

IS CRRP ENOUGH? ADDRESSING ANTIRACISM(S) IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Introduction

Anti-Black racism(s) are still prominent in the various levels of education in Ontario from kindergarten to post-secondary, with targeted and systemic incidents occurring in classrooms and in wider campus environments. Such incidents are perpetrated by students and educators alike and remain largely undisrupted by those in positions to make systemic changes. For example, as reported by *CBC News Ottawa*, in June 2019, Jamal Boyce a student at the University of Ottawa who is Black, was detained on a curbside in handcuffs by campus security for two hours. Why did the campus security officers think this was warranted? He was skateboarding. Boyce shared his experience on social media and with news reporters, describing how the security stopped him and immediately asked for identification. When Boyce replied that he did not have identification and walked—not skateboarded—away, security followed, arrested him, and cited the Trespass to Property Act. While Boyce sat on the curb in handcuffs, a white student rolled past the scene on a skateboard. But, when bystanders asked why security did not also arrest the student, security responded that the white student was not “doing any tricks.” In her memoir *They said this would be fun: Race, campus life, and growing up*, Eternity Martis (2020) writes about her encounters with anti-Black racism at Western University (London, Ontario). She describes how students created university-specific Instagram accounts to share their stories, including incidents in Ontario universities such as but not limited to Queen’s University (Kingston), York University (Toronto), and the University of Ottawa.

In March 2020, *CBC News Toronto* reported that after looking into anti-Black racism(s) within the Peel District School Board (PDSB), reviewers found that although Black students make up only 10.2 percent of the secondary school student population, 22.5

percent of that Black student population have received school suspensions. The external reviewers were told how some principals impose suspensions when Black students wear hooded sweatshirts or certain kinds of earrings, claiming that the attire violates the school dress code. Ontario Minister of Education Stephen Lecce issued over two dozen directives to the board's members for addressing the crisis. Lawyer and human rights advocate Arleen Huggins concluded from a separate investigation of the PDSB that "The board still, after the review report and the directions, has a misunderstanding of anti-Black racism" (as quoted by Carter, 2020, June). She added, "further, there is no evidence that the board has a willingness to engage in the necessary work to gain such an understanding, nor does the board understand the urgency of the need to do so" (Carter, 2020, June). While anti-Black racism in schools warrants urgent attention at the administrative level, it also needs to be addressed for its prevalence within individual classrooms.

In York Region, north of Toronto, Kearie Daniel found that her seven-year-old daughter's vision of her own Black identity changed over the 2019/2020 school year. Daniel's daughter began the year drawing a self-portrait in which she coloured her image to match her physical features and racialized herself as Black. Daniel told *CBC News Toronto* (2020, September) that "By the end of the year, she was drawing herself as white, or colourless even, with yellow hair and blue eyes," and believes that the change is at least in part due to her daughter not seeing herself represented in the school curriculum. While this occurrence is not a case of targeted racism against Daniel's daughter, it suggests how everyday systemic anti-Black exclusion works to omit the identities of Black students from the curriculum. The lack of diverse representations not only leads Black students toward feeling and experiencing marginalization. It also affords students opportunities to justify the active exclusion of their Black classmates consciously, and unconsciously, from the school curriculum here in Canada and/or elsewhere like the United States (Henry, 2019; Taliaferro Baszile, 2009).

In response to such ongoing systemic racisms and curricular exclusions, Ottawa community group *Parents for Diversity* organized as "a collective of parents committed to achieving inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environments" who "advocate for schools and families to promote diversity and inclusion and to take meaningful steps to address and eradicate discrimination and bias" (*Parents for Diversity*, 2020, About Us). The group began as a response to the experiences of racism and discrimination faced by the children of the organizing parents. Co-leader of the organization Mante Molepo stated that even in early grades, her daughter—who is Black—was excluded by other children at school. When Molepo addressed the issue with her daughter's teacher, the teacher "categorically denied that children at the kindergarten level are aware of race" (*CBC News Ottawa*, 2018, September, online). Molepo added that this was the teacher's stance "despite the countless studies that prove otherwise" (*CBC News Ottawa*, 2018, September, online).

These examples from various levels of education are not isolated or rare incidents. Rather, they represent experiences that are all too common. “In addition to promoting European classical knowledge, the university served as a site for the development of racial ideology, that aimed,” as hampton (2020) makes clear, “to justify slavery and colonization without contradicting European Enlightenment ideals about freedom and equality” (p. 17). Today, universities in Canada, and the public schooling system, continue to “classify as Predominantly White Institutions,” or what Gershon also refers to as Ridiculously White Institutions (RWI) in the United States (p. 52). For Gershon (2020), higher education and public schooling institutions have created equity, diversity, and inclusion policy (policing) “feedback loops that at once acknowledge everyday oppressions and aggressions for students of color at an RWI while often using the very neoliberal discourses and material practices that serve to reinforce the continuing nature of their marginalized status” (p. 52).

“In other words, “to serve and to protect,” from the perspective of antiblackness has,” as Taliaferro Baszile’s (2021) research makes clear, “always meant to discipline black bodies to protect white privilege and power in all areas of life” (p. 3). As teacher educators and educational researchers (some of us with experience in administration) then, how might we unlearn and learn to recognize the individual, systemic, and societal contexts and relationships among what is taught and practiced in a teacher education program, the curricular and pedagogical strategies employed by educators in the public schooling systems, and the events and experiences of a wider Ontario Anglophone-majority settler-colonial society? These are not siloed spaces. When anti-Black racism(s) need to be addressed in one space, they also need to be acknowledged, disrupted, and abolished across all these institutional spaces (Hampton, 2020). As part of the response to discriminations such as anti-Black racism(s), one of the Ontario Ministry of Education’s (OME) efforts has been to prioritize a student-centered, equity-based approach to education through a push for Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP).

In this article, we seek to understand some of the ways CRRP can contribute toward confronting anti-Black racism, and how it also sometimes falls short here in Ontario, Canada. To lead our analysis, we consider Milner’s (2017) question, “Where’s the race in culturally relevant pedagogy?” Milner’s contention is that since Ladson-Billings (1992; 1995) introduced her conceptual discussion of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), it has been taken up and adapted by educators to address a wide variety of student identities and cultures. However, in doing so, the central focus on race—particularly students racialized as Black—has faded, if not disappeared. With CRRP being an adopted government policy in Ontario, we provide some examples of different educational stakeholders doing CRRP and antiracist education work. We highlight how these stakeholders can build different kinds of antiracism and equity relationships among teacher education programs, public schools, and communities.

And yet, we still ask, is CRRP enough? Is it enough to address individual, systemic, and structural forms of anti-Indigenous or anti-Black racisms?

A Situated Historical Overview of CRRP

The historical, curricular, and pedagogical evolution of Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) began in the mid-1970s. CRRP has taken different forms and names since its introduction, such as *culturally responsive education* (Cazden & Leggett, 1978), *culturally appropriate instructional events* (Au, 1980; Au & Jordan, 1981), *culturally congruent pedagogy* (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), *culturally relevant teaching and pedagogy* (Ladson-Billings, 1992; 1995), and *culturally responsive teaching* (Gay, 2000), along with a number of other variations. Although several use different terminologies, all promote the importance of recognizing, acknowledging, and becoming more responsive and relevant to the different students that belong to any school community. Continuing debate, however, has centered on the following questions: What should culturally responsive and relevant pedagogies “be” like in relation to specific educational settings? As Canadian curriculum scholars, educators, and educational researchers, we seek to understand how we might situate our current work in teacher education in relation to historical and contemporary conceptions of CRRP.

Although concerted efforts to embed a focus on culture into education started in the 1970s, Ladson-Billings (1992; 1995) is largely credited with establishing the foundations of the current approaches to the relationship between culture and education (Dodo Seriki & Brown, 2017). For this reason, rather than re-produce extensive overviews and critiques of the iterations of CRRP prior to Ladson-Billings, we provide a partial and situated overview of past efforts and look at the critiques that Ladson-Billings made of such efforts. We draw on her critiques in response to our analysis of the ongoing systemic barriers for different students racialized as *non-White* here in Ontario. When Cazden and Leggett (1978) first conceptualized *culturally responsive education*, they drew on anthropological and psychological concepts of culture and learning aptitudes. After reviewing studies focused on “cultural differences in sensory modality strength” (p. 9), the authors made recommendations that culturally responsive education should include multisensory curriculum and modes of instruction to ensure connecting to a range of cultures. Au and Jordan’s (1981; see also Au, 1980) *culturally appropriate instructional events* begins with a focus on the context of the educational instruction, stating that “a context is inappropriate for a certain group of children if its construction violates their cultural norms” (p. 92). They envisioned students as not just recipients of knowledge, but rather the producers of it through forms of cultural communication. Mohatt and Erickson (1982) introduced the concept of *culturally congruent pedagogy*, which endeavored to underpin all teaching practices with the use of cultural languages, practices, and values in any context.

Howard and Rodriguez-Minkoff (2017) state that “these scholars’ work must be recognized, because they were instrumental in moving away from the cultural deprivation and deficit explanations that had become entrenched in the professional literature about students of color” (p. 5). Indeed, early conceptions of culture in, and for, education contributed to the foundations of CRRP as Ladson-Billings would later come to establish it. However, these approaches did not themselves become the basis for CRRP because they at first failed to trouble existing social structural hierarchies within the educational systems. Of these proposed approaches and others, as Ladson-Billings (1995) stressed more than 25 years ago,

...each suggests that student ‘success’ is represented in achievement within the current social structures extant in schools. Thus, the goal of education becomes how to ‘fit’ students constructed as ‘other’ by virtue of their race/ethnicity, language, or social class into a hierarchical structure that is defined as a *meritocracy*. However, it is unclear how these conceptions do more than reproduce the current inequities. (p. 467)

Consequently, Ladson-Billings’ (1992; 1995) initial push for *culturally relevant teaching* and *pedagogy* began with an acknowledgment of the real rather than desired demographics of teacher candidates. At the time of her writing, she suggested that despite growing calls to “increase minority teachers,” the numbers showed that the next generation of teachers would predominantly consist of white teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 102). From our vantage point as teacher educators in Ontario, not much has changed (Petrarca & Kitchen, 2017). Still pertinent, then, is Ladson-Billings’ (1992) question, “What will this [white] teacher need to know to be an effective teacher of minority students” (p. 103)? Here we begin to see an initial consideration of race within conversations about pedagogy within teacher education.

And yet, as Milner (2017) suggests, race has never been given the attention that Ladson-Billings was calling for, and instead has been situated within culture. During the 1990s conversations and curriculum policies focused primarily on implementing multicultural education. Ladson-Billings (1992) reminds us that such conversations represented “an attempt to make the curriculum more responsive to the educational needs of all students” (p. 112). However, at that time, what “multicultural education” looked like was unclear. For her, the initial conceptions of multicultural education focused on including marginalized cultures in ways that continued to “Other” those cultures. Early multicultural education exoticized and added them to the curriculum as feasts and festivals (Banks, 2009; Nieto, 2010), rather than reconceptualizing multicultural education toward becoming a culturally relevant and inclusive relational pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1992). As Ladson-Billings (1995) stressed then, “a culturally relevant pedagogy is designed to problematize teaching and encourage teachers to ask about the nature of the student-teacher relationship, the curriculum, schooling, and society” (p. 483). In turn, Ladson-Billings called on teacher educators

and educational researchers to create opportunities for teacher candidates to examine their dispositions and the educational environment they are preparing to enter.

At the turn of the 21st century, Gay (2000) presented the pedagogical concept of *culturally responsive teaching*. She stressed that “no ethnic group is culturally or intellectually monolithic” (p. 18). Here, her conception of “responsive” pedagogy envisioned cultures in flux and not as static categories. Gay (2000) contended that teachers must present their expectations for all students, regardless of culture or ethnicity, in pedagogical ways that strive to achieve high academic standards. To do so, culturally responsive teaching, for her, should move away from *ideological management*. Instead, she reminds us that the school curriculum seeks to reproduce “the deliberate exclusion or addition of information to create certain images, to shield consumers from particular ideas and information, and to teach specific moral, political, and social values” (p. 152). In turn, Gay suggested that culturally responsive teaching strives to address “the ‘cultural capital’ (i.e., the informal, tacit knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to negotiate the rules, regulations, protocols, and demands of living within educational institutions) needed to succeed in schools” (p. 249). The concept of “cultural capital” points to the ways that public schooling is designed to reproduce, recognize, and validate the academic appropriation of certain white settler colonial norms and values. The challenge, however, is that taking up CRRP or CRP as a pedagogical strategy in the classroom does not necessarily disrupt the wider system that continues to reproduce systemic barriers such as anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racisms embedded within and across public schooling and its respective government mandated curricula.

A decade later, Paris (2012) suggested that CRRP does not go far enough toward addressing the different aspects of a given culture such as the diverse linguistic registers, cultural literacies, and cultural practices of different Black, immigrant, refugee, and/or First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. “It is quite possible to be relevant to something or responsive to it without,” as Paris (2012) reminds us, “ensuring its continuing presence [...] in our classrooms and communities” (p. 95). In response, he put forth the concept of *culturally sustaining pedagogy*, which “seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (p. 95). In short, Paris calls on educators to stop the *add’n’stir* approach that fails to disrupt an explicit, implicit, and null settler colonial curriculum. Instead, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to recenter students’ cultures as the core of the curriculum-as-planned, -implemented, and -lived (Aoki, 1992). It seeks to sustain evolving cultures, rather than positioning cultures as static categorical reference points along the way.

Our partial historical overview of CRRP’s ongoing evolution in the United States is certainly not the first attempt for us to learn and unlearn from this body of scholarship. That there have been several iterations of the pedagogy is indicative of academics’

active grappling with its evolving cultural, historical, and political contextual dynamics. In a recent concerted effort, Seriki and Brown (2017) revisited the possibilities and limitations of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy by publishing a special issue for *Teachers College Record*. There, Dodo, Seriki, and Brown explain that their overarching aim was to identify, examine, and understand CRRP's foundations. In turn, they propose promising ways of taking it up within teacher education, public schooling systems, and respective classroom communities.

We depart from their collective, American situated and contextual discussions by examining the ways CRRP has been taken up (or not) in relation to an Ontario Anglophone teacher education program and the public schooling system it seeks to serve. Moreover, we problematize CRRP by suggesting that it be viewed as one of several components within a wider dynamic system, and not a *fix-all* approach. We suggest that as an individualized teacher pedagogical strategy, it can only promise so much. The options moving forward, seemingly, are: 1) to make use of it but to see how it links to other necessary aspects of re-creating education systems, or 2) to continuously adjust and add to CRRP to a point that it bears no resemblance to its foundations and warrants a different name and theorization. Given that the Ontario Ministry of Education currently touts the use of CRRP in the province's schools, and we as teacher educators are tasked with preparing teacher candidates to work within the Ontario system, we thought it best to address the first of the two options. We discuss what CRRP can achieve and where it needs to be linked to elements of education that are beyond its scope.

In a retrospect similar to what we presented above, but framed in relation to Australian education contexts, Harrison and Skrebneva (2020) note that the common emphasis in all forms of culture-focused pedagogy is that "culture counts," meaning that cultural inclusion is thought to be the key to disrupting student exclusion (p. 18). Indeed, culture does count, and this attitude has contributed to creating paths forward in the work of breaking down systemic and practical barriers that hinder student success. However, in the current social and political climate of Canada, where we teacher educators and higher education leaders recognize systemic racism as a central feature within society and its schooling systems, it is no longer good enough—if it ever was—to assume that tending to cultural marginalization will inevitably address racism. Until recently, CRRP was largely developed and studied in American contexts, in dialogue with US sociohistorical issues with anti-Black racism(s), suggesting the need to avoid a *cut-n-paste* approach to promoting and utilizing a CRRP pedagogy. We therefore turn next to efforts made to implement CRRP in its most recent versions in the Ontario context with its own struggles with anti-Black racism(s).

Understanding Localized Contexts of CRRP in Ontario

In 2005, The Centre of Urban Schooling (CUS) was founded in partnership with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (UofT). The intention of CUS was to connect urban schools with communities and provide research on “how to better serve historically marginalized and racialized children and youth in public schools” (Hudson, 2015, p.1). The CUS brought Nicole West-Burns in as the Director of School Services, with her previous work and research focused on anti-Black racism, for several initiatives (Hudson, 2015), including the *Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy Initiative*. Alongside West-Burns, experienced principal and teacher educator Jeff Kugler provided valuable insight into the CRRP project. Citing the works of Ladson-Billings, Geneva Gay, and Jacqueline Irvine, West-Burns and Kugler’s framework included the seven CRRP components 1) classroom climate and instruction, 2) school climate, 3) student voice and space, 4) family/caregiver relations, 5) school leadership, 6) community connections, and 7) culture of professional development. Though the Ministry’s Area of Focus does not explicitly mirror West-Burns and Kugler’s CRRP Framework, numerous principles do align.

In 2013, the Ontario Ministry of Education released Policy Memorandum No. 119 titled: “DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS.” This memorandum was an amendment to the almost 6-year-old policy of the same name that had arguably limited practical traction. The new memorandum was intended to centralize the importance of equitable and democratic educational practices in Ontario schools and to reduce the educational achievement gap for marginalized students. Policy No. 119 required boards to create change in the areas of racism, sexism, ableism, anti-Indigenous racism, homophobia, and any form of discrimination set forth in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and several corresponding documents (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b). This policy also called for boards to conduct close consultation with students, parents, Special Education Advisory Committees, and the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Advisory Committee. The Ministry considered this policy document a guideline for Ontario School Boards. Alongside the policy stood another document titled the “K-12 Capacity Building Series: Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools” which also made explicit the necessity for ongoing support in antiracism policy and practice.

This initiative was intended to create school environments that brought forth three guiding principles for change and transformation: institutional, personal, and instructional change (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a). Shortly after the “K-12” policy document was announced by the Ontario government, a CRRP pilot program commenced at Irma Coulson Public school, northwest of Milton, Ontario. CRRP was part of the school’s core principles. Hurley (2019) reminds us:

CRRP is not a program that can be delivered to schools in a box and distributed at a staff meeting or even on a single professional development day. Instead it is a dynamic framework that provides a set of tools and lenses that, if taken seriously, can lead to thoughtful unpacking, personal reflection and honest dialogue among staff, students and communities. (p. 1)

The school community therefore ensured that CRRP was at the forefront of each teacher curriculum-as-planned, -implemented, and -lived (Aoki, 1992). The Ministry of Education deemed this CRRP pilot project a success that centered “the cultural assets that students bring with them to the classroom” (Hurley, 2019) and worked to ensure that students’ cultural assets were reflected across the school and curriculum. Over the next few years, the Ministry took steps toward implementing CRRP across the entire provincial education system. It began with releasing the K-12 Capacity Building Series titled *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Towards Equity and Inclusivity in Ontario Schools* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a). This document provided suggestions for bringing CRRP to their individual classroom.

The Ministry of Education then created the Education Equity Action Plan (EEAP) which endeavored to provide an outline for providing more equitable opportunities for students across the Ontario public schooling system (Ministry of Education, 2017). CRRP is called upon throughout the document. One area, for example, includes action items pertaining to “Strengthening inclusive and culturally responsive and relevant teaching, curriculum, assessment and resources” (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 22). This action item in the EEAP is further defined as making substantial modifications to board policies and curriculum by reflecting “diverse perspectives and experiences,” as well as mandatory implementation of lessons that speak to Canada's history of “residential schools, treaties and the legacy of colonialism” (p. 22). The document goes on to provide performance measures and a timeline for ensuring that these outcomes were achieved.

The following year, in April 2018, the Ministry of Education sent out a memorandum titled *Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) – Expression of Interest 2018-2019 Cohort* to the Directors of Education across Ontario. This 2018-2019 document invited schools of the province to apply to receive “four-day intensive training on CRRP, led by Dr. Nicole West-Burns and Jeff Kugler” (Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 1), as well as “on-site support throughout this past school year as they implemented their CRRP initiative, funded by the Education Equity Secretariat” (Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 1). To apply, each board would be required to provide a report on the needs of the school and how it would participate in addressing the needs of the community. Examples provided by the Ministry include “anti-racism work to address systemic racism experienced by Indigenous, Black, and other underserved and/or racialized communities/students; LGBTQ2S inclusion; disproportionality in special

education programs; and/or issues connected to socioeconomic status” (p. 2). Furthermore, according to a funding policy memo (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018) that was released by the Ministry of Education that same year, each school accepted into the CRRP cohort would receive an additional \$35,000. Any chosen school would have to create and release a plan for how the school would budget this grant and provide next steps to implement CRRP in its board. Since Ontario’s Ministry of Education began taking up CRRP, 13 boards across Ontario have been provided support for their CRRP initiatives (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018). Unfortunately, minimal research has been conducted on Ontario schools and teachers utilizing CRRP explicitly in their teaching and institutional practices, or on how these policies and respective practices are fulfilling the calls for antiracism set forth by the Ministry of Education’s Memorandum No. 119 and other corresponding documents.

In the research done so far, scholars take up the theoretical implications of antiracist curriculum policy and how they are employed on a practical level by teachers in Ontario who are inadequately equipped with resources to enact these policies. Alaca and Pyle (2018) at the UofT’s Ontario Institute for Studies in Education conducted a study of how CRRP was implemented by kindergarten teachers in five different schools in the Greater Toronto Area. In their findings, teachers felt unsure about how to incorporate CRRP into the classroom, which results in inconsistencies in understanding what CRRP exactly looks like. Additionally, teachers were also unsure of their abilities to create lessons about cultures with which they did not identify. For example, one teacher expressed difficulties preparing a lesson on Kwanzaa simply due to a lack of knowledge and experience. Alaca and Pyle (2018) note that many teachers express frustration at the lack of professional development (PD) workshops provided to them, stating that often any professional learning opportunities are reserved for administrative staff and school leaders.

In terms of our ongoing professional learning as educators, we reflect on the relationships between what we present in our own classrooms and the professional positions teacher candidates will take on within a range of their future community contexts. Our responsibilities include preparing teacher candidates to enter classrooms ready to create practices and pedagogies that can disrupt reproduction of individual, systemic and structural inequities (James, 2010). Brainwashing teacher candidates into apathetically following the steps of a CRRP or becoming an antiracist educator without question, can become another dogmatic governmental discursive regime. In short, training teachers to use CRRP just because they are expected to be ineffective. Our goal is to create opportunities for teacher candidates to critically assess approaches such as CRRP and to problematize how it does, and does not, enhance the lived experiences of teachers and students.

A Missing CRRP Piece in Ontario: Addressing Antiracisms

A key shortcoming of CRRP, at least in Ontario, is that it does not necessarily call on school board administrators, school administration, and/or teachers to question and/or disrupt the systemic barriers and exclusions that contribute to anti-Black racism(s). CRRP works within the structural parameters within what remains, what Stanley (2011) refers to as, a systems of racialized and racists exclusions. Although CRRP can provide everyone with a seat at the table, it does not create a new table altogether, or even equitable access to the room which hosts that table (James, 1992). More specifically, to borrow the message of a March 4, 2020, Twitter post from @Drawn2Intellect,

Culturally responsive pedagogy is not the same as anti-racist education. Being culturally-responsive creates a more inclusive space. Anti-racism intentionally exposes and challenges systems of power, such as white supremacy, with the intention to dismantle & abolish the system.

Here we consider the argument that those in charge of ministries and boards of education push for CRRP and promote it as being an all-inclusive and antiracist approach is because the dominant Ontario white settler colonial culture with which schools align is, as Sleeter (2012) stresses, afraid of losing power. Antiracism is, as part of its core, anti-settler-colonial-state (Razack, 2002). The education system is a tool within and for the state structure. To attack racism within the formal schooling environment is to attack formal schooling (Lentin, 2008). It therefore remains “easier to promote diversity than to oppose racism, especially if that racism is the racism of the state [school] itself” (Lentin, 2008, p. 326).

Antiracism is not a fixed adjective or noun. Moreover, an environment is not forever antiracist, and a person is not permanently antiracist. Antiracism is the action of supporting and enacting policies and practices that combat racist policies and practices. “Being an antiracist,” as Kendi (2019) notes, “requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination” (p. 23). Antiracism means not just adapting but significantly overhauling and creating change to the education system. Furthermore, changes require consistent efforts that are not always guaranteed to work (Stanley, 2014). CRRP, then, can be seen as a response with immediate tangible points of inclusion, but becomes inclusion into a system built on white, colonial dominance (Ahmed, 2012). In comparison, antiracist practices actively disrupt the tools of exclusions, thereby seeking and working to disrupt and re-structure the system itself.

Addressing CRRP beyond Multiculturalism

As Alaca and Pyle (2018) have shown, despite the Ministry’s provision of professional development workshops introducing educators to CRRP, teachers feel uncertain about “implementing” the pedagogy. Although it is meant to help students develop

a deeper socio-cultural consciousness, CRRP often translates to tokenistic teaching practices (Nieto, 2010). In turn, it becomes a form of *liberal multiculturalism*, which “does acknowledge and celebrate differences. And yet, it tends to categorize ethnic and racial minorities into fixed identities, which in effect reproduces stereotypes by essentializing difference” (Sato & Este, 2018, p. 331). There is a canon of critical multiculturalism and multicultural education in the American context that more directly addresses antiracist ways of teaching and learning (for examples, see Banks, 2009; Gorski & Parekh, 2020; Nieto, 2009, 2017). However, this approach is beyond the scope of our discussion here. Our critique of multiculturalism above is directed at the Canadian context.

The official *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* was adopted as part of the Canadian constitution to “recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage” (Government of Canada, 1985, Section 3.1.a). This language of promotion and sharing of cultural heritage suggests a systemic embrace of all identities; however, the Act works as lip-service. Dominant Eurocentric White supremacist structures remain. Their effects are that systemic inclusions of cultures and racialized identities beyond White French and English communities are state-sanctioned—*permitted* rather than accepted outright—meaning they are always conditional (Bannerji, 2000; Kymlicka, 2018). Additionally, CRRP assumes that the main challenge is including all cultures existing in the same socio-political context. This assumption risks perpetuating the marginalization of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, if these cultures are not represented in the school community.

The cultural identities of Black and Indigenous students and Students of Color are pitted against a Judeo-Christian, Anglo-Saxon, White settler-colonial *norm* reproduced across the public schooling systems (hampton, 2020). While this can have negative consequences for any students who are marginalized, in the face of anti-Black racism in particular, the message becomes that inclusion of Black students means merely ensuring Black representation in the forms of images in the classroom and literature in the syllabus. These actions are positive and should be encouraged, especially when students do not see themselves represented in the school curriculum. However, these culturally responsive actions alone do not address the individual experiences of racist exclusions. Dlamini and Martinovic (2007) point out that assertions regarding the necessity for self-examination of teacher candidates of colour (TCC) is assimilationist in its effort to create a more culturally responsive pedagogy. These scholars note that TCC feel as though they are not permitted access to the same opportunities to express concerns in the Teacher Education field due to other teacher's negative perceptions of the TCC's cultures and languages. Even if CRRP is touted within teacher education classrooms, or classrooms at any level of education, it is ineffective if cultures of TCC or students of colour are the only ones being spotlighted (i.e., made to appear exceptional rather than included as part of the norm).

Furthermore, CRRP is also ineffective if the pedagogy is promoted but TCC and students of colour cannot feel safe to share and express themselves through the lenses of any cultures with which they identify. If CRRP is to be implemented, administrators and practitioners need to move well beyond merely claiming to use CRRP but not developing it *with* students.

Throughout a 2017 evaluation of the transition of Ontario teacher education programs from a two- to four-semester structure, “culturally responsive” is alluded to only five times (only one of the five is “culturally responsive and relevant”) in the descriptions of the institutions’ courses and approaches (see Petrarca & Kitchen, 2017).¹ When looked at in relation to the feelings of the TCC above, and with the continuing incidents of racism in education, such cursory mention of CRRP suggests it has been inserted into programs but not critically developed. CRRP does not have to be so tokenistic. There are elements of the pedagogy that, when enacted purposefully, can afford students opportunities to participate in challenging issues of power and privilege and creating antiracist school environments. These elements, however, need increased emphasis and must be understood as ongoing efforts, rather than a curriculum box to be ticked. Moreover, in Ontario the continued support from the Ministry of Education must remain consistent, resolute, and indifferent to changing political parties. Ongoing financial support must be provided to boards, schools, and then educators, if CRRP is to be anything more than multicultural essentialism. As we have seen in the research thus far, teachers have crucial roles to play if CRRP is to break down barriers, but the onus is not exclusively on teachers.

How Can CRRP Become more than a Professional Disposition?

If we can generally understand culture as experiences lived, interpreted, and defined (Hall, 2016), then educators can recognize why CRRP insists upon acknowledgement that educators and their students live in, experience, and learn from communities outside of the school setting. Everyone brings their experiences and identities into the classroom. This may seem like an obvious statement to make, but the obvious is often taken for granted rather than being used to actively inform educational practices. Scholars who address different forms of the links between experience, identity, and learning warrant consideration. Speaking more specifically to Black women, but sharing a message applicable to all educators, Baszile (2018) promotes an ongoing development of a pedagogy of self-love. She states that “Self-love blossoms out of a willful self-knowing or a journey that always underscores the fact that we teach—in a

¹ Despite growing availability of critical research examining the history, advantages, and privileges of CRRP, nowhere in those five references is CRRP defined or explained. With further evaluation of the Ontario programs in the works, it is possible that more detailed discussion of CRRP within teacher education is forthcoming. At this moment, however, there is no discussion of how Ontario teacher education programs take up CRRP, or of how it can/should be addressed for its relational effects in the classroom.

classroom or a community center or a book—who we are and who we are always becoming” (p. 267). The role of the educator, Baszile (2018) suggests, is to provide an

opportunity for students to have serious dialogues [...] and to draw on intellectually and affectively rigorous texts to understand and articulate in more depth what ails them and what drives them as young people who live in the wake of a legacy of trauma and triumph and ongoing struggles. (p. 277-278)

Supporting the push to reconsider the variety and complexity of lived experiences, Berry (2017) calls for us to re-story education with counter-Western narratives. She contends that “We must move beyond the master narrative and honor the multiple stories we bring to our learning experiences ... we must acknowledge that our stories come from our own cultures, histories, and language, deeply nested in time and space, while accepting that in many ways we are interconnected and interdependent” (p. 63). In a similar vein to Baszile (2018), Berry (2017) suggests we need education that can take students “back to their communities and carry with them throughout the world [...] We must allow education to start with who we are and where we are” (p. 63). Indeed, these approaches speak the language of a CRRP that sees and addresses students as culturally, racially, and intellectually dynamic, and as coming from places and spaces of complexity, perhaps including issues of racism. They are curricular and pedagogical strategic approaches that can help make real connections between a student’s lived, interpreted, and defined experiences and their schooling. However, even affiliating these approaches with CRRP only goes as far as acknowledging the ways students live in the world. It does not ask why the system is such that CRRP and antiracism are needed in the first place.

Fasching-Varner, et al. (2014) examine the school-to-prison pipeline, highlighting schools as neoliberal institutions linked to the capitalist economy, and suggesting that “without school failure there is no opportunity for an educational reform-industrial complex, and without people to punish, similarly, there is no need for the prison-industrial complex” (p. 411). They argue that despite a long-existing discourse about the relationships between race, failure, and poverty, and the push to close achievement gaps between Students of Color and their White peers, “there is no crisis in schools or prisons—each institution is functioning per their design and the demands of the society” (p. 420). The divisions and racist exclusions of people are ingrained in the systems. Baszile’s (2018) insistence that educators need to model self-love such that students learn to examine their embodied experiences within their daily contexts can and perhaps should be taken up as part of CRRP’s insistence on considering lived experience.

Berry (2017) more pointedly links education, the self, and community as phenomena that inform and shape each other. In relation to CRRP, Berry’s points are indicative of how education being ‘responsive’ and ‘relevant’ must mean being relational to a given

group of students and not just generic identity labels. These insights should indeed be taken up, but they should not be seen as solving racism in education. Beyond teaching students to embrace and connect with their cultures, identities, and histories, we need to eliminate the need for them to navigate a system structured to diminish them. When Fasching-Varner, et al. (2014) write of the school-to-prison pipeline, they address it in the American context. However, scholars here in Canada are having similar conversations in relation to unpacking and disrupting the historic systems of education that enable and perpetuate anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

Brant-Birioukov, et al. (2020) seek to reconceptualize teacher education in ways that make possible a more cohesive education system working toward reconciliation between Indigenous nations and Canada. The authors posit that “the existing tensions surrounding an inherited Eurocentric curriculum cannot be reduced to best practices but involves an honest engagement with the historical particulars that came before” (p. 56). They call for educational leaders “to foster a teacher education agenda that destabilizes Settler-dominant narratives, ethical engagement and the nurturing of historical consciousness must be continuously re-centred at the forefront of teacher education curricula” (p. 56). While these scholars focus on Indigenous education, their perspectives are transferable to wider antiracism, as racist exclusions of any kind can be traced through the “historical particulars” to understand and dismantle the dominance of Whiteness settler colonialism.²

More specifically addressing anti-Black racism, Aladejebi (2021) shows that prior to and throughout the 20th century, Black educators, and community members in Canada,

...emphasized a continued commitment to social justice and equal access to education by working inside and outside of public schooling institutions to combat the problematic streaming of black [sic] students into lower level programming, high dropout rates and student disengagement from ministry-mandated curricula. (p. 180)

Evidently, Black educators and community members have long understood the importance of engaging connections between schooling and community, particularly in the work of challenging racism. Education systems—the people and institutions with power to support such connections—have not embraced (to put it mildly) the antiracist potential through school-community links. As Hampton (2020) states of post-secondary education at McGill University, “Black people have attended and worked at the university for well over a century. As in Canada more broadly, this

² Donald (2009) uses the metaphor of the colonial frontier fort to address colonial-rooted ideas of which and how knowledges and identities belong in the ‘fort’ (read dominant system). His research illustrates that settler-colonial education structures have adopted the fort mentality and the system is “conflated with ways of organizing and separating people according to race, culture, and civilization” (Donald, 2009, p. 4).

presence and the contributions of these people have largely been erased from institutional histories" (p. 14).

In 2020, the Ontario Black History Society initiated the #BlackedOutHistory project, in which they redacted any content *not* related to Black history in the Nelson 8 History textbook, a Canadian history textbook commonly used in Ontario Grade 8 classrooms. Of 255 pages, only 13 remained with readable content about a racialized group with an over-400-year-long history in what is now Canada. While textbooks on their own can enact antiracism, this balance is indicative of the wider lens of what the education system supports and promotes in Ontario. The Ministry can encourage, and any individual educator can use CRRP, but the underlying structure of the education system remains one of settler-colonial dominance.

In response, Hampton (2020) calls on educators to take up critical race counter-storytelling, not just for the sake of presenting Black narratives that de-center Eurocentric/White narratives, but rather to identify and trouble White supremacy in even the most seemingly antiracist systems and practices. She states, "We must ensure that histories of African enslavement and the presence and experiences of Black people are also considered part of the national conversation regarding 'truth and reconciliation' in Canada" (p. 26). In this sense, antiracism becomes something that links history with the present, emphasizes connections between different people, groups, and communities, and is not done *to* BIPOC but with and for people of all racialized identities. If this is the case, then CRRP must be implemented in relational ways that engage and critically examine the interconnections between people, identity, education, community, and the power structures that underpin it all.

To do so, Carl James (2017) has proposed a relational way forward called a *community-referenced approach to education* (CRAE). This approach is not yet another iteration of CRRP with a different name; instead, the idea is that communities each have their culture(s), meaning that CRRP can still be used. CRAE plays on the understanding that culture is always in flux and is shaped differently by context. As James (2017) states, "Communities shape, and are shaped by, group affiliation based on shared norms, values, interests, and practices—all of which are interrelated to social, political, religious, and economic circumstances" (p. 39). He adds that "Community is neither homogeneous nor stable, but is necessarily complex, contextual, changing, multilayered, relational, and sometimes temporary, differentially serving its members who exercise their agency based on their beliefs, ethics, and mores" (p. 39).

Educators essentialize students' identities when they make cultural connections all about the generalized cultures connected to predetermined conceptions of students' nationalities. If "culture" is alive, meaning it is never static and grows with and through the influences of context, educators attempting to include essentialized visions of cultures will always fall behind and, at best, only be partially attuned to students' lived experiences. James (2017) advises that "Educators [...] need to take

every opportunity to co-create curriculum with students helping them to develop their critical analytical skills, learn language to articulate *their* understandings of their lives, make sense of their community and social circumstances, and acquire understandings of the structures that support their circumstances” (p. 40, emphasis in original). CRAE is indeed an approach that individual educators can draw on in ways that acknowledge the complexities of the systems and structures in which students, schools, and communities are situated. It calls on teachers and students to develop the necessary critical lenses to question and restory the (dis)connections between their education and their lived experiences. How can we then, as teacher educators, create opportunities for future teachers to create community relevant and relation curriculum and pedagogies?³

In his discussion of CRAE, James (2017) states that “education and schooling must take into account the needs, concerns, interests, expectations, and aspirations of students and parents in terms of having CRRP, curriculum, and resources informed by the communities in which students and parents reside” (p. 52). CRRP, then, is not inevitably a strategic pedagogical counter or silver bullet when addressing anti-Black racism. Rather, it contributes toward seeing that a community is composed of different people with their unique histories and lived experiences who in turn are in the processes of co-creating their community cultures. The ongoing evolution of these cultures frames how people experience and/or counter anti-Black racism(s) inside and outside of a settler colonial public schooling system.

Addressing CRRP and Antiracism as Teacher Education in Ontario

In Eastern Ontario, we have been involved in partnerships that exemplify approaches to CRRP and antiracism in educational institutions. In November 2017, in line with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s *Education Equity Action Plan*, the Réseau de Savoir

³ In 2017, the Government of Ontario announced a three-year strategic plan to tackle systemic racism in the government and public programs and services – including schooling. This work included research and consultation, advanced reporting on hate crimes, increased funding for antiracism educational resources, and other outreach strategies (Government of Ontario, 2017). Three years later, perhaps inspired by the late 2010s and now early 2020s (re)ignition of attention to racism in Canada, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) announced that they supported the Government’s antiracism initiatives (OCT, 2020[a] July). In July 2020, OCT announced its plan to publish a public advisory to all OCT members in addition to amending the OCT Act and producing an anti-Black racism Additional Qualifications (AQ) course for educators (OCT, 2020[b] July). In November 2020, OCT announced its amendments to the OCT Act’s Professional Misconduct Regulation. This regulation now considers the following as misconduct: “making remarks or engaging in behaviours that expose any person or class of persons to hatred on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination under Part I of the Human Rights Code” (OCT, 2020 November, Online). In this same issue, they note that participation in the announced AQ is voluntary, but an important first step in leadership development in Ontario. While a good step, we cannot assume any trickle-down antiracism will occur from the OCT regulation changes. Building working relationships between teacher education, schools, education governance, and communities can offer avenues forward that reflect the lived and changing experiences of students and educators.

sur l'Équité / Equity Knowledge Network ([RSEKN](#)) was launched as a pan-Ontario initiative hosted by the University of Ottawa and including regional leaders in the Eastern, Southern, Northern, and Greater Toronto Area regions of the province. The overarching mandate of [RSEKN](#) was knowledge mobilization through connecting teacher candidates, teachers, administrators, researchers, parents, students, and community groups, for the purposes of developing and promoting equity in education. While all regions of [RSEKN](#) supported each other, the network was regionally divided to better respond to the different requirements in the various provincial areas. We (the authors of this paper) were situated in the Eastern Ontario region and found that in responding to the needs of the communities within the area, our focus became primarily on developing practices of antiracism.

In partnership with the Ottawa school boards, the *Urban Community Cohort* (UCC), connects teacher candidates at the University of Ottawa's Bachelor of Education program with schools that have been identified as 'urban priority' based on the diversity of cultures, languages, and residency status in Canada (UCC, n.d.). The priority of the UCC, like we have seen with CRRP practices at Irma Coulson Public School, is to "teach in dynamic environments and strive to create safe schools, increase student achievement and build sustainable community partnerships" (UCC, n.d.). Student teachers involved in the UCC program are encouraged to focus on strategies related to critical engagement, student success, and agency through three key priorities outlined in the UCC mandate (UCC, n.d.). These priorities are 1) taking a critical approach, 2) creating inclusive school environments, and 3) teaching responsively. In accordance with the Government of Ontario and Ministry of Education, 40 high schools in 12 school boards in many cities across Ontario received funding for such initiatives related to student achievement, violence, bullying prevention, as well as community and family engagement (Ministry of Education, 2019). Prior to such initiatives and identifications, and perhaps even still (given the insubstantial amount of research, it is hard to say), these schools faced higher rates of suspension, expulsion, poverty, and academic achievement (Ministry of Education, 2019).

With our relationships between the teacher education program and the local educators growing in strategic ways, we sought to ensure that students were directly included in the broadening partnerships. In 2018 and 2019, through RSEKN, we provided our support to the first and second annual *Black Youth Conferences* (BYC) in connection with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB). We also continued our support for the planning of the 2020 conference, but it was postponed due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. With some guidance from OCDSB staff, the BYC was organized by a team of Black students—Grades 9 to 12—from a variety of schools across the board. Each conference included a schedule of panel discussions, musical performances, and workshops, all of which were led *by* students for a participating audience *of* students. While the student organizers did not declare the conference an event only for Black students, the vast majority of participants were

Black students, and the conference became a space of sharing and exchange and for confronting the experiences of anti-Black racism that the students faced within their schools. The discussions went beyond merely airing grievances and were developed to identify what about the school system needs to change, as well as what students can do to initiate the changes.

Our initial support was in the form of funding, helping to cover any costs accrued as part of developing and successfully facilitating the Black Youth Conferences. Additionally, and more in line with the relational understandings of CRRP, in the lead-up to the conference and during the conference itself, we used our social media tools to promote and bring awareness to the work the students were doing. As part of sharing the goings-on of the event with the online world, we targeted our social media output at teacher candidates who would soon be taking on teaching practicum positions in the very schools that the BYC student organizers and participants attended. The conference was an opportunity for Black students to represent their lived realities and for (future) educators to understand the education culture that includes anti-Black racism, not as a disconnected occurrence *out there*, but as an issue where they and we live and learn. It was an experience where Black students could use their voices of excellence and be sure they would be heard.

In 2018, school boards in Ontario were granted permission to collect race-based data (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2020). Alongside TDSB and the OCDSB, 7 other boards in Ontario collected such data, and created a Graduation Program designed to provide support, mentorship, and Afrocentric Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Black students. *The Sankofa Centre of Excellence* was created to “address issues and concerns that impact the graduation rates of Black students in the district” and provide culturally relevant and responsive ways to align the individual experiences of Black youth in these schools with the curriculum as taught (Sankofa Document, 2020, p. 4). Meanwhile, the Sankofa Centre continues to focus on combating micro and macro ways racisms manifest across the K-12 public education system. The Sankofa Centre of Excellence pilot began in two schools in the Ottawa region. The Black Graduation Coaches’ role in these schools was to begin to identify Black students who would be interested in participating in the program, identifying administration and teachers who would liaise with students and coaches, as well as maintain frequent status updates from the Human Rights and Equity Division to the schools (Sankofa Document, 2020). While the BYC and Sankofa are examples of understanding community culture in connection to education, the call for educators to pay attention should not always have to come from the students. For this reason, we developed other partnerships where new teachers were introduced specifically to CRRP.

The Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) partnered with RSEKN to identify equity as the organizing framework for its *New Teacher Induction Program* (NTIP). New teachers were able to enact a social action curriculum project within their classrooms which in turn sought to address equity, diversity, and inclusion. Part of the

professional learning that the OCSB organized for new teachers involved reading and enacting the different curricular, pedagogical, and relational strategies put forth in *Hammond's Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain*. Over the course of the year, new teachers were able to collaborate with each other as professional learning communities in partner schools in ways that encouraged them to address existing systemic barriers for the different students they sought to serve. Several guest speakers with an expertise in CRRP were invited to support their ongoing professional learning that year. Here, the school board administration recognized that part of organizational change in its culture requires disrupting its cultural responses even within its New Teacher Induction Program. Such professional learning is part of a new teacher's transition toward becoming a professional educator in terms of the school board leadership's commitment to be part of the systemic and structural changes required to disrupt different societal, structural, and individual racisms. This initial CRRP pilot project has now become part of the professional learning for all newly hired OCSB teachers.

Despite these different efforts, however, students, teacher candidates of color, and educators at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education, continue to feel the impacts of institutionalized racism and its structural prohibitors (Teachers Candidates of Colour, 2021). In 2019/2020 the *Teacher Candidates of Colour (TCC)* Collective was created and continues to be taken up each year by new members with similar objectives. The TCC Collective recognizes the lived experiences of teachers of color in the faculty and provides solidarity through "active learning and unlearning" processes (TCC, 2021, p. 1). In 2020, for example, the TCC Collective hosted a Slam Poetry and Spoken Word event that facilitated the artistic dialogue of BIPOC teacher candidates and the University community. Alongside this event, the TCC Collective has hosted several webinars pertaining to anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racisms in the classroom (TCC, 2021). The Collective states their aims in saying:

The TCC Collective aims to come together and work on projects that focus on the following goals: (1) decolonizing the body, mind, and spirit, which focus on learning and unlearning our own assumptions and biases, (2) decentralizing hierarchies and power dynamics to empower marginalized communities and individuals, and finally, (3) removing and reducing systemic and structural barriers that exist. (TCC, "Our Mission", 2021)

Similarly, we see the work of *Education Graduate Students of Colour (EGSC)* in University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education as inspired by the TCC Collective's growth, with equal intents to provide space for solidarity and combat Anti-BIPOC racisms. In partnership with the TCC Collective, the EGSC created an academic space for graduate students of color to publish in EGSC's independent journal titled *Counter Narratives* (EGSCUottawa, 2021). Additionally, the EGSC hosts webinars and

workshops on antiracism. What is evinced by these collectives is the "structural, institutional, and individual mechanisms of anti-Black racisms" that continue to persist within teacher education and graduate studies programs (p. 220-221).

CRRP alone is not enough here at our Faculty of Education to adequately combat individual, systemic, and societal forms of anti-Black racisms students and colleagues continue to experience at the University of Ottawa. Such student collectives have strategically sought to create curricular and pedagogical opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom to enact critical race counter-storytelling by and for their respective communities. And yet, current enactments of CRRP fail to disrupt the "Ridiculously White insitution[al]" structures and respective conceptions of what it might mean to become a teacher here in Ontario (Gershon, 2020, p. 52). We do, however, see promise in the actions we have described (RSEKN, UCC, BYC, Sankofa Centre of Excellence, NTIP, TCC, EGSC), because each initiative was built on and continues to develop through emphasis on community engagement. Beyond taking on aspects of CRRP (e.g., inclusion: providing critical spaces for voices of otherwise marginalized people), they work to bolster and connect those voices for naming and dismantling institutional and systemic barriers. CRRP is too often enacted on individual levels and not as a collaborative approach connecting educators, students, and community. Indeed, more social action research in collaborating with teacher education programs here in Ontario and elsewhere is needed to understand a way forward.

The relationships we built, supported, and now work to maintain are evidence of antiracist possibilities when education is looked at as linked to and positioned within a dynamic community (James, 2017). Voices of marginalized students become heard, not in combative ways, but through open and honest communication *with* educators. Future and new educators are provided with professional development opportunities that engage with CRRP as more than a checklist and, rather, put the pedagogy into practice within a relational and social action focus. The challenges to this type of work, however, are that, firstly, it requires a buy-in, not in the monetary sense—although there are some financial costs—but in the sense that students and educators at all levels need to want to learn and use CRRP even before they really know how it works.

Educators should see themselves connected to the work of actively interpreting CRRP and disrupting anti-Black racisms in non-tokenistic and purposeful ways (James, 1992). Racisms occur in sociohistorical contexts (Goldberg, 1993), so there cannot be a *one-size-fits-all* or a *one-and-done* antiracism education. The spaces we create and occupy, even if intended to be antiracist, cannot and will not be eternally antiracist. Antiracism must be active and ongoing (Hage, 2016). This can require some students and educators to shift from positions of comfort. There are no guarantees in the disruption of racialized exclusions (Stanley, 2014). This uncertainty can cause hesitancy in taking up the continuously shifting work while strategically connecting with students' lived experiences. As Stanley (2012) says elsewhere and we agree,

using an antiracist approach “offers a better picture of reality, and is more alive to the complex social dynamics that continually reproduce and circulate certain people’s meaning while excluding the meanings of most of the people in the world” (p. 326). If CRRP is to contribute to antiracism work, it needs participation from all facets of a community where our meanings are created, enacted, and embodied.

Conclusion

Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy can play a key role toward disrupting anti-Black racism(s). However, doing so requires understanding ‘culture’ in relational and non-tokenistic ways that unsettle the systemic “fixity” of settler-colonial structures. The evolving cultures of a community and school are underpinned by meanings stemming from racialized identities, and many other facets of our identities such as gender, sexuality, religion, class, and others. Moreover, the fact that there are so many possible identifications that in turn inform one’s cultural relevance speaks to the shortcomings of addressing “culture” in essentializing ways. Enacting CRRP should, in theory, involve co-creating a classroom community and curriculum with students that can support and sustain relations with them and their communities. This curricular approach may not disrupt the systems and structures that perpetuate anti-Black racism(s). It might, however, enhance our capacity to identify and address past, present, and future anti-Black racism(s) across the curriculum-as-planned, -implemented, and -lived.

Not every elementary and secondary school has a teacher education program nearby. And so, the partnerships that we highlighted here are not always replicable. For this reason, ongoing investigation needs to be done not only on how CRRP is being conceptualized across Ontario, but also on how it is being taken up both within teacher education programs and by teachers in the classroom. Strategies for disrupting anti-Black racism(s) cannot use a ‘copy-n-paste’ approach, uncritically implementing antiracist practices from one community/school cultural context in a different community/school cultural context. The recognition and incorporation of nuanced culturally referenced contexts through CRRP can contribute to understanding anti-Black racism in its place. Enacting antiracism in a school setting cannot be done *to* students or *for* students, and must be done *with* students (James, 2017).

To answer our title question, CRRP is not enough, as a stand-alone strategy for disrupting and unsettling antiracism education. On its own, this pedagogy as it is often taken up in Ontario teacher education programs, does not address systemic and structural racist exclusions and inclusions. However, it need not be abandoned. CRRP can be understood and implemented with reference to community, where cultures are complex, unfixed, and (re)created within context (James, 2017). If CRRP is employed as relational and ongoing, perhaps it can help educators and students understand

their relationships with each other and the communities in which they live and teach in deeper ways and suggest pathways toward enacting a less racist society together.

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