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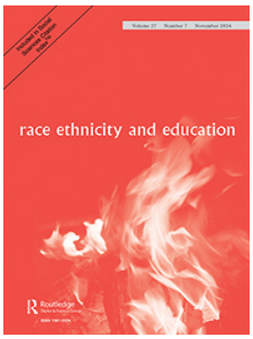

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Marketing a culture of achievement to Black and Brown students: TNTP and neoliberal multiculturalism

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ABSTRACT

Neoliberal multiculturalism is a global racialization process that works as a unifying discourse for the rationalization of neoliberal policies within U.S. global ascendancy and capitalist development. Invoking state multiculturalism, e.g. 'diversity' or 'equity', neoliberal multiculturalism is officially antiracist. Official antiracism portrays multiculturalism as being at its core while limiting discussions of race and racism to sanctioned racial discourses. Using neoliberal multiculturalism as a framework, this paper presents a critical analysis of the racial ideology presented in TNTP's founding teacher training curriculum designed specifically for its Teaching Fellows. The analysis demonstrates how official antiracism can function in curriculum designed to train fast-tracked selective alternative route program teachers to teach predominantly Black, Latino, and immigrant students in lower-income neighborhood public schools.

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Neoliberal multiculturalism; alternative certification; racial project; teacher training; official antiracism

Relaxing your expectations for any student – whether out of concern for difficult situations at home or in the community, or out of respect for a culture that is different from our own – in the end only hurts that student by lowering achievement and thereby limiting life prospects (TNTP Guidebook 2005, 23).

Introduction

For more than two decades in the U.S., among other fast-track programs, *selective* alternative route programs (SARPs) like the Teaching Fellows have recruited and trained tens of thousands of middle-class, majority White graduates of elite colleges and career changers with credentialed resumes to teach in public schools (Mead, Chuong, and Goodson 2015). The national impact is significant; over half of alternatively certified teachers work in schools serving primarily Black and Latino students and account for 21% of teachers in those schools (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas 2016). In districts that serve mostly lower-income Black and Latino students, the proportion of teachers entering through alternative routes is often well above 50% (Carver–Thomas and Darling–Hammond 2017). The impact of SARPs

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and their teacher-training programs have been even more profound in highly segregated districts such as NYC, particularly in high-demand areas like mathematics (Boyd et al. 2012).

Prior to the COVID pandemic, teacher shortages in the U.S. were forecast (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas 2016). The need for qualified teachers is more acute with increasing retirements and enrollment declines in undergraduate teacher education (Diliberti, Schwartz, and Grant 2021; Partelow 2019). Many U.S. schools currently face teacher shortages (Turner and Cohen 2023). To fill open positions in core subjects like mathematics, many urban districts will increase an already substantial reliance on fast-track, not-for-profit SARPs like TNTP's [formerly The New Teacher Project] Teaching Fellows programs (Brantlinger, Grant, and Cooley 2023; TNTP 2022). However, as a field, we know little about the process to prepare mostly racially and socioeconomically privileged SARP teachers to educate and work with students from non-White, dispossessed communities.

The purpose of this paper is to critically examine the curriculum designed to train fast-tracked SARP teachers to teach predominantly Black, Latino, and immigrant students in lower-income neighborhood public schools. Specifically, we provide a critical theoretical analysis of the written guidebook published by TNTP and designed specifically for pre-service Teaching Fellow training. This research is part of a longitudinal examination of the selection, preparation, instruction, and experiences of mathematics teachers from the NYC Teaching Fellows (NYCTF) (e.g. Brantlinger and Smith 2013; Brantlinger, Cooley, and Brantlinger 2010, Brantlinger, Grant, and Cooley 2023; Cooley et al. 2019; Cooley, Hannaford-Simpson, and Shahid 2020). This work led the researchers to consider the pre-service curriculum provided to TFs. What we learned is that SARPs provide a pathway by which neoliberal principles, including race colorblindness mixed with competitive individualism, enter the public education domain.

Neoliberal ideology is primarily based on the premise that society most benefits from the enabling of markets accompanied with the privatization of public services (Harvey 2005). Melamed (2011, 39) argues that neoliberalism, far more than an economic system, 'is also a world-historical configuration of governance and biological and social life' affecting every aspect of existence, including education. Neoliberalism's impact on U.S. public education has been carefully studied before, including privatization, interactions with race, standards and assessments, and curriculum and instruction (e.g. Apple 2006; Baltodano 2012; Dumas 2013; Lahann and Reagan 2011, Martin 2013; Sleeter 2013). This paper contributes to this literature using a framework of neoliberal multiculturalism, to understand how this modern racialization process is expressed in SARP teacher curricula.

This article begins with a brief history of the development of SARPs in the U.S. and the more recent spread of SARPs internationally. It then lays out the neoliberal multicultural framework that undergirds the analysis. The research methodology is then detailed, followed by a brief description of the study's context. An overview of the data source, namely *Teaching for Student Achievement (TfSA): A Guidebook for Effective Teaching in High-need Schools* (TNTP 2005), referred to as *The Guidebook*, used to prepare TFs nationally, 2005–2012, is then provided. Following this, a thematic content analysis of *The Guidebook* based on the theoretical framework

constructs is presented. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of the outcomes presented here.

Throughout the paper, we exemplify, when useful, within the context of mathematics education and NYCTF, our original points of research. However, *The Guidebook* is not content specific and was used for all TFs nationally.

A brief history of SARPs

Alternative teacher certification programs first began to appear in the U.S. in the mid-1980s partly in response to high teacher retirements and a looming growth in student population (Frankel and Gerald 1982). Adding to this, the report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (U.S. National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983) exploded onto the political scene with dire critiques of the U.S. educational system, including teacher preparation. The authors argued that '[T]eacher preparation programs need substantial improvement' and 'Too many teachers are being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students' (1983, 21). *A Nation at Risk* also paved the way for neoliberalism to find sure footing in public education. Following its publication, 'Standards reformers argued that by imposing high curriculum standards in public schools and enforcing them with high-stakes tests, we could improve the productivity of American workers, expand the country's economic growth, and enhance its competitive position in the world' (Labaree 2010, 49).

School districts in several states soon instituted varying alternative certification programs. In 1988, Teach for America (TFA), the first SARP and brainchild of Wendy Kopp, Princeton University graduate, was designed as an alternative certification route for graduates of elite colleges who would teach for 2 years in some of the nation's highest poverty schools. TFA, a not-for-profit organization, quickly received millions of dollars in donations and became a favorite for exclusivist teacher education reformers. Accepting 4000 positions out of 35,000 applications in 2009, TFA touted its 'selectivity' as raising standards among teacher corps (Kopp 2003).

Kopp also founded The New Teacher Project (later renamed TNTP) in 1997 as a 'spin-off of Teach for America' (TNTP 2001b). Kopp recruited Michelle Rhee, a TFA graduate, to be TNTP's first CEO. In 2005, TNTP claimed to have already trained over 13,000 new teachers in 40 programs across 20 states; this included 10 to 30% of all new teachers in cities like Atlanta, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. and NYC. With a stated focus on mathematics and science, TNTP claimed to maintain significant involvement with their 'clients', the districts they contracted with (TNTP 2001a).

The SARP model has been exported globally by leaders in the TFA-TNTP network. As with TFA and TNTP, Wendy Kopp cofounded 'Teach for All' in 2007 in collaboration with Teach First, a SARP registered as a charity that originated in England in 2002 (Teach First 2024). Kopp remains as the CEO of Teach for All which networks with organizations around the world to implement training programs for SARP teachers (Teach For All 2024). As with many SARPs in the U.S., the Teach First programs place minimally trained recent graduates from elite colleges in 'challenging' schools serving dispossessed populations where they teach for 2 years. As of August 2024, Teach for All stated that it partners with 61 countries including China, Brazil, Haiti, Israel, Morocco, and South Africa to implement 'Teach First' SARPs (Teach for All 2024).

In the U.S., SARPs like TNTP's Teaching Fellows and its progenitor, TFA, have been highly acclaimed by policy elites from both major political parties (e.g. Duncan 2009; Will 2011). SARPs have been shown to converge with neoliberalism's market-driven interests, creating competition in the teacher preparation 'market' and serving to deregulate and de-professionalize teacher education while recasting it as a product focused on efficiency and outcomes (Baltodano 2012, Martin 2013; Sleeter 2013). Positioning teacher education as a commodity is in part a result of advancing student learning as a product, measured by standardized exams, another education commodity (Au 2010; Sleeter 2013).

Theoretical framework

Race, racism, racialization, and racial projects

This research centers race in the context of the fast-track preparation of SARP teachers to teach in highly segregated, under-resourced U.S. public schools. We recognize race as a fluid, socially constructed, and historically contingent classification system (Molina 2014; Omi and Winant 1994).

We find the following definition of racism, "the creation or maintenance of a racial hierarchy, supported through institutional power" (Kohli, Pizarro, and Nevárez 2017, 184) useful in this context for its emphasis on the structural nature of racism. To clarify, the term 'racism' often conjures the idea of individual prejudice which feeds the myth that racism is solely interpersonal and, as such, is not structural. While individual prejudice is a central element of racism, it 'cannot by itself guarantee racial domination' (Bonilla–Silva 2015, 75). In order to guarantee this, racism must be structural in nature and, thusly, supported by the power of state and corporate institutions.

Following Melamed (2011), we understand racialization as a 'process that constitutes differential relations of human value and valuelessness according to specific material circumstances and geopolitical conditions while appearing to be (and being) a rationally inevitable normative system that merely sorts human beings into categories of difference' (Melamed 2011, 2). Everyone is assigned to a racialized group, although this is not always recognized, particularly among those who are racialized as White.

Central to the current study is the construct of *racial project*, an ongoing racialization process that formulates what race means at a given historical moment in society using social structures and cultural representations (Omi and Winant 1994). For example, U.S. standardized testing is presented as meritocratic and objective while simultaneously reproducing exclusion, stratification, and power structures. In this way, it serves as a racial project because it helps to constitute the meaning of race and, more specifically, normalizes a racialized hierarchy of academic achievement (Au 2016; Martin 2013). State and corporate institutions, inclusive of schools, contribute to differing, often competing, but also overlapping, racial projects (Gholson and Wilkes 2017; Molina 2014; Omi and Winant 1994).

Martin (2013, 322) posits that racial projects necessarily interact with 'market forces such as neoliberalism'. Neoliberal racial projects privatize racial discourse, i.e. individualize racial issues as private matters, using a colorblind framework of a freely competitive society, claiming there are equal opportunity and rights for all. Government measures to attend to racial inequities are rejected as biased against Whites and an attack on

meritocracy, 'Marketplace ideologies now work to erase the social from the language of public life so as to reduce all racial problems to private issues such as individual character' (Giroux 2003, 193).

Neoliberal multiculturalism

Melamed (2011, 4) argues that, since the end of World War II, a new global racial project has emerged, specifically, 'a formally anti-racist, liberal-capitalist modernity articulated under conditions of U.S. global ascendancy'. Neoliberal discourses of difference among groups of people rationalize and make acceptable transcontinental constitutive and systemic inequities occurring within the evolution of U.S. world dominance. This global racial project works jointly with, and goes beyond, white supremacy without replacing it. The result contributes to universal racialization – in the sense that the differential worth of human beings is normalized and has been made to work for U.S. capitalist globalization.

Within this global racial project, Melamed (2011, 41) defines the current stage of U.S. racialization processes as *neoliberal multiculturalism*, the 'unifying discourse that neoliberalism has used to exert a monopoly of rationality over the practices that impact its constitution'. We understand discourse to mean systematic bodies of ideas, practices, knowledge, and power that shape meaning and how to understand the world (Foucault 2002).

Utilizing institutional invocations of multiculturalism, e.g. 'diversity', 'equity', and 'inclusion', neoliberal multiculturalism has operated as a unifying discourse that is officially antiracist and has been driven by a series of sanctioned or state-recognized U.S. antiracisms. As a racial project, neoliberal-multicultural methods transform the outcomes of value-laden systems, that is, applying value to those who are the beneficiaries of neoliberalism and valuelessness to those that have been impoverished, into normalized orders of difference that 'explain and make acceptable inherent and systemic inequalities within historical formations of U.S. global ascendancy and capitalist development' (Melamed 2011, 42).

Official antiracisms portray multiculturalism, i.e. the recognition and equal valuing of diverse groups in society, as being at its core while limiting discussions of race and racism to sanctioned racial discourses. That is, official racism coalesces around racialized expressions of value (e.g. individual responsibility, competition, culture of achievement), and expressions of valuelessness (e.g. interdependence, collectivism, culture of poverty) that make it 'possible to disseminate highly ideological truths and information bits as authentic and substantive knowledge' (Melamed 2011, 41). These discourses presume the value of U.S. individualism and competition and, as such, preserve racialized power structures including white supremacy. 'As a unifying discourse, neoliberal multiculturalism has disguised the reality that neoliberalism remains a form of racial capitalism' (42).

For example, Martin (2013, 326) argues that the 'mathematics for all' discourse, as articulated by professional groups including the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM 1989, 2000), appeals to well-intentioned actors as a 'colorblind and universal effort' with a 'social justice veneer'. That is, this discourse posits that it is possible to improve the mathematical experiences and learning of Black students without attending to how anti-Black racism structures those experiences and learning outcomes. In this way, Martin argues that 'mathematics for all' is sanctioned racialized discourse, i.e.

official antiracism, that remains 'simultaneously aligned with the rhetoric and ideologies of neoliberal . . . racial projects' (2013, 326).

Official antiracisms have constitutive, normative, and rationalizing powers. They 'institutionally validate some forms of difference and make others illegible' (Melamed 2011, 11) and thus control what counts as a race matter:

> It should not be possible to be antiracist without being against oppression. Yet race-liberal hegemony has been so effective that today in the United States everyone is antiracist, and yet oppression is banal and ubiquitous (2011, 49).

In the current analysis, we focus on three coalescing official antiracisms, namely, what we refer to as *an ethic of multiculturalism*, *categories of difference*, and *what counts as a race matter*. We do not intend that these antiracisms are disparate. On the contrary, they overlap and have 'unifying power' (Melamed 2011, 50). We briefly discuss each one below.

Ethic of multiculturalism

This official antiracism grounds policies that serve to advance neoliberalism (e.g. privatization of education) as key to a post-racial world of equity, diversity, individual freedom and opportunity. It establishes perceptions of inequality rather than addressing inequality (Melamed 2011). For example, neoliberal multiculturalism in the U.S. articulates school vouchers as a way to free Black and Latino children from 'failing' public schools while also increasing diversity in private and charter schools. Following this logic, any rational, good citizen would use vouchers as a mechanism to improve the life chances of their children, and those who do not use vouchers have only themselves to blame (Dumas 2013). The resulting structured deprivation of educational resources in those communities fades from view (Aggarwal 2016). This official antiracism presents the issue of vouchers as beneficial to communities dispossessed by neoliberalism although evidence for this is weak at best (Cowen 2022). An ethic of multiculturalism appeals to the politics of positivity and allows one to be aligned with a just value system while simultaneously drowning out 'the noise of racism' (Ahmed 2012, 61).

Categories of difference

Neoliberal multiculturalism produces *categories of difference* that distinguish groups of people as a 'valorized domain of knowledge' that ideologically correlates with 'ethical, moral, technical and political stances' (Melamed 2011, 43) that aim to explain racialized outcomes. Indeed, economic status quos themselves define antiracism in ways that valorize established monetary power structures. Material disparities among racialized groups (e.g. wealth, housing, political power) are coded as the just desserts of reasonable, moral citizens while those dispossessed by neoliberalism are 'unfit for global citizenship because they lack the proper neoliberal subjectivity' (44). The result is a proliferation of norms that 'render some forms of humanity and their social imaginaries rational and others irrational, some legal and others illegal, some criminal and others law-abiding, and so on' (13). For example, Woodson and Love (2019) demonstrate how achievement gap studies and the resulting proposed pedagogies are based on assumptions of Black inadequacy. That is, gap studies take for granted sanctioned racialized categories of difference. Race and ethnicity are used as static descriptors that are then cited as causal

variables that set forth racialized results (Martin 2009). '[G]ap studies promote deficit thinking due to the assumptions that motivate the comparisons' (Woodson and Love 2019, 93). These approaches fail to 'account for structural and institutional racism in their discussions of student learning' (Martin 2009, 16). Instead, marginalized communities are pathologized as having cultural, psychological, or social problems and lacking motivation or family support Solórzano and Yosso (2002); Valencia (2012).

Controlling what counts as a race matter

As mentioned previously, all official antiracisms, inclusive of an ethic of multiculturalism and categories of difference, contribute to controlling what counts as a race matter in a manner that benefits neoliberal agendas. An ethic of multiculturalism, for example, frames perceptions of inequality in ways that deracialize antiracist references. Categories of difference shape discourses that sanction racial domination as a result of character, effort, and meritocracy built on equal opportunity for all. Racialized effects are abstracted to such a degree that 'racial context is more residual than overt' (Melamed 2011, 43).

For example, neoliberal multiculturalism legitimizes the idea that lower scores on standardized exams cause racial inequities and lack of opportunity in U.S. society. This delegitimizes the antithetical view that the cause and effect are opposite; that is, racial inequities, biased tests, and lack of opportunity cause differential outcomes in academic achievement (Berliner 2012). In fact, official achievement discourse embodies neoliberal multiculturalism, particularly in mathematics education, a subject in which success is largely defined by standardized test scores. In particular, achievement discourse normalizes the outcomes of White children as the point of reference (Martin 2009). This is largely due to the 'assumptions that motivate the comparisons …. Black children's perceived potential is solely defined by middle-class White children's actualities' (Woodson and Love 2019, 93). Indeed, when it comes to the well-documented 'achievement gap' between Asian and White students, this disparity is not part of official antiracist discourse (e.g. see NCES 2021). Nor does the term 'achievement gap' refer to differences between Black and Asian or Black and Latino, rather always with White as the norm (e.g. see Center on Education Policy 2009). Therefore, as Hilliard (2003, 137) points out, 'right away, it seems that something more than achievement is being discussed when the gap language is used'.

Research questions

As indicated, this paper provides an exemplar of how neoliberal multiculturalism permeates in the context of a curriculum designed for SARP teachers in the U.S. who comprise a large proportion of new mathematics and other teachers in districts that serve lower-income Black and Latino students. We show how TNTP's founding curriculum for Teaching Fellows (TFs), *The Guidebook*, embodies neoliberal multicultural discourse that constitutes, rationalizes, and normalizes legitimate knowledges about the mostly Black, Latino, and immigrant communities the TFs will serve.

- How and to what extent does neoliberal multiculturalism manifest in *The Guidebook*'s discourse?

(a) What kinds of official antiracism are employed in the discourse and in what ways are they used?
(b) What legitimate racial knowledges are constituted, rationalized, and normalized about TF communities and their students' communities?
(c) What legitimate racial knowledges are constituted, rationalized, and normalized about racialized groups, racial inequities, and racism?

- What does *The Guidebook's* discourse reveal about TNTP's racial project?

The first overarching research question allows for a critical examination of how the discourse of a teacher training manual can draw on and perpetuate neoliberal multiculturalism. *The Guidebook* instructs TFs on how to understand and teach mostly Black, Latino, and immigrant children and how to understand race, racial inequities, and racism. It presents the purpose of U.S. public education for these communities, its focus, principles, and goals as well as possible obstacles and how to approach them. It is within these parameters that an institution's official discourse reveals its assumptions and beliefs, as well as justifications and explanations. The sub-questions break down the racialization processes of neoliberal multiculturalism into the discourses that provide rationality for its practices and valorization of racial knowledge. The second research question takes cognizance of neoliberal multiculturalism as a racialization process.

Methods

Research methodology

This qualitative study uses a critical research methodology (Stinson and Bullock 2012) informed by Melamed's (2011) theory of neoliberal multiculturalism to analyze the racial discourse of TNTP's written pre-service training materials for SARP teachers.

Positionality

Both authors are racialized as White and from the middle class. The first and second authors were the female PI and male senior research associate respectively in a research study of NYCTF that began in 2005. We did not enter this research with preconceived notions of SARPs. Indeed, the original research goal was to determine in what ways TFs could engage students in conceptually challenging mathematics. Our research has explored several different aspects of the NYCTF program, one of many TF programs that were disseminated nationally in the U.S. (Brantlinger, Cooley, and Brantlinger 2010; Cooley et al. 2019; Cooley, Hannaford-Simpson, and Shahid 2020). Our focus gradually changed as we observed TFs in highly under-resourced, segregated schools. As White educators who want to better understand structural racism, we were open to and began seeking scholars in critical theories who could help us to understand what we observed about NYCTF program goals and training. We became cognizant of the fact that we needed to consider structures in place that allowed and supported not-for-profits involved with educational philanthropy like TNTP to flourish and even be heralded as good for all of society. This paper represents a culmination of these efforts.

Data source

We are interested in *The Guidebook's* discourse for three reasons. First, for 8 years, *The Guidebook* was TNTP's signature contribution to TFs' training in NYCTF and other TF programs operating in upwards of two dozen urban U.S. districts. Tens of thousands of new TFs, who taught mathematics and other core academic subjects, across the country were in part introduced to their largely Black, Latino, and immigrant students, how to understand them, how to teach them, how to understand their schools, and TFs' role in those schools, among other related matters with *The Guidebook*; its discourse, as we show, draws on and instantiates neoliberal multiculturalism and some of its key tenets.

The second reason builds on the idea that the enactment of all educational policies, e.g. through curricula, is realized within racial ideological frameworks that are normalized through discourse (Bonilla–Silva 2003; Leonardo 2003; Melamed 2011). By racial ideology, we mean a set of assumptions and beliefs that explain or justify racialized social schemes, power structures, and hierarchies, and whether race or racism is a consideration. Importantly, racial ideological frameworks allow for considerations of why certain discourses are utilized and what goal(s) they serve within racial projects.

This brings us to the third reason; since its inception, TNTP's Teaching Fellows programs and other SARPs have spread widely and become institutionalized in U.S. teacher education and, increasingly, in many nations globally as discussed above. As the originating curriculum document, *The Guidebook* represents the elucidation of TNTP's founders' interpretation of racial social schemes and hierarchies and how to address them, i.e. racial ideology. Examining *The Guidebook* helps researchers and educators to understand how TNTP's official racism and neoliberal influences can be recognized in other teacher curriculum materials and newer SARP programs that have since propagated. This includes the Guidebook's replacement, Lemov's *Teach Like A Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College* (TLaC) training materials, which provide a similar kind of teaching taxonomy as *The Guidebook*. Lemov's TLaC and the 2.0 and 3.0 versions which add more techniques to its taxonomy provide 'a set of frameworks and practices that aim to close the achievement gap in standardized test performance' (Lamboy and Lu 2017). In addition to being central to TNTP and other alternative certification program training, TLaC has spread into university teacher programs and district professional development. We return to these connections in the Discussion after the analysis of *The Guidebook*.

The New York City context

NYCTF was putatively instituted to offer a fast-track route to address teacher shortages (Kopp 2003; Mungal 2016). Launched in 2000, TNTP partnered with the NYC Department of Education who contracted with several colleges to provide accredited programs. TNTP's role was to recruit 'outstanding' individuals and provide over 50% of the 200 hours of 6-week summer pre-service preparation with a focus on *The Guidebook* and its themes and to organize student teaching, i.e. hours in summer school with students who had failed the previous year; the colleges provided master's coursework for the remaining hours. NYCTF grew quickly, going from about 300 recruits in the first summer to about 3000 in the second summer, and served as a model for TF programs nationally.

In the fall after the preservice summer training, this provisional route allowed TFs to become teachers of record while simultaneously completing state certification requirements in their respective master's programs, leading to the *Transitional B Certification* (i.e. alternative certification in New York) with which TFs were considered certified. Since 2000, upwards of 25,000 SARP teachers have entered the NYC public school system, including more than 50% of all new, and over 25% of all, secondary mathematics teachers (Boyd et al. 2012).

Implementation of the guidebook and its principles

Table 1. NYCTF preservice training.

NYCTF Training	Description	Training Hours
Student Achievement Framework (SAF) Advisory – weekly mandatory meetings for TFs.	*The Guidebook* was required reading. Taught by TNTP 'Advisors', mostly former Math TFs.	34
Content Workshops or Seminars, mandatory Friday meetings.	Taught by TNTP, similar themes to SAF Advisory, i.e. *The Guidebook* themes.	26
Clinical Practice	Set up by TNTP, hours in summer school for students who had failed.	40–60 or less[2]
University Coursework	Coursework varied at the universities.	80[3]

As delineated in Table 1, the NYCTF summer preservice program distributed the 200 hours of required training across four components. TNTP staff directed the first three components, although all components were physically held at university campuses. Each university delivered 80 instructional hours; coursework differed by university.[1]

The Guidebook lists no individual authors but rather is described as written by TNTP and 'inspired and coauthored' by TFA. The graphic in Figure 1 below is featured on the title page and at the beginning of each chapter.

Figure 1. Teaching for Student Achievement framework.

The achievement focus is captured in the graphic's outer ring, 'closing the achievement gap' with 'effective' TFs in 'high needs' schools. As the inner circle explains, Teaching for Student Achievement (TfSA) requires effective 'instructional design and delivery' bolstered by effective 'classroom management and culture'. The circular white ring lists the 10 chapter titles that constitute the main techniques of the TfSA Framework. Table 2 provides a brief summary of the formal knowledge provided in each section/chapter.

Table 2. Synopsis of the guidebook sections/chapters.

Guidebook Section/Chapter	Formal Knowledge
How to Use This Guidebook	'The Guidebook argues that your chief responsibility as a new teacher is to immediately effect gains in student achievement, while contending with the countless challenges you will face working in a high-need school' (p. viii).
Introduction	Defines TfSA, which entails 'ensuring that your students make dramatic academic progress' (p. 3). Lays out which student groups are the focus (p. 5), alternate explanations for achievement gaps (pp. 6–8), how gaps will be closed (pp. 8–9), how TF success will be measured (p. 9) and an overview of the TfSA Framework (pp. 9–11).
Chapter 1, **Setting Challenging Academic Goals**	'[I]ntroduces . . . the concept of establishing the highest possible expectations for your students' academic growth . . .. We will advise you on how to . . . infuse your instruction with a healthy dose of urgency to enable you and your students to ultimately achieve that audacious goal' (p. 14).
Chapter 2, **Assessment: Beginning with the End in Mind**	'We will discuss the absolute necessity of combining instruction and assessment, so that your instruction consistently assesses, and your assessments consistently instruct' (p. 14).
Chapter 3, **Standards-Based Instructional Planning**	'[O]ffers an overview of the educational achievement standards mandated by districts, states and the federal government' (p. 14).
Chapter 4, **Differentiated Instruction**	'[D]etails how to address the diverse, and in many cases, competing needs of the students in your class' (p. 14).
Chapter 5, **High Impact Teaching Strategies, or HITS**	'This chapter will detail those methods which have the most convincing record of improving student achievement' (p. 14).
Chapter 6, **Creating a Positive, 'No Excuses' Classroom Culture**	'We . . . offer a guide on how to establish a community based on a classroom culture of achievement' (p. 204).
Chapter 7, **Establishing Effective Rules and Consequences**	'[W]ill help you to select, teach, and enforce the rules and consequences that will be the cornerstone of your classroom management plan' (p. 204).
Chapter 8, **Establishing Efficient Classroom Procedures**	'[E]xamines the need for routines to create a structured classroom environment that helps both students and the teacher function effectively' (p. 205).
Chapter 9, **Authority and Discipline**	'[G]uides you through the inevitable occurrence of student misbehavior' (p. 205).
Chapter 10, **Promoting Student Achievement through Diversity**	'We discuss the ways that your own personal biases and privileges might affect your teaching, and encourage you to begin understanding how racial identity and cultural learning styles affect academic performance' (p. 205).
Chapter 11, **Effecting Change in the Classroom as a Newcomer**	'[C]onsiders the inherent tension between your potential to effect change and your status as a newcomer with little influence in your community' (p. 205).

Data analysis

The research team, which includes the authors, varied over time but consisted of people racialized as Black, White, and Asian with divergent socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. To analyze *The Guidebook*, the researchers worked discursively toward consensus judgments to interpret and code the data (Cochran–Smith et al. 2009). As a team, we first read *The Guidebook* and utilized verbatim coding and other open coding techniques using paragraphs as the unit of analysis (Saldaña 2021). We noted, for example, any mention of race, achievement, or culture. We then wrote analytic memos based on our repeated readings and iterative coding of *The Guidebook*. We each read the others' memos and wrote responses, followed by group discussions. Through this process, we fleshed out sub-codes such as difference, multiculturalism, families and communities, diversity, and views of students, teachers and TFs, among others. Over a 3-year period, these discussions coincided with group readings of critical research literature that helped us to better understand how *The Guidebook* created a racialized narrative about how to best teach Black, Latino, and immigrant students in neighborhood urban schools. We reflected on these readings and how they related to our understanding of *The Guidebook's* discourse. These cycles, i.e. analyzing, writing, reading, reflecting, discussion, while time-consuming, finalized the coding scheme, refined our thinking, and sharpened the development of the findings presented below.

During the second stage, *The Guidebook* text was uploaded to NVivo, a computer assisted data analysis software (CADAS) tool. Two researchers then coded chapters of the book, using the developed codes and subcodes. NVivo coding comparison queries between researchers were 95% in agreement, achieving Kappa scores greater than .75, indicating strong agreement. Differences found were due to data that could be coded with more than one code. This highlighted overlaps in the components of official antiracism. In those instances, all relevant codes were applied.

In the final stage, we grouped coded sections of *The Guidebook* along the three official antiracisms laid out previously; namely, *ethic of multiculturalism*, *categories of difference,* and *controlling what counts as a race matter*. For example, as we formulated the categories of difference, we came to understand that it was not only the text that gave meaning in *The Guidebook* but also what was left out of the text. We noted that, once multiculturalism and diversity were embraced in the pursuit of achievement for all, overt discussions of race and ethnicity were avoided. In their stead, cultural references were utilized building differences and valorization of those differences until, finally, *The Guidebook* centered its discourse around 'racial-cultural' differences in Chapter 10, *Promoting Student Achievement through Diversity*. This led us to go back through the analyses to carefully understand how this term was developed and what purpose it served. This clarified ways in which *The Guidebook* provides sanctioned discourse around a culturalist view of race that legitimizes valorized categories of difference, which is by definition racism, 'the creation or maintenance of a racial hierarchy, supported through institutional power' (Kohli, Pizarro, and Nevárez 2017, 184). Racial difference as culture provides a basis for controlling what counts as a race matter (and what counts as a cultural matter).

The findings

We begin this section with an overview of the *TfSA Framework*. We then present the analysis of *The Guidebook* showing how its discourse draws mainly on three official antiracisms, namely, an *ethic of multiculturalism, categories of difference*, and *what counts as a race matter*. We do not contend that this is exhaustive, but rather these official antiracisms are highly utilized in *The Guidebook*'s discourse. As mentioned previously, although they overlap, we choose to empirically separate the first two in the analysis and consider their influence on *what counts as a race matter* to bring forth the nuances with which official antiracist discourse can operate in teacher curricula.

Overview of the Teaching for Student Achievement (TfSA) framework

Designed to be read and discussed over the course of the pre-service summer program, the centerpiece of *The Guidebook* is a systematized taxonomy of teaching techniques purportedly designed to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps. *The Guidebook*'s text asserts that the TfSA Framework is a 'a research and data-driven device' (viii) that will ameliorate racial testing gaps if implemented correctly by TFs. A foundation of TfSA is for TFs to hold all their students to 'high expectations' for academic achievement and on-task for achievement-oriented behavior.

> The good news is that you *can* tackle and overcome the achievement gap in your classroom for your students. A key to that success will be establishing and maintaining high expectations of your students. (25)

While high expectations are arguably valuable for teachers to strive towards, *The Guidebook* argues that testing gaps are due in large part to a failure of (other, non-elite) teachers holding Black and Latino students to rigorous standards. TfSA will break this cycle. Consistent with this, it promotes a vision of teaching as a 'cyclical process' where TFs 'teach–assess–teach–assess–teach–assess' (37). TFs are taught to 'diagnose' students' current performance, similar to doctors diagnosing patients, to determine if they are 'sick and need help' (35), use that diagnosis to set 'an audacious goal' (17), implement 'high impact teaching strategies' (153), and to teach 'with the end in mind' (35).

Teachers are not the only ones to blame for testing gaps, however. As laid out below, *The Guidebook* makes a parallel argument that students and their families lack the necessary culture to succeed in education. Namely, aside from specified teaching techniques, a fundamental part of TfSA is for TFs to establish a 'culture of achievement' (220) in students that aligns with 'high expectations' and a 'no excuses attitude'.

> Teachers who accept the mission of closing the achievement gap adopt a 'No Excuses' attitude to combat the effects of learned helplessness and self-limiting behavior … that present huge barriers to achievement (214).

To be clear, 'no excuses' also applies to TFs who are expected to teach for student achievement at all costs, '[Y]ou have committed yourself to closing – not rationalizing – the achievement gap' (26). TFs are encouraged to 'model' and 'market' their 'culture of achievement' and make a 'deliberate effort to transmit the culture' and 'conscientiously indoctrinate … students to an ideology of success' (219).

Neoliberal multiculturalism as articulated in the guidebook

Impregnated with principles and ideals from neoliberal multiculturalism, *The Guidebook's* discourse prioritizes an individualist, competitive, and meritocratic view of education that is formally antiracist. Glossing institutional and structural racism, *The Guidebook* informs its readers that racial inequity is embodied by achievement disparities between Black, Latino, and other marginalized groups, on the one hand, and White students, on the other. Raising achievement amongst Black and Brown students is presented as the apex goal for achieving social justice and racial equity in U.S. society. In the first subsection below, we show how *The Guidebook's* achievement focus is conceptualized as being based on an *ethic of multiculturalism*, grounding patriotic, social justice motives for its particular importance to TFs who will work with 'underperforming' Black and Latino students. In the second subsection, we conceptualize how *categories of difference* are formalized around a culturalist argument for racial differences in achievement, with particular emphasis drawn between TFs and the communities they serve. In the third, we consider how these two antiracisms unite in their reasoning to provide rationalization for *what counts as a race matter*.

We include a selection of examples to show how these official antiracisms manifest in *The Guidebook*. These examples were chosen because they are representative of how the racial discourse functions throughout the text; details change, but the methods are consistent.

Ethic of multiculturalism

We begin with *The Guidebook*'s articulation of an ethic of multiculturalism because, for neoliberal multiculturalism to take root, it needs to control the rationality 'for the comprehension of the social practices that impact its very constitution' (Melamed 2011, 41). *The Guidebook*'s discourse draws on a particular imagery of diversity, equity, and social justice as a grounding basis for its argument about the need for TFs to focus on raising achievement scores at all costs.

The Guidebook first introduces a view of social equity that does little to contextualize historical testing gaps in the U.S. education system. It begins by informing its readers that, formerly, the focus of 'schooling' had been on 'compulsory attendance' and 'equality of access' (5). *The Guidebook* instructs that only recently had 'achievement for *all*' been centered in 'education reform' and had 'renewed interest in the achievement gap' (5, original emphasis). It rationalizes TNTP's achievement focus as being based in social justice for Black and Latino children because the persistence of achievement gaps, 'undermines the most fundamental ideals of equity on which our country was founded' (21). The sum of this discourse normalizes racialized education inequities as embodied by disparate achievement scores, which are antithetical to U.S. values.

Steeping its motives in a presentation of contemporary change and racial justice places *The Guidebook's* proposed solution, i.e. TFs implementing the TfSA Framework, at the cusp of modern education reform, an official antiracism goal. TFs who correctly implement TfSA will ameliorate achievement gaps and, thus, inequity itself. For example, TFs are encouraged to follow the TfSA Framework and do all they can 'in one year to . . . help put . . . students on equal footing with their peers raised in wealthier communities' (27). To illustrate, *The Guidebook* describes a TF who realizes that achieving his 'audacious'

academic goal would mean that 'his students would no longer be "behind", an accomplishment that would send a powerful message to them and others' (19). That is, if TFs could help Black, Latino, and other 'low performers' raise their achievement to the level of White students, racial equity will have been realized. *The Guidebook* implies that, once achievement is raised, Black and Latino students will be able to fully participate in U.S. society (i.e. inclusion) – a society that, despite some individual racism, is ultimately fair and meritocratic, 'Schools and employers generally reward hard and good work' (25). In other words, structural racism is not a structuring force in U.S. society but rather in contradiction to its core values, i.e. the 'fundamental ideals of equity' upon which the U.S. was founded.

The Guidebook also builds an ethic of multiculturalism around TFs themselves. Specifically, TFs are needed to counter the 'soft bigotry' of (other) teachers who 'pity' their students and 'do not expect as much from them' (22). Rather than structural forces, (non-elite) teachers are presented as one of the root causes of race-based achievement gaps. The TFs are doing racial good by ending the teacher prejudice that their students might otherwise be subjected to. TFs are precisely the agents of change and hope that urban school systems like NYC need, 'Given that [students] are often powerless to change or address their teacher's inadequacies, they lose faith in the system that is failing them' (216). This official antiracism serves to reaffirm, celebrate, and normalize TFs' presence in schools as being immersed in an ethic of multiculturalism.

Categories of difference as legitimate knowledge

Neoliberal multiculturalism reconciles familiar terms with meanings that 'explain and make acceptable inherent and systemic inequalities' (Melamed 2011, 41). Consistent with this, *The Guidebook*'s discourse creates valorized differences between groups like TFs, majority White elites and beneficiaries of neoliberalism, and the mostly Black, Latino, Native American, and immigrant communities who have largely been dispossessed by the same political and economic systems. This section shows how these distinctions, or categories of difference, specifically take shape in *The Guidebook*.

After presenting the 'staggering ... magnitude of the achievement gap' (6), *The Guidebook* identifies which racialized groups are of concern. Noting that '17-year-old African American and Latino students perform math and reading at the same levels as 13-year-old White students', *The Guidebook's* discourse adds 'race alone, of course, does not explain the entire picture' (6). This opens the possibility that race, left undefined, explains some portion of this picture. Asian communities are discussed very little in *The Guidebook* because, 'statistically speaking, Asian American students are not performing at the same low levels, on average, that African American and Latino students are' (322).

Once its racialized framing of the achievement gap is established, *The Guidebook* adopts a race-avoidant tone until the penultimate chapter, *Promoting Student Achievement through Diversity*, in which it culminates its discourse around a culturalist view of racial inequities. Having named the groups of concern, the racial discourse simply refers to 'students' and sometimes their families and builds an argument structured around cultural delineations between high-achievers like TFs and the low-achieving, mostly Black and Latino communities, they will be teaching.

TFs are provided with a positive self-identification in *The Guidebook*; they are celebrated as 'outstanding individuals' (unnumbered page) and examples of how,

in the U.S., one can embrace the 'culture of achievement', i.e. individualism and merit, and become good, valuable citizens. TFs are praised for their presumed talent and capabilities and informed that they were 'recruited, selected, and trained because of your instructional and leadership potential' (352). Indeed, they are envisioned as being 'community leaders' (333). The authors place themselves alongside TFs as hardworking and driven; for example, assuring them that 'many of us' achieved success through 'considerable exertion' (167). TFs are assured that they are among 'relatively exclusive company' since 'all of us have at least a bachelor's degree' (331).

The Guidebook calls on TFs to 'bring their leadership and instructional skills to . . . change an inequitable system' (352). To do this, TFs are taught that they 'must build a culture of achievement in your classroom' (220). *The Guidebook* consistently assumes that TFs understand and instantiate the culture of achievement; at no point does it concern itself with teaching TFs what it is, but rather with TFs passing their (superior) culture of achievement on to students.

Alternatively, *The Guidebook* presents the culture of 'Black, Latino, and Navajo' communities as resulting in cultural learning styles (synergetic) different from those of White communities (analytic) and connects the culture of synergetic learners as one that emphasizes cooperation while analytic learners have more competitive cultures (342). These differences are further inculcated in a *Guidebook* section titled, 'When Cultures Clash; Collectivism vs. Individualism' (343). While *The Guidebook* encourages TFs to develop an appreciation of 'collectivist' cultures, U.S. individualism is presented as preferable. Again, grouping the *Guidebook* authors with TFs, it is noted that, 'Families from cultures more group-oriented than our own tend to emphasize interdependence over independence' (343). The information provided builds the case that 'minority' communities have a 'collectivist culture' which is a barrier to the individualism necessary to achieve in education. '[I]ndividualism and collectivism can conflict when children of minority, collectivistic cultures encounter individualism in U.S. schools' (343).

In constituting these differences, *The Guidebook* implies that 'minority populations' are not (real) Americans. Citing an essay entitled 'Cultural Values in Learning and Education' (Greenfield, Raeff, and Quiroz 1996), *The Guidebook* teaches that, 'many recent immigrants and *minority populations* in America tend to come from cultures . . . that value the collective society, while *Americans*, and *most European societies*, tend to prioritize individual accomplishment above those of the group' (343, emphasis added).

The 'racial-cultural' (340) differences drawn between TFs and students are correlated with conceptualizations of valorized behaviors and sensibilities. These valorized differences are legitimated through references to Black and Latino children as 'low-performing' (6), having 'arrested progress' (20), being prone to 'learned helplessness' (215), engaging in 'self-limiting' behavior (216) and having insufficient internal motivation (166). Since they 'lack an understanding' of the benefits of education, they may 'abandon personal ambition' (215). Students also 'recognize that they should work much harder than they typically do' (217). *The Guidebook* normalizes the conceptualization that Black and Latino communities are underperforming because of their inherent nature as exemplified in the passage below, which uses an ethic of multiculturalism to sanction the differencing discourse:

> 'By creating an atmosphere of achievement that is inclusive of all cultures and perspectives, a teacher helps students overcome some of the challenges to hard work and learning (lack of motivation, low expectations, low self-esteem) that may hold them back'. (362)

Constituting students' cultures as inherently contrary to the culture of achievement, this official antiracism devalues minoritized students and normalizes racialized stigma as valuable knowledge while simultaneously legitimatizing discourse about racial difference. Taken as a whole, the categories of difference rendered in *The Guidebook* demonstrate how neoliberal multiculturalism commodifies racialized cultures to structure difference in ways that explain (away) why some forms of humanity are more successful and, thus, more valuable than others.

Controlling what counts as a race matter

In this section, we consider the unifying power of antiracisms in service to the culture of achievement, as discussed above, to highlight how these discourses consolidate to abstract race 'to know the truth about the difference that racial difference makes (or does not make)' (Melamed 2011, 2).

Having reasoned that a culture-of-achievement focus represents a modern approach to address racial inequities in education, and thus society as a whole, raising test scores is sanctioned as the pinnacle patriotic education goal and, therefore, TfSA as the apotheosis of good teaching for the identified racialized groups. This valorization offers a comprehension of TFs' presence in classrooms, the implementation of TfSA, and focusing on achievement gaps at any expense as acts of political and social advancement. Those with the strongest work ethic, saturated in a culture of achievement, will triumph, i.e. students raising achievement and TFs leading them there. This also means dismissing that structural racism exists since the neutrality of (raceless) self-sufficiency eliminates its feasibility.

The dismissal of structural racism as contributing to educational inequities is symbolic of a dismissal of structural racism as an explanation for anything TFs will see in the racially segregated schools and economically stressed communities they were about to enter. Despite the 'tough conditions' in which students live (215), *The Guidebook* maintains that 'these students' need to understand that 'only with comprehensive preparation and hard work can they, and everyone else, reasonably expect to succeed' (216). In summary, in order to be successful, autonomous students need to overcome their proclivities, e.g. self-limiting behavior, that block them from achieving. This conceptualization is further embedded in the constitution of gaps between racialized groups solely in connection with achievement. Conceptualizations about other gaps, e.g. wealth, opportunity, resources, or power, are glossed over or set aside entirely (6).

The incorporation of diversity, equity, and social justice that undergirds and lends legitimacy to the orders of difference generated in *The Guidebook* provides legibility and illegibility of race matters in ways that reify entrenched power structures. Race issues are presented as cultural in nature (e.g. collectivism vs individualism), a result of ignorance (e.g. lacking an understanding of the benefits of education) or habit (e.g. abandoning personal ambition) to be corrected by TFs (e.g. instilling a culture of achievement). *The Guidebook* stresses a culturalist representation of racial inequities that marginalizes conceptualizations that include the material realizations, or the everyday effects, of being at the bottom rungs of

racialized hierarchies in U.S. society. Structural racism is illegible in neoliberal multiculturalism; it has been erased by official antiracism.

TNTP's racial project

We focus here on TNTP's racial project as articulated in its teacher preparatory curriculum, *The Guidebook*. Creating an educational philosophy and practice directed at elite novice teachers, namely TFs, *The Guidebook* demonstrates how TNTP engaged with a root racial project of normalizing a racial ideology of culture. Trained to follow an overt racial script, Teaching for Student Achievement, TFs are informed that Black, Latino, and immigrant students in under-resourced schools and their families are unaware of the benefits of education or lack the culture to succeed. TfSA's 'no excuses' mandate, for example, is an official antiracism that frames Black and Brown students and their communities as not having the culture that TNTP designates as 'what works'. This is also a racial project that synthesizes a definition of whiteness as it relates to instruction. That is, the TFs were learning about whiteness and non-whiteness (e.g. European vs. non-European culture) to provide explanations for differences in testing outcomes and for the need to implement a specific teaching taxonomy on certain groups.

The racial ideology expressed in *The Guidebook* reveals that TNTP was not interested in establishing a wide range of thought or well-researched pedagogical methods. Its singular focus was to instill a 'culture of achievement' – a term that conjures different ideas in different people but one that is presented with a positive resonation. TFs were told they exemplify this culture and could feel confident that they represent it. They were also informed that the communities they would teach do not exemplify it and TFs must instill it in them. This is a reinforcement of a racial hierarchy that places TFs at the top and positions Black, Latino, and immigrant groups well below.

In support of this racial project, *The Guidebook* consistently leans on the assumption that only TNTP, or similar organizations such as TFA, understands how to improve the plight of Black, Latino, Native American, and immigrant students and their teachers in under-resourced schools. The solution, TfSA, is presented, due to the urgency of raising achievement, as a necessarily condensed version of how upper-middle-class students are successful in well-resourced schools. The resulting TfSA teaching tactics in *The Guidebook*, although deemed unsuitable for well-resourced, suburban schools, are the answer for under-resourced schools serving mostly low-income Black, Latino, and immigrant families. In this way, TNTP's TfSA is insidious as it is presented as being beneficial for minoritized students while simultaneously appealing to TFs sense of self, having been academically successful in their schools and communities. This approach deflects any critical analysis of racial hierarchies resulting from unequal resources, i.e. the material conditions of racism, in U.S. society and the resulting power imbalances.

Summarizing *The Guidebook's* discourse, as a racial project, if 'achievement gaps' provide a neutral quantification of personal effort, then the test scores of Black, Latino, and immigrant communities are due to their own cultural inadequacies. The Guidebook and its descendants like TLaC frame groups dispossessed by neoliberalism as being in need of strict taxonomies, like TfSA, to overcome their cultural inclinations enough to score higher on standardized exams and, thus, become productive members of an equal society with equal opportunity for all.

Discussion

In this article, we have shown how neoliberal multiculturalism and its official antiracism specifically manifest in the training of SARP teachers who start out teaching students of color in lower-income urban public schools. *The Guidebook* provides a concrete example of how neoliberal-multicultural racialization can play out in the form of SARP teacher training materials which anoint elite college graduates and beneficiaries of neoliberalism with affirmations of their value to U.S. society in contrast to the stigmatization of populations dispossessed by neoliberalism.

Revealing the highly ideological nature of *The Guidebook's* discourse, presented as necessary knowledge for TFs, we highlight three official antiracisms; namely, these are an ethic of multiculturalism, categories of difference, and controlling what counts as a race matter. As demonstrated, these antiracisms employed in *The Guidebook* present the TNTP TfSA Framework as an egalitarian, modern, and proven approach that, if implemented correctly, will correct the ingrained natures of 'underperforming' Black, Latino, and immigrant children.

The Guidebook presents raising student achievement, or test scores, as the preeminent goal of public education for the aforementioned communities while mostly avoiding to directly address issues of race or racism, particularly in any kind of complexity. In its place, the argument centers around 'racial-cultural' differences between the collectivism of 'minority' and 'immigrant' populations and the (preferable) individualism of 'European' and 'American' societies. It invokes the 'culture of achievement' as necessary to be successful; TFs are assumed to be steeped in it and will teach it to their students, who lack it, through a 'no excuses' approach.

We have shown how the official antiracisms presented in *The Guidebook* provide an outline for TNTP's racial project. The transparent references to 'European' versus 'minority' cultures, the pejorative significations of racialized heritage and habits assign meaning to race and inform future teachers how to understand race in educational settings and the wider social structure of society. Official antiracism abstracts race so that the racial context is obscured. In its place, discourses of difference are employed as a system of rationality that codes those who have been dispossessed by neoliberalism 'as handicapped by their own monoculturalism or other historico-cultural deficiencies' (Melamed 2011, 42). *The Guidebook* provides a clear example of how this can function.

Official antiracisms involve active, relational processes, in particular, when it comes to public education. Putting majority economically privileged, White TFs in the kinds of lower-income, largely non-White public schools that they themselves did not attend, and are under-prepared to work in, can reify stereotypes. For example, consistent with its expectations for classroom teaching, created in elite spaces with little apparent consultation with communities of color, *The Guidebook's* mantra of 'no excuses' subverts any nuanced understanding of power dynamics in inequitable classroom situations. A fundamental flaw with TNTP's approach is that new teachers will always have beliefs about their students that need to be challenged and the structure of its initial certification program does not allow this to happen (Brantlinger and Smith 2013; Brantlinger et al. 2023). Indeed, *The Guidebook's* official antiracism largely serves to make whiteness and its precepts – impartiality, objectivity, and normalcy – imperceptible

(Bonilla–Silva 2012; Bullock 2017; Dumas, Dixson, and Mayorga 2016; Leonardo 2009; Martin 2007, 2019; Martin, Price, and Moore 2019; McGee, Alvarez, and Milner 2016; McKittrick 2014; Picower 2009; Solórzano and Yosso 2002 Zavala and Hand 2017).

Indeed, in related analyses, we showed that many – although not all – NYCTF mathematics teachers believed *The Guidebook's* teachings were legitimate and shared the views it promoted (Brantlinger et al. 2020; Cooley et al. 2019). This includes the main idea that teaching mathematics to Black, Latino and immigrant communities needs to be understood, and centered, in terms of achievement gaps, which may be closed, if not eliminated entirely, by specific techniques. That is, the solution to problems rooted in historical-social structural inequality and discrimination is technical rather than political or social. Social equality and inclusion for all members of society can be achieved without the need for beneficiaries of neoliberalism to give up any of their power or privilege. TNTP's racial discourse is not unique. However, *The Guidebook* served to normalize TNTP's official antiracism among masses of teachers.

Although *The Guidebook* is no longer in use, the ideas and approach arguably have not changed much. Specifically, all of the new (mathematics) TFs in NYC no longer attend a local college for coursework but instead attend Relay Graduate School of Education, a private, for-profit institution unaffiliated with any university. Relay was founded in 2011 by the leaders of three charter school networks, Uncommon Schools, Knowledge is Power Program and Achievement First (Cochran–Smith et al. 2020; Mungal 2016). The leaders of these organizations are part of the TNTP-TFA 'reform' network, sitting on one another's advisory boards. Originally intended as a training site for TFA corps, Relay was envisioned as a 'means of privatization of a public good by creating an enterprise for external people to make money' (Mungal 2012, 155). Relay requires that all master's candidates demonstrate satisfactory student growth in achievement scores to qualify for graduation and thus certification (Cochran–Smith et al. 2020; Mungal 2012, 2016). This is in line with TNTP's TfSA ideology and fits well within the parameters of neoliberal multiculturalism. Although founded in NYC, as with Teaching Fellows programs in the early 2000s, Relay quickly expanded to 19 campuses in cities that serve economically deprived communities (Cochran–Smith et al. 2020).

Given the aforementioned teacher shortages and structures, for the foreseeable future, fast-track programs like TNTP's Teaching Fellows will continue to play a decisive role in determining who teaches lower-income Black and Brown students in U.S. public urban schools as well as having a significant impact on teacher preparation and instructional practice, including how to understand the communities in which they teach. We maintain that teacher education is a dynamic process that has been made in particular ways, and can, with effort, be unmade or remade. We must consider, however, how little of these possibilities are allowed to exist within selective alternative certification structures such as TNTP's programs which have been anointed by powerful interests, become widespread, and been normalized as beneficial for dispossessed populations.

Notes

1. See (Brantlinger and Smith 2013) for detailed information about the NYCTF training and college programs.

2. NYS set 40 hours as a standard, NYCTF set 60 hours. However, many TFs completed less than 40 hours (Brantlinger and Smith 2013).
3. One university required a math course in the preservice training, adding an additional 40 hours (total 120 hours).

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