the guidance she provided about the program. She outlined that due to the "teacher shortage [specific routes are] popular pathway[s]". Throughout, she highlighted which program would allow for the student to not only save time, but also money.

When the student expressed concern about being placed far from home for a student teaching placement she responded, “we work with the student to figure out the best placement for them”. Her tone was supportive and friendly. She demonstrated where to locate material on the website, casually acknowledging that it could be “very rabbit holish”. As she detailed the requirements for a COVID waiver or flexibility, she stressed the need for a minimum GPA of 2.67.

Her demeanor remained friendly and welcoming throughout the entirety of the session, even as the student asked questions about the specifics of their own experience with tests. She shared with the student that there are various methods to satisfy basic skills and that if the student completed the CBEST exam, the results do not expire. She also mentioned that there are multiple ways to achieve basic skills requirements.

Overall, Katie refrained from the use of excessively technical language. The delivery of

information during the session was well paced and informative. She simplified an otherwise complicated process, eliminating acronyms and using storytelling to meet the needs of the aspiring teacher candidate. The session hosted by the SSO team was noticeably different.

Nectarine TEP Virtual Information Session Observation 2

I signed up for the SSO information session hosted by the SSO administrator, Sophia, from the Nectarine TEP website. At the time of my observation, 14 prospective students were in attendance in addition to two SSO staff members.

At the onset of the session, Sophia introduced the current teacher shortage emphasizing that the time is right to become a teacher since “there is a high need for teachers” then redirected the presentation to the process of becoming a teacher in California.

Initially the session focused on what a teaching credential is followed by a discussion of timelines for the Nectarine TEP applications and explanation of requirements for the Multiple and Single Subject credential programs. Sophia shared her screen and commented about the website emphatically, “this is a lot of information!”.

She categorized the variety of programs as traditional/flexible and accelerated. Like Katie, Sophia referred to the accelerated program as “very intense”, however, she repeated “intense” three times. She then compared the post-baccalaureate program with the undergraduate programs offered.

Sophia frequently paused to check for attendees’ questions, however in response to questions, she guided students to “email us specific questions”. An additional SSO member joined the session and outlined information regarding the US Constitution and that students could fulfill the requirement after admission. Later I found that this was not made clear elsewhere.

On one slide dedicated to GPA Sophia emphasized emphatically,

we are going to be checking your GPA throughout the program. So you can never let it fall below 2.75. If that happens, you will be put on academic probation. So, it's really important that you do not take any additional courses that are outside the program. A lot of students think, I don't know why, they'll take an additional course, thinking it's outside of the program, maybe, you know, like a music course, just for fun, and then they fail the course. Well because you took that course during the time that you're in the program, it will affect your GPA (Sophia).

Much like that of Nectarine, such proclamations assume a projected future action and clearly emphasize the regulative sanction of “academic probation”. Furthermore, the deficit language of “then they fail” depicts previous students, who are not in attendance during this session, as failures and seemingly incapable of making wise decisions for their academic future.

One student inquired if the calculation of GPA is cumulative from the entirety of their college career to which Sophia and one SSO staff member responded in unison emphatically “Yes!”. No further explanation was given as to the reasoning behind this decision, and flexibilities, which I later learned are offered, were not shared.

In a continuation of the session, one SSO staff member outlined necessary steps to complete both the university application and the program application emphasizing the TEP’s preference for transcripts to be sent electronically. The pace and tone of the session changed as this SSO staff member increasingly used technical jargon, focusing more on logistics, and stopping less frequently for questions.

In their discussion of the subject matter competency requirement, a slide was shown with the CSET exam as the primary method to meet it. This was followed up by a discussion of how to register for the exam. Sophia chimed in, “if you do not have the exact major you will need to take the CSET exam”. A sense of urgency was ever present in the remainder of the session.

The hosts stressed punctuality while discussing the Certificate of Clearance, TB Test, and Personal Statement of Experience and advised candidates to seek letters of recommendation from four people so that they had a better chance of receiving at least two of them, highlighting firmly that family and friends should not be requested to write letters. This was useful advice for candidates who may have been unfamiliar with the procedure, however the tone was one of strict compliance.

In a discussion of the final requirement for admission, the faculty admissions interview, Sophia highlighted that, “All correspondence, it's very important, will be going to your Nectarine email address.... we have so many students that never signed up for the interview, who said they never got the email, and said they never checked their Nectarine email”. Based on her use of an infantilizing tone with candidates, it is plausible to presume that she has had such concerns with previous candidates or enrollees. Such ongoing deficit discourse was prevalent in Sophia’s interview transcripts.

In outlining the cost of the program, the SSO staff member discussed the application, tuition, and exam fees. However, after sharing information about these costs, the member informed the students that the SSO will “not answer any questions about financial aid”, and that it is essential for them to look for scholarships and seek assistance from the financial aid office. Contact information for the financial aid office was not given at this moment. As they try to make sense of the complex information on teacher credentialing, prospective students may find it challenging to reconcile seemingly contradictory messages in Nectarine. In the final five minutes of the session, one student inquired about scheduling an advising appointment to which Sophia responded,

Unfortunately, we are down to one advisor, we are in the processing of back-filling two positions that are vacant at this time...our office is very short staffed, and we apologize for that. If you have any really specific questions, you can just email us...and one of us will answer that email that question for you. But unfortunately, we aren't doing advising appointments, because we don't have anyone who can help you (Sophia).

The SSO staff member clarified this is due to COVID flexibilities. In what seems like an effort to be transparent, Sophia, disclosed the institution is suffering from staffing inefficiencies, however significantly this can be problematic when presumably the listeners are burdened with institutional issues, they are unable to remedy in any way.

In contrast to Katie's information session, the SSO session was lengthy and complex, yet comprehensive. It raised more questions than it answered, and the presenters emphasized frequently that candidates could contact them via email instead of directly by phone. Such an impersonal approach to recruitment and admissions is found throughout the transcripts of Nectarine.

Nectarine TEP Website Review

After searching for "Nectarine University teaching credential" I was routed to the SSO page, where the following were available as selectable options: *Programs We Offer*, *How to Apply*, and *Information Sessions*. Selecting *Programs We Offer* opens a new page showing three programs offered at this university – Multiple Subject, Single Subject, and Education Specialist. There are five different programs offered for Multiple Subject and five also for Single Subject. To apply, I had to go back to the first page, the Prospective Students Page which outlines considerable information about testing and contact information. Listed also are information about COVID flexibilities. All compliance requirements are outlined on the home page.

There are five different flexible and accelerated programs for each of the Multiple Subject, Single Subject and specialist programs outlined. These program pages do not have

application instructions. Students who want to apply would have to go back to the home page to find out more information about application instructions, yet guidance for how to get back to the homepage is not presented.

The application page features criteria, deadlines, and a description of special admission. A description of “foreign” transcript evaluation is included as well. When clicking on an application, it does not allow a student who is not a college student at the university to find out more about how to apply. It was unclear how to find out about the procedures to complete an application. I learned in information sessions and from participants, that the application process is “tedious” (Sherri), and students are often “confused” (Katie).

Under the subject matter requirement section, the CSET is prioritized, despite current waivers due to COVID flexibilities (CTC, 2021). The font is very small on all webpages. The interview information is described, yet there is no rubric present for prospective candidates to see how they will be evaluated.

Exams, scores, and regulatory compliance-related terminology are given priority on the website. It is wordy and difficult to navigate. For candidates interested in going through the application without a Nectarine student account, they must contact the “understaffed” (Sophia) SSO. Such gatekeeping mechanisms are likely to limit applications.

Interviews with Nectarine

Throughout the interviews at Nectarine, minoritized students were framed as individually responsible for engaging the program and for admissions outcomes. The neoliberal market-based discourse embedded within the program supports hierarchical management and reduces the staff, faculty, and administrator relationship to one of compliance with a stringent focus on teacher

quality. A preoccupation with enrollment and framing of students as customers is replete in the transcripts.

My first interview was with the administrative faculty member, Diana, who oversees one of the credential programs Nectarine and collaborates with fellow administrator Edgar, and Student Services administrator Sophia, who I also spoke with. Next, I spoke with Katie, the program's sole recruiter and who works in tandem with Sophia's student services team. I was able to observe Katie and Sophia both run virtual information sessions as well. Finally, I was able to interview two staff members who work as advisors to prospective Nectarine students, Sherri, and Maria.

In responding to a question regarding the student body at Nectarine, SSO administrator, Sophia, the primary gatekeeper for information on credentialing and recommending candidates to the CTC, shared that most students find out about the program via the website, saying,

what happens typically is the student or prospective student will call our office, and say, I'm interested in becoming a teacher, I have questions. We say we really encourage you to attend one of our information sessions first (Sophia).

Instead of responding to inquiries, prospective students are sent to an information session. During my observation of such information-heavy sessions, outlined earlier, I observed a strong emphasis on regulatory compliance and language centered on sanctions framed as, "If you do not comply with x... you will not be accepted".

Furthermore, when asked about TEP enrollees in the program, Sophia offered skepticism regarding COVID-19 flexibilities (CTC, 2021), sharing,

To be honest with you I noticed a lot of changes because not only the admission there was a lot of COVID flexibility that happened with the admissions, and I think that we're seeing a lot of students that were not well prepared to enter the program. If that makes sense (Sophia).

Her statement conjures a ranking of TEP enrollees based on standardized testing. She justified this based on an assumed shared understanding that exams have predictive validity for TEP performance. She implied that students admitted prior to COVID, when admissions criteria were stricter, are somehow of higher caliber.

Coincidentally, SSO staff member and primary recruiter, Katie asserted that COVID flexibilities (CTC, 2021) increased the number of BIPOC, specifically “Black and Latinx” applicants. When asked if those candidates were admitted, Katie stated that she does not have the statistics, but is confident that they were. Nevertheless, Sophia justified her laser focus on quality throughout the interview adding,

I think we haven't seen. I don't think we really clearly know how that [COVID flexibilities] impacted teaching. And we probably won't see it for a couple of years when somebody does go back and does some research on that. Like, how were those teachers that completed this program without those tests? How good were they? We won't know that for a couple of years. But I do. We haven't done any research or any studies on it. But I can tell you that a lot of the students that we admitted without those exams, I don't think they're our best students (Sophia).

Significantly, the rhetorical question, “how good were they”, reflects Sophia’s skepticism of current enrolled students accepted due to relaxed requirements. As one of the first faces of the program, this commitment to meritocracy (Liu, 2011) obscures racial inequities and ongoing racialized outcomes for BIPOC teachers. Sophia’s assertions ignore the pervasiveness of systemic racism in higher education and TEPs from considering how past and present injustices contribute to racial disparities.

Prevalent throughout the transcripts is the theme of teacher quality control as illustrated in the next excerpts from staff, administrators, and faculty members of Nectarine responding to the interview question asking them to describe an ideal candidate for admission. A colleague of Sophia, SSO staff member Maria shared,

It will be somebody that already has basic skills in subject matter. And obviously, you know everything else that's required for the application in place a complete you know the GPA needed to be admitted they already have a fingerprint clearance on file with the Commission you know that that did everything is supposed to be done but in that has Basic Skills and subject matter (Maria).

When asked about the teacher candidate population she shared,

We vary in the culture is diverse, and I can tell you from I worked on my reports, is very diverse, you know, like, not as there is like, you know, how we talked about you see a lot of females as opposed to males. But you do, depending on some some programs, you might see, you know, where there's, there's a lot of Latinx, but there's also, you know, whites and there's a lot of there's, there's, there's a lot of you know, very interesting, our campus is very diverse (Maria).

Later when asked about diversification of the teaching workforce she shared,

This is not my thinking. But I think some people would say that maybe there has to be more support in regards to help in some of the minorities in regards to financial assistance for them, or maybe, you know, also helping with some of the assessment or exams, you know, that's needed. To me, I think, if you're going to do it, you should do it for everybody, you know, like, but, but maybe, you know, anybody could take care of it to take advantage of it? I think? But maybe some individuals feel that, that minorities might need a little bit more assistance with that, you know, but no, I don't know. I can't tell (Maria).

While the pointed questions I asked related to the ethnoracial makeup of the TEP student body, Maria chose to discursively insert “culture” and “diversity” as racial proxies in her statement, resorting to gender diversity in her response by introducing, “females as opposed to males”. Her fear that individuals, in particular new applicants, who Katie shared were mostly Black and Latinx, might take advantage of flexibilities, illustrates her proximity to whiteness and negative stereotyping of prospective students. Though she identifies as a Latinx female, her propensity to make broad generalizations about BIPOC is indicative of her commitment to the neoliberal market-based discourse. Unlike the student services team in Melon and Apple, Nectarine’s program reinforced for these “diverse” prospective students the need to meet

requirements, opting to focus less on student-centered relationships, and more on enrollment numbers.

Administrative faculty member, Diana who relies on Sophia's team for updates on regulatory compliance, described an ideal candidate for admission as one who has,

done enough research about the program before they come that they understand what's involved. You know, because there's often and that stuff is all online, I would say, but, you know, we get a number of people who come in, and they don't understand that, you know, they're going to have to student teach during the day, for example, that that's a big one. You know, or, or now, you know, understand that we're an on campus program, and we don't have a lot of online courses. So, so they understand what they're getting into. And then they, you know, go to an info session, and they find out what they need to have for admission and they get those things. And they apply not at the last minute, so that they can get the courses they want at the times they want (Diana).

This deficit-based description of prospective students and their potential shortcomings is more indicative of a denied candidate rather than an ideal one. Through phrases like “they don't understand that you know they're going to have to teach”, and “understand what they're getting into”, Diana assumes all students have similar experiences with education.

Katie countered such discourse, acknowledging students' financial challenges sharing, that an ideal situation would be if,

they've met the subject matter requirement. And that's only more for their benefit. Because then if they met the subject matter requirement because the...of the major that they majored in, they don't have to spend money on a CSET. They have that requirement done (Katie).

The comment "they don't have to spend money" is a welcome break from the administration and administrative faculty's neoliberal market-based discourses and demonstrates Katie's awareness of students' financial concerns. Her effort to provide support was unique amongst her colleagues. In response to a question on the recruitment process she shared,

In like, their first few sentences, I could tell they've already done some research, or they haven't done anything, or they've done research. And they're really confused. So I could kind of go based on what they say in the first few sentences, like what they know. Or what I need to clear up (Katie).

Later she added,

I send them [prospective students] specific links of like, we talked about this, this is where it is. And then that way again, it's like that follow up. So then they hopefully they feel like oh, like she did say she was gonna follow up she did it like it's creating that rapport with them (Katie).

Her acknowledgment of students' challenges was evident in her statement, “They're really confused”, but unlike her colleagues, she did not attribute this to their abilities or lack thereof. Instead, she seeks to provide clarity and "rapport" with students in the pursuit of equity, a clear indication of the counter-frame discourse.

Diverging from this discourse was Edgar, the TEP program administrator who works closely with Sophia and Diana. He shared that an ideal candidate for admission would,

Well, they'd at least initially come in being open to JEDI conversation, most of our candidates, to be honest, come in with some degree of experience, ranging from camp counseling all the way through being a TA, or frankly, even having been a teacher, say in a private school environment that didn't require credential. So most of our candidates already kind of speak diversity broadly. Okay. And I definitely would say the ideal candidate has to speak diversity broadly at a minimum (Edgar).

For Edgar, students must be “at least” open to “JEDI” or Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and “speak diversity”. Such abstract qualifications imply that students who have applied are typically not open to such conversations and that some may have applied without much experience. Salient in this excerpt is “speak diversity broadly” an obfuscation which resists naming, in any specific way, the contours of racism or white supremacy that necessitate these values. Despite an expressed commitment to such JEDI values, when prompted regarding the most important issues facing their program Edgar shared,

Yeah, with varying degrees of intention I think we are definitely trying to solve the larger issue of the teacher shortage. We're keenly aware that that's happening. But we fight a large bureaucratic system that wants to limit enrollments because it's a publicly funded institution (Edgar).

Edgar's remarks allude to neoliberal market-based discourses by referring to "enrollments" as *customers* (Ball, 2004) rather than *learners* or *students*. By introducing "limit" and "publicly supported institution" he drew upon the neoliberal market-based discourse that public monies are abused, and private funds are better spent. While offering a critique of underfunded public institutions might be seen as a counter-framing strategy, it is enmeshed inside a neoliberal frame. Later Edgar shared his thoughts on diversifying the teacher workforce sharing,

Well, I think efforts like we have that are grant funded right? That really target young men of color. It's solving two problems, right? Two challenges, right? With a statistical under representation of young men and the gross statistical under representation of men of color. Right? but unfortunately that's a very targeted effort based on the fact that it's grant funded. So guess what that means fiscal and human resources. So, unless at a system wide level we're willing to put in both fiscal and human resources not much is going to change. We'll continue to draw from the same population from whom we've been drawing (Edgar).

Edgar highlighted the need for additional "fiscal and human resources", implying that diversification efforts are delayed owing to the lack of grant money allocated for this endeavor. While this argument is presented as a counter-frame, it is complicated by the fact that, as indicated by Melon and Apple TEP administrators, the institutional system offers substantial resources for diversity initiatives, and Nectarine has received these resources. Edgar's discursive moves transfer responsibility to diversify to broader, bureaucratic structures deflecting attention from program level changes, thereby positioning diversity initiatives as everyone and no one's responsibility. When asked about disparities in teaching he shared,

Sure. Unless somebody says to you, you can do this, and you're not the kind of person who has been offered those kinds of models before, you might not think this is a great opportunity for you. I think again, we have the privilege of having enough students who say, I didn't get a fair shake, because I'm a blank and you can feel that within any hyphenated identity you want to. They seek out the opportunity to become a teacher, but we could do a lot better job I think of targeting the people who also identify that way, but don't have the either the self-reflective know how to think that way, or the good individual drive to change. So, they, their dad's a gardener, so they're going to become a gardener, they're going to own the gardening business than inherit that from their dad. Right? As opposed to saying, "Hey, I think I can become a teacher". Right? Not that either one of those has less or more value, but they don't. Often, I find our students don't think innovatively about a future trajectory, beyond the fact that they're getting a degree (Edgar).

Similarly, his colleague Diana shared factors leading to not admitting a student,

I'll tell you the biggest one. Well, there's, there's the tangible things, right. So like, GPA, and their GPA is below 2.5. That's an automatic denial, or they don't meet all the requirements. But there have been several occasions where we have not admitted students and a lot of it comes down to their energy and their disposition. And, you know, I've had a student come in here yelling at my student assistants, became very aggressive. And I said, "We're not admitting them". Not someone that doesn't shows the aptitude to be, you know, a good teacher (Diana).

While she does not specify the ethnoracial background of this “aggressive” prospective student, her assessment of their “energy and disposition” sheds light on her beliefs about admissions decisions. Her statements demonstrate a strong relationship between rejected candidates and a personal appraisal of their “attitude”, a concept that is also apparent in Melon. Here, a shared understanding of “good teacher” is assumed, but with limited elaboration, this race-evasive (Chang-Bacon, 2022) rhetoric is present throughout the transcripts at Nectarine.

Staff member Maria, offered a similar logic when asked about improvements to recruitment and admissions processes sharing,

We're competing against National University or these other private universities that do everything online. They credential according to the data National credentials over 1000 teachers a year. How they do that, is beyond me, that's a lot. But I think the biggest thing is that they're doing it online. The pushback here has always been that they don't want to do online because they're going to lose the quality of the program. And so the integrity of the program is important (Maria).

Here we are exposed to the competitive environment in which teacher education programs operate. Maria reduced recruitment and admissions to her concern of market competition with National University. Like her colleagues, she too discussed enrollment and reduced students to customers or numbers. Here, online learning is portrayed as a concern since it disrupts the market rivalry of teacher education as an industry and is framed as a threat to program quality. Like her colleagues, she is concerned about both the institution and program's prestige and reputation. Nectarine, like Melon, functions within the dominant teacher education policy discourse and interconnectedness between market competition, teacher preparation, and certification (Sleeter, 2008). In responding existing to disparities within this context, Sophia shared,

what I find, when you say, in regards to the disparity, I do find sometimes there is, but it's probably going to go away with the new options we have to need subject matter and basic skills, with AB 130. It's changed the playing field, I think, leveled it out. Because one of the things that we used to find with a lot of students that were, that English was not their first language. They had a hard time passing the CBEST writing, for example, or the reading. But now that we're using coursework, I think they do better in a classroom, and they can pass those classes, and now they meet subject matter (Sophia).

Here Sophia's use of the game-based metaphor of a "level playing field" invokes equal opportunity discourse, which asserts that all students are afforded the same, fair educational experiences, assuming there are winners and losers and that losers might have a lack of education, healthy family dynamics, proper values, or work ethic (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Such colorblind (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) race-evasive discourse (Chang-Bacon, 2022; Jupp et al., 2019) minimizes the impact of institutional racism, ignoring that students from low-income families and those racialized as minorities, especially those living and learning in urban neighborhoods, often attend underfunded, hyper-segregated schools (McLaren, 2016).

Sophia's perspective here is consistent with Maria's understanding that of COVID flexibilities (CTC, 2021) allow for the admittance of "less-qualified" students. Because the playing field or in this case, TEP program admission requirements, is not level by any means, students who have more access to test preparation and resources in high school and later college are able to outshine their counterparts, especially those who are low-income and minoritized. This metaphor is a significant indication of the discourses present at Nectarine.

In responding to the prompt regarding diversification of the teaching workforce Sophia shared the quiet part out loud stating,

the biggest challenge now is there's, there's no one to recruit not even a white teacher. I mean, there's a teacher shortage everywhere. So, it doesn't matter if you're trying to recruit more diverse teachers, there's no one, you pretty much are hiring anyone that's going to come into a classroom at this point. So, I don't even think it's playing a role in hiring anymore. To be honest with you, I think they're so desperate to hire, you know, to put a teacher in a classroom (Sophia).

In responding to whether race plays a role in recruitment and admissions she agreed, but also shared, "When people say diversity, they mean Black and Latinx". Adding later,

From our part its, we're not looking. That's not even something that we're concerned when we're doing the, you know, the, the, whether we're giving the information out, or whether we're assisting them or even processing, we're not looking at, you know, that background in order to make that determination we're doing it based on a lot of times I tell people, we're kind of like the enforcers, right? Like, we just make sure that we're meeting the requirements per the [public university system] per the commission. So we're not really, I mean looking at any background at that point, we're looking, do you meet the requirements? Do you have, you know, the meet basic skills or have fingerprint clearance or have you know, what is that's required and not looking at any background? (Sophia).

Here Sophia engaged in the Minimization of Racism and Cultural Racism discourse frames (Bonilla-Silva, 2005) equating "diversity" with "Black and Latinx" and glossing over existing racial disparities due to systemic racism, such narratives are representative of the discourses prevalent in Nectarine's TEP. Additionally, in this response, the choice word she used is "enforcer", positioning herself with considerable power to recommend or withhold students

from teaching credentials, thereby the teaching profession. Her use of the phrase "not even a white teacher" shows she is aware of the diversity gap in teacher preparation, but quickly switched the topic to the teacher shortage.

Sherri, a staff member who engages frequently with the SSO team, shared that incoming students struggle to understand requirements, stating, "*They are all over the place.... a large majority of them are not not fully aware of everything that's needed*". She later added,

So, I think there's a little bit of a disconnect there...I think there's definitely some responsibility on the university end, um, but I don't, I'd be stepping outside of my, or how they say, "stay in your lane", I'd be stepping outside of my lane. If I were to try and make commentary on, on how that divide, or that gap could could better be filled (Sherri).

After prompting her that her input is much appreciated, she added,

I definitely think there needs to be more relationship building between the university and the community colleges, the counselors here and the counselors there. Um, excuse me, let me say it this way. Um, as far as the recruitment efforts here at the university, I think that it could be a little bit more forward thinking and a little bit more. I don't know if aggressive is the right word. I just think there needs to be more outreach in terms of, you know, letting these folks know that this is the best way to have these students come in and be prepared, adequately prepared, when they get here. So I yeah, I mean, that would be my take on it that those efforts could definitely use some finessing (Sherri).

When asked to share more Sherri stated,

You know, now we've got students of color who aren't necessarily first gen and might not even be coming from lower income families. So that's kind of I don't know if you want to call it a lost population, but that's definitely a group of students that would need some outreach as well (Sherri).

Later she hedged, "*But there's also this fine line between, you know, when, when we're advising them, and then when we hand them off to the [SSO] folks, because we just try and not try not to overstep our boundaries*".

The only Black woman participant out of those contacted at Nectarine, Sherri's perception of retribution due to regulatory compliance is indicative of racialized discourses in use. Later in the transcript she mentioned how she does not want to misguide students, saying,

rather than me speculate, I really do encourage students, I show them where to go to, you know, on the website, where to go to look for the appropriate information, and then who to follow up with in the [SSO] if they still need clarification on that whole process, because like I said, I do not want to infringe, or get into get a student in a predicament where they can't get admitted, because "Oh, Sherri didn't tell me". Or, or "Sherri told me something wrong", right? So, but we do the two offices, we do collaborate with each other, you know, to a certain extent, but it really, it really does become more of a Student Services responsibility once they get to the point where they're ready for a program admission (Sherri).

This fear of the “power of the pen” is consistent with what Evans-Winters and Hoff (2011) describe Black faculty and staff experience in higher education, especially teacher education, which is often dominated by white students, staff, faculty, and administrators and neoliberal market-based discourses.

Counter-framing in this environment is challenging since staff, faculty and administrators in Nectarine prioritized efficiency and regulatory compliance over the JEDI principles they claim to uphold. Participants praised “diversity” while ignoring or denying the persistence of systemic racism. Without a common understanding of diversity in Nectarine, JEDI ideals will have little influence on the whiteness of their teacher candidate pool.

Nectarine TEP Case Summary

What emerges from the interviews and observations analyzed in the study of Nectarine and that of Melon is that racialized discourses are multifaceted, often operating in tandem with or in opposition to each other. The most prevalent racialized discourse in Nectarine’s TEP is that of maintaining teacher quality at any cost due to a firm belief in equal opportunity.

In addition to rhetoric of equal opportunity prevalent in the recruitment and admissions process within Nectarine, throughout the interviews, and during observations, participants made references to the cultural background of BIPOC to explain racial disparities in teaching. When asked about disparities in TEP admission, administrator, Edgar’s proximity to whiteness is

visible as he invoked Cultural Racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2005) frames to generalize that “the population” at their university (50% Latinx), often lack role models, and some are encouraged instead to “become a gardener”. Such stereotypical reference points frame BIPOC candidates as unable to succeed and reifies whiteness as superior. A self-identified white male, Edgar’s narratives are reminiscent of “progressive whiteness” (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) as he provides explanation for racial disparities as an occurrence due primarily to BIPOC’s lack of drive to change. According to Feagin (2020), such virtuous whiteness is common in white spaces, such as the world of teacher education programs (Cross et al., 2018; Daniels & Varghese, 2020; Matias, 2016; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Matias et al., 2016).

Relatedly, staff members’ and administrators’ skepticism about COVID-flexibilities (CTC, 2021) is particularly noteworthy, especially because Black and Latinx student applicants increased due to them. Comments regarding COVID-flexibilities can be understood as racialized, as primarily minoritized students are framed as those who might “take advantage of” requirements (Maria). Sophia’s cynicism against TEP students who have been admitted due to COVID flexibilities reveals the evaluation of applicants against white-normed expectations. The fact that licensure exams yield racially biased results is hardly acknowledged in Nectarine. Such obfuscation and deflection are what Dijk describes as “delicate moments”, when individuals would rather avoid discussions of race. Bonilla-Silva (2001) discusses these as moments of *anything but racism*.

In Diana’s reference to what students should know and be able to do, the onus is put on the candidate’s navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). At Nectarine, candidates must have high navigational capital if they are to get admitted to the seemingly prestigious organization. The neoliberal market-based rhetoric of institutional prestige is embedded within the discourses of

Nectarine. Simultaneously experiences of racism are minimized and cultural racist rhetoric is referenced to explain racialized outcomes. Such beliefs are reified through policies and practices such as strict adherence to CTC regulations, thus reinforcing the belief that gatekeeping measures are necessary to exclude people who do not fit what is not seen as, but in fact operate as, white norms.

Even though BIPOC are enrolled in the TEP, Nectarine operates as a racialized organization uncritically employing exclusionary measures to limit diversity in its teacher candidate pool, whether that be consciously or unconsciously. Recruitment and admissions support focuses primarily on rigorous CTC regulations and recruiting candidates who meet them. When discussing prospective applicants, staff, faculty, and administrators place a high value on previous educational experience as well as the successful completion of standardized exams. A primary concern is maintaining teacher quality in addition to what is framed as a teacher shortage crisis. Decisions are based on the presumption that everyone, despite circumstance, is given a fair and equal opportunity, and that the ideal teacher is a strong English speaker, professional, and knowledgeable about requirements. For Nectarine's TEP, race plays a minimal role in the TEP admissions process because all applicants are believed to have an equal chance of being accepted. There is an unwavering commitment to compliance with the CTC and firm belief in the quality of compliance measures.

This section summarized the recruitment and admissions processes of Nectarine's TEP as presented in websites and documents, as demonstrated in virtual information sessions, and as described by staff, faculty, and administrators. The following section outlines the case of Apple.

Case 3: Apple: A Case of Symbiosis

An analysis of data from Apple reveals that an infrastructure is maintained to recruit and support BIPOC teachers throughout the TEP admissions process. Staff recruit BIPOC teachers in innovative ways and have workarounds for strict admissions policies. Decisions are based on the presumption that candidates bring rich, cultural experiences with them, and an ideal teacher might be nurturing, multilingual, community-oriented, and equity minded. Partnerships are cultivated to supply a colorful pipeline of teachers to Apple’s TEP who then work in local communities only to return for higher learning, and subsequently encourage community stakeholders to apply to Apple themselves. Thus, Apple’s TEP is a case of symbiosis.

The following section includes a detailed explanation of Apple’s admissions process, recruitment strategies, narratives, supports, and barriers present as presented on websites and documents, illustrated via virtual information sessions, and shared by six faculty, staff, and administrators in interviews. See Table 10 for participant pseudonyms and roles.

Table 10

Apple Case Study Participants and Roles

Pseudonym	Role
Bianca	Staff
Adrian	Faculty
Ilaine	Faculty
Meena	Faculty
Dana	Administration
Bruno	Administration

Apple TEP Program Design

Apple University’s TEP is in the center of a large urban county, offering both a multiple and Single Subject programs in addition to Education Specialist credentials. It also offers a unique bachelor’s degree pathway for students seeking to teach in urban communities.

According to the CTC (2022), the three majority TEP enrollee ethnoracial groups are Latinx (68%), followed by white (13%) and Asian (11%), however the majority of faculty at the university are white (40%) and Asian (30%). Participants from Apple were aware of the ethnoracial makeup of their student body.

During interviews, participants shared that while there is significant representation of Asian students, Black students are underrepresented. The Student Service Team (SST) (pseudonym) is responsible for all matters pertaining to compliance. Multiple advisers and credential analysts collaborate with administrators and faculty to ensure that admissions choices are based on criteria and are consistent with the program's core emphasis on community. Apple, like Melon and Nectarine, is compliant with CTC regulations, however its approach is substantially less exhaustive and punitive than that of Melon and Nectarine. Apple's admissions requirements and processes are outlined in Table 11.

Apple TEP Admissions

Table 11

Apple TEP Admissions Requirement and Processes

Policy	Criteria
Compliance Related	GPA minimum of 2.5 Subject Matter evident in Coursework, Waiver, or Exam Basic Skills evident in Coursework, Waiver, or Exam Certificate of Clearance TB Clearance US Constitution Requirement - Only for outside candidates CPR or First Aid Certification
Program Specific	Letters of Recommendation (2) Personal Statement of Experience Prerequisite Courses (3) Students are not interviewed prior to admission, but after admission once students enroll in a prerequisite course.

For the preliminary Single and Multiple Subject programs, prospective students submit two applications after attending information sessions hosted by the SST. Next, the SST reviews the complete application to ensure candidates have uploaded transcripts (with a minimum GPA of 2.67), Certificate of Clearance, Negative TB Test, two LORs and one PSE.

Like Melon, the basic skills and subject matter criteria, typically required prior to admission, is not required at this time due to COVID flexibilities (CTC, 2021). The SST collaborates with students to evaluate if coursework may waive requirements. Priority is given to whether a student has presented a transcript with a low GPA. In such circumstances, if all other material is deemed “aligned with the mission” (Bianca), SST staff contact the student to find out more about their career aspirations. Priority for the SST administration, administrative faculty, and faculty is to admit individuals who are community oriented, and equity focused.

When the SST has determined that an application is complete, it is forwarded to administrative faculty who examine application materials, where they give special attention to the LORs and PSE. They utilize a five-question form to measure dispositions to determine admission.

After the administrative faculty and SST concur on an admissions decision, the admitted student receives a congratulatory email which describes their conditional admission and includes an invitation to a virtual orientation hosted by an SST member.

Formal admission is granted to students after the successful completion of three prerequisite courses in which they engage in fieldwork in local schools. In one course, their faculty advisor conducts an interview to find out more about their teaching philosophy and career aspirations. They collaborate to design a program roadmap for the Apple program. Admission might be rescinded in these courses due to concerns over disposition or academic performance.

All participants in this study shared that a withdrawal of admission is an extremely unusual occurrence, and if a concern emerges, students are referred to a committee for review, who actively make efforts to maintain the student's continued participation in the program.

Apple TEP Recruitment Strategies

The SST engages in targeted recruitment efforts via community partnership programs such as high school pathways, community college and career ladder programs in conjunction with local nonprofits and school districts.

Members of the SST visit undergraduate courses, and host campus recruitment events, regularly. The program actively admits college graduates from local communities who have “background knowledge” (Bruno). Apple graduates are then tapped to return to Apple as mentor teachers and then, if they pursue further training as school leaders, hire from within the Apple alumni pool of teachers.

Furthermore, these Apple alumni school leaders often promote the program within their contexts, offering incentives to paraprofessionals to seek credentials. The core philosophy underlying this symbiotic process is that community relationships are paramount and mutually beneficial, most especially for local BIPOC students who have increased access to teachers from their own communities who understand and value their lived experiences.

Apple's undergraduate urban program's recruitment procedures are distinct. I was unable to obtain any further information on this program from the website, nor was I able to speak with the program's administrator. From what I gathered; it has a specific focus on urban communities. One faculty member (Ilaine) and one staff member (Bianca) alluded to the students in the urban program being “different” than the Latinx majority in other programs but did not specify in any way their ethnoracial backgrounds.

Apple TEP Recruitment Narratives

Through a preliminary thematic analysis of the transcripts at Apple, I determined that the program is primarily concerned with community-oriented education and has a strong equity focus. Their aim is to revitalize the community and work toward racial justice.

SST leaders are engaged with their staff and regularly participate in committees and conferences to discuss recruitment and admissions. They are outspoken in their desire to improve conditions by promoting meaningful inclusion and diversity. Bruno, who is the SST administrator, pays regular visits to the CTC in Sacramento, much like Melon does. However, in contrast to Melon, Bruno's objective in doing so is not only to learn about the latest regulations but rather to advocate for the removal of barriers to entry for BIPOC teachers.

Apple SST members actively disseminate information across the college administration. During the course of interviews, the SST and administrative faculty were lobbying to make official the reduction of the admission entry GPA requirement. Specifically, the participants shared, the reason for this had less to do with the teacher shortage, than the need to increase the number of BIPOC teachers applying to the program, especially those who may have had some unforeseen circumstances during their university coursework.

Apple is unwavering in its commitment to eliminate hurdles for BIPOC teachers and is steadfast in its pursuit to design initiatives that reach BIPOC students while they are in high school and even earlier.

Apple TEP Supports for Recruitment and Admission for BIPOC

Support within Apple is extensive, personalized, and inclusive. Communication is sent strategically, and courses are designed with BIPOC students' needs in mind. The program eagerly supports reentry students as well. Participants shared that former students have contacted

them to return to the program to graduate because of the AB 130 flexibilities. Participants shared that they often reach out to previous students who, for whatever reason, were unable to complete the program, due to CSET exams, urging them to rejoin the TEP and provide evidence of coursework.

Through personalized support, candidates are reminded about deadlines and requirements frequently. During multiple interactions with the SST in information sessions and personal conversations, students are reminded that LORs should be written by individuals who are familiar with the candidate, and that they should not be written by family members. SST members share stories of successful applications and simplify complex language to make the process accessible for students. Even though Apple, Nectarine, and Melon all share concerns regarding LORs, the language employed by Apple SST members focuses on growth and possibility.

During the SST orientation, students meet with an assigned advisor who supports them on their journey throughout the program. At this significant juncture, students, advisors, and faculty members present can exchange contact information. Faculty shared that they enjoy meeting with students and eagerly support them whenever they have time. Subsequent communication provides students with support on their journey. One faculty member relayed that they stay in touch with teachers who graduate beyond the program.

A specific structural support is key. The Apple TEP does not conduct admissions interviews, rather it places heavy reliance on past academic performance, recommendations from people who are better familiar with the candidate, and most importantly a candidate PSE and their life stories.

Apple TEP Barriers for Recruitment and Admission for BIPOC

Like Melon and Nectarine, barriers for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC at Apple are exacerbated by compliance regulations, institutional constraints, and external factors. Consistent with the literature, (Sleeter, 2016) participants shared that compliance regulations, specifically the necessity to take and pay for costly, high-stakes exams for entry and the performance-assessment for exit, the CalTPA, disproportionately restrict BIPOC access to teaching opportunities. The complicated process of credentialing is further exacerbated by institutional constraints. Additionally, the dearth of high school pathways, the GPA requirement, and inaccurate advice about community college child development programs were cited as challenges to recruiting.

Constraints outlined by participants include the complicated centralized application process for students, outdated website, unpaid student teaching, high program cost, program length, commute, parking fees. Participants also framed letters of recommendation and interviews as equity issues that might need stronger consideration within the context of diversification efforts.

In contrast to Melon and Nectarine, neither staffing inefficiencies nor institutional demands to boost enrollment were discussed, however the lack of diversity among faculty was highlighted as a significant barrier for BIPOC recruitment and admission. Additionally, faculty expressed dismay at their lack of time to participate in recruitment and admissions processes and collaborate with the SST. Participants shared that, when they have time, faculty might attend information sessions and orientations, however, do so infrequently due to their “heavy workload” (Ilaine).

External factors perceived by participants as potential barriers to BIPOC admission include the general public's perception of teaching as having poor working conditions for BIPOC, and the profession's low wages. One administrator shared that the program is intently focused on recruitment and retention of BIPOC teachers in the communities acknowledging the harm many teachers face in the current climate of K-12 schools (Kohli, 2021).

Apple TEP Case Analysis

Apple TEP Virtual Information Session Observation

Bianca started the information session by conducting a poll to see what topics needed to be covered in more depth. She then introduced herself as a staff member for the School of Educational Studies who works with prospective students.

She emphasized that there was a lot to cover so she introduced basic acronyms used in teaching and education to let students know she would send out the PowerPoint after the meeting.

Early on, Bianca mentioned she would require participation from all participants and introduced the analogy of the teaching credential as driver's license. She shared that like the several requirements needed to get one's driver's license, the teaching credential also has many involved requirements. Bianca shared that she provides this comparison "because it's a little bit easier for people to understand certain concepts within education, because it is complicated". She later compared different types of teaching credentials offered at Apple including Multiple Subject, Single Subject, and Education Specialist credentials each with different requirements, fees, and expiration dates, and are earned at different levels, such as a preliminary credential like a full driver's license.

The next segment covered the various paths for obtaining a teaching credential, including traditional, non-traditional (fast track and part-time), internship, and residency paths. Returning to the driver's license analogy, she explained, "If you want to drive a big rig, you can't use the driver's license that you got for your class C license, right?" (Bianca).

While taking questions from participants and continuing to make heavy use of the driver's license analogy, Bianca broke down specifically, each pathway to obtaining a teaching credential. Once Bianca covered the different pathways for teaching, she opened the conversation flow exclusively to participant questions. Topics included logistics, fees, compensation, stipends, interviews, pathways, requirements, GPA, and LORs, as well as some personal concerns.

After answering the questions, Bianca moved into outlining, step by step, the requirements to obtain a Certificate of Clearance, which she framed as a California requirement that individuals must meet prior to working in a classroom. She also introduced a tutorial video on this process which she played online for the Zoom participants. She then covered a quick in-depth overview of exams and different assessments required for all teachers including the CBEST and CSET.

At the end of the scheduled time for the session, Bianca spent an additional 45 minutes going over questions the participants had for her, going into as much detail as is possible to deliver in a short period of time. Question topics in this segment included LORs, TB Testing, alternate pathways to credentialing, exams, specific personal concerns, financial aid, scholarships, GPA, and application timelines.

Throughout the session, she remained exceptionally welcoming of all questions. She took the time and effort to make every minute of this session as meaningful as possible, and remained

relatable to the prospective students, empathizing on the complexities and challenges they might face in applying to a TEP.

Apple TEP Website Review

When I inquired about recruitment and admissions policies, I was redirected to the website, as the primary source. Files on the site at the time were not related to the programs in the scope of this study. I checked with two participants, one staff member and one administrator to ensure the information on the website is reflective of their programs. For this reason, I focused my analysis solely on information that was available on the website during my study.

After searching for “Apple University teaching credential” I was routed to the School of Educational Studies’ Student Services Team webpage. This was jarring, as the Google homepage, and its minimalist design differs greatly with the Apple TEP homepage. Immediately I was bombarded with complex jargon. The font was very small and inaccessible to me, a Standard American English speaker. The website is branded to the colors of the school which might be inviting to students, especially for those who are current undergraduates at the institution. Scrolling further down, I was prompted to select one of two options for applying to the program, as a *Current Undergraduate* or a *Post-baccalaureate*. According to Wodak (2004) this type of unnecessary technical jargon or *insider-jargon* references the power dynamics in an institution, as information is presented to the reader with an assumption of understanding. Web designers can often quickly add features such as definitions when you hover over such technical words if they are necessary.

Scrolling further down the website brings the user to the Apple TEP admissions requirements section which features a group of BIPOC in university shirts taking a selfie. There is no featured caption to indicate whether these are staff or students. Listed next to the picture is

the title *Admissions Requirements & Eligibility*. First and foremost, listed in this section is the GPA requirement. This indicates that it is highly valued by the organization (Wodak, 2004) since it is placed at the absolute top. Detailed below it is how the GPA is calculated, specifically “GPA of 2.5 overall or 2.75 in the last 60 semester/90 quarter units”. This clarification can be empowering for students who might otherwise move away from the page if it had just listed 2.75 GPA, which is the stated requirement in all official documents. I later learned that the decrease in GPA minimum was lobbied for by some of the participants in this study and was officially changed over the course of my interviews.

The section next lists compliance related requirements such as the Certificate of Clearance form. External links provide further clarification and detailed procedures to obtain fingerprinting. Third on the list is the PSE, but no description is given in terms of expectations or submission instructions.

The final item on the list relates to compliance and lists the negative TB test, with the added disclaimer that it must be within four calendar years. A final note about the admissions requirements refers to basic skills and subject matter competency, stating that students are required to complete them “once admitted, not to apply”. This clarification is significant, as interview data present, clearly, how gatekeeping barriers such as exams can be, especially for BIPOC teachers applying to Apple.

Further down the webpage is a definition for post-baccalaureate and specific procedures for applying, including the introduction of the two LOR requirement.

Presented in this same space is a demarcation of the different applications that students will be required to submit, one for the university and one for the program, in addition to a directive to either mail or “deliver” transcripts to the university. In an observation of the Apple

information session, I learned that this flexibility is offered, as students are sometimes unable to pay for transcript services, so are invited to deliver them in person if necessary. This small, but significant shift in discursive moves from strict and regulatory to flexible and supportive, is prevalent throughout the transcripts of interviews with staff, faculty, and administrators at Apple.

The overarching theme present in the analysis of the transcripts of interviews and observations, and analysis of the website is that the recruitment and admissions processes in Apple are a case of intentional university-community symbiosis. Apple consists of staff, administrators and faculty who actively and passionately seek to admit and prepare BIPOC teachers from local areas with the specific intention to improve economic mobility of marginalized and minoritized communities.

Apple TEP Interviews

My first interview was with the administrative faculty member, Dana, who oversees the School of Educational Studies at Apple University. She, along with Bruno, the administrator of the student services department, collaborate to run Apple's TEP. Bianca is a staff member who works closely with Bruno and takes direction regarding recruitment and admissions initiatives. I was able to observe Bianca run a virtual information session as well. Next, I spoke with three faculty members, Meena, Ilaine and Adrian, each with varying responsibilities and teaching loads.

Next, is a summary of discourses with brief excerpts within Apple. All participant proper names have been substituted with pseudonyms, and all identifying information has been removed. In response to the question regarding an ideal candidate, Bianca, shared,

really what we're looking for, for someone to come into our program to be admitted, they really need to be passionate about education, which, if you're going into a program, that's that's a given, you have to be excited about it. They should be focused, like equity focus, they should be focused on, on building up community in their classroom, they should be focused on the student, be student centered. And really just willing to learn and support the students that they would be working with. That's our biggest, our biggest goal is to prepare students that want to help communities, urban communities in particular, but communities as a whole (Bianca).

In my observation of her information session, I was astounded by how Bianca simplified the teaching credential process and guided students through each aspect of the university and program applications, offering advice directly derived from the SST administration and administrative faculty. She detailed necessary components of the PSE and illustrated how to secure LORs, and from whom. Bianca's excerpts demonstrate her commitment to equity and community, which is a significant priority in attracting teachers to the field at Apple. For Bianca, an ideal candidate mirrors the community.

Similarly, SST administrator Bruno shared her commitment, and outlined his work on removing barriers for BIPOC teachers, sharing,

The university's is lower than the programs. We have been good with like a 2.5. If someone doesn't have it, they can petition, file petition, the faculty set those standards and parameters, we in our, in our [SST office] work strongly with the faculty to try to move it in one direction or the other. But really, we want to, we would like it to match the university one because it's almost like saying, and we're premised on like, this is a new program. We don't want to hold anything back if you will, anyone back from being able to come in. But the faculty make their decisions based on the reasons they make their decisions (Bruno).

In a criticism of Apple's GPA requirement being higher than that of the undergraduate programs, Bruno engaged in counter-framing and suggested that while he agrees GPA is a priority, it is not the only factor in admissions. Evident here is how challenging it can be for some, even those equity-minded, to challenge neoliberal discourses, such as accountability

measures that are racialized such as the GPA, whilst simultaneously working within the larger neoliberal context of higher education (Giroux, 2020).

In the next excerpt, Bruno oscillated between validating the necessity of accountability measures, and simultaneously highlighting how students must meet them. He shared,

With us with us. It's rare, that we reject someone that the university accepted, if that makes sense. If they meet minimum quals, unless they missed a requirement, like they forgot to turn something in. And even then, we have, at times provided a little bit of a window for someone to turn stuff into us. The only other times I've seen somebody get rejected is if they turn something in that was inaccurate for that requirement. So, like, they turned in a letter of rec that came from a relative versus a professional resource. Source, sorry. Or their philosophy of education statement made no sense, both in what they shared and how it was written and so forth. Those would be probably the biggest reason someone doesn't get in (Bruno)

Here we return to English communication as ideal and measurement of teacher quality as unquestioned. For Bruno, despite a professed commitment to equity, and acknowledgement of barriers faced by college students, in particular first-generation students of Color, as he shared, an ideal candidate for admission to Apple, he conceptualizes, is someone with high navigational capital with a PSE that makes “sense”. We hear similar discourses shared with Nectarine and Melon, in Apple, the preoccupation with compliance, fraudulent LORs, and well-written PSEs.

Unlike Melon and Nectarine, however, Apple offers significant support for students regarding these via personalized supports. Faculty member, Meena, shared her view on admissions decisions,

So, we have admission the GPA requirements, you know, having a BA. So those are pretty much outlined in our catalog requirements that we look for. I particularly on my end, of things, I pay attention to, of course, they need the numerical requirements. So, they submitted transcripts, right, because they have complete application. But I typically, for my whole focus on the essay, students' commitment, Philosophy Statement, and the letters of recommendation. So, for the credentials, we have few questions. I think, five questions related to you know, one of the questions is, what are the letters of rec? You know, it's accessible and positive. Other questions have to do with the disposition of the teaching credential candidates and how well they communicate (Meena).

Like Melon and Nectarine, here the focus is on English “communication”. The predictive validity of GPA is left unquestioned, and the ideal candidate has a significantly high navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). Dispositions as outlined in this process are evaluated by a five-question rubric. In a similar vein, Ilaine, who later asserted that requirements are equity issues subscribes to the need for regulatory compliance, when asked about the ethnoracial diversity in the program Ilaine shared,

Yeah, it's predominantly Hispanic, Latino, and, and it does differ somewhat based on our urban...program students who are in the credential program who are in the taking their bachelor's or come sorry, who are completing their Bachelor's in urban [education]. There is some difference as far as demographic or you know, not just racial, ethnic demographic, but know that predominantly most of our students, the you know, the majority of our students are Latino, Hispanic, and identify as that (Ilaine).

Here Ilaine’s race-evasion is apparent as she struggles to say, simply, “Black” or “African American” indicating this is a delicate discursive exchange. Her audible and visible discomfort was revealing. According to Matias (2016) “safe dialogue around race” can be “misguided because its centerpiece is an unsafe topic...threatening whiteness” (p. xv). Further along in her transcript Ilaine asserted, her agency, to not discuss race, despite being asked pointed questions regarding the role of race in recruitment and admissions, saying, "*My mind is actually more right now I'm I don't know; I didn't tell you this I'm actually coordinate are also have been coordinating are leading the coordination of our new [program]*". CDA theorist, Van Dijk (2008) claims, such hesitation indicates discomfort with the topic of race and are often typical in the case when an ethnoracial group is to be named or discussed.

When questioned about disparities in teacher preparation, however she employed a counter-frame as she presumed a common knowledge of the cause of racial disparities in teaching and followed this up with a stated desire for equity-focused policy, a drastic difference from Melon and Nectarine discourse.

[Student Services] and faculty who have been more active in that process have put a lot of effort into fighting kind of those or are being present within those CTC conversations and advocating for for the removal of those barriers for our students (Ilaine).

She was aware of the SST's focus on removing barriers for students. When asked about the recruitment process, Ilaine lauded the work of the SST. This collaborative, positive praise is evident in the transcripts, indicating that the Apple environment is healthy and collaborative.

Later in the interview she outlined how the faculty and SST administrator collaborate to make the program more accessible to BIPOC, sharing, "*we as faculty have talked about to try to remove some of those barriers for our students and make the program more accessible*".

At Apple, faculty member Ilaine, was eager for equity and participated in a counter-frame sharing,

Things like letters of recommendation that are required, our students feel uncomfortable to be able to ask for those to follow up on those when they're, you know, current or former employees or employers or professors. I think that, that is that does raise an issue of equity for students, when they have had experiences feeling like marginalized in the workplace or marginalized in school, to be able to even get something like something that some people might think is as simple as a letter of recommendation. Things like interviewing, having to do an interview to get into a program for students who might be bilingual or multilingual and might not and might feel like they have been discriminated against or marginalized for things like English proficiency orally or in writing, having written statements, that kind of thing is something we've talked a lot about in our admissions process (Ilaine).

According to Feagin (2020) this would constitute Counter-Framing because it challenges the racial hierarchy by highlighting how letters of recommendation are an equity issue, especially for those who may have been "marginalized" and that it is not simple for everyone. It also counteracts the legitimating white racial frame by critiquing the idea that interview discourse is understood by all people, by illustrating how for "bilingual and multilingual" students this may not be the case as they may have experienced "discrimination" or "marginalization" due to their "English proficiency". The establishment of equitable criterion upon which to assess teacher

candidates depends upon Counter-Frames such as this to highlight how racial inequities continue. Bianca, illustrated the impact of the COVID-19 flexibilities, sharing,

A lot of the students that had left, a lot of the students that left the program because they couldn't pass exams, they needed extra time. And then life got in the way. So now they're back, because those restrictions those exams those barriers were lifted and now, they can go through the program without any issues (Bianca).

Bianca referenced the salience of Equal Opportunity discourse within the organization by describing how, due to increased flexibilities, aspiring teachers, many of whom may have abandoned the profession altogether, have returned to fulfill qualifications. She did not clarify if these are BIPOC teachers, however it can be assumed that some may be due to the demographics of the program historically.

Counter-framing can be met with rejection, however, as illustrated in the next excerpt. In responding to a prompt about how they share equity focused ideas to colleagues, Adrian, a faculty member who teaches an introductory prerequisite course shared,

They're, they're aware of it, that there's that's a challenge. And that's something that they're trying to they're trying to address. But there's not a lot, there's not a lot of space. And I did try to reach out, I'm going to not share any names. But I did try to reach out to say like, "This is what I'm doing, let me know, you know how I can maybe complement the work that you're doing" and I got an email back saying, "It looks like you're doing too...I didn't really read your syllabus, but it looks like you're doing too much (Adrian).

Adrian was the only person who was able to identify, accurately, the ethnoracial breakdown of the current student body in the TEP. Despite Adrian's use of counter-frames to highlight practices that are working for their BIPOC students, and share ideas, they are disregarded and told they are "doing too much". Evidently, there are individuals in Apple who find racial equity work burdensome. This type of discursive move minimizes racism and impedes progress. Dismissing equity work and framing it discursively as "too much" limits potential for sustainable change. Later she added,

I and we're getting a little philosophical here, but I do think that if we're going to change the system, it does have to be, it can't be white people. I don't think that...I think that more diversity in the classrooms and people like I know some people, some white people that get upset and get all feelings hurt when they're like more Black, you know, more Black and Brown teachers are needed and white teachers can't be the same for... I agree. You know, they're there. I think I'm an amazing teacher. But there's there's just nothing like seeing yourself in your teacher, that is a powerful experience. And there is no, and there is no core like understanding of the experiences of that I will never have as a white person. And so...I'm going to cry...I get all passionate sorry (Adrian).

In the interview, she cried, and I was reminded of Matias' (2016) work on white emotionality as she says, when teacher educators “emotionally refus[e] to feel discomforted by understanding race, teachers and teacher educators disingenuously engage in antiracism” (p. 63). Bonilla-Silva (2005) claims this type of variability or “incoherent talk” [is common when] talking about race in a world that insists race does not matter [and is] so preeminent” (p. 62). In what seemd like an attempt to claim that ethnoracial diversity is critical, Adrian placed the onus of changing systems on the very people it continues to harm, BIPOC. Though her recognition of ethnoracial diversity in teaching as visibly “powerful” for BIPOC students, her claim that efforts must be undertaken by BIPOC and not those holding primary positions of power such as those who are elite and white, abstracts understandings of racial equity and justice.

Apple TEP Case Summary

The dominating racialized discourse in Apple is what Feagin (2020) would categorize as Counter-framing (Feagin, 2020). Ever present however, remains the racialized discourse of Equal Opportunity, specifically neoliberal market-based discourse. Participants oscillated between such discursive moves drawn from the Minimization of Racism to Equal Opportunity, to Counter-Framing.

According to Feagin (2020), the Counter-frame has strong historical roots in Black and Indigenous tradition and is most often associated with the discourse of BIPOC in resistance to white supremacy. He asserts that the Counter-Frame includes a,

strong analysis and critique of white oppression; a vigorous countering of anti-black framing; and a positive assertion of the humanity of all people and their right to real freedom and justice. Each dimension challenges aspects of the white frame: its blatant, subtle, and covert support of racial oppression; its anti-black (and anti-other) racial mythologies; and its hypocritical support for “liberty and justice” (Feagin, 2020, pp. 254-255).

In Apple’s TEP world, candidates from the community, regardless of challenges academically, present a deep appreciation for community and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and persist to become teachers, mentor teachers, and community leaders, in large part due to accommodating recruitment and admissions processes employed by the collaborative personnel who engage in personalized supports and creative methods of resistance against ongoing shifts in regulatory compliance. Staff, administrators, and faculty relationships differ in equity orientations and commitments to racial justice; however, one thing is constant, the collaborative nature of their systems and recognition of what needs to be done. Apple is a complex case of symbiosis, one in which both the community and the program benefit, a marked difference from the contexts of Melon and Nectarine.

Chapter 4: Summary

The findings in this study confirm earlier work on racism and whiteness in teacher education and indicate that racialized discourses are enmeshed in the policies and practices within teacher education (Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Matias, 2016; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Sleeter, 2001; 2008; 2016). University based TEPs, despite designation as minority serving institutions, operate as racialized organizations (Ray, 2019). Specifically, in Melon and Nectarine, staff, faculty, and administrators engage in racialized

discourses expressing an often-conflicting relationship with whiteness, nevertheless maintaining whiteness firmly in the center, as white, mostly female students are expected, and ethnoracial diversity is seen as a deviation from this norm. TEP staff, faculty and administration engage in, what I term whitekeeping the teaching workforce in conscious and seemingly innocuous ways. The teaching profession can be policed by whitekeepers in TEPs who engage in rigorous assessments of teacher candidates' ability to perform whiteness for entry.

This chapter provided case findings about the recruitment and admissions processes of Melon, Nectarine and Apple, which were detailed by staff, faculty, and administrative personnel, as well as published on the website and outlined via virtual information sessions. The next chapter (Chapter 5) presents a cross case analysis of the three university based TEPs, and Chapter 6 addresses the implications of the findings for policy and practice.

Chapter 5: Cross-Case Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore the racialized discourses in the recruitment and admissions processes and how whiteness might be embodied and challenged in three university-based TEPs operating within three MSIs in the state of California in efforts to recruit and admit BIPOC teachers. Data collected for this study included in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 20 university staff, faculty, and administrators and observations of virtual recruitment information sessions hosted by TEPs, and analysis of TEP websites and documents as they pertain to recruitment and admissions.

I specifically employed the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2004) to examine the covert prejudice in discursive practices that might impact BIPOC teachers' access to teaching opportunities. Through this lens, I hoped to formulate a better understanding of the contours of whiteness as they continue to exclude BIPOC teachers from the teaching workforce. Findings of the cross-case analysis are summarized in the next sections framed as themes found across cases. Research Questions 1 and 2 of this study are answered.

Research Questions and Findings

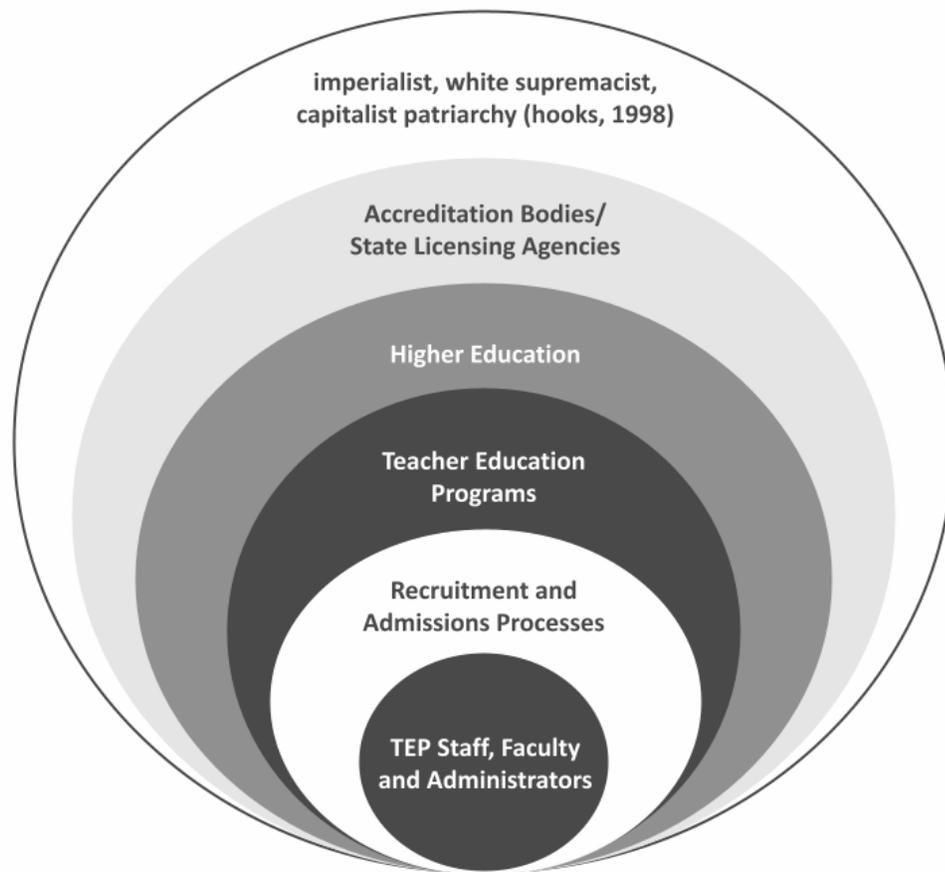
Research Question 1: What are the racialized discourses in the TEP recruitment and admissions processes in three California-based MSIs?

In this study, discourse is understood as a “form of social practice” that is “constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it” (Wodak & Meyer, 2015, p. 6). *Racialized discourses*, understood in this study, are those which “reproduce unequal power relations” between ethnoracial groups through the ways in which they “represent things and position people” (Wodak & Meyer, 2015, p. 6). Discursive themes prevalent across the TEP recruitment and

admissions processes within the three California MSI's explored for this study can be characterized as racialized discourses. Specifically, the dominant racialized discourses in TEPs are anchored in dimensions of imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchal system which prioritizes neoliberal market-based discourses in accreditation, that is reified through the broader educational community discourse within higher education of what it means to be a teacher. Teacher education programs thus operate in this system which unsurprisingly leads to racialized outcomes. See Figure 6.

Figure 6

Dimensions of Racialized Discourses in TEPs



Compliance and Teacher Quality

Under the guise of teacher quality, applicants to TEPs buy into the myth of meritocracy and the belief that they have an equal opportunity at admission; however, they are measured against white-normed dispositions and must navigate a complicated maze of requirements. This is unsurprising as the neoliberal educational reform agenda, since the 1980s, has increasingly focused on broad accountability mechanisms such as licensure exams and performance assessments that are exclusionary to BIPOC teachers and continue to undermine the ability of programs to be flexible (Cochran-Smith, 2021c; Darling-Hammond, 2020; Sleeter, 2008).

While this study sought to explore racialized discourses in teacher education program recruitment and admissions in general in MSIs, it was apparent rather quickly that staff, faculty, and administrators maintain an almost sacred allegiance to regulatory compliance, prefer ideal candidates who exhibit white norms and values, express contradictory beliefs about diversity, all while deflecting blame for the ongoing “incredible crisis” of the teacher shortage or navigate compliance in innovative ways to maintain commitment to community. Programs relied on the discursive themes of equal opportunity and white-normed dispositions under the guise of teacher quality control based on compliance. Equal opportunity was the predominant discursive theme in Melon and Nectarine. Specifically, this rhetoric pervaded the discourses due to the neoliberal market-based framework of higher education institutions (Giroux, 2020).

At Apple, Community Revitalization and Justice based on the Counter-Frame was a predominant discursive theme, however rhetoric of Equal Opportunity also emerged. Underneath the umbrella of Equal Opportunity, Cultural Racism, Minimization of Racism, Naturalization and even Counter-Framing interacted as discourses in various ways throughout the TEPs.

Equal Opportunity

According to education theorist and notable historian, Henry Giroux (2014), higher education suffers from its deeply rooted connection to neoliberalism and operates in an increasingly corporate, almost militaristic manner suffering from the,

squelching of academic freedom, the rise of an ever increasing contingent of part-time faculty, the rise of a bloated managerial class, and the view that students are basically consumers and faculty providers of a saleable commodity such as a credential or a set of workplace skills (Giroux, 2014, p. 32).

Giroux further laments that university faculty are losing power as they are, “governed by fear rather than by shared responsibilities, one that is susceptible to labor-bashing tactics such as increased workloads, the casualization of labor, and the growing suppression of dissent” (p. 33). The overarching themes of the prevailing discourse were consistent with the ideological presumptions of the marketplace, which include free will, individualism, meritocracy, and equality of opportunity.

In a neoliberal society that perceives schools as factories, teachers become the factory workers who supply society with a product, the student (Giroux, 2014). This coupled with the rugged individualism in the US makes people think that students have equal opportunities and can accomplish anything (Giroux, 2014).

Notions of equal opportunity discourse are littered throughout the transcripts, most pronouncedly in Melon and Nectarine. In an initial review of the transcripts, I noticed a common conception about the need to screen and “weed out” (Diana, Katie) students that were perceived to be not “good teachers” (Kelly, Ophelia, Terry) in compliance with state regulations. A description of what constitutes “good” or a measurement for goodness was not shared.

One code featured prominently throughout all three transcripts, “GPA”. TEPs in this study showed an unwavering dedication to the use of GPA for admission, despite widespread

support for lowering GPAs. All programs adhered strictly to the minimum GPA criterion. Recent deliberations of the public university system to which each TEP belongs, resulted in a reduction to 2.5, allowing all TEPs under its jurisdiction to cut their GPAs to this level. However, the primary focus was on how GPA was an indicator of quality of teachers. This dedication disregards the fact that there are substantial ethnoracial differences in academic performance and that students of Color and those from low-income families, particularly those from urban areas, tend to attend underfunded, highly segregated schools throughout their educational careers, from kindergarten through high school (McLaren, 2016).

Additionally, common phrases such as COVID flexibilities have leveled “the playing field” (Maria, Sophia), “everyone has a fair shot” (Terry), and “if you’re going to do it [provide support for exams] you should do it for everybody...anybody could...take advantage of it” (Maria) are replete in the transcripts indicating the notion of Equal Opportunity discourse.

Not only did the transcripts reveal unwavering confidence in the use of GPA and examinations for TEP admittance and skepticism toward COVID flexibilities, but they also revealed a surprising subtheme related to institutional effectiveness, specifically job dissatisfaction.

Interview and observation transcripts analyzed for this study revealed a central focus on institutional inefficiencies. In responding to the prompt to describe recruitment and admissions processes, participants, primarily staff and faculty, shared discontent with being “overwhelmed” (Kiara), having a “heavy workload” (Ilaine), and felt that had “no control” (Bianca, Bruno, Maria, Dana) due in part to state regulations. Ray (2019) outlines in racialized organizations that,

as racial structures, organizations partially delineate where, and how, one is to spend one’s time. Within organizations, segregation, or incorporation into the lower tiers of organizational hierarchies diminishes one’s ability to influence organizational procedures and the larger institutional environment (p. 36).

This was seen in the transcripts as it was so difficult for people to dedicate time to the recruitment and admissions processes for BIPOC. Additionally, participants acknowledged they had limited training in recruitment and admissions at Melon and Nectarine, however administrators' narratives focused on increasing TEP enrollment, despite staff shortages.

Coupled with what seemed to be interpersonal conflict, job dissatisfaction featured prominently within the Equal Opportunity discourse. What seemed evident was the neoliberal discourse, that individuals were managed by a higher authority and had less control over regulatory compliance. What they could exercise power over, was the perceived quality of TEP enrollees, and in many ways, administrators, faculty, and staff, operated as gatekeepers, under the pressure of compliance regulations, providing the states with high quality teachers who fit a predetermined set of characteristics or dispositions (Goodwin & Oyler, 2008).

white-Normed Dispositions

Related to the requirements in line with compliance, were transcript utterances referencing candidate dispositions, namely those that would indicate an admittance or denial. Out of over 2,000 codes, none were as diverse as those under the umbrella of candidate dispositions, particularly those related to whiteness as standard.

In Melon the disposition of a well behaved, polite candidate with high English proficiency is preferred. In Nectarine the disposition of a well-informed, equity-minded, responsible candidate with high English proficiency is preferred. In Apple the disposition of a community-oriented, student-centered candidate is preferred. All candidates, however, must have the minimum GPA as noted in the transcripts. When discussing the ideal candidate, the fear of a fraudulent LOR was common throughout (Jaschik, 2022). Ray (2019) emphasizes that fear of fraud is a common occurrence in racialized organizations.

Repeatedly throughout the case analysis, whiteness defined an ideal teacher candidate as one who embodies and expresses a cultural, linguistic, and social presentation that aligns with and sustains the overall white racial worldviews of the predominantly WT education staff, faculty, and administrators (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Feagin, 2020; Harris, 1993; Matias, 2016; Ray, 2019).

COVID Flexibilities

When asked about strategies to diversify the teaching workforce, often the participants indicated that COVID flexibilities had already taken care of commonly known barriers, and that they therefore did not have to do much in terms of recruitment or admissions. Often, they redirected me to focus on the teacher shortage.

Teacher Shortage

The neoliberal market-based rhetoric centers on enrollment, institutional inefficiencies, and the burden of dealing with COVID flexibilities. Any progress made towards increased ethnoracial diversity, for, especially the Melon and Nectarine universities, is framed as good for the teacher shortage. This over-reliance on technical rationality impedes the advancement of racial equity and makes it more difficult for programs to meaningfully prioritize the overwhelming whiteness in their TEP candidate pool.

Social Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity Centered in whiteness

Despite the obvious teacher prep diversity gap in their universities, Melon and Nectarine transcripts contain statements that minimize or deny that such gaps are evidence of racism. Participants in these universities generally believe they are working hard to diversify the teaching force, since it “used to be white in the past ” (Paula). Both universities, unsurprisingly,

have a disproportionate number of white TEP enrollees in conjunction with appeals from faculty and staff for more faculty diversity. The unrecognized privileges given to their white TEP enrollees are exemplified by statements such as ideal candidates need to “be appropriate” (Deborah), be “articulate” (Paula), “need to string a sentence together” (Diana) and “we can’t waive regulations for them” (Diana), and “we would have to do it for everybody” (Maria). Such statements relegate racism as a thing of the past and relate racialized outcomes to BIPOC teachers’ academic deficiency, or disinterest in teaching.

Administrators and recruitment and student services staff despite commitments to diversity, often revealed unfavorable attitudes against BIPOC teachers as intellectually unprepared and perhaps even uninterested in pursuing teaching as a viable career, thus positioning them as disadvantaged from the start.

Evident in the transcripts are the reasons why personnel believe BIPOC, specifically Black teachers are not recruited. One of the reasons cited for the lack of Black students is that they “don’t live here” (Adrian). This anti-Black sentiment is obvious in each of the three transcripts, rendering Black people invisible. In fact, race-evasiveness (Chang-Bacon, 2022) was seen most in the transcripts when the topic shifted to Black TEP enrollees. Deflecting the word “Black” or “African American” was evident in the transcripts as participants would quickly shift to discussing gender diversity.

Latinx TEP enrollees were presented via similar yet less obvious forms of Cultural Racism frames. The transcripts contain references to Latinx students as “gardeners” (Edgar) whose culture does not “value education” (Ophelia) or who view it as a “feminine profession” (Ophelia) or who lack “role models” (Edgar). These pseudo-ethnographic (Van Dijk, 2008) arguments for why BIPOC teachers are not enrolled in their TEPs obfuscate the realities of

systemic racism, reinforce problematic negative stereotypes, and uphold whiteness as superior and moral (Feagin, 2020).

Additionally, replete in the transcripts, are notions of “helping” (Ophelia) BIPOC teachers, in particular “first-gen” (Dana) who need “*tremendous* support” (emphasis added) (Dana) as a diversity initiative. Seemingly equity-focused, the transcripts reek of white saviorism (Matias, 2016). Some participants expressed deficit thinking about BIPOC teachers, who in their understanding were uninterested in teaching simply because “they're raising kids or whatever they're doing” (Diana). Continuously framing themselves as saviors in a journey to supply the state with teacher, any teacher, any Color, anyone “even a blue teacher” (Ophelia). Some were critical of the racial composition of their departments, noting the need for change, but also accepted that the primary focus in teacher education now is the teacher shortage.

Community Revitalization and Justice

In Apple’s TEP, however, the discourse of Counter-Framing by Communities of Color and by whites (Feagin, 2020) was most prominent and illustrates the program’s commitment to community revitalization and justice. Apple is the most closely representative of its local K-12 student body. This study demonstrates that this is because they intentionally provide flexibility within the restrictions of regulatory compliance while giving dynamic personalized support to their majority BIPOC candidates. Countering the fear of the fraudulent LOR, instead most of the Apple personnel frame these as race-targeted burdens (Ray, 2019) to students especially those who may have experienced harm due to marginalization and racialization.

Apple participants made several references to community and equity throughout the transcripts and offered counter narratives to discourse focusing on students' perceived deficiencies when asked to describe an ideal student. Furthermore, in discussing their

partnerships with the local community, participants employed asset-based discourses. In addition, they expressed proudly their innovative approaches to stringent regulations from the CTC sharing how their creative strategies improve the diversification of their TEP student body, and the teaching workforce. They are upfront about needs for improvement, and eagerly share what they have learned with other TEPs. They are collaborative, vocal, and committed to the community. For Apple, the community has assets and cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Consistent with the literature on whiteness in teacher education (Carter Andrews et al., 2021; Matias, 2016; Picower, 2009; 2021; Sleeter, 2016), the discursive frameworks in use in both Melon and Nectarine embody whiteness, whereas that of Apple is an active attempt to challenge whiteness.

Competing discourses across the cases about what dispositions are valued for the admission of an ideal candidate is captured as composites in Table 12. Descriptions have been lifted verbatim from elements of their transcripts.

Table 12*Composites of Case Study Participant Perceptions of an Ideal Candidate for Admission*

University	Ideal Candidate	Not Ideal Candidate
Melon	<i>“Not necessarily diverse “college graduate that was “diligent in getting prerequisites in”, “a good critical thinker and fighter”, who “understands diversity and systemic issues”, is “student centered”, “polite”, “passionate”, with “intellectual humility”, who is “hard working”, “resilient”, and “responsive to emails”, “with a backbone”.</i>	<i>A “fragile”, “compliant good soldier”, who has “limited English” proficiency, “unprofessional” in “dress and speech”, “authoritative”, “does the bare minimum”, and is “attending the program as a way to fill time because they couldn’t do anything else”.</i>
Nectarine	<i>A college graduate with a “high GPA” who is “informed about the program and about teaching”, and “knows what they are getting into because they have been working in the classroom, who “has attended an information session” and “met all requirements”, “passed their basic skills exam and met subject matter competency” and “has submitted a complete application on time”.</i>	<i>Someone who is “not on top of these things”, “does not understand the difference between online and on campus learning”, and “expects that other people are going to waive regulations for them”.</i>
Apple	<i>A “homegrown”, college graduate with a “strong undergraduate GPA” “from the community with background and contextual knowledge”, who is “passionate”, “student-centered”, “carries community”, with a “commitment to educational equity”, “understands diversity”, “homegrown without much experience”, “takes program seriously” “interested in working with children” and “want to help urban communities”, who is “dedicated to the field”, “who cares and wants to make a difference”.</i>	<i>Someone who “wants to become a teacher because they couldn’t do anything else”.</i>

Note: The composites here are a combination of salient quotes from participant transcripts in response to the prompt, “Please describe to me an ideal candidate for admission”.

Research Question 2: What are the racialized factors that shape recruitment and admissions in TEPs?

Through analysis across cases, I was able to identify racialized factors that shape the recruitment and admissions processes in TEPs and categorized them based on CDA. For each case, it seemed the following themes were salient: roles and duties of those working within TEPs, the communication of these individuals, the activities they engage in to recruit and admit prospective candidates, the engagement of faculty in the process, and the overarching policies and structures of the program. Each factor shapes the recruitment and admissions processes and operates in various ways as both supports and barriers simultaneously.

Roles and Duties

In the case of Melon and Nectarine, student services play a significant role in whitekeeping the teacher candidate pool. Both teams ensure compliance and are communicative with the CTC to ensure regulations are followed strictly. Although they claim to have an open-door policy, they are both experiencing staffing inefficiencies and participants expressed a desire for more time to collaborate as they are overwhelmed. Despite providing a program roadmap to students and offering personalized support as needed, such staffing inefficiencies hinder the support they can give to students. Melon highlighted that due to the teacher shortage, instead of teacher diversity the primary focus is on enrollment, as personnel are pressured from the university leadership to increase numbers.

In Nectarine, faculty lamented that the lack of communication between the student services and faculty and that the team does not speak a shared language. Some recognized that due to the pandemic, some are still transitioning, however expressed dissatisfaction at the workload due to shortages. In Melon, administrators claimed the program shares information

across channels, however staff and faculty revealed that some roles and duties are not clarified. In both Nectarine and Melon, roles, and duties, though specified, overlap. As a result of my frequent reading of transcripts, case study excerpts from both programs began to blend, as they function similarly and are experiencing job dissatisfaction in similar ways.

In Apple, roles and duties are clearly defined and the student services, though an enforcer of regulatory compliance, engages policies and structures with a critical stance throughout the process, aiming to provide students with as much flexibility as possible within institutional parameters. Faculty described the student services division as rock stars, who are incredible, and hold the program together like glue. Participants emphasized that roles are specified and that there are multiple collaborative positions. They shared that student services and faculty often coordinate efforts across the university.

Faculty members stated that they would prefer additional training in recruitment and admissions but are unable to participate due to their heavy workloads. Administrators and faculty bemoaned the lack of faculty diversity, framing it as a significant impediment to BIPOC recruitment and admission.

Communication

Communication is a significant factor in the recruitment and admissions of BIPOC teachers. Melon and Nectarine both provide prospective candidates with appointments if requested and participants shared that they feel frustrated with the website. Though they acknowledge the process to complete a credential is complicated, only a few folks in each program aim to clarify processes for prospective candidates in any consistent way.

In both Melon and Nectarine, participants highlighted that students are primarily recruited from the university's own undergraduate student body and that COVID has

complicated recruitment efforts. In both Melon and Nectarine, participants shared that most recruitment is word of mouth. Despite providing information via information sessions, both Melon and Nectarine restrict communication. When asked about this, participants in both programs cited staffing inefficiencies due to COVID as the reason why they were unable to deliver regular personalized support to prospective candidates.

In Apple, the staff, faculty, and administrators send communication strategically to prospective candidates and encourage students to communicate with the recruiter often. Applicants are given a rough outline of what they should be expecting in terms of communication. Despite the overwhelming frustration with the website, they are focusing on improving it through the lens of prospective students. The student services administrator engages other TEPs regularly to share what is working and learn from others about what more can be done. All participants at Apple lament the complexity of credentialing and recognize that a major barrier to recruiting BIPOC teachers is the public perception of teaching as a profession, claiming it needs to be elevated. Bianca specifically emphasized the need to publicize the hard work many BIPOC teachers engage in with local communities via social media.

Activities

Recruitment activities in Melon and Nectarine were focused primarily on undergraduate students as student services personnel shared, they are unable to do more, due to a laser focus on the teacher shortage, and a lack of fiscal and human resources. Katie at Nectarine creatively engages sororities and fraternities. The program, however, remains tightly focused on its own undergraduate population. In describing partnerships with school districts and community colleges Nectarine participants described these as feeder schools that bring individuals to the

program. When asked about specific, targeted recruitment efforts, participants referenced a grant at Nectarine, and similarly one grant at Melon.

Participants at Melon shared that barriers to recruitment of BIPOC teachers are related to their perceived lack of interest, inability to complete requirements, that local school districts don't prioritize diversity, and sharing that COVID-19 suspended momentum. Participants at Nectarine similarly shared that barriers to recruitment of BIPOC teachers are related to COVID and that BIPOC might not be able to fulfill requirements or may be disinterested in their future trajectory. Few Nectarine participants acknowledged that BIPOC teachers may have been marginalized and due to negative experiences, may not want to enter K-12 schools.

In Apple, recruitment efforts are multifaceted, ongoing, and consistent. Student services continually engages with their ethnoracially diverse student body and utilizes existing alliances to maintain the recruitment of BIPOC teachers from the local community. Student services participate in strategic and active recruiting, reach out to faculty, administrators, and staff across campus to discuss recruitment efforts, and maintain strong partnerships with local non-profits, community colleges, school districts and the county office of education. Participants shared that a few barriers to recruitment for their program include exams, fees, limited high school pathways available, the GPA requirement, and ill advisement students receive when they transfer from community college child development programs.

Stakeholder Engagement

In Apple, faculty engage students during information sessions and orientation and keep in touch with them throughout their journey within the program. Some remind students to take exams and register for classes while others claim they are unable to participate fully in recruitment efforts. One administrator in Apple lamented that the lack of faculty diversity was

problematic for the recruitment of BIPOC teachers as those who do work in the TEP often lack understanding on how to serve the communities that they are working with directly.

In Melon and Nectarine faculty involvement in recruitment is minimal, but significant in admissions. In Melon faculty lament that they have not seen recruitment materials fliers and are eager to be more involved, while at Nectarine, faculty interviewed placed responsibility for the lack of involvement of stakeholders on the lack of visionary leadership, outlining also, the lack of training available for those involved in making decisions. While some faculty are seen as very supportive of students in Nectarine, others fear they cannot answer questions due to regulatory compliance. It is evident that faculty in Melon, Nectarine and Apple, seek to be involved more in recruitment, but are inhibited due in part to various institutional factors.

Policies and Structures

Policies and structures supporting or serving as barriers to the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers vary across cases. In Melon and Nectarine, despite core values of social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion strict requirements are adhered to following the CTC and the public university system criteria. Though participants claim to be reflective, the interview process in both programs wreaks of subjectivity as students are measured against white norms and values.

In Melon, claims that the TEP personnel talk about anti-racist pedagogy, is obscured by acknowledged rigidity and inaccessibility of the program. Policies such as inflexible GPA requirements and practices such as the consistent prioritization of exams in documents, websites, and in information sessions render the program accessible primarily to a majority white candidate pool. One shared that teacher preparation needs a “good hacking” (Kiara), while another lamented that “teachers are not paid very well” (Kelly).

Participants in Nectarine shared that they don't have control and cannot deviate from CTC regulations or the public university system stipulations, yet they acknowledge the application is tedious and they give students extensions. Such contradictions, coupled by the overwhelming whiteness of TEP faculty, staff, and administrators, potentially discourages BIPOC teachers from applying.

In Apple, participants outlined that policies and structures that support the recruitment of BIPOC teachers are related to the philosophy of those involved in recruitment. Primarily, they shared the focus should not just be on recruitment, but on retention as well, and ongoing support for BIPOC teachers who enter school systems. Faculty outlined that recruitment efforts are hindered by the length of time it takes for students to complete a credential, and this was echoed by the administrators as well. For Apple, barriers are acknowledged and mitigated within the system, and they employ creative methods to circumvent regulations that are historically exclusionary to BIPOC teachers.

Research Question 2b: What are the barriers or perceived barriers for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers?

Common barriers or perceived barriers for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers found across the cases are framed as those facing candidates, those within programs hampering diversification efforts, and external factors hampering BIPOC recruitment and admission. Examples include: exclusionary and costly admissions criteria based on CTC regulations and public university system stipulations, the complicated credential process, pervasive white-normed policies and practices in TEPs, lack of TEP staff, faculty, and administrator diversity, long and costly credential programs, unpaid student teaching requirements, lack of training for those involved in recruitment and admission, public perception

of teaching as white, female, disrespected, and underpaid, and lack of fiscal and human resources in TEPs that hinder recruitment efforts. See Table 13 for a matrix incorporating themes from across the cases.

Table 13

Cross-Case Analysis Findings

Category	Apple	Melon	Nectarine
Admissions	Homegrown, High-Achiever, Community-oriented, Passionate, Student-Centered, Committed to Educational Equity, Understands Diversity, Enjoys Children, Has Vision of Helping Urban Communities, Dedicated to Teaching, Cares, Wants to Make a Difference Decisions focus on personal essays and candidates' life stories	High-Achiever, English Speaker, Critical Thinker, Fighter, Equity-Focused, Student-Centered, Passionate, Hard-Working, Resilient, Responsive, Polite, Understands Diversity, Well-Behaved, Professional Decisions focus on Interview, GPA, Letters of Recommendation and Personal Essay	Compliant, High-Achiever, Well-Informed, Experienced, Diligent, Punctual Decisions focus on GPA, Exams, Interview, Letters of Recommendation and Personal Essay
Strategies	Targeted BIPOC Recruitment Partnerships: Community, District, YMCA, Community Colleges, County Offices, Nonprofits Career Pathways High School Pathways Undergraduate Recruitment Course Visitations Alumni Recruitment Campus Event Recruitment Graduate Fair Recruitment	Moderate BIPOC Recruitment Partnerships: District, Community Colleges, County Offices Undergraduate Recruitment Course Visitations Mostly Word of Mouth	Moderate BIPOC Recruitment Partnerships: District, Community Colleges, County Offices Undergraduate Recruitment Course Visitations Alumni Recruitment Campus Event Recruitment Graduate Fair Recruitment Mostly Word of Mouth
Narratives	Core Values: Community Revitalization & Justice Vocal about systemic change Express desire to remove barriers Express desire to reach students earlier	Core Values: Social Justice and Equity Belief in equal opportunity Express desire to remove barriers	Core Values: Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Belief in equal opportunity Acknowledgement of need for systemic change
Supports	Extensive Personalized Inclusive Interview after admission Communications sent strategically Courses strategically designed for students' different needs Support reentry students	Moderate Compliance-Related Open-Door Policy Extension of deadlines Virtual Information Sessions Use of a rubric for interview	Moderate Compliance-Related Virtual Information Sessions Extension of deadlines Ongoing surveys for improvement Use of a rubric for interview TEP Personnel are flexible
Stakeholder Engagement	Extensive Includes Student Services Team, across departments and colleges Administrators share with other TEPs Faculty provide support Faculty keep in touch with alumni	Limited Primarily Recruiter Faculty Involvement in Interview	Limited Primarily Recruiter Faculty Involvement in Interview Faculty Respond to student inquiries
Barriers	Applicant Facing: - Complicated Process - Centralized Application - Outdated Website - Information is inaccessible - Unpaid Student Teaching - Tuition Fees - Length of Program - Exams - Commute - Parking Fees - Letters of Recommendation - Interview Internal: - Lack of faculty diversity - TEP Personnel lack of time External: - Public Perception of Teaching - Teacher Salary	Applicant Facing: - Complicated Process - Outdated Website - Program is rigid - Unpaid Student Teaching Internal: - Staffing Inefficiencies - Institutional Pressures for Enrollment - Lack of faculty diversity - High attrition rate - TEP Personnel lack of time for collaboration, communication External: - Partnerships don't prioritize diversity - Public Perception of Teaching - Teacher Salary	Applicant Facing: - Complicated Process - TEP Application is tedious - Outdated, Overwhelming Website - Unpaid Student Teaching Internal: - Staffing Inefficiencies - Institutional Pressures for Enrollment - TEP Personnel overworked, not speaking collective language, desires visionary leadership and training, afraid to overstep boundaries, feel they do not have control due to regulatory compliance - Lack of funding for diversity initiatives External: - Public Perception of Teaching - Teacher Salary

Chapter 5: Summary

In this chapter, I provided an in-depth cross-case study analysis of three TEPs, Melon, Nectarine and Apple. I elaborated upon key findings in my critical discourse analysis of each site's TEP websites, documents, information sessions and interviews with staff, faculty, and administrators, and provided detailed responses to my research questions. In the following chapter, I discuss the significance of my findings, present policy, and practice implications, provide recommendations, and suggest ideas for further research.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Implications

This dissertation aimed to explore the racialized discourses in the recruitment and admissions processes and how whiteness might be embodied and challenged in three university based TEPs operating within three MSIs in the state of California in efforts to recruit and admit BIPOC teachers. Through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2004) using the frames of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and the conceptual framework of white racial discourse (Feagin, 2020; Ray, 2019), I explored not only the racialized discourses, but also racialized factors that shape recruitment and admissions of BIPOC teachers, specifically policies and practices that support the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers, and those that operate as barriers. The use of CRT and CWS make transparent the ways in which TEP staff, faculty and administrators embody and challenge whiteness in the recruitment and admissions of BIPOC teachers, and the ways in which racialized factors shape the process, as programs provide support and maintain barriers in complex, often contradictory ways. This research has implications for accrediting bodies and licensing agencies, teacher education programs, community colleges, and K-12 districts and schools

Summary of Findings

It is clear from conducting the Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 2004) using Critical Race Theory (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and Critical Whiteness Studies (Feagin, 2020; Ray, 2019) and the conceptual framework of white racial discourse that without the integration of community revitalization and justice, TEPs, by default, engage in whitekeeping recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers. Structurally, programs embody whiteness or

challenge it within the constraints of institutions and overarching compliance with state teacher licensing regulations.

Teacher quality and measurements associated with maintaining it via strict state licensure regulations, and efforts to diversify the teaching workforce are prioritized in different ways across programs. TEPs can challenge or maintain racialized factors and operate as racialized organizations (Ray, 2019) enforcing, uncritically, seemingly race-neutral burdens such as costly compliance related clearances, GPA, costly licensure exams, letters of recommendation, personal statements, and interviews.

TEPs that embody whiteness and prioritize regulatory compliance, assess prospective candidates via a deficit lens, with the assumption that all have an equal opportunity, and those who demonstrate whiteness are favored. In such programs, the recruitment and admissions process is fraught with inconsistencies and inefficiencies, as there is no agreed-upon concept of diversity. Admissions decisions are based on the presumption that everyone, despite oppressive racial realities (Feagin, 2020), is given a fair and equal opportunity, and that the ideal teacher is a strong English speaker, polite, professional, but most importantly, punctual, all racialized white norms. Interviews are aimed at weeding out people who do not adhere to white norms and values. COVID flexibilities for state teacher licensure are viewed as leveling the playing field for BIPOC, and the primary focus is to sell the program to meet labor needs due to the teacher shortage which takes precedence over increasing teacher diversity.

TEPs that challenge whiteness and prioritize community revitalization and justice, such as Apple, evaluate prospective candidates using an asset-based perspective. Such programs recognize that racism is systemic and acknowledge their role in exacerbating broad educational inequities. Admissions decisions are based on the presumption that candidates bring rich, cultural

experiences with them, and the ideal teacher might be nurturing, multilingual, Candidates who demonstrate a commitment to community and focus on equity are favored for admission.

community-oriented, and equity minded.

In such TEPs, the recruitment and admissions processes are structured to predominantly attract pre-service teachers from local communities, specifically BIPOC, via strong partnerships. There is a shared dedication to community revitalization and justice. Candidates are admitted if they meet minimum requirements and are provided with personalized support throughout the program and beyond. COVID flexibilities for state teacher licensure are viewed as helpful to BIPOC whose struggles are acknowledged and honored. The primary focus is to enhance communities with BIPOC teachers who are prepared to teach and remain in the profession. Efforts to address the teacher shortage are seen as opportunities to increase teacher diversity.

Programs that challenge whiteness function in the same public university system as those that embody it. Thus, they are subject to similar restrictions and must conform to state teacher licensure regulations. However, they manage their adherence to these regulations in innovative ways to promote racial equity and justice.

The purpose of this study was to explore racialized discourses in TEP recruitment and admissions processes and racialized factors that shape the recruitment and admission of BIPOC teachers. Despite professed institutional commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion and acknowledgements of the critical need to diversify the teaching force, racialized discourses, specifically that of Equal Opportunity (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and Minimization of Racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018), are espoused by programs as TEPs that embody whiteness, as they operate as racialized organizations (Ray, 2019).

In two university based TEPs studied, racialized discourses were pervasive as these spaces are predominantly white as designed and draw candidates from a consistent white majority candidate pool (Feagin, 2020). Racialized factors rooted in Equal Opportunity and neoliberal market-based discourse simultaneously inhibit admission of BIPOC teachers and welcome admission of white candidates. BIPOC K-12 students are marginalized throughout their academic careers, by a majority white teacher workforce only to be further rejected by a majority white TEP faculty and administration workforce.

This study reveals that despite state licensing regulations, and institutional constraints, TEPs hold significant power to make critical choices regarding the recruitment and admission of BIPOC candidates. Visionary leadership, deep commitment to community revitalization and justice across the program, and critical engagement with policies and structures that whitekeep the teaching profession, have the potential to increase BIPOC recruitment and admission. Those TEPs that are university-based, specifically those which are designated as Minority Serving, must leverage partnerships within and across communities of Color if they are to honor their vision and mission to serve BIPOC. The findings of this research demonstrate that TEPs can either embody whiteness or challenge it; the choice is theirs.

Implications

It is clear through this study that recruitment and admissions processes in university based TEPs can be highly racialized. Any critical progress toward racial equity in teaching will continue to be obscured by discourses rooted in whiteness coupled by racialized factors that whitekeep BIPOC admittance to TEPs and subsequently teaching. A brief history of whiteness in American education is necessary to place the findings into context.

It is well known that the American education system was designed to maintain white

supremacy. A significant element of conquest, European (not designated white at the time) colonizers weaponized education to transmit and tragically replace what they claimed were *savage* Native American cultures with *civilized* Euro-centric language, culture, and knowledge, through an especially violent campaign resulting in totalizing institutions for indoctrination and subjugation.

In a powerful study, historian Craig Steven Wilder (2013) explores the interwoven histories of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and higher education in the US, chronicling how early church-based colleges and universities were created to maintain profit from slavery, violence, and dispossession. Eager to exterminate Native American peoples for their land, policymakers provided land grants to support the creation of numerous colleges supplying labor in the form of enslaved workers.

Traditionally designed for the cultivation of the intellect of elite, white men, these Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) served in conjunction with the church and state as what Wilder (2013) terms the “third pillar” of the burgeoning slave economy. Prominent slave-holding families held the first prime positions in these institutions where students’ enslaved workers were accommodated on campus (Wilder, 2013).

Throughout the 19th century, these institutes of higher education would not only provide cover for the slave trade, but also serve as its primary propagandist, via the perpetuation of pseudoscientific justifications for the inferiority of Black and Brown bodies and minds (Gould, 1996). Today, revisionist American history textbooks refrain from discussions about long-time slave holder Benjamin Franklin’s fear of the “darkening complexion of America” (Wilder, 2013, p. 142), or of Thomas Jefferson’s sadistic curiosity about Native American peoples and penchant for collecting their remains, ordering enslaved workers to rob their graves. William and Mary’s

medical program was later developed due to Jefferson's own research on these stolen bodies (Wilder, 2013).

According to Feagin (2020), this dark past of American higher education is intentionally brightened by predominantly white, male scholars via a white racial discourse, or frame, that has whites and people of Color, "collectively forgetting" (p. 28) the atrocities upon which such institutions were primarily built.

Since the colonial era, to the present, it can be stated that the exclusion of BIPOC to higher education functions as designed, to construct and maintain white biological, cultural, and social supremacy (Feagin, 2020; Posselt, 2016; Wilder, 2013). Despite integration and affirmative action measures, universities still admit an overwhelmingly white student body and operate via majority white staff, faculty, and administrators (Bustillos & Siqueros, 2018; Cabrera et al., 2016; Cabrera et al., 2017; Posselt, 2016).

Gains made during the Civil Rights movement for BIPOC, received aggressive response from the dominant white majority. In response to affirmative action measures meant to make institutions more racially integrated, conservatives organized and rallied in vehement opposition, charging that such initiatives were, in essence, reverse discrimination against whites, thus a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Feagin, 2020).

By 1990, such notions gained traction in California and Proposition 209 passed, effectively banning affirmative action, making it challenging for universities to take race into consideration for admission (Cabrera et al., 2017). In 2020, calls to dismantle this racist agenda, an attempt was made to reverse Proposition 209 via Proposition 16, but was rejected. Therefore, even though universities are not race-neutral spaces, and whiteness is enacted via discourse in text and social practices (Cabrera et al., 2017; Feagin, 2020), California universities admissions

decisions must remain *color-blind* (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) or *race-neutral* (Feagin, 2020). In TEPs operating in these universities, enrollees are thus largely white as designed.

This study on racialized discourses and factors that impact the largest profession in the nation (Ingersoll et al., 2018), is critical as American society grapples with its “long overdue awakening” to racial and social injustice (Worland, 2020). The blatantly racist and violent execution of George Floyd on May 25th of 2020, has triggered society to demand introspection of America’s unique brand of “well institutionalized systemic racism” (Feagin, 2020, p. 4), specifically its violent past and terrifying present. To maintain their institutional image (Ahmed, 2012), a growing number of businesses, organizations and universities drafted or renewed existing commitments to social justice, specifically diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (Thompson, 2021). Such efforts, however, largely ignore historical racial trauma, glossing over the lack of ethnoracial diversity in overwhelming white institutional spaces (Cabrera, 2014).

Public relations messaging can regurgitate race-neutral discourse, dominating institutions in invisible ways, working in the background to block the advancement of BIPOC (Ahmed, 2012; Feagin, 2020; Iverson, 2007). The lack of culturally responsive stakeholders, such as teachers, who represent BIPOC communities, contribute to economic inequality and maintain power in the hands of the very few.

In predominantly white spaces (Feagin, 2020) such as teacher education (Matias, 2016) BIPOC must grapple with invisible hurdles such as white folk engaging in backstage performances (Feagin, 2020), hiding disgust (Matias & Zembylas, 2014), and viewing equity work and anti-racism as more of a temporary means to an end (Hawkman, 2020). This was prevalent in how participants in this study discussed candidates during admissions decisions. Racialized dispositions measured during interviews, resemble the inherent virtuousness of

whiteness and desire to colonize and subjugate the children learning in public spaces, where teachers “can't pick the students” (Kelly). Internal practices embrace white norms and those who espouse them.

English proficiency is prioritized, and whiteness is seen as a credential (Ray, 2019) and as normal, as whites, particularly white women are passed on for targeted recruitment efforts, since they enter programs at alarmingly higher rates than their BIPOC counterparts. This is exacerbated as the teacher shortage highlights how TEPs lament that they can't admit “even white students” (Sophia).

Despite commitments to equity and diversity, due to racialized decoupling (Ray, 2019), the consistent white majority candidate pool is not wrestled with in meaningful ways by TEPs. Under the guise of neoliberalism (Lahann & Reagan, 2011) teacher education does not have to grapple with its whiteness problem as resources are diverted to supplying districts with teachers due to the teacher shortage. Work conditions, and in particular teacher pay and the lack of racial equity initiatives in K-12 contexts are invisibilized as the teacher shortage promotes race-evasiveness (Chang-Bacon, 2022; Jupp et al., 2019).

The belief that GPA is the primary and almost sacred predictor of performance in preparation and beyond was absolute across the cases. Flexibility in accepting those with lower GPAs, was framed as merciful in an otherwise merciless competition against the whiteness of it all.

A significant implication of this study is that whiteness is a discourse that is not only embraced by people of European descent but is also often espoused by BIPOC. Such widespread whiteness can be harmful if not interrogated at the structural level in long-lasting meaningful ways.

An important implication that emerged from this study is the issue of context as an important factor to be considered in understanding ethnoracial diversity in teaching. Since faculty and administrators are part of a public university system, they have been exposed to the system's current work to diversify the teaching workforce. However, despite exposure to these initiatives, there exist personnel who hesitate to name any contour of systemic racism as a causal factor for racial inequities in the teaching workforce. An interrogation of white supremacy, decentering of whiteness, followed by subsequent training in racial equity and racial justice is critical for spaces engaged in the preparation of the next generation of teachers (Ray, 2019).

Participants highlighted that efforts to remove barriers to admission for BIPOC teachers, improve working conditions, and increase teacher compensation have been going on for decades, and that policy is only shifting now because of the pandemic, accompanying teacher attrition and shortage. It is evident from the study, as CRT hypothesizes, that whites will move to eliminate barriers, and improve conditions, as a large proportion of white children attend K-12 schools, as such their interests have converged with that of BIPOC (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Unfortunately, TEPs studied are not capturing the increase in candidate ethnoracial diversity that may be seen because of an increase in state legislative flexibilities surrounding admissions criteria (CTC, 2021).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The following are implications for policy and practice for state accrediting bodies and licensing agencies, university-based TEPs, community colleges, K-12 school districts, and school sites for strategies to diversify the teaching workforce.

Figure 7 is included with additional recommendations gleaned from my own interpretations based on theoretical frameworks, the research process, and my own background

as a woman of Color teacher and teacher educator working diligently to decenter whiteness and radically reimagine communities that prioritize racial equity and racial justice.

Recommendations include:

1. Prioritize Racial Equity and Racial Justice in Recruitment and Admission of BIPOC
2. Critically Review Racialized Policies and Practices that Inhibit BIPOC Recruitment and Admissions
3. Involve Stakeholders in Recruitment and Admission of BIPOC Teacher Candidates

To disrupt the overwhelming whiteness in systems and promote racial equity and racial justice in teaching, it is recommended that accrediting bodies and state licensing agencies, TEPs, community colleges, and K-12 districts and schools ensure that ethnoracial and linguistic diversity is prioritized.

This will require the intentional allocation of resources to decenter whiteness (Feagin, 2020), commitment to recruit and retain BIPOC personnel (Gist & Bristol, 2022; Gist et al., 2021), dedication to train stakeholders in racial equity and racial justice (Feagin, 2020; Kohli, 2021), and resolve to increase financial, social, and academic support for BIPOC (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Policies and practices that are exclusionary represent racialized decoupling (Ray, 2019). Any policy or practice, which further advantages whites over BIPOC, must be interrogated with fidelity by a diverse team of key stakeholders who have had training in racial equity and racial justice.

Resources must be allocated for the ongoing financial, social, and academic support for BIPOC policymakers, administrators, faculty, staff, K-12 school leaders, K-12 schoolteachers, K-12 students, and community members within and across contexts, to ensure meaningful inclusion is not fleeting.

Accrediting Bodies and State Licensing Agencies

Accrediting bodies and state licensing agencies must consider establishing TEP standards for the recruitment, admission, and retention of BIPOC. Such standards might require TEPs to ensure the teacher prep diversity gap (TNTP, 2020) is minimized and that enrollment is matched to, at minimum, county demographics or more narrowly, to the local K-12 student body enrollment demographics.

Additionally, accrediting bodies and state licensing agencies should design TEP standards for program staff, faculty, and administrator diversity. Such standards might require TEP personnel, at minimum, to reflect the undergraduate student body of the university they operate in. Non-university based TEPs could be required to assess local community demographics to match hiring and retaining BIPOC staff, faculty, and administrators. Such mandates would ensure TEPs adhere to program diversity initiatives.

Furthermore, accrediting bodies and state licensing agencies should seriously consider reducing or removing a minimum GPA requirement of 2.5 for entry and 3.0 for exit in TEPs (Fenwick, 2021). Consideration of removing licensure (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Epstein, 2005) and performance assessments as TEP entry and exit requirements has implications for BIPOC recruitment (Fenwick, 2021; Gitomer et al., 1999; Nettles et al., 2011; Sleeter, 2016). Such stipulations pose barriers for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC.

The establishment of TEP standards for involving community stakeholders and developing partnerships is key. Without such stipulations, TEPs are relegated to maintaining compliance related to entrance and thus whitekeeping. With the perspective of community stakeholders, such as organizations, K-12 school personnel, students, and households, and strong partnerships such with colleges, high schools, organizations, non-profits, and county offices of

education, the complexity of obtaining a teaching credential is likely to be reduced as more individuals will have access to information regarding teacher preparation and credentialing. This has implications for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC as the complexity will be ameliorated and support networks can thrive to bring more BIPOC into the profession.

University Based TEPs

Teacher education, according to Epstein (2005), operates as a “job reservation and segregation system for whites...select[ing] for race more than competence” (p. 95-96). University based TEPs must train administrators, faculty, staff, candidates, and communities, in racial equity and racial justice, increase funding for student services staff and targeted recruitment efforts, and fund targeted recruitment initiatives.

The ongoing critical engagement and review of all policies and practices such as standards for hiring, recruitment and admission and TEP admission that whitekeep spaces is necessary. The goal should be to generate meaningful, intentional, targeted recruitment leads via personalized support conducted by BIPOC for BIPOC.

TEPs should critically review racialized policies and practices. As seen in the findings, the hypervisibility of BIPOC teachers often obscures whiteness. Efforts to make diversity a real priority across systems requires the use of data and tracking to ensure commitments are followed through on and agreed upon policies and practices, remain in institutional memory.

According to leading education scholars Alicia Dowd and Brandon Elmore, the use of data for equity is necessary to reduce “racial disparities” (Dowd & Elmore, 2019, p. 159) in access to educational opportunities. Their “anti-racist approach” for higher education can be applied to contexts such as TEPs, specifically to the recruitment and admissions process. Additionally, their approach can be used to evaluate diversification efforts across contexts.

In the case of improving TEP recruitment and admissions “fine grained measures” or “close to practice” data that can be pinpointed is essential (Dowd & Elmore, 2019, p. 160). Tracking the overwhelming presence of whiteness in applicants, is one such example. To do this, data gathered might include prospective applicants, applicants, admits and denials. This might also include evaluating data about those admitted who withdraw before the program begins, or early on, in addition to general program attrition rates. The use of an “Equity Scorecard” (Dowd & Elmore, 2019) could involve TEP key stakeholders to examine TEP recruitment, admission, and retention data which would best be disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and other indicators important for TEP recruitment and admission, such as gender and language. The use of multiple indicators would potentially help key stakeholders guide discussion and unearth implicit biases or color-evasive policies (Chang-Bacon, 2022) and practices being upheld. Such an equity scorecard might help TEPs improve systems such as increased personalized support and transparency that have been found to help BIPOC students (Dowd & Elmore, 2019).

To improve access for BIPOC, TEPs should strongly consider the reduction or removal of a minimum GPA for TEP entry and exit (Fenwick, 2021). Academic performance is often referenced as a primary predictor of program completion, however GPA minimums are roadblocks to meaningful goals towards diversity, as seen by Apple’s students. With ongoing support, students with lower than the minimum GPA finished the program and went on to teach. Low income working BIPOC students are hurt the most by this requirement and economic mobility is hampered when they are denied admission due to GPA requirements. Automatic denials due to GPA neglect students and community growth and contribute to the whitekeeping of TEPs and subsequent whiteness of the teaching profession. Thus, a critical assessment of GPA is necessary as a use for admission denial to TEPs.

It is critical that TEPs actively recruit and retain BIPOC personnel. The lack of faculty diversity (Galanek & Gierdowski, 2020; Gusa, 2010; Stout et al., 2018) in predominantly white spaces is a barrier for the recruitment and admission of BIPOC (Gist & Bristol, 2021; Matias, 2016; Sleeter, 2016). To do this TEPs must train in anti-racist hiring practices (Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022). Since most TEP personnel are white women (Hancock & Warren, 2016; Morey et al., 1997) integrating faculty, students, community members, and undergraduate students in admissions and even hiring processes might be an effective way to improve diversity across ethnoracial background and gender. Additionally, seeking the input of first-year college students who have recently attended K-12 schools might also be beneficial for broadening perspectives.

TEPs improve working conditions in TEPs (Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Matias, 2016). Heavy workload and staff inefficiencies were commonly referenced in the transcripts of this study. To infuse the teaching workforce with much needed Color, TEPs must be released from the consistent onslaught of regulatory compliance. Flexibilities such as coursework in lieu of basic skills exams, are irrelevant, as the college degree in most states already has general education as a requirement. Time and energy that could otherwise be dedicated to creating genuine initiatives to diversify the TEP candidate pool are instead spent on tasks like checking undergraduate transcripts for such basic skills equivalency. Members of the TEP staff, faculty, and administration might consider comparing the characteristics of successful alumni with current admissions criteria to make improvements on recruitment and admissions processes.

Data exploration for this study highlighted the overrepresentation of Latinx teachers in urban communities in southern California, relative to Black and Asian teachers, both subgroups which feature prominent in demographic makeup of Southern California. What is left unspoken

is potential colorism or skin color bias (Walker, 2004) related to TEP recruitment and admission. TEPs might consider evaluating their own program personnel's commitment to and deep understanding of racial equity and racial justice in addition to colorism. This can be done via observations and brief critical discourse analyses of policies and practices as described in this study.

It is essential that TEPs ensure the admissions process is more equitable. Most graduate admissions committees like to admit students like themselves (Posselt, 2016) and this was evident in two of the three programs in this study. Despite the use of rubrics, participant faculty members of this study often engaged in whitekeeping practices, valuing white norms and values throughout the process. TEPs must increase the number of tools for inter-rater reliability; however, these tools must be scrutinized from an equity perspective. Whitekeeping rubrics will contribute to white outcomes. Some ideas to improve rubric use are the following, (1) Obtain rubric feedback via internal surveys, focus groups, and interviews from key stakeholders including but not limited to: TEP a staff, faculty and admin, district personnel, local school leaders, teachers, school staff, community members, and students, to understand what they are looking for in teachers in their local communities, (2) Increase ethnoracial and linguistic diversity of personnel designing rubrics, and in admissions (3) Train key stakeholders on racial equity and racial justice, decentering whiteness, colorism (Walker, 2004) and implicit biases (4) Have official programmatic goals drawn from program mission and vision for ethnoracial, linguistic diversity, and gender diversity embedded in rubrics and on websites to increase transparency, (5) Allow applicants to use the assess themselves using the rubric, and submit it to interview committees within 24 hours (6) Design an admissions feedback survey for applicants which can be shared among key stakeholders.

Enhancing online presence is key to recruiting BIPOC candidates. TEPs should work with their Information Technology departments on campus to update their websites and streamline the application process. The complicated nature of these processes deters BIPOC applicants from completing forms and submitting on time. Additionally, program personnel should consider how to reduce program fees and develop creative methods to secure financial aid for BIPOC students. In addition to program cost, TEPs might also consider shortening programs, to ensure candidates can finish in a timely manner, whilst incurring the least amount of student debt. The removal of costly exams and increased personalized support will yield more applicants of Color. All information about program cost, length, should be publicized on websites in clear and simple ways that minimizes technical jargon.

It is critical that TEPs and community colleges involve stakeholders to diversify the teaching workforce. Consistent collaboration with middle schools, high schools, and K-12 school districts to design and expand pathway programs (Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021) is vital. Grow Your Own Programs (Gist & Bristol, 2022; Goings et al., 2018; Lac, 2022; Lightfoot & White, 2022; Valenzuela, 2017) that target students from urban and rural communities of Color are successful in diversifying the teacher workforce and can also “strengthen students’ sense of agency and political efficacy (Lightfoot & White, 2022, p. 92) and “create a new generation of diverse, community-responsive educators who have a deep understanding of their home communities” (Bianco & Marin-Paris, 2019, p. 40). With increased funding for student services staff and broadening who can be involved in recruitment and admission, the development or expansion of local Grow Your Own Programs (Gist & Bristol, 2022) is possible.

The findings demonstrate that stakeholders wish to participate more in recruitment and admissions efforts but are unable to due to factors like heavy workload, the complexity of credentialing, and the need to adhere to strict regulations. It is essential that student services work with staff, faculty, and administrators to participate in recruitment activities and welcome prospective candidates.

Involved stakeholders are more likely to assist in offering training to K-12 districts, schools, and colleges on teaching as a career, preparation, and certification. Additionally, they can train college counselors and career and transfer center personnel about teacher preparation, and certification, and remind them to direct students to take majors in subject matter for teaching in lieu of child development if they seek to teach in K-12 schools.

Engaging community organizations via partnerships and community members via events both online and in physical spaces might lead to co-construction of needs assessments. Accessing the assets of community members will lead to symbiotic partnerships as outlined in Apple.

Community Colleges

To prioritize racial equity and racial justice in teaching, community colleges must engage in the training of administrators, faculty, staff, college students, and communities, in racial equity and racial justice, increase funding for student services staff and fund targeted recruitment efforts. Increased staff can provide financial, social, and academic support for BIPOC seeking teaching careers.

Additionally, while community colleges serve a large portion of BIPOC (52%) (NCES, 2023b), faculty are over 80% white (Galanek & Gierdowski, 2020; Stout et al., 2018) the recruitment and retention of BIPOC administrators, faculty and staff at the community college

level can have significant implications for BIPOC students seeking support to become teachers and thus increasing diversity in these spaces is necessary.

K-12 Districts and Schools

It is advised that efforts be undertaken at the K-12 level to train district and school leaders, teachers, staff, communities, and students in racial equity and racial justice and provide financial, academic, and social support to BIPOC. This has implications for BIPOC teachers as they continue in the profession (Dixon et al., 2019; Kohli, 2021; Kohli & Pizarro, 2022; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012)

In addition, K-12 districts should form partnerships with nearby colleges and universities to lobby for the increased financial assistance for BIPOC students and provide funding for pathway programs. This study and broader research (Dixon et al., 2019) indicates that BIPOC experience harmful, racialized conditions in K-12 schools first as students (Bianco & Marin-Paris, 2019), and then if they become K-12 teachers (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Kohli, 2021; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021). Thus, it is critical that K-12 school districts and schools vigorously decenter whiteness, and actively support BIPOC administrators, teachers, and staff (Kohli, 2021; Sleeter, 2016). Training in anti-racist hiring practices has the potential to improve representation of BIPOC in schools, however any training will have little impact if working conditions are not improved and if racialized discourses and practices remain in place.

Furthermore, K-12 districts and schools must provide competitive and equitable compensation to recruit BIPOC to the profession (Allegretto, 2022; Gist & Bristol, 2022; Gist et al., 2021; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021). Improvements in pay might also be complemented with subsidized training opportunities leading to higher learning and the

promotion of individuals into higher-paying roles. The development of a teacher educator pipeline of Color is bound to develop if the recommendations are instituted in transformative ways. See Figure 7 for recommendations.

Figure 7

Recommendations to Diversify the Teaching Workforce

Accrediting Bodies and State Licensing Agencies	University-Based TEPs	Community Colleges	K-12 Districts and Schools
RECOMMENDATION 1: PRIORITIZE RACIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE IN RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSION OF BIPOC			
Allocate Funds to Decenter Whiteness (<i>Feagin, 2020; Matias, 2016; Sleeter, 2016</i>) Recruit and Retain BIPOC Personnel (<i>Bitar et al., 2022; Gist & Bristol, 2022; Kohli, 2021</i>) Train Stakeholders in Racial Equity and Racial Justice (<i>Feagin, 2020; Kohli, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022</i>) Increase Financial, Social, and Academic Support for BIPOC (<i>Garcia et al., 2022; Kohli, 2021; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022</i>)			
Establish TEP Standards for Recruitment, Admission and Retention of BIPOC Design TEP Standards for Program Staff, Faculty and Administrator Diversity	Increase Funding for Student Services Staff (<i>Carver-Thomas, 2018</i>) Fund Targeted Recruitment Efforts (<i>Carver-Thomas, 2018</i>) Fund Pathway Programs (<i>Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022</i>) Secure Financial Aid for BIPOC Students (<i>Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022</i>) Support BIPOC TEP and College Administrators, Faculty, Staff and Students		Secure Financial Aid for BIPOC Students (<i>Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022</i>) Fund Pathway Programs (<i>Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022</i>) Support BIPOC Administrators, Teachers, Staff and Students (<i>Kohli, 2021; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021</i>) Provide Competitive and Equitable Salaries (<i>Allegretto, 2022; Gist et al., 2021; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021</i>)
RECOMMENDATION 2: CRITICALLY REVIEW RACIALIZED POLICIES AND PRACTICES			
Reduce or Remove GPA TEP Entry and Exit Requirements (<i>Fenwick, 2021</i>) Remove Licensure Exams (<i>Carver-Thomas, 2018; Epstein, 2005; Lambert, 2019</i>) and Performance Assessments as TEP Entry and Exit Requirements (<i>Fenwick, 2021; Gitomer et al., 1999; Nettles et al., 2011; Sleeter, 2016</i>)	Transform Admissions Criteria and Processes Reduce Or Remove GPA TEP Entry and Exit Requirements (<i>Fenwick, 2021</i>) Train in Anti-Racist Hiring Practices (<i>Bitar et al., 2022; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022</i>) Improve Working Conditions (<i>Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Matias, 2016</i>) Update Online Presence and Improve TEP Application Process Reduce Program Fees and Length		Train in Anti-Racist Hiring Practices (<i>Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022</i>) Improve Working Conditions (<i>Bitar et al., 2022; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Kohli, 2021; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021</i>)
RECOMMENDATION 3: INVOLVE STAKEHOLDERS			
Establish TEP Standards for Involving Community Stakeholders & Developing Partnerships and Pathways	Collaborate Across Middle Schools, High Schools, Community Colleges, K-12 School Districts and TEPs Design and Expand Pathway Programs (<i>Gist & Bristol, 2022; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021</i>) Increase Administrator, Faculty and Staff Involvement in Recruitment and Admission Increase Training To K-12 Districts, Schools and Colleges on Teaching as A Career, Preparation, and Certification		Train Middle School and High School Counselors and Career and Transfer Center Personnel About Preparation, and Certification Collaborate Across Middle Schools, High Schools, Community Colleges, K-12 School Districts and TEPs Design and Expand Pathway Programs including Grow Your Own Programs (<i>Bianco & Goings, 2022; Garcia et al., 2022; Gist & Bristol, 2022; Lightfoot & White, 2022; Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021</i>).

California Recommendations

This study highlights the critical need for structural reform in teacher education in the state of California. Current initiatives to alleviate the teacher shortage exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as increased teacher pay, the expansion of GYO programs, increased recruitment activities, and increasing staff, are avenues to also enhance ethnoracial and linguistic composition of the state's majority white teaching workforce (Carver-Thomas, 2018, 2022; Carver-Thomas et al., 2022).

In line with Carver-Thomas et al., (2022), I recommend that compensation for teachers must be increased, however this need not be a federal initiative and can be undertaken by California and local school districts. One method to offset the cost of TEPs, might also be for the state to introduce new loan forgiveness programs, specifically for those attending TEPs within public universities.

California, according to Carver-Thomas et al., (2022) should implement recruitment initiatives to help candidates navigate the complex process of becoming a teacher via career counselors. Such training should also include middle and high school counselors to help reach prospective teachers earlier than college.

In California, the recent 2021-2022 budget has invested in building a strong teacher pipeline, (Carver-Thomas et al., 2022). It is recommended that programs ensure to establish racial equity and racial justice as an important area of focus. Additionally, state expanded financial aid opportunities such as the Golden State Teacher Grant program provided to TEP candidates with \$20,000 who commit to work in "priority schools" have the potential to increase BIPOC access to teaching opportunities (Carver-Thomas et al., 2022).

Carver-Thomas et al., (2022) suggest that more must be done to “support teacher recruitment by ensuring strong uptake of scholarships awarded through the Golden State Teacher Grant Program”. I agree and find it encouraging that such funds assist students who are from low-income communities of Color enter into programs without racialized burdens (Ray, 2019). However, I suggest that \$20,000 be increased in the next cycle of the program. As illustrated in this study, a major obstacle for BIPOC candidates is unpaid student teaching, additionally, program tuition is not the only cost incurred by students, especially those with children and extended families. Unfortunately, grant stipulations exclude teachers who have been working during the pandemic who might not have had the chance to complete their clear credentials due to extenuating circumstances. A consideration to include eligibility for those teachers who need to complete their clear credential has implications for, specifically, low-income BIPOC who might otherwise be unable to stay in the profession due to the cost of induction, a critical time which influences their career trajectory (Jackson & Kohli, 2016).

TEPs included in this multiple-case study did not include information on the Golden State Teacher Grant Program on their websites. Such a beneficial program for BIPOC must be published widely.

Future Research

What is clear from this study is the lack of long-term investment made at the institutional level with the aim of ensuring equitable outcomes. Further research might examine institutional racism within schools of education and larger humanities departments within universities, to highlight how white racial discourse coupled with market-based discourse and color-blind frames, operate jointly to produce racialized outcomes.

According to the data analyzed for this study, a concerning trend of decline in enrollment of Black and Native Americans was noted. Further research might examine the pervasive anti-black discourses within TEP recruitment and admissions policies and practices with a specific focus on Black male recruitment initiatives (Cole, 1986; Graham, 1987).

In line with Gist and Bristol (2022), further research might illuminate the experiences of specifically, Indigenous Teachers in the recruitment and admissions process, specifically Native erasure in teacher education policies and practices and anti-indigenous discourses and how this might specifically redirect Indigenous people from the teaching profession.

Furthermore, as a Brown, South Asian woman teacher, I am intrigued by the invisibility of the Asian teacher in the discourses emerging from this study. I therefore suggest more research can explore the Asian teacher experience across the teacher development continuum (Chong, 2002; Gist & Bristol, 2022; Kim & Cooc, 2021; Kokka & Chao, 2020; Kumashiro, 2006; Ng et al., 2007; Rong & Preissle, 1997; Subedi, 2008).

Additional research might examine whitekeeping policies and practices that contribute to the disproportionate number of elite whites holding positions of authority in educational institutions such as universities, schools, colleges, and TEPs (Cabrera et al., 2016; Zambrana & Dill, 2009)

Additionally, further research might explore the perspective of TEP applicants, specifically BIPOC, but are denied admission. Such research might highlight additional methods to support, recruit and retain BIPOC teachers. Furthermore, additional research might be done with TEP enrollees to explore their perspective on the recruitment and admissions process. Such research might highlight supports, barriers, and innovative methods to recruit and retain BIPOC teachers.

Considering the ambiguity surrounding COVID and the complex discourse among policymakers over the teacher shortage (Aragon, 2016) future research might concentrate on COVID-related flexibilities and the influence they have had on TEP recruitment and admissions efforts. Additionally, researchers might explore how such flexibilities have impacted the whiteness of applicants across various age ranges and in a variety of contexts.

Conclusively, research should be done to explore the neoliberalism discourses as manifested in the curriculum and instruction in TEPs, and how racialized factors such as those introduced in this study operate as mechanisms to deter BIPOC from completing programs. Participants highlighted attrition as a barrier to teacher diversity. Further, research might be done to explore the edTPA as a barrier to completion as highlighted by participants, specifically for BIPOC.

In this study participants recognized the cumulative impacts of racism on BIPOC, in relation to entrance to TEPs, therefore in line with (Gist & Bristol, 2022; Kohli, 2021; Kohli et al., 2021), further research is needed to examine the psycho-socio-emotional states of BIPOC aspiring teachers as they experience the recruitment and admissions process with a focus on structures, policies, practices, and supports of TEPs. Additionally, this study supports the need for additional research that might examine the experiences of BIPOC teacher educators (Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Kohli & Pizarro, 2022; Matias, 2016) and the psycho-socio-emotional aspect of being in predominantly white spaces such as TEPs and implications for the recruitment and admission BIPOC teachers.

Conclusion

As a public-school student, I rarely had a teacher who looked or sounded like me, much less shared my faith background. I had 46 teachers from kindergarten to Grade 12, and out of 46,

only two were of Color, one was Black one was Latina. I remember them both vividly. Today, as an extremely rare Pakistani, Muslim, Brown-skinned, hijab wearing teacher, I am heartbroken that the faces of my colleagues remain so lightly hued.

As a teacher educator and educational consultant working in the ethnoracially and linguistically diverse state of California, I am troubled by the fact that our K-12 public school system is ill-prepared to teach BIPOC students due to a predominantly WT workforce who minimize and often dismiss racism as a thing of the past.

For three years as a consultant, I assisted BIPOC seeking to enter the public school system, and time after time, we encountered hurdles due to ever-changing, complex state teacher licensure regulations and costly TEP admissions requirements. Well-educated, creative, passionate, equity-oriented, multilingual Brown and Black teachers were unable to teach public school students. The complexity discouraged them and deflated their dreams of teaching in American schools. A careful inspection of American teacher education recruitment and admissions policies and practices is long overdue. Mechanisms that *whitekeep* the teaching profession are harmful to students, teachers, and communities.

This study builds upon previous research on teacher diversity, by employing critical discourse analysis to understand the complexities of recruitment and admission of BIPOC in TEPs. This is an important methodology, as it allows for the detailed unraveling of powerful discursive practices and social practices within TEPs that maintain a predominantly white, female teaching workforce.

I explored a significant entry point to teaching, recruitment, and admissions into teacher programs. I observed information sessions and reviewed websites and documents. I interviewed TEP staff, faculty, and administrators, gathering what was said, and noting what wasn't, as they

described their program's recruitment and admissions processes and shared strategies to diversify the teaching profession. Using a critical lens, I aimed to identify the contours, under the surface, that gatekeep recruitment and admissions, and subsequently teaching, as not whites only, but whites mainly.

This study revealed that the discourse of what a teacher looks and sounds like can easily be reified by micro-level interactions among those in positions to gatekeep, or whitekeep, entrance to the profession.

Whether in K-12 contexts, or in that of higher education, we must be alarmed that white stories about who should become a teacher become immutable truth via racialized discourses. This must be countered with narratives about the assets and significance of BIPOC teachers, if American teachers are ever going to look and sound like the students they serve. Efforts to interrogate white supremacy meaningfully and consistently, decenter institutional whiteness, and transform teacher education is critical if this cycle is to be disrupted in long-lasting ways.

Racial equity and racial justice must be prioritized in teacher education, but first, remnants of whiteness across educational contexts must be identified, its ongoing interrogation legitimized, and transformation codified.

Those of darker hues are given hope they can teach under false pretenses of equal opportunity, however barriers to entry are not equal across race. My headscarf, brown skin, ethnoracial background and gender identity place me far from the powerful center of the white women in America, many who teach in K-12 public schools. Through my research, I have highlighted how admissions decisions are made, and offer how they might be made differently, so that one day the teachers might look like me and that one day my grandchildren will have teachers who look like, speak like, and understand them.

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Appendix A: Email Invitation to Participate in Study

[Email Subject: CGU Study on CA Teacher Education Program Admissions]

Dear [Full Name of Participant],

I hope this email finds you well. I am a doctoral student in the School of Educational Studies at Claremont Graduate University. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a research study to gain a better understanding of admissions in teacher education and am looking to interview participants to explore the admissions process.

To be eligible for this study individuals should have served in an active role in university-based teacher education program admissions within the last five years at your university in the state of California.

Interviews will be with me, and will be conducted remotely, via Zoom for approximately 90 minutes. During the interview, participants might be asked questions such as: What is the process of admissions like at your university? What type of criteria do you typically use to determine admission? With permission, interviews will be audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis. Responses will be de-identified. Pseudonyms will be used.

I am hoping to interview at least 30 participants before June 30th. If you personally know of any university-based education program staff, faculty and/or administrators that meet the requirements and might be interested in sharing their experiences, I would greatly appreciate it if you could put us in contact.

My email is: mayeen.quader@cgu.edu. Thank you for your time.

Best,

Mayeen Quader, Ph.D. Candidate
Claremont Graduate University
School of Educational Studies

Appendix B: IRB Informed Consent Form

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN: TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS IN CALIFORNIA IRB # 4250

You are invited to participate in a research project. Volunteering will probably (not) benefit you directly, but you will be contributing to research in teacher education. If you volunteer, you will be asked to participate in one semi-structured interview on Zoom. This will take about 90 minutes of your time. If applicable, I will also request permission to observe at least one virtual recruitment information session. Volunteering for this study involves no more risk than what a typical person experiences on a regular day. Your involvement is entirely up to you. You may withdraw at any time for any reason. Please continue reading for more information about the study.

STUDY LEADERSHIP: This research project is led by Mayeen Quader, a doctoral candidate at the Claremont Graduate University (CGU), who is being supervised by Dr. Emilie Reagan, Associate Professor of Education at Claremont Graduate University.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to understand the university-based teacher education program recruitment and admissions processes in Minority Serving Institutions in the state of California, specifically this research aims to explore the barriers and supports for prospective teachers of Color.

ELIGIBILITY: To be in this study, you must be at least 18 years old, a staff, faculty member, or administrator of a university, and have worked or currently work within a university-based teacher education program who is currently serving, or has served within the last five years, in an active role in the teacher education program's recruitment or admissions process.

PARTICIPATION: During the study, you will be asked to be interviewed once online via Zoom. The interview will take about an hour and a half (90 minutes). The interviews will be conducted within a four-month period between June and September 2022. Some interview questions that will be asked are: Could you please generally describe the admissions process within your university-based teacher education program? If applicable, I am also requesting to observe a virtual recruitment information session about the teacher education program.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION: There are minimal anticipated risks associated with participating.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION: I do not expect the study to benefit you personally. This project will benefit the researcher through the completion of a doctoral dissertation. This project is expected to benefit the research community on teacher education as it will shed light on the admissions process.

COMPENSATION: You will not be directly compensated for participating in this study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any particular question for any reason at any time without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at CGU.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your individual privacy will be protected in all papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study. I may use the data collected for future research or share it with other researchers, but I will not reveal your identity with it. In order to protect the confidentiality of your responses, I will secure data files, use random ID codes in documentation and pseudonyms for the final written report. When interviews are conducted, I will record the conversations using an audio recorder. All data will be destroyed five years after the data collection process is completed.

FURTHER INFORMATION: If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact me, Mayeen Quader at mayeen.quader@cgu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Emilie Reagan at emilie.reagan@cgu.edu. The CGU Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved this project. If you have any ethical concerns about this project or about your rights as a human subject in research, you may contact the CGU IRB at (909) 607-9406 or at irb@cgu.edu. A copy of this form will be given to you if you wish to keep it.

CONSENT: Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you may have about this study, and you voluntarily agree to participate in it.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____
Printed Name of Participant _____

The undersigned researcher has reviewed the information in this consent form with the participant and answered any of his or her questions about the study.

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____
Printed Name of Researcher _____

Participants Needed for Research Study on Teacher Education

Have you served in an active role in the recruitment or admissions process within your university teacher education program?

You May Qualify if You:

- Are over 18 years old
- Are an employee of a Minority Serving Institution
- Have served in an active role in the teacher education program recruitment or admissions process in the last 5 years

Participation Involves:

- One 90-minute interview on Zoom

Location:

- Remote - Zoom

Study Lead:

Mayeen Quader MA Ed.
Claremont Graduate University
mayeen.quader@cgu.edu



Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Introduction

Script

Good afternoon _____. I would like to thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. As I mentioned to you before, my study seeks to understand the admissions process within university-based teacher education programs.

Our interview today will last approximately 90 minutes during which I will be asking you about your role in the university-based teacher education department and experience with admissions

Are you still okay with me recording our conversation today?

IF YES: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions?

If any questions arise at any point in this conversation, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I will be more than happy to answer your questions.

Interview Content Questions

Part 1: Background & Admissions Process

1. Please could you begin by telling me about your role at the university?
2. How long have you served in your current role?
3. You let me know you have been a part of the TEP recruitment or admissions process at your university. Could you please generally describe the TEP recruitment or admissions process?
4. Could you tell me about your role with TEP recruitment or admissions?
5. What type of criteria do you typically use to determine admissions?
6. Who and where is the program recruiting prospective candidates from?
7. What factors lead to not recommending a student for admission?
8. How long does it take for you to make a decision about admissions?
9. Please describe for me the ideal TEP candidate recommended for admission.
10. Please describe an effective TEP recruitment and admissions process.
11. Please describe an ineffective TEP recruitment and admissions process.
12. Do you receive training about the university based TEP recruitment and admissions process from your university in terms of making decisions?
13. How do you keep yourself updated about teacher education admissions?
14. Is there anything you really want to try out during the TEP admissions process that you have not been able to?
15. Did you ever apply to a teacher education program? If so, what were the TEP recruitment and admissions processes like for you?

Part 2: Handout Introduction of University TEP Admissions Policies

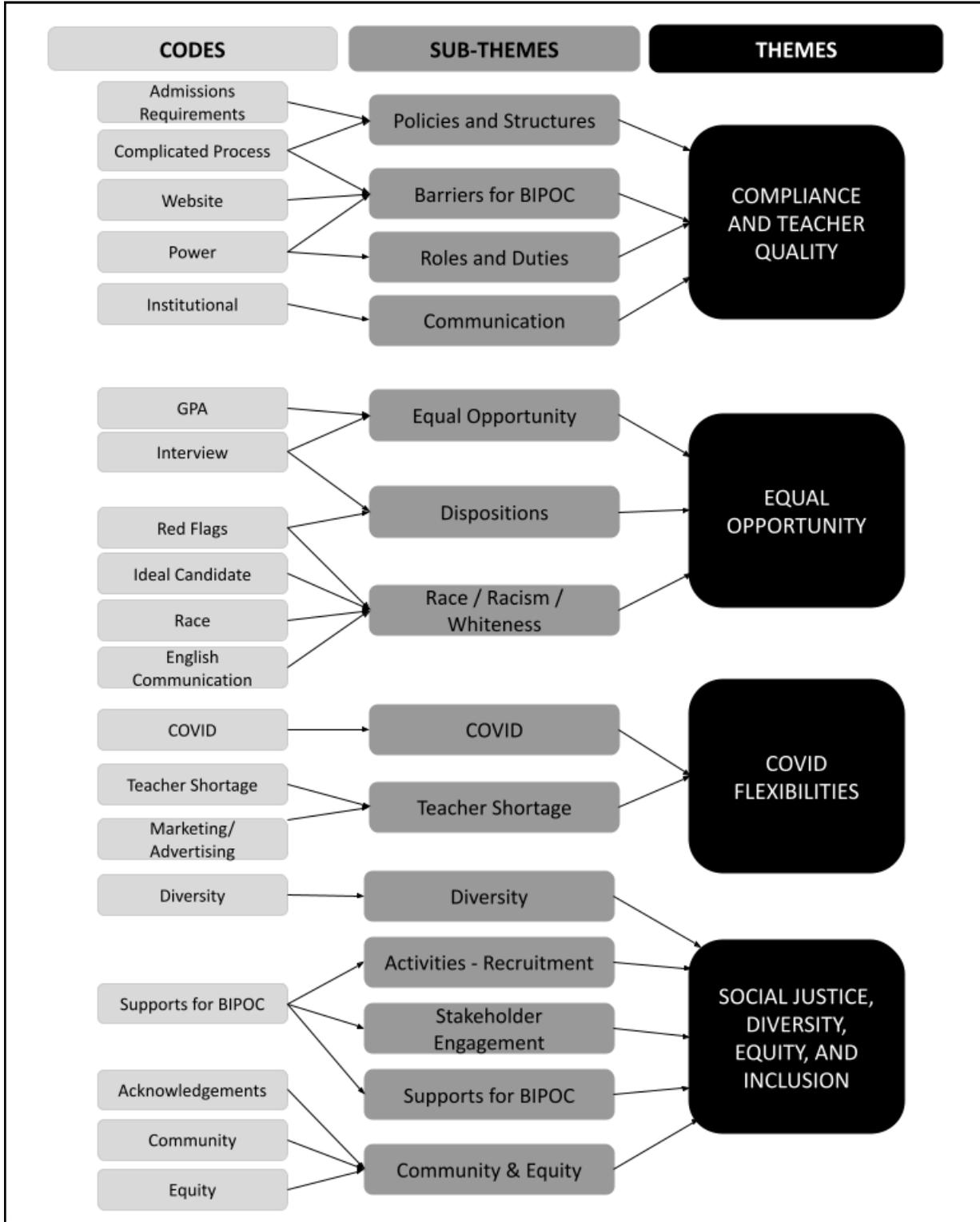
16. In front of you, you will have the most recent admissions requirements for your university based TEP. I would like for you to take a few minutes to read it. Then please tell me what comes up for you. Any thoughts, feelings, reactions, memories you have as you read it?
17. What do you see as some of the most important issues regarding recruitment or admissions that your university based TEP is trying to address or change?
18. How do you see yourself involved in helping these changes to come about?
19. Do you believe that there is a disparity in access to pathways to a teaching credential?
20. Do you think race plays a role in TEP recruitment and admission?
21. In your opinion, what can be done to diversify the teaching workforce?

Closing Instructions

Script

Thank you very much for taking the time to join me in this conversation today.
Your time is greatly appreciated.
Have a great day!

Appendix E: Codes, Sub-Themes, and Themes



Appendix F: Follow-Up Interview Questions

Thank you for participating in the research study: Teacher Education Recruitment and Admissions: A Multiple Case Study of Three Minority Serving Institutions in California. Please confirm your information by completing this short form.

Should you have any questions please contact me via cell at (951) 531-4318 or by email at mayeen.quader@cgu.edu.

1. Please type your Full Name

2. Please select your role(s) in the teacher education program. Please select all that apply.

- Administration/Leadership (Chair, Coordinator, Dean, Director)
- Faculty (Full-Time/Part-Time)
- Staff (Advisor, Analyst, Recruiter, Specialist)
- Other

3. How would you describe your gender identity?

4. How would you describe your ethnoracial identity? (i.e., ethnicity and race?)

5. Is there anything else you would like to share about your teacher education program?