

Article

Justice-Centered Reflective Practice in Teacher Education: Pedagogy as a Process of Imaginative and Hopeful Invention

Sonia M. Rosen , Charlotte E. Jacobs , Jessica Whitelaw, Vinay R. Mallikaarjun  and Frances Rust 

Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA;
chjacobs@upenn.edu (C.E.J.); jwhi@upenn.edu (J.W.); vinaym@upenn.edu (V.R.M.); franrust@upenn.edu (F.R.)
* Correspondence: soniar@upenn.edu

Abstract: This paper introduces *justice-centered reflective practice*, an approach that emerged out of our practitioner research in the Independent School Teaching Residency program. This ongoing and imperfect praxis is simultaneously a stance, a lens, a pedagogy, an orientation, and a way of understanding and mobilizing our individual and collective identities as teacher educators. Mediated by joy, imagination, vulnerability, and uncertainty, six foundational principles guide our work: *justice-centered reflective practice* is (1) purposeful and systematic, (2) iterative and cyclical, (3), critically reflective, (4) agentive, (5) done in community, and (6) loving and hopeful. Here we detail these principles and illustrate how they manifest in our work as teacher educators in how we structure the program and enact our pedagogy. We seek to continue a scholarly conversation among critical teacher educators about how we enact liberatory values and aspirations in the context of institutions and policy environments that often constrain our collective work.

Keywords: critical teacher education; social justice; practitioner research; critical pedagogy; teacher agency



Citation: Rosen, S.M.; Jacobs, C.E.; Whitelaw, J.; Mallikaarjun, V.R.; Rust, F. Justice-Centered Reflective Practice in Teacher Education: Pedagogy as a Process of Imaginative and Hopeful Invention. *Educ. Sci.* **2024**, *14*, 376. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14040376>

Academic Editor: Leonidas Kyriakides

Received: 13 January 2024

Revised: 30 March 2024

Accepted: 1 April 2024

Published: 5 April 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, teacher education policy and practice has been guided by neoliberal logic that has constrained our collective vision of teaching and limited our ability to understand teachers as autonomous and agentive [1]. In this article, we advocate for a view of teachers working in critical community with one another and with students, disrupting traditional hierarchies in order to produce knowledge, imagining new possibilities for learning and for enacting the social change that learning can inspire. Drawing upon our work in the Independent School Teaching Residency (ISTR) program at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, we present an approach to teacher education that offers a radical revisioning of the field. We build on the work of Horton and Freire [2], who remind us that education for systemic change should reconstitute educational spaces as sites of access and empowerment for all social actors in ways that maintain the integrity of the participatory, equitable democracy we hope to build.

Thus, as program faculty, we have explicitly moved toward refining our program structure, pedagogy, and curricular approach to specifically embrace what we call justice-centered reflective practice (JCRP). This is not a ‘fixing’ of teacher education; rather, we think of it as an ongoing redirection of our work as teacher educators that is embodied in shared struggle, collective reflection, and communal aspirations for a world based on love, joy, and humanization, rather than exploitation and colonization [3–5]. We call into question the impulse of many teacher education programs to hold onto a sense of certainty about ‘best practices’. Instead, this paper articulates an approach that is continually in process, a pedagogy that is being worked out collectively all the time through what Cochran-Smith and Lytle [6] (p. 121–124) refer to as inquiry as stance:

Fundamental to the notion of inquiry as stance is the idea that educational practice is not simply instrumental in the sense of figuring out how to get things done, but also and

more importantly, it is social and political in the sense of deliberating what gets done, why it gets done, and whose interests are served. Working from an inquiry stance, therefore, involves the continual process of making current arrangements problematic; questioning the ways knowledge and practice are constructed, evaluated, and used; and assuming that part of the work of practitioners individually and collectively is to participate in educational and social change.

Our writing intentionally takes up a tenor of uncertainty and personalization that we see as aligned with an inquiry stance and essential to equity-centered work in a field that tends to favor certainty as a feature of hegemony and the dehumanization of teachers, students, and the profession [4,7]. This is in keeping with Liu and Ball's [8] (p. 70) highlighting of "the need to base research on actual teaching and learning practices in classrooms (and) the need to encourage critical reflection for transformative learning". In this paper, we introduce our current thinking about an orientation toward justice-centered reflective practice that we are developing, the principles that we have chosen to guide our work, and how those principles currently live in the ISTR program. We hope this paper will contribute to conversations in teacher education across many different geographic, institutional, and programmatic contexts.

We come to this work as five cis-gender teacher educators with cross-generational experience in the field of teacher education, as former pre-K-12 educators and current university educators. We are an Arab–American woman, a Black woman, two White women, and an Indian–American man. We have a variety of roles within the ISTR program, including faculty members, program directors, and a graduate research assistant. All of us are positioned differently in relation to the field of teacher education, with research backgrounds in youth activism, social movements and community organizing, youth identity development, the intersections of race and gender in education, critical literacy and the arts, practitioner research, teacher education and professional learning, critical methodologies, and critical pedagogies.

In the first section of this paper, we theorize our approach to justice-centered reflective practice. We take inspiration from a wide range of liberatory work in areas such as racial literacy, abolitionist teaching and organizing, anti-poverty movements, critical research traditions, and humanizing pedagogies. In the second section, we explore how we engage this orientation in ISTR's reciprocal partnerships, curriculum, and pedagogy, and we identify questions that have emerged from our work so far. We close the paper by reflecting on our learnings and theorizing how different practices, pedagogies, and curriculum foster the development of justice-centered reflective practitioners. In so doing, we try to anticipate how our future research about justice-centered reflective practice could contribute both to our program and to the broader field of teacher education.

2. Pedagogy as a Multimodal Process of Imaginative and Hopeful Invention

As presented in Figure 1, our approach centers joy, imagination, vulnerability, and uncertainty, which we conceptualize as mediating six foundational principles that guide our practice as teacher educators. What we call justice-centered reflective practice is ongoing and imperfect praxis, always undergoing revision and re-creation. Our guiding principles are as follows:

Purposeful and systematic: We understand teacher preparation as a purposeful and systematic endeavor. We lean on the tradition of critical practitioner inquiry to position teachers as producers of critical knowledge about themselves, their values, and their practice as educators in their specific disciplines and contexts.

Iterative and cyclical: We use intentional design as an orientation towards everything that we do. The iterative, cyclical nature of this approach allows us to create opportunities to disrupt traditional institutional hierarchies by inviting a range of program stakeholders to contribute their collective wisdom and creativity to solving problems and evolving the practice of teacher preparation. Thus, classrooms become potential sites for profound social change and teachers can see themselves as agents of change.

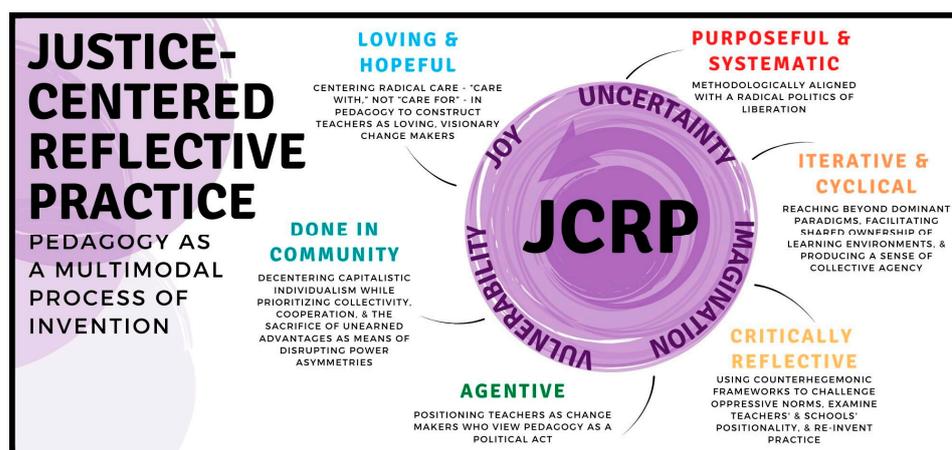


Figure 1. Here we visualize justice-centered reflective practice (JCRP) as an ongoing multimodal process of invention. JCRP's six key principles sit on the outside of the circle, creating continual motion and change. Inside the circle is our commitment to fostering imagination, vulnerability, joy, and uncertainty in and among all members of the ISTR community, including ourselves. These emotions mediate how we work to enact the JCRP principles.

Critically reflective: We recognize that teaching and learning occurs in socio-political contexts, in the midst of histories of white supremacist exclusion. Given this context, we believe teachers need opportunities to name and critique injustice so their classroom practice does not inadvertently reinforce biases and systems of domination. This also requires teachers to explore their own and others' intersecting identities and positionality in relation to racial capitalism.

Agentive: We view teaching as a political act, and we position teachers as agents of change who are responsible to the broader collective in which they are situated. In this way, we conceptualize teachers not as heroic individual change makers, but as contributors to the ongoing processes of social change that are happening within and outside of classrooms and schools.

Done in community: Everything about our practice as teacher educators is relational, centering collectivity as a core value. In our work, we seek to develop relationships premised on mutual vulnerability, substantive intellectual and emotional challenge, and deep connections with professional peers. We place a present, loving, relational care at the center of teaching and learning. We want everyone in our professional community to feel a sense of responsibility to the teachers and learners in their midst.

Loving and hopeful: Finally, we root our practice in radical hope, which we understand as an optimistic belief that we as humans can rise to our potential as agents of social change and simultaneously confront the interpersonal challenges that can disrupt our sense of connection to others and our ability to assert agency.

Threaded throughout these assumptions is the practice of advancing equity and inclusion as a multimodal pedagogical process—that is, we believe that using many modalities to engage with and produce knowledge, to interact with students and colleagues, and to negotiate shared understandings of teaching and learning is essential to the practice. In the sections below, we define each of these features of our approach, discuss how they are interrelated, and highlight the diverse scholarly literature and social movement traditions that have informed our thinking.

2.1. Developing Reflective Practice That Is Purposeful, Systematic, Iterative, and Cyclical

We draw on literature that views teacher development as an ongoing process of reflective practice and teachers as playing an important role in disrupting inequities. Justice-centered reflective practice positions teachers as producers of critical knowledge empowered to make classrooms sites of humanization and connection [9], a task that is

particularly challenging in a competitive, exploitative system of racial capitalism designed to alienate us from one another [10]. Though the work of relationship building can sometimes seem chaotic and spontaneous, we approach this work in ways that are both strategic and systematic, and aimed at establishing a foundational ethos of connection and critical care [11].

We embrace a vision of teacher education that rejects the idea of simply presenting novice teachers with a set of best practices that serve as shortcuts around the challenges of problem solving and engaging in introspection. Our approach stems from a belief that the best teachers, across the lifespan of teaching, ask questions of their practice and are ongoing learners of practice, learning from their teaching and from their students. One example of how this comes to life in our program is through a year-long inquiry project that our students engage in. As a part of the inquiry project, students select a certain aspect of their teaching practice to study in depth through the counter-hegemonic lenses that ground our curriculum. The inquiry project is also highly collaborative in nature, wherein our students participate in ongoing discussions about and reflections on their practice with their peers, mentor teachers, and instructors. Focusing on research and purposeful, ongoing, reflective practice invites novice and experienced teachers to practice a mindset—ways of doing and being—that cultivates inquiry as a stance through which they pose, address, and solve complex problems of practice to improve teaching and learning with ongoing attention to social justice means and ends [6]. It centers teacher research and inquiry as a way to think about and practice teaching as a purposeful process of ongoing learning and reflection.

Here, the word “purposeful” has a double meaning, referring both to the intentionality discussed above and to the sense of purpose that guides our shared commitment to educational justice, a politics of liberation and a pedagogy of connection [11] that requires ongoing presence, relational learning, and dialogue rather than reliance on the shortcuts ‘best practices’ supposedly offer [4]. In this sense, embodying a learner-stance toward practice is deeply personal and political; it includes cultural humility toward our own biases and sources of privilege and a willingness to learn continually from the experiences of others [7], along with a continual understanding that the personal journey of learning to teach as a “process of becoming” [12] requires vulnerability and uncertainty.

We approach teacher education and a politics of liberation from the standpoint that injustice is institutional and systemic as well as individual and internalized. Thus, we operate under the premise that our pedagogy must embody a liberatory purpose in that it is fundamentally intersectional, centers students’ connection to liberation work, and builds on the work of justice-focused organizations outside of our school communities [4]. We believe that justice-centered reflective practice has the potential to support teachers as reflective practitioners who account for and speak back to systemic and institutional injustice by employing critical, intersectional methodologies that disrupt colonial epistemologies.

As Esposito and Evans-Winters [13] (p. 21) describe them, these intersectional qualitative methods enable an orientation that serves as “an epistemological stance and modus operandi for the examination (and interpretation) of (a) complex relationships, (b) cultural artifacts, (c) social contexts, and (d) researcher reflexivity”. In the tradition of other critical methodologists, their work names the way identity mediates our orientation to systematic qualitative exploration, as well as how we contribute to knowledge construction within our communities. Importantly, these critical methodologies create space for novice (and experienced) teachers to incorporate honest reflection and intentionality in teachers’ everyday practice, what Mendoza, Gutierrez, and Kirshner [14] (p. ix) call “design as praxis”. They point to the power of designing learning environments as intentional interactional spaces that offer pathways to imagine possibilities across historical and time scales, calling this mediated praxis:

Mediated praxis. . . is the intentional organization of the learning environment—with attention to the moment-to-moment interactions and interconnectedness of larger social histories—toward equity, praxis, and transformative learning. This perspective requires attention to equity and transformative learning as both

a process and outcome and must be attended to from conceptualization of the project and embedded throughout.

Central to our approach is this understanding of design as praxis; it is an intentional systematizing of inquiry in our practice. Prison abolitionist Miriam Kaba [10] points out that, by design, social change involves trying out new things, taking risks, and often failing. In this way, she writes, the process—not some ideal final product—is the goal, and the process must be a co-creation driven by people’s real needs in a particular time and location, what Ayers [9] (p. 81) calls “more a process of people in action than a finished condition”. Based on these assumptions, we hold onto a vision of liberatory teaching as aspirational, an ongoing process of creation and re-creation. Our approach to designing our curriculum is one that is iterative and responsive to the needs of our novice educator students and our school partners. We are intentional in co-constructing our classroom spaces, the texts and materials that we use, and our assessments through ongoing dialogue with and feedback from our students. In doing so, we take the stance that all members of our community can contribute valuable knowledge and expertise to conversations about schooling, teaching, and learning. This process, what Love [4] refers to as “freedom dreaming”, requires imagination in order to lean into creating a new future for education. We argue that in this process being vulnerable and stepping into the uncertainty of not knowing what our new creation will be is what allows us to be in community with one another in ways that are meaningful, deeply connective, and transformative.

We make a conscious choice to lift up the wisdom and experience of Kaba [10] and other social movement organizers, because we see classrooms as potential sites for profound social change and teachers as powerful agents of change, both within and outside of schools. In doing so, our approach attempts to position teachers, not as heroic individual change-makers, but as contributors to larger movements for social change that rely upon everyday work. Teachers have the power and responsibility to develop “authentic relationships of solidarity and mutuality” [4] (p. 118), being supportive of and accountable to their school communities and to one another in the process of collectively grappling with what Cochran-Smith and Lytle [6] call the ongoing “dialectic between theory and practice”. Social movement actors use this same idea to frame and learn from their social change practices. For example, Baptist and Rehmman [15] (p. 7) advocate for a pedagogy that bridges the “false dichotomy between ‘theory’ and ‘praxis’”. Instead, they [15] (p. 7) argue that in order to support a sense of collective agency among people who are working together to address the root causes of inequity, we should embrace “the concrete pedagogical task to combine different kinds and layers of knowledge and reflection that are currently separated and polarized in our prevailing education system”. These understandings of liberatory pedagogy speak to our concept of teacher inquiry as an iterative practice with the potential to produce critical knowledge of practice that is rooted in teachers’ own reflexivity, mutuality, and engagement in community.

Justice-centered reflective practice is based on the idea that teacher education should involve the cultivation of an inquiry stance toward practice, keeping questions about means and ends alive in the daily work of teaching and encouraging teachers to continue exploring whose (and what) interests are being served in any given moment of teaching [6]. Our virtual instructional rounds, in which our students regularly video record themselves teaching and then debrief their teaching in small groups with their peers with an alumnus of our program as facilitator, speaks to how our students develop the skills to observe, reflect, and enact different teacher moves through an ongoing cycle of inquiry and praxis informed by liberatory theories. We contend that, though the stakes are always high in classrooms, the work toward liberation demands attention to what Kaba [10] (p. 27) calls “a long view, understanding full well that [we are] just a tiny, little part of a story that already has a huge antecedent and has something that is going to come after that”. Informed by an extensive history of liberatory social movements, we take a long view of our work as justice-centered reflective practitioners.

2.2. Centering Critical Reflection

Teaching and learning always occur in sociopolitical contexts in the midst of histories of white supremacist exclusion. Learning to teach must include interdisciplinary exploration [16] of these histories, the broader sociopolitical contexts of schooling, and the particular socio-political contexts within which teachers work. Baptist and Theoharis [17] (p. 163) highlight the ways in which we have been deeply socialized to accept exploitative ideologies and dominant socio-political narratives, noting, “the process of education is at once one of uneducating and unlearning as well as one of educating and learning”. With this in mind, teachers need opportunities to name and critique injustice in order to transform curriculum and pedagogy so their classroom practice does not inadvertently reinforce biases and systems of domination [4,18,19].

Love [4] (p. 11) identifies the bold choice that confronts all teachers who choose to do this, asserting that “abolitionist teaching is choosing to engage in the struggle for educational justice knowing that you have the ability and human right to refuse oppression and refuse to oppress others, mainly your students”. To foster a critically reflective mindset, teacher education must center on the praxis mentioned above, joining theory and critical practice as a liberatory act [20]. Novice teachers must have the opportunity to highlight and mine the connection between ideas learned in university settings and what is learned in life experiences as a necessary prerequisite for systematically challenging dominant, normative discourses and representations [7] if they are to make a choice to engage in anti-oppressive teaching practices. Our program is organized into three curricular strands, one of them being the History and Social Context strand, where students reflect on the purposes of education, how those purposes are mediated through societal structures rooted in power asymmetries, and dominance at both the individual and institutional levels. Through readings, discussions, and assignments, students develop the skills to be critically reflective of their own practices and the culture of their schools, always with an eye towards equity, humanization, and liberation.

Justice-centered reflective practice conceives of critical reflection as involving both this outward-facing sociopolitical examination and an inward-looking exploration of identity and positionality. Teachers need opportunities to take into account and explore the multifaceted aspects of their own identities and conditions in order to understand how these facets of identity intersect [21] in the context of racial capitalism and how they mutually constitute one another [22]. All identity work involves particular attention to privilege and an interrogation of how identity is connected to the exercise of power as well as the uneven distribution of power in school contexts and in society writ large.

Again, the historic work of organizers offers insight into the relationship between identity, positionality, and our ability to imagine new possibilities for human connection. Ayers [9] (p. xiii) names this as a key feature of the Freedom Schools of the 1960s, arguing that “freedom, if it means anything at all, points to the possibility of looking through your own eyes, of thinking, of locating yourself, and, importantly, of naming the barriers to your humanity, and then joining with others to move against those obstacles”. Similarly, Muhammad [5] and Love [4] also discuss how Freedom Schools and the continued resistance that Black people engage in within the field of education are part of a larger history of “freedom dreaming”, where joy is a central part of imagining a different future for education.

Price-Dennis and Sealey-Ruiz [22] (p. 22) speak to the need for teachers to engage in an “archaeology of the self”, or “the self-exploration, probing, excavation, and understanding of where issues of race, racism, and human phobias live within individuals”. They [22] (p. 23) identify three practices that are central to this process: questioning assumptions about race, engaging in critical conversations about race, and practicing reflexivity, “a cyclical process of (re)examining perceptions, beliefs, and actions relating to race”. For Ayers [9] (p. 84), this kind of critical reflection is fundamentally an imaginative and vulnerable process. He calls for “a pedagogy of experience and participation, a pedagogy both situated in and stretching beyond itself, a critical pedagogy capable of questioning, rethinking,

reimagining. We are looking for teaching that is alive and dynamic, teaching that helps students grapple with the question ‘Where is my place in the world?’”.

We believe that capturing the inward and outward-facing critical imaginations of both teachers and students cannot be simply done in the terrain of written language, because taking our minds and hearts beyond the bounds of the oppressive systems, structures, and cultural norms that define our world is not solely an intellectual exercise. Our approach rests on the assumption that, in order to reflect upon the harm we have (unevenly) experienced due to racial capitalism, we must notice how that harm shows up in our bodies and trace how it mediates our relationships [23]. We must consider the physical, emotional, and relational implications of the social world we inhabit, making a connection between our own experiences of harm and the political economy of education (among other social institutions). This understanding is developed through multimodal exploration that allows us to use multiple senses and sensibilities to engage in this personal and collective “excavation” [22]. We believe that the process of personal excavation—when done in community and through modalities that are typically not privileged in university spaces and are thus read as more “creative”—is one of mutual vulnerability, and also of uncertainty. An example of how personal excavation and multimodality intersect in our program curriculum is through teacher and learner self-autobiography and self-portrait. As part of this project, students are asked to reflect on their own educational experiences through the lenses of identity and power, sharing how these experiences may influence their understanding of and approach to teaching. The final product of this assignment is that students create self-portraits using a medium (or mediums) of their choice to represent their learner and emerging teacher identities. In the past, students have created collages, annotated music playlists, infographics, and photo essays as ways to capture their self-portrait. The students then share their self-portraits with each other in one of our class sessions.

Multimodality, then, serves several purposes, allowing us to broaden accessibility through different epistemologies and knowledge systems [13] and create a learning environment in which novice teachers have multiply shaped invitations to critically examine their contexts, develop deeper understandings of their own positionality within those contexts, and to imagine a more just and equitable future [24]. In a learning environment characterized by dynamic opportunities to imagine and engage multimodality, teachers gain access to expanded epistemologies and a range of means for self-authorship [25], allowing for new opportunities as agentic sense-makers to re-make themselves, re-negotiate their identities as teachers, and re-imagine social futures [26]. Multimodality, thus, can support teachers and help them to develop a praxis rooted in critical reflection, acknowledge their own responsibility and connection to a larger community, and develop an authentic accountability to the collective.

2.3. Living Justice in a Pedagogy of Agency, Community, Love, and Hope

Central to critical practice is teachers’ and students’ sense of individual and collective agency. Justice-centered reflective practice makes a commitment to centering opportunities for novice and experienced teachers to “read” and “re-read” the racialized world in which they live and work, which is essential in order for them to re-write and transform it [27]. This work is both an act of what Santoro and Cain [28] call “principled resistance”—rooted in thoughtfully constructed pedagogical, professional, and democratic principles—and a critical reimagining of what education can be. We believe it is incumbent on teacher education programs to position preservice and novice teachers as agents of change who are responsible to the collective and able to interpret, understand, and transform the world around them, much like the Freedom Schools model of the 1960s [9]. Freire’s [27] work on “problem-posing education”, which envisions teaching and learning as mutually constitutive acts and defines teaching as a fundamentally human process based on human connection rather than a simple transference of knowledge, is a useful place to start envisioning what it looks like for teachers to embrace a sense of agency in all aspects of their work. One way that we lean into this stance is by incorporating Stevenson’s [23]

and Price-Dennis and Sealey-Ruiz's [22] conceptualization and skill-based practices of racial literacy. By using our class time to have students reflect on racialized messages that they received throughout their K-12 schooling, as well as providing opportunities for them to practice managing their racial stress and how to respond to racial conflict, we center humanity, human connection, and caring within teaching and within schools.

Justice-centered reflective practice reconceptualizes the act of teaching and prompts us to redefine what (and who) we believe teachers are. Designing university teaching and teacher education in ways that create space for participatory knowledge generation and sharing [18] positions teachers not as technicians but as "transformative intellectuals" [29] whose mutual work can advance change. This transformation, birthed out of the mutuality of human connection, is embodied in individual teachers' internal processes as well as in the ways we reconfigure our professional relationships and disrupt dominant social hierarchies. Internally, teachers need to be able to engage in ongoing critical conversations that make them "better equipped to resist the rampant racist practices that disproportionately impact students of color" [22] (p. 12) and, we would add, the emotional and intellectual violence that students of all marginalized identities inevitably face in school. In this way, teacher education programs can be fertile contexts for pre-service and novice teachers to develop professional relationships that are premised on mutual vulnerability and the humanizing of one another, substantive intellectual and emotional challenge, and deep connection with professional peers. We also see teacher education programs as spaces where teachers can find joy through being in close relationships with one another. These experiences can disrupt the highly individualistic cultural myth of teachers as self-made, i.e., the notion of "the natural teacher" [12] (p. 230), and instead create opportunities to imagine a different type of teacher whose orientation is grounded in community, vulnerability, and love.

As teacher educators, we have the opportunity to develop a complex and deeply connected vision of community that can foster what hooks [30] (p. 129) calls a "love ethic", or the sense that our individual existence is dependent upon the existence of others in our community and around the world: "Communities sustain life—not nuclear families, or the 'couple', and certainly not the rugged individualist. There is no better place to learn the art of loving than in community". Here, we are suggesting that teacher educators reject "society's collective fear of love" [30] (p. 91) and embrace a vision of love that permeates all our relationships, even the most difficult relationships that are mediated by histories of violence and inequity. Justice-centered teacher education re-shapes the teacher–student relationship, and, through a pedagogy of connection [11], places a present, loving, relational care at the center of teaching and learning. Our program is structured so that our students have multiple layers of support throughout their teaching fellowship—they have their university instructors, their university advisers, their school-based mentors, and their program site directors, all who subscribe to a relational and student-centered orientation to teaching, mentoring, and learning through their curriculum, pedagogy, and practice.

This re-shaping is an intentional and visionary way of humanizing ourselves and the profession that shifts how we imagine what it means to be responsible to other teachers and learners in our professional community, disrupting systems of domination [31] in real classrooms, in real time. This re-shaping of the teacher–student relationship also creates space for joy—making oneself "aware of [their] own humanity, creativity, self-determination, power, and ability to love abundantly" [4] (p. 120). By finding joy in our connections with one another and the discovery of what can be possible when we work together collectively, we are resisting our own dehumanization and the internalization of oppressive structures and systems.

In their work with young Latinas, Figueroa and Fox [31] (p. 238) argue that we must "work towards a critical care praxis not *in spite of* our differences but *enabled by* our differences". They [31] (p. 238) position "listening as critical care praxis [that] must start by listening to each other and reconciling difference without erasing it". This concept of critical care implicitly critiques the "care for" model, which is premised on the assumption that those who are positioned to have more social power can know the needs and experiences of

those with less social power. In contrast to this patronizing form of care, Figueroa and Fox suggest that listening authentically in a way that centers difference is essential to praxis. Their approach to qualitative research supports a vision of love that is both aimed toward social change and provides a blueprint for the kind of world we want to co-create.

Khan-Cullors [32] (p. 148) also paints a picture of living out the liberatory values we advocate for in social justice movements. In describing the kinds of interpersonal relationships that support liberation work, she articulates the need “to love and honor the singular us along with the collective us”. This theme is taken up frequently in scholarship on social movements, which point to “prefigurative politics” as the intentional approach to interpersonal interactions within movement organizations that prefigure the kind of world movement actors are fighting for [33]. There are many dimensions of interpersonal relationships that get renegotiated in movement work, but one key dimension that we see as particularly relevant to developing a teaching practice rooted in love is the recognition that in a deeply connected community we will all harm others and be harmed by others, thus we will all need to do the work of transforming harm [10]. We view educational contexts as potential sites of individual and collective self-healing from the complex harms we experience as a result of the systems of domination in which we are all situated [4].

Mirra’s [34] (p. 7) conception of critical civic empathy, which is so deeply rooted in the intellectual work of critical literacy theorists, seems to be a call for us as teachers and teacher educators to develop deeply empathic connections with others as an important component of social change efforts:

Critical civic empathy is about more than simply understanding or tolerating individuals with whom we disagree on a personal level; it is about imaginatively embodying the lives of our fellow citizens while keeping in mind the social forces that differentiate our experiences as we make decisions about our shared future.

This conception of empathy as a tool for engaging in negotiations around complex sociopolitical issues reflects the notion of love—the “care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust” [35] (p. 133)—that is at the heart of justice-centered reflective practice. The approach we aspire to is a shared commitment to teaching and learning in the interest of all students and in the interest of disrupting the system of racial capitalism that shapes U.S. schooling and produces individual and generational trauma. It is rooted in a hopeful belief about the collective power and capacity of the mind, heart, and imagination to solve complex problems of educational practice and to advance equity and social change through the everyday work of teaching and learning. When we struggle, we are expressing optimism about the world as it could be and deriving joy and healing from the collective pursuit of imagining and creating the world we want. Love [4] (p. 90) recognizes this as the “beauty in the struggle”. Our joy exists as an electric excitement of possibility in moments of sociopolitical struggle, because these are moments when we are consciously resisting the impulse to be crushed and dehumanized by the limitations of the world as it is, instead choosing to find joy, connection, and inspiration in the possibilities we imagine and create together.

Teachers are in a unique position to help foster communities of hope, joy, and transformation by remaining in a constant state of creativity and imagination, always building what we want for ourselves and nurturing the conditions for love and connection in our classrooms. Justice-centered reflective practice constructs teaching as a joyful, fundamentally relational act that is embodied in what Rodgers and Raider-Roth [36] describe as “presence”. In this way, counter-hegemonic teaching is not simply *against* injustice, it is *for* positive action. It holds that by centering loving connection and radical hope alongside noticing systems of domination and exploitation, we can proactively imagine and create an alternative world.

In capitalist systems, hopefulness is often portrayed as an impractical or improbable desire, an unreasonable demand to control forces beyond our purview. However, justice-centered reflective practice relies on the notion that we must “demand the impossible” [4] (p. 7) in order to do work that matters to marginalized communities. Far from being

unreasonable, impractical, or improbable, this enactment of radical hope should be a reflection of our optimistic belief in one another to rise to our potential as agents of social change as well as our trust in one another to confront the interpersonal challenges that can obstruct our sense of connection and ability to act [10]. Kaba [10] (p. 27) describes hope as a discipline and reminds us that

We have to practice it every single day. Because in the world we live in, it's easy to feel a sense of hopelessness, that everything is all bad all the time, that nothing is going to change ever, that people are evil and bad at the bottom. It feels sometimes that it's being proven in various different ways, so I really get that. I understand why people feel that way. I just choose differently. I choose to think a different way, and I choose to act in a different way. I choose to trust people until they prove themselves untrustworthy.

When teacher educators choose to think and act “a different way”, pre-service or novice teachers are given the green light to practice the discipline of hope, enact joy, and live into their imagination, which inevitably shapes their students' learning. As teacher educators, we do this not out of obligation, but with the purpose of feeling whole and connected with others. We do this because we feel moved to seek out this connection in our teaching practice, and when we are engaging in critical care we too benefit from the love, trust, and intellectual and emotional vulnerability that form the basis of this mutuality. Justice-oriented reflective practice offers us the means to remain accountable to one another while also maintaining our human connection.

Communities in which members are reciprocally accountable to each other can challenge individuals to stretch beyond dominant assumptions while also helping us collectively challenge the structures of domination around us [10]. This intersection of mutuality and accountability through a stance of critical care creates possibility. In the context of a teacher education program, facilitating what Cochran-Smith and Lytle [6] call “inquiry communities” across a school/university partnership—or placing teaching in community to generate knowledge about complex problems of practice—expands the reach of justice-centered efforts in education and lives into a pedagogy of connection. It is a counter-individualistic means of re-shaping public discourse about education in and outside of schools [6]. It also disrupts the hierarchies that typically define the relationship between schools and universities and limit our ability to learn from knowledge that is generated outside the ivory tower. Far from devaluing the work of university-based teacher education programs, this approach extends the possibilities that open up as we invite more voices into our broader professional conversations.

3. Our Practices and Our Questions

As educators in a teacher education program, we are constantly in process and moving towards and enacting the dimensions of justice-centered reflective practice that we theorize above. This happens in a lived and ongoing way through the daily work of teaching and learning. As we write this article, we are currently engaged in studying our process, pedagogies, and practices to discover the multi-layered ways in which principles of justice-centered reflective practice are enacted in our work. In the section below, we describe some of the ways that we attempt to live into the JCRP principles through our curriculum, pedagogies, and program structures. We also outline some of the learnings, questions, tensions, and challenges that we are experiencing along this journey. This section of the paper is divided into three sections, each defined by key questions that focus on different dimensions of our practice: reciprocal partnerships, curriculum, and pedagogy.

3.1. How Can We Learn to Challenge and Transform Structures of Privilege through Reciprocal Partnerships?

The foundation of our teacher education program lies in the partnerships that exist between our university and our 20 school partner sites that host our students for a two-year teaching placement. Our students are novice teachers (with 0–2 years of teaching

experience) who are placed in independent schools (Independent schools are “non-profit private schools that are independent in philosophy: each is driven by a unique mission. . . each is governed by an independent board of trustees, and each is primarily supported through tuition payments and charitable contributions. They are. . . accredited by state-approving accrediting bodies” [37]), known for their reputations as being high-achieving and highly selective with access to a considerable number of resources. Following the JCRP principle of centering critical reflection, a key facet of our work is acknowledging and deconstructing how all of our partner schools have histories that are rooted in exclusion. Historically, their school doors were typically open only to males who were affluent, white, Christian, and heterosexual (the exception being girls’ schools, which, although accepting of girls, were exclusive along the lines of race, class, religion, and sexual orientation) [19,38]. Though all of the schools in our partnership have evolved to become more inclusive spaces and all of them are engaged in work connected to different areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, they are still highly privileged spaces where characteristics of white supremacy culture [39] influence the everyday interactions between members of the school community.

Our approach toward transforming the school spaces in which we work (both our own university and our partner schools) draws on the JCRP principles of done in community and critical reflective practice through the intentional ways that our program is structured so that we as faculty members at the university are in constant dialogue with our students and numerous other faculty members at our partner schools. Our program is co-constructed so that the university faculty and the school partners have joint roles in developing the structures of the program and its curriculum and teaching, where both entities come to the table with something to offer. In this way, we push back against the traditional relationships that typically exist between university teacher education programs and K-12 schools, where the university dictates the learning and the school sites are recipients of that learning [40]. We seek to leverage the knowledge that each member in the partnership brings to teacher education—the university faculty contributes knowledge of research and scholarship focused on teaching, learning, and teacher education, and our school partners contribute knowledge of the experiences of educators in the field and the specific skills and dispositions that novice educators need to develop to become reflective practitioners. Aligned with the JCRP principle of purposeful and systematic practice, we view this partnership as a way to imagine and create more permeable boundaries between sites of practice and institutions usually viewed as the ivory tower, thereby transforming the university in the process.

Our work is also done in community through the different structures that we create as opportunities for our work to be sites of humanization and connection. One structure is our intentional cohort model, whereby each partner school commits to hosting at least two students each year, meaning that at any given time a school should have at least four students from our program as members of their school community. We have found that having a critical number of students at the partner schools works to temper the isolation that novice educators might experience when they are the only one in the building, especially given that about half of our students identify as People of Color. Our cohort model extends across the individual partner schools wherein the students take all of their classes together across the program year with a cap of 30 students per cohort. In our experience, keeping the cohorts intentionally small nurtures the formation of relationships among the students themselves and among the students and instructors. We have learned that in order to engage in critically reflective dialogue where students and instructors openly examine their own positionalities and those of their institutions, there must be a foundation of trust and connection. Creating spaces both inside and outside of the classroom where students and instructors can build community together through their common experiences allows for the JCRP principle of loving and hopeful pedagogy to flourish through the development of trust, connection, shared vulnerability, and, ultimately, accountability where we each care for one another’s growth as we work together to transform the hegemonic contexts in which we work and learn.

Another structure in our program that affords us opportunities for reciprocal learning that is done in community is that each fellow is paired with an experienced teacher at the host school who serves as their mentor throughout the two years of the program. Our mentors and students engage in weekly observations of one another's teaching, followed by regular debriefing conversations. Reflective of the iterative and cyclical JCRP principle, these observations and conversations provide an opportunity for fellows and mentors to engage in a dialogue at the school level that is critically reflective and rooted in mutual vulnerability, allowing each person to learn from the other. Over the course of their two years as mentors, the experienced educators also engage in a mentoring curriculum, in which they are introduced to research-based frameworks that ground mentoring practices in our justice-centered principles.

Our work that is done in community transcends the physical classroom or school space, spans generations of our students and partners, and is multimodal in nature. Starting in their first year, our students participate in virtual "instructional rounds" wherein they record videos of themselves teaching and then regularly meet in small groups for a debrief of their teaching facilitated by ISTR alumni. Consistent with the iterative and cyclical JCRP principle, throughout their two years in the program students also reflect on their teaching practice through a variety of media, such as creating a podcast episode, visually modeling their reflections and experiences across the curricular strands, and publicly presenting findings from their teacher inquiry project to the program community. Lastly, during their second year, students create a multimodal portfolio in the form of a published website that traces their evolution and growth as educators throughout the program. We have seen that the products that our students create throughout our program become texts for critically reflective discussions that push other students, instructors, mentors, and school partners to examine how hegemonic norms, attitudes, and behaviors are woven into schools and their pedagogy, and we also imagine new ways of teaching, learning, and being. ISTR's communal orientation enables many opportunities for working together to re-imagine a vision of schooling that is equitable, loving, and grounded in our collective humanity.

3.2. How Can We Design and Re-Design Curriculum That Purposefully and Systematically Invites Critical Inquiry and Agency?

Across various dimensions of the program, we aim to center problem-posing and ongoing critical reflection about practice as essential to learning to teach by posing questions to teachers about their students, themselves, the conditions of their classrooms, and the contexts of schooling in which they work. This work, which is iterative and cyclical in nature, aims to reshape curriculum in a purposeful and systemic way by moving away from a "best practices" orientation of teaching and toward a sustained invitation to reach beyond dominant paradigms and take a critical inquiry stance on practice [6].

In the program, we expect that both novice teachers entering the profession and the experienced mentors with whom they work can individually and collectively frame the existing conditions of teaching as opportunities for inquiry rather than fixed conditions of their work. In their second year, stemming from the JCRP principle of agentive practice, students are invited to be problem-posers and problem-solvers through the design and enactment of teacher research in the form of an inquiry project, a form of teacher research that involves systematic critical reflection, vis-à-vis, the study of one's practice. After a year of strategic course offerings that introduce them to counter-hegemonic frameworks and provide them with opportunities to examine their own positionality as well as the positionality of their schools, students identify a problem of practice and construct a question to explore for their inquiry project. To structure this invitation within an equity framework that is grounded in the JCRP principle of purposeful and systematic practice, we ask fellows to articulate their values about teaching and learning and to root their inquiry questions in a commitment to criticality that reflects both their values and pedagogical concerns. Efforts to link their questions to these commitments are part of a concerted effort to develop an ethical orientation to teaching and learning, an orientation that interrogates

the ways that daily teaching practices are always shaped by deep assumptions, ideologies, and beliefs. We encourage students to keep asking the questions, “In the interest of who? In the interest of what?”.

The inquiry project is one example of the way we aim to co-construct the curriculum with students, offering them a set of readings, activities, and invitations in their coursework and beyond, while also making space for them to bring their identities, experiences, concerns, and questions to this work in ways that are unique to each student, their positionality, and their context. In doing so, these actions underscore how the JCRP principle of iterative and cyclical practices infuse the program curriculum, which takes shape at the intersections of the course offerings and unique social relationships that emerge within the ISTR program. This co-construction is both strategic and, by nature of the collaboration, always being shaped and reshaped in ways that can never be fully determined ahead of time. We find ourselves constantly reshaping curriculum in response to what is happening for students in their daily work, always building the learning environments, relationships, and practices that we want for ourselves and them.

The curriculum is further co-constructed by the strategic invitations that we offer students along the way—all aimed to scaffold, support, deepen, and extend their inquiries. For instance, students learn data collection tools and analytic strategies to support their efforts to notice more and learn from their classrooms as sites of practice. They learn about ways to find and craft a story in their inquiry and to communicate that story to an audience. They use the podcast segment they produce to document their research as an ongoing thinking and learning process informed by what they are noticing and learning in their classrooms, coursework, and beyond. Along the way, instructors meet individually with fellows to discuss and interpret what is unfolding and to help strategically plan next steps in ways that are responsive to their unique learning contexts. Students meet with each other, their mentors, and their inquiry groups to get feedback on their inquiry projects. We see these conversations with a range of differently positioned stakeholders as enacting the JCRP principle of done in community, highlighting the important dimensions of learning spaces and as an expanded notion of what counts as curriculum and teaching.

Our efforts to co-construct the curriculum with our students can be understood as efforts to center agency and community as core orientations of transformative teachers. As we design curriculum in this way, we aim to create opportunities for ongoing critical reflection, opportunities that are not just intellectual exercises but lived opportunities to read and re-read the contexts in which we live and work in order to re-write, re-imagine, and transform them [27]. By placing this work at the center, we frame our efforts in teacher education as efforts to develop agentic identities in communities of practice committed to social change.

In coursework and assignments across the program, we have tried to build in ongoing opportunities for critical reflection that consider how agentic identity works, which requires leaning into vulnerability and uncertainty, two emotions that mediate the JCRP principles, and is linked to issues of power, teaching, and schooling. Students study the institutional contexts of schooling (both in general and in particular in independent schools) through the *History and Social Context* strand of our curriculum. Starting in their first year, students are introduced to Stevenson’s [23] racial literacy framework and are encouraged to use this framework as a starting point from which to (re)examine themselves and their perceptions, beliefs, actions, and experiences related to intersecting issues of race, class, language, gender, and other identity markers linked to the unequal distribution of power. Through these identity-centered discussions and corresponding assignments, we invite students to think in ongoing ways about how injustice is institutional and systemic as well as individual.

An early assignment that we have found important to helping our students examine their particular teaching context is a multimodal project that asks them to research and interrogate a ritual or tradition at their school that reflects the stated mission of the school. In this assignment, they analyze the ways in which the social hierarchies and relative

positions of power in their schools are mediated by race, gender, and class. Another assignment that helps our students gain insight into their contexts is one that asks them to interview and shadow their own students and other school community members in order to gain a snapshot of the daily lived school experience of someone whose identities and positionality differ from their own. These opportunities for critical reflection and agentic identity work are picked up and woven throughout the other two curricular strands, *Teaching and Learning* and *Reflective Practice*, through our intentional efforts to design assignments and seek out readings that can support our students in developing understandings of injustice as both systemic and perpetuated by individuals. In the final portfolio, students represent how their archaeologies of self [22] have developed over their coursework and in their research on teaching.

As a final, culminating assignment for our students, the portfolio is for us a critically important opportunity to learn from and about our efforts to design multimodal curriculum and to examine how these efforts advance our broader goal of expanding epistemologies and modes of engagement in justice-centered practice. The portfolios require more than a competent use of tools; they also require a critical awareness of social context and the interests of maker and audience [41]. For our students, creating a digital learning portfolio, presenting the portfolio to an audience that extends across the university and their schools, and finding unique ways to represent teacher learning on a digital platform and through verbal, visual, and oral modalities affords opportunities for a lived exploration into imagination, vulnerability, joy, and creation that we view as fundamental to agency, critical inquiry, and transformative praxis.

3.3. How Can We Work to Enact Justice-Oriented Pedagogy That Is Collective, Loving, and Hopeful?

As instructors committed to justice-oriented teaching and learning, we make intentional efforts to humanize ourselves and the profession in ways that are ongoing, relational, and lived in our own loving and hopeful pedagogical practice. Part of what makes this work challenging is not relying on a set of best practices is that it involves constant negotiation not just about *what* we teach but also about *how* we enact it. Since justice-oriented pedagogy cannot be transmitted, it requires ongoing attention to how we design structures of learning that make critical and creative invitations for students to challenge taken-for-granted practices, believing that these efforts matter. It requires that we approach teaching as a practice of imaginative and hopeful invention.

We see the social organization of our pedagogy not simply as an organizational feature of the program but also as a matrix of collaboration and a strategic feature of our pedagogical goals. That is, we approach pedagogy in a way that centers the invitation of a range of perspectives in the interest of ongoing dialogue, critique, and invention. We approach pedagogy in a way that is informed by our belief that work shared through a critical and reflective lens is essential for the development of strategic and collective goals and transformative practice. We believe that the work we are able to do within this matrix exceeds what any one of us can accomplish alone.

In our teaching, we aim, like many practitioners, to mine the social affordances of the classroom through collaboration and dialogue. But in addition to these efforts, following the JCRP principle of practice that is done in community, the structure of the teaching teams involving university professors from various disciplines who partner with school mentors to teach courses and support fellows is an unusually collaborative approach to pedagogy. This unique arrangement allows for the reach of pedagogy to extend in reciprocal, multi-directional learning across students, professors, and mentors, disrupting the usual teacher/student distinction to position students as teachers, teachers as learners, and novice and expert teachers as mutual learners. This matrix of relational dynamics, which relies upon deep listening, ultimately disrupts the conventional notion of teacher as the primary knower and opens up possibilities for an expansion of understanding about who can generate knowledge and where it comes from in the classroom, an example of the

purposeful and systematic way that we aim to enact a loving and hopeful pedagogy. It is an expansion of pedagogy that we intentionally invite, embrace, and grapple with in the hope that our students will bring this expansion to their own classrooms, communities, and sites of practice.

We map this expanded social organization onto a broader view of the processes available for meaning-making and critique. It is through this expansion that multimodality has been linked to a social justice agenda that promotes access and equity for learners [42]. As Vasudevan et al. [25] (p. 446) argue, “a multimodal understanding of composing practices widens the lens of composing to include the modal affordances, identities, participation structures, and social interactions and relationships that shape and are shaped through the engagement of multiple modalities for the production of meaning”. Drawing upon these critical multimodal scholars [25,42], we aim to enact justice-oriented pedagogy through the creation and negotiation of a range of multimodal texts that afford students the ability to critique and question teaching and learning in multiple ways to engage theory and practice [41].

Taking up inquiry within this arrangement and re-framing problems of practice as sites of learning has the potential to radically alter how teaching and learning is socially constructed. In a profession that has long been dominated by the language of certainty and by teacher-as-expert/student-as-novice distinctions, our efforts to engage inquiry, critique, and invention are, by virtue of their inherent uncertainties, counter-hegemonic to dominant discourses of schooling that privilege certainty. Involving tension and grappling with uncertainty, the work can never be fully anticipated, thus it requires continual presence. By inviting both novice and experienced teachers into collective, critical reflection on problems of practice, we seek to re-frame frustrations and teaching dilemmas as provocative, important questions to mutually explore, understand, and critique in light of deep assumptions about the purposes of teaching and schooling.

For us, a practice of loving our students means believing that our work and theirs is potentially transformative. It means seeking/finding joy in the work, even when it is challenging. It means making an effort to build shared commitments and constantly shape and re-shape pedagogy in ways that aim to keep justice at the center of teacher education, always building the things that we want for ourselves and the world we envision for our students.

4. An Invitation to New Commitments, Conversations, and Praxis

We conclude by returning to our initial assertion that teacher education can be approached as a form of social action. Centering joy, imagination, vulnerability, and uncertainty as essential habits of mind for teachers and teacher educators alike represents our collective effort to resist paradigms of learning to teach that assume that the knowledge needed to teach can be confined to a set of pre-determined ‘best practices’. Keeping justice at the center, we have found, requires that we occupy these habits of mind with commitment to a set of guiding principles that frame all aspects of our practice with each other, with teachers, and all partners in the social organization of our work as purposeful and systematic, iterative and cyclical, critically reflective, agentive, and taken up in community in loving and hopeful ways across a wide range of modalities. Taken together, these principles provide a structure to enact our commitment to change and to cultivate our collective power to change the conditions in our classrooms and beyond.

With this in mind, we offer the dimensions of justice-centered reflective practice as an invitation to you, the reader, and to all teacher educators to engage with us in conversations across the field of teacher education, conversations that extend to other teachers and learners who are less commonly viewed as part of teacher education work—including current teachers and administrators, students whose voices are often ignored, and community organizers whose work calls into question many of the hegemonic assumptions about schooling that our field generally accepts as unchangeable. What we have offered in this paper, we hope, is not a menu or template of ‘best practices’, but an orientation toward our evolving

practice that offers us lenses through which to humbly leap into this messy work together and implement systems, norms, and technologies that continually facilitate a renegotiation of our relationships within and outside of our immediate teacher learning communities so that all participants' voices are heard and valued. This work will look different across diverse social contexts because it is fundamentally responsive to communities, students' and teachers' identities, as well as changing sociopolitical circumstances.

Importantly, this work is also imperfect and rife with tensions. As we call into question dominant narratives and challenge oppressive hierarchies, we also encounter resistance. We often meet resistance from students or school partners who are hesitant to apply a critical lens to the discourses and practices that have historically been a source of comfort or privilege for them. However, we too find ourselves expressing resistance when our students or school partners push back in instances when our behaviors or policies are inconsistent with the values we have expressed in this article. For us, remaining rooted in the principles of JCRP means continually considering our own positionality within the power dynamics that mediate any given moment or circumstance in our program. As we use our own practitioner inquiry to weigh this resistance against our values, there are times when we respond with flexibility and times when we decide to hold more rigidly to our curricular or pedagogical choices. Ultimately, any certainty we have about our work is a result of our belief in each other and commitment to the JCRP principles that guide us toward praxis.

None of our ideas are a new invention; they are simply a call to listen to the brilliant liberatory educators whose vision and vulnerability have become the foundation of our work with novice and experienced teachers, school partners, and the young people they "walk with" in their educational spaces [2]. With these ideas as our foundation, we can approach teaching as a form of collective organizing (rather than lonely activism) [10] and define justice work in radical terms that challenge the very structures and knowledge systems that maintain inequity.

We are under no illusions that all teacher education programs have the resources that we have been allotted, and we know firsthand the obstacles that can be created by a lack of adequate funding or rigid, narrowly defined state certification standards. We do not believe that our program should be replicated, nor do we think the approach we have described is a magical recipe for educational equity and justice. Rather, we advocate for nuanced conversations about how teacher educators can translate the commitments embedded in justice-centered reflective practice into a range of contexts. These discussions must also seriously engage the many questions that continue to be posed about the liberatory possibilities and limitations of schools and schooling, whether we are discussing specific types of schools in specific contexts or questioning the broader idea of schooling as a site for socialization and knowledge production:

- What are the implications of applying this liberatory education work to existing systems of schooling that are and have historically been exclusionary? How does that work get taken up? How does it land?
- Is there potential for schools and teachers to upend and reorganize systems of power and exploitation? If so, how are different kinds of schools positioned (or not positioned) to do this?

In grappling with these questions, we are reminded that it is not enough to have commitments; we also need to organize our learning environments in ways that allow us to live those commitments in community with others and evolve our practice in response to our continual learning, our changing sociopolitical circumstances, and the experiences and voices of our students. In extending this invitation to you, we also hold open an invitation to ourselves to continue and deepen these conversations in the ISTR program and with other teacher educators outside of ISTR. At the time of writing, we are immersed in research aimed at helping us embody justice-centered reflective practice in our program's structure, culture, pedagogies, and curriculum. We are excited by justice-centered reflective practice because it is simultaneously a stance, a lens, a pedagogy, an orientation, and a way of

understanding and mobilizing our individual and collective identities as teacher educators. It is an opportunity for all of us as teacher educators to exist in flux as we invent the world we hope for, but to do so in a context of trust and togetherness amidst all the tensions, challenges, and questioning that permeate our work and the profession.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, S.M.R., C.E.J., J.W., and F.R.; methodology, S.M.R., C.E.J., J.W., and F.R.; formal analysis, S.M.R., C.E.J., J.W., V.R.M., and F.R.; writing—original draft, S.M.R., C.E.J., J.W., and F.R.; writing—review and editing, S.M.R., C.E.J., J.W., V.R.M., and F.R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the Collaboratory for Teacher Education at PennGSE, grant number 8.2022.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed for this paper. Data sharing is not applicable to this article. Additionally, data from the larger study that is referred to in the article is not readily available due to privacy concerns.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Au, W. Neoliberalism in teacher education: The contradiction and the dilemma. *Teach. Educ. Pract.* **2017**, *30*, 283–286.
2. Horton, M.; Freire, P. *We Make the Road by Walking*; Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA, USA, 1990.
3. Greene, M. *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*; Jossey-Bass: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 1995.
4. Love, B.L. *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*; Beacon Press: Boston, MA, USA, 2019.
5. Muhammad, G. *Unearthing Joy: A Guide to Culturally and Historically Responsive Teaching and Learning*; Scholastic: New York, NY, USA, 2023.
6. Cochran-Smith, M.; Lytle, S.L. *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2009.
7. Hooks, B. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*; Routledge: London, UK, 2003.
8. Liu, K.; Ball, A. Critical reflection and generativity: Toward a framework of transformative teacher education for diverse learners. *Rev. Res. Educ.* **2019**, *43*, 68–105. [[CrossRef](#)]
9. Ayers, W. *Teaching toward Freedom: Moral Commitment and Ethical Action in the Classroom*; Beacon Press: Boston, MA, USA, 2004.
10. Kaba, M. *We Do This 'Til We Free Us*; Haymarket Books: Chicago, IL, USA, 2021.
11. Carter Andrews, D.J.; Richmond, G.; Marciano, J.E. The teacher support imperative: Teacher education and the pedagogy of connection. *J. Teach. Educ.* **2021**, *72*, 267–270. [[CrossRef](#)]
12. Britzman, D.P. *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*; State University of New York Press: New York, NY, USA, 2003.
13. Esposito, J.; Evans-Winters, V. *Introduction to Intersectional Qualitative Research*; Sage Publishing: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2021.
14. Mendoza, E.; Kirshner, B.; Gutiérrez, K.D. Introduction: Centering equity and power in designing for transformative learning. In *Power, Equity, and (Re)Design: Bridging Learning and Critical Theories in Learning Ecologies for Youth*; Mendoza, E., Kirshner, B., Gutiérrez, K.D., Eds.; Information Age Publishing: Charlotte, NC, USA, 2018; pp. vii–xvii.
15. Baptist, W.; Rehmann, J. Introduction: Plight, fight, and insight of the poor—The need for a pedagogy to end poverty. In *Pedagogy of the Poor: Building the Movement to End Poverty*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2011; pp. 1–10.
16. Vavrus, M. *Diversity and Education: A Critical Multicultural Approach*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2015.
17. Baptist, W.; Theoharis, L. Teach as we fight, learn as we lead: Lessons in pedagogy and the poverty initiative model. In *Pedagogy of the Poor: Building the Movement to End Poverty*; Baptist, W., Rehmann, J., Eds.; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2011; pp. 160–177.
18. Hooks, B. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*; Routledge: London, UK, 1994.
19. Swalwell, K.; Spikes, D. *Anti-Oppressive Education in “Elite” Schools: Promising Practices and Cautionary Tales from the Field*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2021.
20. Freire, P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; Ramos, M.B., Translator; Seabury Press: New York, NY, USA, 1970.
21. Crenshaw, K. *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings*; The New Press: New York, NY, USA, 2017.
22. Price-Dennis, D.; Sealey-Ruiz, Y. *Advancing Racial Literacies in Teacher Education: Activism for Equity in Digital Spaces*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2021.
23. Stevenson, H. *Promoting Racial Literacy in Schools: Differences That Make a Difference*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2014.

24. Gannon, K.M. *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto*; West Virginia University Press: Morgantown, WV, USA, 2020.
25. Vasudevan, L. Making known differently: Engaging visual modalities as spaces to author new selves. *E-Learning* **2006**, *3*, 207–216. [[CrossRef](#)]
26. The New London Group. A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harv. Educ. Rev.* **1996**, *66*, 60–92. [[CrossRef](#)]
27. Freire, P. The importance of the act of reading. *J. Educ.* **1983**, *165*, 5–11. [[CrossRef](#)]
28. Santoro, D.A.; Cain, L. Introduction. In *Principled Resistance: How Teachers Resolve Ethical Dilemmas*; Santoro, D.A., Cain, L., Eds.; Harvard Education Press: Cambridge, MA, USA, 2018; pp. 1–15.
29. Giroux, H.A. Textual authority and the role of teachers as public intellectuals. In *Social Issues in the Classroom*; Hurlbert, C.M., Totten, S., Eds.; NCTE: New Delhi, India, 1992; pp. 304–321.
30. Hooks, B. *All about Love*; Harper Perennial: New York, NY, USA, 2000.
31. Figueroa, A.M.; Fox, M. Refusing closure through critical care. In *Critical Youth Research in Education: Methodologies of Praxis and Care*; Ali, A.I., McCarty, T.L., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2020; pp. 227–242.
32. Khan-Cullors, P.; Bandele, A. *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*; St. Martin's Press: New York, NY, USA, 2017.
33. Rosen, S.M. "So much of my very soul": How youth organizers' identity projects pave agentive pathways for civic engagement. *Am. Educ. Res. J.* **2019**, *56*, 1033–1063. [[CrossRef](#)]
34. Mirra, N. *Educating for Empathy: Literacy Learning and Civic Engagement*; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA, 2018.
35. Hooks, B. *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*; Routledge: London, UK, 2010.
36. Rodgers, C.R.; Raider-Roth, M.B. Presence in teaching. *Teach. Teach. Theory Pract.* **2006**, *12*, 265–287. [[CrossRef](#)]
37. National Association of Independent Schools (n.d.). National Association of Independent Schools. Available online: <https://www.nais.org/about/about-nais/> (accessed on 4 November 2021).
38. Gaztambide-Fernández, R. What is an elite boarding school? *Rev. Educ. Res.* **2009**, *79*, 1090–1128. [[CrossRef](#)]
39. Okun, T. *White Supremacy Culture*; White Supremacy Culture Website. Available online: <https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/> (accessed on 22 October 2021).
40. Zeichner, K. Rethinking the connections between campus courses and field experiences in college-and university-based teacher education. *J. Teach. Educ.* **2010**, *61*, 89–99. [[CrossRef](#)]
41. Kress, G. *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*; Routledge: London, UK, 2010.
42. Jewitt, C. Multimodality and literacy in school classroom. *Rev. Res. Educ.* **2008**, *32*, 241–267. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.