# A CRITIQUE OF THE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM FROM THE LENS OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY

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In the context of teacher education, the professional development continuum equates with the structured, on-going learning development that all educators pursue to grow personally and collectively from entry to exit from the profession (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). For teachers of color (TOC), the traditional approaches to teacher preparation and continuing professional development otherwise known as the teacher development continuum neither align with their expectations and historical experiences nor serve the interest of minority P-12 students. Contrary to Nieto's (2014) assertion that teaching with integrity resides in the teacher's self-hood, the continuum does not reflect the identity of the teachers of color or fit their social justice mindset. This mismatch creates barriers to their effective training, growth, and development, thereby doing them more harm than good. As noted by social justice scholars, the teacher development continuum represents another feigned attempt used to maintain White's power and strongholds within the educational system to support racist ideology and Eurocentric beliefs which marginalize the minoritized populations (Rogers-Ard, Knaus, Epstein & Mayfield, 2012; Ugwuagbula, 2020).This article interrogates the structure and outcomes of the teacher development continuum in relationship to the needs and identity of teachers of color, using the critical race theory as a theoretical framework.

Supporting the above notion that the historic context of the teaching profession is based on an educational system of Eurocentric worldview, Sleeter (2017) notes that the traditional teacher education programs produce more professionals of European descent compared to the growing minority P-12 student population. Additionally, the curriculum of the programs is still Eurocentric in nature and the incentives for moving up the career ladder for teachers are designed to favor the privileged (McMahon, Forde & Dickson, 2013).

In analyzing the continuum, this author borrows from the tenets of critical race theory (CRT). CRT originated from the works of legal scholars of color like Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Richard Delgado, Kimberle Crenshaw, and Mari Mathsuda during the civil rights movement initially focusing on African American issues but later extending to causes of equality affecting other minoritized populations. Its goals are to challenge racial politics and power relations in institutionalized systems like education (Lynn, Jennings & Hughes, 2013; Degaldo & Stefancie, 2017). CRT argues that racism is institutionally embedded, and guides laws, policies, and practices to inequitably serve communities of color (Lawrence, 2008; Crenshaw, 2010; Collins & Thuong, 2022). It suggests that race is the determining factor of most institutions in the United States and not an aberration, and this focus on race privileges one group while subordinating another.

Observing the major role that race plays in society in general and education in particular, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) pioneered the use of CRT as a scholarly inquiry in education. More recent CRT scholars like Carbado (2011) and Dixson and Anderson (2018) opined that the growth of CRT as a theoretical movement in education is still evolving and currently not well defined. This author disagrees in part, due to the extensiveness of

the application of CRT in the works of many veteran and aspiring educators like Christine Sleeter, Rita Kholi, Mary Epstein, Margarita Bianco, Marvin Lynn and Conra Gist. (Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans, & Donche, 2016; Rogers-Ard, et al., 2012; Sleeter, 2017; Kholi, 2019; Gist, Bianco & Lynn, 2019).

While CRT may not be considered a fully formed intellectual movement, its tenets are well defined and offer a useful framework in investigating many issues in education, especially in teacher education. Applied to education and the teacher development continuum, one sees how racial politics and power relations affect what is being taught, how it is taught and who has a voice in determining what quality is (Ladson-Billings,1994; Sleeter, 2017; Kholi, 2019). Many tenets of CRT like color blindness, assimilation, meritocracy, endemic racism, and white property are entrenched in the traditional teacher development continuum and will be utilized to explain the mismatch between the system and the expectations and identity of teachers of color.

This article further interrogates the lack of cultural responsiveness of the current policy, structure, and practices of the teacher development continuum, how teacher quality is defined, and who benefits from the current structure. Next, it addresses the mismatch between the intent of the continuum and the expectations of the minority teachers based on findings from a survey of Teachers of Color (TOC) from a Midwestern State. These TOCs were in the first five years of their teaching and were asked to assess the adequacy of their professional development based on their identity and historical experiences. Adding the opinion of the respondents in this study to the teacher continuum discourse allows for the inclusion of the much-needed voice of the teachers of color themselves and presents some alternative ideas to what currently exists. The article concludes with implications and challenges for stakeholders interested in creating professional development opportunities in ways that are responsive to the background and needs of teachers of Color.

## The Mismatch between the Current Structure of the Teacher Development Continuum and the Expectations and Needs of Teachers of Color.

It is clear in the literature that, whether in their preparation, induction, or continued professional development, teachers of color encounter many challenges that limit their effectiveness. Primary among these challenges is of the lack of alignment of the traditional educational system with who they are and what their needs are (Kober, 2007; Bosner, 2011; Sleeter, 2017). This disconnect between the White, Anglo-Saxon traditional structure of the schools and the needs and identity of the teachers of color is amplified by an unwillingness of the system to incorporate the historical experiences of the teachers of color (Rogers-Ard, et al, 2012; Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans, & Donche, 2016). Moreover, there exist, an attempt to indoctrinate, not induct new teachers of color along the continuum of professional growth and development further diminishing their cultural capital and stifling their passion from what many of them consider a calling (King & Darling-Hammond, 2018). Additionally, professional development tailored to the needs of teachers of color is limited, incoherent among providers and lacking in content related to equity and social justice (Goodrick, 2009; Rogers-Ard, et al, 2012; Rich, 2015). Beyond the lack of relevancy of the continuum to the identity of teachers of color is the sparseness in the literature of the opinion of these teachers concerning what kind of support they think that they actually need for their professional development. This article seeks to fill that gap in the knowledge base.

## The Professional Development Continuum for Teachers of Colour

Critical race theory challenges the claims of neutrality, colorblindness and meritocracy in policies and practices shaping the preparation, professional development, and retention of teachers. These concepts are evident in the experiences of teachers of color along the continuum from pre-service to in-service. For example, teacher candidates must pass many external examinations at entry and exit from their preparation programs and for licensure. At their

face value, these requirements may appear aimed at promoting rigor in teacher preparation. However, the requirements for teaching are already rigorous and these standardized examinations themselves have been found to be racially biased, inexorably expensive, and unreliable in determining the effectiveness of future teachers (Rogers-Ard, et al, 2012; Couch, et al, 2021). Additionally, these tests create unnecessary bottlenecks for minorities wanting to enter the teaching profession. As Rogers-Ard, et al (2012) further noted, the evaluation of in-service teachers and their professional development along the continuum are also based on the same subjective assessments, driven by high stakes testing and policies and practices that promote the interest of the privileged and the Eurocentric curriculum. Critical Race theory posits that these assessments, just like the curriculum and pedagogy of the current schools, are biased and they not only shortchange, but alienate students of color.

According to Rogers-Ard, et al (2012), the use of externally designed standardized examinations is a biased process that is used to label, sort, or categorize students into different achievement groups. This process is a segregation effort that often overlooks local conditions or specific contexts that impact, affect, and shape student performance. The same standardized assessment used during licensure also constitutes barriers to many capable teachers of color from entry into full time teaching. Additionally, state, and federal policies on teacher qualifications lead to racial disparities among urban teaching forces; and the use of national hiring firms and a racially biased definition of teacher quality further serve as barriers that maintain a predominantly White teaching force (Rogers-Ard et al., 2012).

Racial discrimination has played a role in limiting the opportunity for students of color who may desire a career in education. Agreeing with CRT scholars, Ahnmad and Bose, 2014 (quoted by Liu, et al, 2017) noted that the efforts to shrink the diversity gap in the teacher workforce are rooted in larger educational inequities, which plagued the teacher continuum from pre-service to in-service. The authors asserted "the leaky pipeline for the production of teachers of color is part of the leaky pipeline for all students of color, which in turn is grounded in larger social issues of funding inequities, community segregation, salary stagnation at the lower end of the economy and institutional racism" (Liu, et al, 2017, p.14).

Differential racialization is another tenet of CRT reflected in the structure of the teacher development continuum. Minority teachers are confronted by their understanding of the historical, social, economic, and political role that race play in education in the United States. According to Ladson-Billings (1994) teachers of color's knowledge of the history and experiences of structural inequality in education based on race shape their perception of their role as teachers. It also influences their sense of self and their perception of what their roles are in the community in which they live and work. It is no wonder then that Teachers of Color have a social justice perspective to teaching which their white counterparts cannot relate to, and which may also serve as a pull or push factor for joining the profession for these individuals. American Educational Research Association (AERA) reports that some minority students pursue teaching to influence the lives of students like themselves because of their negative experiences. They want to change education in the schools they attended (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005).

Furthermore, aspiring minority teachers also see teaching as a way to become advocates who will address the social injustices of the past and create a better educational experience for all students but especially the children of color. Sonia Nieto, in *Why we teach* (2005), wrote about one teacher of color who sees teaching as power and talks about using that power in a way that benefits her children. Arguing along the same vein, Ladson-Billings (1994) noted, as a teacher of color, you learn from history and from experiences that schools serve as the battleground for the struggle for power in the United States. The experiences for teachers of color are linked to that struggle. These historical perspectives relating to social justice should be factored into the preparation and professional

development of all teachers but more so that of teachers of color. The rationale being that current demographics reveal an increasing growth in the number of minority students which not only require more minority teachers, as role models but need all teachers and the curriculum to be culturally responsive.

The endemic racism (another CRT tenet) existing in the teacher workforce serves as impediment to the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. King and Darling-Hammond (2018) noted, "until we as a nation collectively acknowledge and address the unique challenges that these teachers face every day, we cannot support our claim that we truly value them" (p.2). Boser (2011) explained that these challenges are rooted in the history of the teaching profession and the racial discrimination that took place in our country's past creating an unfavorable working condition for teachers of color. Ginsberg and Budd (2017) agreed, noting that "teachers of color are clustered in the most hard-to-staff, economically disadvantaged and lowest performing schools. They are confronted with cultural dissonance, restrictive curricular and pedagogical practices, which negatively impact their ability to manage the classroom and contribute to the learning of the students" (p. 2). Moreover, they are often seen as disciplinarians by their peers and their culturally relevant pedagogy viewed as counter-productive to the state standards and testing mandates. In their article titled, *We're not doing enough to support teachers of color*, King and Darling-Hammond (2018) argued that "while teachers of color are happy to use the opportunity of their cultural capital to connect with children of color, they express frustration at being pigeon-holed. They also resent being asked to regularly take on additional duties without adequate compensation and support, a situation they described as "invisible tax" (p4). According to Ginsberg and Budd (2017), the negative school climate and working conditions described above are carried over from teachers of color's preparation programs, especially during their internships. Wherever they are posted to teach during their periods of pre-service or in-service, minority teachers understand that they are going into an environment that may or may not accept their identity. Additionally, Teachers of Color operate in survival mode because of the fear of negative evaluations, feelings of isolation and the lack of acceptance by their peers. Exacerbating the situation is the lack of role models or mentors to help them navigate the complex world of teaching and the culture of the school environment.

Teachers of color's personal experiences as students shape their view of teaching, and account for possible reasons why many of them decide whether to go into education. The Negro College Fund (quoted by Bireda & Chait, 2011) reported negative experiences with teachers in a minority student's own schooling as a leading reason to steer away from a career in teaching. Many of these students who did have negative experiences and did not want to pursue teaching also likely may not have had many ethnically similar teachers throughout their educational experience. Furthermore, ethnically diverse students were more likely to have attended urban public schools where the resources were scarce, and the teachers were treated poorly. These experiences taint their image of a teaching career early on in their schooling and kept educational careers from ever being an option that came to mind in their consideration of a higher education. The pervasiveness of these personal challenges and discriminatory practices makes teachers of color question whether the profession is personally and professionally sustainable, and account for their high attrition rates. The reminder of this article will focus on examining their opportunity for the professional development continuum that is supposed to guard against their untimely exit and maximize their potentials.

**Overview of the Teacher Development Continuum**

Teacher development is a continuum which progresses from teacher training through the course of the teacher's career. The continuum is established to enable teachers cope with the demands of the job which requires not only the mastery of the subject matter and pedagogical skills, but also the ability to deal with complex relationships, multifaceted mandates and increasing expectations from

different stakeholders. The development and duration of the phases vary based on the background of the individual teacher, their educator preparation program and the policies and resources provided by their State and School district. However, Darling-Hammond (1994) and Goldrick, (2009) opine that it takes about five years for a new teacher to hone their skills and knowledge in order to demonstrate effectiveness typical of an accomplished teacher.

According to Darling-Hammond, et al (2017), "an effective professional development should consist of a structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvement in student learning outcome" (p.2). For these changes to occur, the professional development must include seven essential elements. It must be content focused, collaborative, reflective of best practices in the field, contains active learning, coaching and expert support; other components are ongoing feedback, reflection, and sustainability. Darling-Hammond, et al (2017) further argued for a coherent and progressive professional development system starting from the educator preparation program to a period of induction, continuing learning during in-service and preparation for leadership.

Reiterating the importance of a continuum from pre-service to in-service, Iordanides & Vryoni (2013) argued that the quality of the training that a new teacher receives from their educator preparation program serves as the foundation for their professional life and could determine the impact of further professional growth and engagement in the profession. It affects their attitudes, fuels their passion, and motivates them to stick it out when they face challenges in the real world. This foundational period not only influences their professional development but "determines their satisfaction, confirming or denying expectations and dreams connected to their profession" (Iordanides & Vryoni, 2013, p.75). Kyndt, et al (2016) agreed, stating that beginning teachers are eager to learn, and require professional development in a guided or formal

way. This lack of support at the beginning of the career for teachers could influence their retention in teaching.

Support for teachers along the teacher development continuum is beneficial not just for the teachers of color themselves, but the educational system as a whole. King & Darling-Hammond (2018); Liu, et al (2017) and Strong (2011), suggested that teachers of color have positive effects on all students especially the students of color. They set high expectations for them academically and behaviorally which leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy for these students in their performances. For students of color, being taught by a minority teacher can boost their academic achievement, graduation rates and their aspirations to attend college (King & Darling- Hammond, 2018). Students of color, especially black students, are also less likely to be expelled and more likely to be identified as gifted and talented in programs with teachers of color. In fact, all students are better prepared for citizenship in a diverse world when they have teachers of color because they use culturally relevant instructional practices and are more likely to address the issues of racism and bias in their classrooms. The positive impact being made by minority teachers on all children makes a strong case for why we should be placing more teachers of color in the classroom and why we should be investing in their growth and development. Unfortunately, this is currently not the situation in education. As King & Darling-Hammond (2018) rightly observed, "policymakers, educational administrators and others talk about the need more for more teachers of color, but there isn't enough emphasis on the burden that these teachers face and the need to support them" (p.3).

Whether teachers of color's ascension up the professional ladder occurs in phases or as a cycle, what is important is that "they be supported with strong preparation, appropriate compensation, and quality professional development and leadership opportunities so that they may fulfill their calling which is to ensure that every child receives an excellent education (King & Darling-Hammond, 2018, p.2). Teachers of color need professional

development that is comprehensive and consistent at each phase, the support should begin early in their training and the responsibility for providing the support should be shouldered by all stakeholders involved in the education of our children. Additionally, these supports must consider their history and experiences in schooling, the larger structural inequalities that they have been subjected to throughout history, and how these experiences have impacted their perception of their role as teachers.

**Consequences of the Absence of a Critical Teacher Development Continuum for Teachers of Colour**

Research suggests that while the pool of qualified teachers of color in P-12 is slowly increasing, the gap remains because the percentage increase is not high enough to keep up with the rapid influx of students of color (Ginsberg, & Budd, 2017; Sleeter, 2017; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Rich, 2015; Smith, 2016). Additionally, teachers of color are leaving the profession at an alarming rate due in part to the previously mentioned factors of unsupportive school environment, lack of mentors, and retention strategies to support their progression to leadership. Discussing the shortage of teachers of color in Denver, Colorado, Smith (2016) suggests that school districts struggle to create environments in which teachers of color feel included and are not stereotyped. He argues for the need to alleviate what the former U.S. Secretary of Education –John King referred to as the "invisible tax" or additional responsibilities imposed on minority educators as among the few representatives of their ethnic group in a predominantly white school environment. He asserts that the lack of diversity also stems from the shortage of minorities in teacher preparation institutions. Colleges of education are not recruiting and graduating enough teachers of color due to various reasons.

Arguing in the same vein, Rogers-Ard, et al. (2012) suggested that the barriers that face teachers of color begin long before they enter the profession. In their article titled *Racial Diversity Sounds Nice; Systems Transformation: Not so Much: Developing Urban Teachers of Color,* they contended that the factors hindering success for teachers of color as candidates in training are like those they face as in-service teachers and are responsible for their lack of growth and development along the teacher continuum. The authors extensively documented the history of racial exclusion in the hiring of teachers of color, the barriers that keep teachers of color from the profession and the cost of the persistent shortage of teachers of color in our urban schools. One of the causes of shortage of minority teachers that hitherto had not been addressed is financial. Compared to their white counterparts, minorities come from lower social economic backgrounds and often graduate with a higher amount of student loans. They have to balance full time work with full time study, raising immediate and extended family members, placing their grades in jeopardy. In addition to the tuition, clinical and test fees, their economic hardship worsens during the period of student teaching, which is unpaid but has a full-time requirement preventing them from working. These factors could discourage them from teaching. As Smith (2016) noted, in order to compensate for their economic challenges, minorities would rather pursue other professions where they can make more money than education where the pay is lower.

Rogers-Ard, et al. (2012) further argued that stakeholders must pay special attention to the unique needs of the teachers of color and eliminate the barriers they face if we want them to succeed in the classroom and stay in the profession. They proposed a framework of growing teachers of color workforce that challenges the dynamics of racism and "a shift of the conversations from recruitment to retention of teachers through providing professional development, feedback, and relevant support for the skill sets as urban teachers need to be of a high quality and effective in urban schools" (p. 453). Goldbrick (2009) advanced the argument to specifically address the barriers that teachers of color face upon graduation and as full-time professionals. He suggested several reasons why new teachers of color need the special support and help to overcome the barriers to their growth and development. The first is that beginning teachers, especially those of

color, are often placed in high need schools despite the research that shows a positive relationship between years of teaching experience and higher student achievement with teachers who have more. These new teachers will need strong and constant support to deal with the challenges and avoid burn-out.  Second is the need to combat the shortage of teachers of color resulting from the impending retirement of half of the current workforce within the next decade. This situation calls for an increase in the capacity of new cadre of teachers and an acceleration in their professional development. Third, due to economic reasons, teachers of color may not have attended the best quality teacher preparation institution, and if they were lucky to, did not have a good experience due to discrimination, lack of mentors and positive role models. Teachers of color also need special sets of skills because they are often posted to high need urban areas, or teach in high need areas (Special Education, English or Science). Lastly, TOCs are often charged with disciplining students of color and required to serve as role models for them. These expectations place special burden on them psychologically and physically. As Goldrick (2009) noted, supporting them to be "more effective, more quickly should be the primary goal for policy makers and education leaders alike" (p 1).

Talking about psychological and emotional barriers, King and Darling-Hammond (2018) noted that teachers of color feel marginalized by their peers and school administration. They do not feel that their voices are heard and they "have to "tone down their personalities to teach" (p.5). Furthermore, they are discriminated against in teaching assignments. They are often restricted to teaching lower-level courses taken by students of color instead of college level courses or take leadership roles in their schools. Teachers of color need professional development and social support relevant to these responsibilities and encounters, beyond what is routinely offered to other teachers.

**Stakeholders and their Support for Techers of Colour along the Continuum**

The continuum for teachers of color like that of teachers in general, starts from pre-service and progress through their entire career as full-time teachers. Identifying the stakeholders involved in this continuum can be somewhat complicated. This is because the effort to prepare, recruit and retain teachers of color involves so many participants at different levels, formal and informal. Participants include policy makers at different levels of government (federal, state, and local governments), corporate donors, the departments of education, teacher preparation institutions (traditional and non-traditional), their alumni, school districts, schools, and taxpayers in general. While education in the United States is by constitution (10th amendment) a state prerogative, the federal government since 1960s has become more involved. Federal involvement is seen in the form of policy, regulations, and recommendations, especially those relating to increasing access and high achievement for all students and preventing discrimination. Example is the Great Society Act aimed at redressing past discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and gender (FindLaw, 2018). Federal Government also sets some guidelines under the No Child Left behind. The era of Obama ushers in regulations for grading schools as low or high performing and for teacher evaluation. Also, the State has designated many of its responsibilities to the local school districts who are closer to the people. Local funding of schools is based on their taxes (property taxes) which vary greatly. It is therefore important for the State to intervene in order to, as much as possible, even the playing field of education funding (FindLaw, 2018).

Just as the stakeholders are diverse, so also are the types of support available. They vary and include financial, social (mentoring, networking) and academic (research and taking university courses). The literature (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Goldrick, 2009; Ladson-Billings 1994; Liu, et al., 2017; Rogers- Ard, et al., 2012 and Shuddak, 2010) suggests that most of the stakeholders support for

teachers of color exists at the pre-service level and are in the form of financial incentives to encourage minorities to go to college and lately to enter teaching. These efforts are mainly to address past societal injustices, which limited students of color's opportunity to go to college or compensate for the era of school desegregation when minority teachers decrease in number because the qualifications for teaching changed or because the schools in which they were teaching were closed down as under-performing. As noted by Rogers-Ard, et al., 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2005 and Liu, et al. (2017), the support provided to teachers of color is linked to the history of racial desegregation in our society, which led to the whitening of the teaching profession and the shortage of teachers of color.

Liu et al. (2017) identified two approaches of stakeholders' support for teachers of color, the first of which is the pipeline approach. This referred to the approach meant to increase the number of teacher candidates of color through strategic recruitment, financial support, and mentoring. Liu et al. (2017) further suggested that programs for recruitment are commonplace nationwide, with 31 out of the 50 States implementing some kind of minority teacher recruitment policy, but 19 had none. The pipeline programs are either university or district based, but usually developed with both parties collaborating. Examples include Illinois' "Grow Your Own" and the "Georgia Pathways program." The ideal outcome for these programs is for the teacher candidates to complete their education program and then return to teach in and give back to their community.

The second approach aimed at supporting minorities in the teacher workforce is primarily financial. Examples are grants and loan forgiveness, usually with stipulations of service for a number of years in the State, school district or high need schools. Some programs may add an element of mentoring or networking, at least in the early years as an in-service teacher.  Liu et al. (2017) referenced the "Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois" funded by the Golden Apple Scholars Foundation. This program not only provides financial support, but also helps participants find teaching job upon graduation. Another example is the "Minority Teacher Recruitment Project" (MTRP) in Kentucky, a partnership between school districts and University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development. The program provides financial support of $5000 yearly scholarship, financial development, and a range of academic support for the project participants (Liu et al, 2017).

The State of Nevada established a three-tiered support system that not only provided financial support to teachers starting from the pipeline but also to the school districts. The purpose is to promote educator effectiveness and student success. It also seeks to ensure that students have equitable access to effective teacher and to acquire college and career readiness skills. Nevada offers a Scholarship of $3000 per semester for teachers especially those of color spread out during their preparation and additional money after spending 5 years on the job in the State. They also proposed $500 incentives for new teacher hires. The new teachers are required to complete 60 hours of professional development as a condition for the incentive. However, While the policy assures that all children have access to qualified and effective teachers, the financial support is for all teachers not just those of color (Smith, 2016).

Ginsberg and Budd (2017) focused their research on mentoring. They argued that new teachers of color can benefit from mentoring relationships with peers that are from similar backgrounds and are trained at institutions with common commitments to educational equity. An example suggested by Ginsberg & Berg (2017) is HBCU alumni modeling for pre-service and beginning teachers. This is because a mentor teacher from a different background might have a strong grasp of the subject matter and/or be a skilled classroom manager, yet still lacks sensitivity to the issues that are driving teachers of color out of teaching. The key is trust. The teachers of color must trust the system well enough to ask for and accept feedback. This is where coaching comes in. Coaching

helps them develop positive strategies to act on the feedback given to them.

Scott (2017) also agreed that successful mentoring for teachers of color occurs when the mentors are alumni of the same HBCU institution who have gone through the same curriculum and experiences as the current teacher candidates and who probably teach in the same schools where they obtained their K-12 education. However, he believed that mentors can also come from among those with different cultural experiences, since each cultural experience is different and there is so much to be learned. What is important is that the mentors should not cut corners but expose the mentees to the whole gamut of the teaching experiences in a way that builds credulity and integrity. Blankenship et al. (1993) argued for a holistic strategy from recruitment to mentorship of in-service teachers of color to include diversification of the administrative participation as well as the teachers' corps (p 13). He added the school administrators and other teachers as part of the stakeholders. They too need the culturally responsive training in order to be sensitive to the needs of the teachers of color and to know how to appropriately support them.

Based on the extensive literature review above, the author submit that significant effort is being made at the front end of the continuum by all stakeholders- state government, educator preparation programs (EPPs), school districts, and even corporate funders of scholarships. The efforts to train and recruit the teachers of color have increased and are yielding some results. The number of teachers of color has increased greatly over the past few decades. However, the increase is still not fast enough to keep up with the rate of diversity in our schools resulting from high birth rates and immigration. The diversity of students is expected to increase, while the diversity of teachers will remain mostly stagnant if efforts are not made to reverse the pattern. By 2021, the enrollment of African Americans, Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native Americans/Alaska Natives, and students of two or more races are expected to increase, while the enrollments for whites are projected to be lower (Dilworth, 2014). These projections further prove that a one-race majority is quickly becoming a thing of the past. Moreover, we do not see an appreciable level of effort expended to retain these teachers of color, to help them grow and become leaders in the profession. The professional development, mentoring and other programs offered also failed to align with the identity and perspectives of these teachers. The literature review further shows that the inconsistent and limited support by stakeholders make these teachers lose the passion that led them into teaching and impact their tenure. It is worthwhile to reiterate Goldrick's (2009) point here that, "the developmental pathway into teaching and through the teaching career for teachers of color is characterized by a largely fragmented and incoherent system of training and support" (p. 2). This lack of structured and consistent support at the beginning of the career for teachers of color could account for why we lose them early.

**Methodology**

As an enhancement to the literature review, the author conducted a study, utilizing a questionnaire to gather data on the perceptions of the teachers of color directly. The study seeks to learn what teachers of color believed to be the ideal professional development opportunities that would add to their development as effective teachers and promote their long-term career needs. It also seeks to investigate the existing efforts to support the growth and development of teachers of color and the types of stakeholders involved. Following are the definitions of key terms (highlighted in bold) used in the study. **A teacher of color** is one who self identifies as non-white. Stakeholder groups are organizations or institutions tasked with providing support and programming along the teacher professional development continuum from pre-service to career end. **The Education Preparation Program (EPP)** is a unit usually attached to a college campus that prepares people to become teachers. The EPP offers education preparation programs that meet state and national standards. **The school district** is where the teacher of color

works and practices their craft. **Professional development** consists of varied opportunities for teachers to learn and engage in topics, using best adult learning practices to deliver knowledge to the profession. The professional development topics derived for this survey are the result of reviewing school improvement plans most typically provided by stakeholder groups. Not all EPP, departments of education or school districts offer the same topics. The lists are also not exhaustive of what these stakeholder groups might offer. **Support** refers to planned and intentional activities that enhance the learning of the teacher both professionally and personally.

**Development of the Instrument: Questionnaire**

The survey instrument used in this study was developed by the researcher based on a Likert- scale attitude measure, as well as forced choice (yes/no) and open-ended questions. The survey consisted of twenty-five questions. Questionnaires and surveys are useful ways to learn about perceptions, beliefs, values, opinions, and desires (McMillan & Schumacher, 1984). Surveys can be descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory. This survey is essentially descriptive. The researcher sought to understand the professional development and growth of teachers of colour from their perspectives as a way to add to the existing knowledge base that hitherto has not reflected the unique perspective of these teachers.

The first part of the survey asked participants to provide demographic information on gender, age, and ethnicity. Participants also described their educational background and employment history in this section. The design of the second part of the questionnaire allowed participants to respond to separate questions from three stakeholder groups. The stakeholders are Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and school districts. Each stakeholder set of questions included opportunity for respondents to comment on what they would like to see from the stakeholder group. For the Education Preparation Program stakeholder group, participants selected from a list of experiences the stakeholder group could offer and rated the importance of those same topics. They were asked if they expected to receive programming from the EPP after graduation. An open-ended question gave them space to list what any additional topic they would like to receive from their EPP. They were asked if their EPP continued to provide outreach and if so, what they received. The last question asked how often they received professional development from the local university.

The second set of questions focused on the role of the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) stakeholder group. Participants responded to a list of professional development topics the IDOE might provide and if they had ever participated in workshops on these topics. Participants were asked if they expected the IDOE to have unique programming for teachers of color and to list what would they like to see offered from the IDOE for teachers of color.

The third set of questions asked the respondents about their experiences at their school district. Questions were asked about their attendance at professional development workshops and professional development activities provided by the school districts where they worked. As with the other two stakeholder groups, respondents were asked if they expected the stakeholder group to provide unique programming for teachers of color and what type of programming would they like to see. The last question asked the participants to check from a list of topics, which were of most interest to them for their professional development and growth and to provide other topics, not on the list, that would support their professional development and growth.

Taken together, the questions provided an understanding of both the experiences of teachers of color and their thoughts about what they needed for their professional growth and development. The researcher was also able to compare these opinions and perceptions across the TOCs' years of experiences with EPPs, state education department and school districts. The survey assured anonymity and received approval from the Indiana University Institutional Research Board (IRB).

**Selection of Participants and Data Collection Procedures**

Participants for this study were teachers of color with 1-5 years of teaching experiences and currently teaching in Indiana. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), through a standard data request form submitted by the researcher, provided the names, school districts and email addresses of the participants. The Indiana University Institutional Review Board approved the study. The researcher used Qualtrics, a cloud-based survey tool to contact and distribute the survey. All potential participants in the study received an email invitation. Fourteen days after the initial email invitation, they received a follow-up email reminding them to complete the survey. Seven days later participants received a final reminder. Participants received a thank you email at the close of the collection period. Qualitative data, collected from the open-ended questions, was sorted into thematic categories. Using open coding to break down, examine, compare, and categorize data, the researcher was able to see recurrent themes and thus determine the categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

**Discussion: Summary of Findings**

Invitation to participate in the study was sent via email with an electronic link to the questionnaire in Qualtrics to 1,782 teachers of color from across the state of Indiana. 285 started the survey and 228 completed the survey, yielding approximately (13%) response rate. Results from the 25-item survey revealed the perceptions of teachers of color according to teaching experiences, age, and ethnicity/race. More females than males completed the survey (56% and 45 % respectively). Over half were African American women teaching in the same district with more than five years of experience. About 38% had master's degrees with 12% holding post master's degrees. The largest age group among the respondents were those over 35 years (89%) followed by those in the 20 to 25years age range (11%). The largest group of respondents by ethnicity were African American (54%) followed by Hispanic or Latinx (23%). 11% of respondents reported as Asian American /Pacific Islander with 10% identifying as mixed race. Less than one percent identified as Native American, and one percent chose not to identify. Most respondents taught in a high school (34%) followed by elementary school (33%) and middle school (29%). The remaining respondents reported teaching at another level. More than half (57%) had between 2-5 years of teaching experiences. 37% had more than five years and about seven percent were in their first year of teaching. Over half (50%) reported being at the same school district for five years. Twenty percent (20%) had been at their district over five years and approximately thirty percent (30%) were new to the school district. In summary, most respondents were female, African Americans, hold the master's degree or higher, and have 2-5 years of teaching experience at the high and elementary school levels.

**Findings: Stakeholder Groups**

Following the nine background questions, participants responded to questions about each stakeholder group - Education Preparation Programs (EPPs), Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and Indiana School Districts where they taught. Participants responded to seven questions about their EPP, three questions about the IDOE, and four questions about their school district. An additional two questions asked about topics of interest. Each stakeholder section also included a space for comments about what the type of professional development participants would like to see the stakeholder provide teachers of color. These questions allowed participants to give voice to the survey questions. Each stakeholder section included questions about the role of the stakeholder in the professional development of the teachers of color and the expectations the respondents had of the stakeholder group.

The first question in each of the stakeholder sections focused on professional development provided by the stakeholder to pre-service and licensed teachers of color. The topics varied according to the nature/business of the stakeholder group but were similar. The responses to educational topics the EPP provided to pre-service teachers of color were distributed widely from a high of

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14.74% to a low of l.71%. No clear topic received an overwhelming majority of responses. Sixty-nine (14.74%) of the respondents reported having a mentor during their EPP experience. Closely followed by about 14.32% who reported having received a culturally responsive curriculum through the EPP. Three percent (3%) reported experience with a multicultural club while in the EPP. The topic least provided by their EPP was programming addressing the unique needs of teaches of color (1.71%). Responses to the eight topics available through the IDOE were less scattered. Over one-fourth of respondents (25.68%) indicated that support for preparing for the licensing exam was available from IDOE. The next highest was opportunity for induction of beginning teachers (17.57%). 12.84% respondents also indicated that culturally responsive curriculum was an opportunity made available from the IDOE. As with the EPPs the lowest opportunity for professional development from IDOE was programming (workshops) addressing the unique needs of teachers of color (4.73%). The last stakeholder group section asked respondents about professional development topics offered by their school districts for teachers of color. The three top areas offered by the school district were professional development in the subject area (27.50%), professional development addressing diversity issues (17.08%) and (15.83%) addressing culturally responsive curriculum development. Once again, as in the previous sections, programming focused on the unique needs of teachers of color was not a topic addressed very highly in school districts (2.92%).

**Analysis of the Results**

In summary, survey findings revealed that the respondents experienced similar professional development opportunities from all the stakeholder groups. However, respondents reported that what was missing is programming that meets the unique needs of teachers of color. Suggested professional development that would better meet their needs include support groups, networking, affinity groups, mentoring by educators of similar background, and any other opportunity to meet

with other teachers of color to share experiences, ideas, and support activities. Culturally responsive curriculum was provided by all stakeholder groups, yet it was the topic frequently identified by respondents on their list of what they would like to receive from their EPPs, IDOE and the school districts. This contradiction relates to the nature of the culturally relevant curriculum professional development activities. Culturally relevant curriculum, which addresses freedom, critical thinking, social justice, racism, among other things and is probably different than what they have received but is what they wanted to see. According to Ladson-Billings (1994), cultural relevant curriculum and teaching transcends the negative effects of the dominant culture and addresses how history or background of people of color is distorted in the curriculum. A culturally relevant curriculum capitalizes on the students' social and cultural backgrounds, and this is what teachers of color want to be able to do in the classrooms.

Majority of respondents rated as highly important; all the topics suggested for EPPs to provide for pre-service teachers of color. This question was not part of the questions for the other two stakeholder groups. 70.11% of respondents indicated mentoring was the most important area an EPP could provide to pre-service teachers of color. Second was support to prepare for licensing exams (69.89%) which tied with having a culturally responsive curriculum in the EPP. Over 50% reported scholarships for pre-service teachers of color as very important. Having diverse faculty members was seen as very important by over half (65.54%) of the respondents. Programming addressing the unique needs of teachers of color is very important to most of the respondents (63.07%) along with culturally diverse clinical placement (61.71%). Having multicultural education clubs was not as important (39.43%) as the other topics rated "very important," but combined with moderately important (72.57%), these clubs might be valuable to have as part of the EPP. In summary, respondents consistently mentioned the importance of mentors, support for licensing exams and

professional development in culturally responsive curriculum.

Participants were asked if they expected the stakeholder groups to provide programming designed for teachers of color. The choices were yes, maybe and no. The expectation for the EPP to provide programming after completion of the preparation program for teachers of color were fairly equally dispersed with nearly a third for each choice (31.64% yes, 33.90% maybe and 34.56% indicating no). When asked the same question about the IDOE, 44.35% of respondents indicated yes, that they expected IDOE to provide unique programming for teachers of color. A little less than a third (27.65%) checked maybe, and 30% said no. The spread was similar for school districts. Less than half of the respondents (40%) said yes, they do expect the school district to provide unique programming for teachers of color, 25.62% indicated maybe and over a third (34.38%) said no. In summary, respondents expected the IDOE and their school district to provide unique programming for teachers of color more so than their EPP.

The next question was part of the EPP section only. Respondents were asked if their EPP continued to provide workshops or outreach to them as in-service teachers of color. The overwhelming response was no (84.30%). About fifteen percent (14.70%) said yes that their EPP had provided workshop or did reach out to them. Respondents listed the type of outreach they received from their EPP. They received ISTEP training, emails about various workshops, mentorship, and professional development. The last question was only in the school district section and respondents indicated how often they received professional development from the local EPP in their area (not their alumni institution). Most (48.43%) indicated not often, while 29.89% said often; 49% reported receiving professional development annually, nearly six percent received it monthly and fewer than four percent (3.45%) reported receiving professional development from the local school/college in their area every semester. In summary, the respondents do receive some professional development from the local school/college that fills in for the lack of outreach from their former EPP.

The last questions of the survey asked participants to check from a list of topics of interest to them for their professional development and for them to list other topics that would support them as teachers of color. Of most interest to respondents from the list provided was professional development on being an advocate for under-served children (12.83%). This finding aligns with what Nieto (2005) described as minority teachers seeing teaching as power and about using that power to benefit children. They (11.64%) also reported they would like professional development on how to lead change in diverse school settings. Culturally responsive curriculum was of interest to 10.69% of the respondents. Cultural competency (10.93%) and mentor training to serve future teachers of color tied for areas of professional development the school districts could provide.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to first create awareness among stakeholders of the need to re-evaluate the professional development and other support services provided to teachers of color from the beginning of their training through the lifespan of their career. Another purpose was to examine policy and practices regarding the quality, content, coherence, and consistency of the professional development along the continuum of teacher development for all teachers, with emphasis on equity and social justice to address the specific needs of the teachers of color. Lastly, the study hoped to add to the literature the voices and perceptions of teachers of color regarding professional development opportunities provided to them during their first five years of teaching and what they would like to see and expect from stakeholder groups. The findings from this investigation have implications for theory and practice. First, the professional development offerings are the same for teachers of color as any teacher. However, for teachers of color there were several missing components from their professional development continuum. The idea of a different continuum that is

contextual and humanizing, and that changes with the times is required. A continuum that addresses their unique educational experiences, historical influences, and social justice concerns and that works to improve education for all children is what is important to teachers of color, and what they want to see. They also seek opportunities to connect with other teachers of color and to share their experiences and knowledge. They view these types of supports as very important for pre-service teachers as well as experienced teachers of color.

There are a number of implications for the traditional professional development continuum. It is important to have a continuum that goes beyond a licensing requirement framework that is aimed at retooling teaching skills and/or addressing goals and objectives of the state and districts. For teachers of color, what is needed is a rethinking of the continuum with a focus on professional development that addresses the practice of social justice, equity, freedom, and liberation (Hooks, 1994). The new or redefined continuum must move beyond the accepted boundaries to one that is multi-dimensional ensuring the respect and accommodation of all cultural viewpoints and ideals.

## Recommendations

Teachers of color in this study listed what they had experienced along the continuum of their career and what they would like to see. What they would like to see was markedly different than any of the model continuums mentioned in the review of the literature. How can stakeholders address the unique needs of teachers of color? First, educator preparation programs, state departments of education, and school districts must acknowledge the historical inequities built into the educational system in the United States. When culturally relevant curriculum is offered, it must go beyond the boundaries of learning historical factoids of cultural diversity but extend to how our educational systems can and should work to address the inequalities in our society and the powerful role that teachers play in this work. The Ohio and the Alabama Teacher Development Continuums referenced as exemplars are based on each state's standards for teaching

professionals. Changing the continuum requires a change in basic assumptions in the thinking about what teaching is all about for the teachers of color. Each standard, element, and level of progress along the continuum must address how all teachers, moving from novice/emerging to accomplished/distinguished, learn about, and demonstrate the skills and knowledge on the following topics (as suggested by the participants of our study).

1) Teacher power and what it means when advocating for all children
2) Teaching is a revolutionary act because it determines the future life of the children and at the same time conflict with the dominate authority.
3) How teaching can be liberating for the teacher and the students.
4) Teaching is about humanizing and contextualizing each interaction.
5) Teaching is about the teacher's and the student's reality.
6) Teaching is about social justice.
7) Teaching is about freedom.
8) Teaching is about civic responsibility to make a better world.

To begin to address the unique needs of teachers of color, each stakeholder group must not only integrate these and similar topics into their programs, but they must also do so consistently and measure their success along the way. By addressing these and other topics, all teachers benefit and in turn, so do the children.

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