

Applying Critical Race Theory to Enhance the Racial Inclusivity of Teachers in Canada

A Review of the Literature and Facilitative Programming

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Abstract

This review of the literature draws on critical race theory to examine the lack of racial diversity among the teaching force in Canada. Several barriers including systemic racism, non-diverse hiring policies, and arduous certification requirements for immigrant teachers inhibit the racial diversity of the teaching force in several provinces. Manitoba is profiled because one of the province's leading universities overhauled its Bachelor of Education admissions protocols to admit an increase in BIPOC applicants. Another leading university in the province has implemented policies to increase the number of Indigenous faculty members and pre-service teacher candidates. Understanding the effectiveness of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policies in Manitoba could result in a more comprehensive understanding of the validity of EDI policies in general. Through a scoping review, this analysis unearthed 34 articles and documents published around the intersection of race, racial diversity, BIPOC educators, and White teachers. This article presents the findings of the literature review by exploring the merits and drawbacks of using critical race theory to elucidate potential barriers and opportunities for affirming linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity in the Canadian school system.



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Introduction

The racial diversity in the teaching force has not kept pace with the diverse composition of the student body demographics in the Canadian education system (Janzen & Cranston, 2016; Schmidt & Janusch, 2016; Sulz et al., 2023). Several barriers, including linguistic discrimination, systemic racism, discriminatory hiring policies, and cumbersome qualifications recognition and recertification processes inhibit the racial diversity of the teacher workforce (Marom, 2017; Schmidt, 2010; Stephenson, 2020). To enhance the diverse nature of the teaching force and increase the number of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) educators, there is a need to break down the barriers that exist by examining theories useful in elucidating potential obstacles. There is also a need to explore facilitative programming to make schools genuinely and robustly inclusive. Facilitative programming is part of the larger work required to dismantle systemic racism within the education system.

Several theories are useful in elucidating potential barriers and opportunities for affirming linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity in the school system, including emancipatory peacebuilding, intersectionality, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory. Through a review of the literature, this article provides an overview of critical race theory (CRT) and explores the merits and drawbacks of using the theory to outline the obstacles that prevent many racially diverse teachers from participating in the school system. The article provides an overview of the facilitative programming that can dismantle the existence of systemic racism, enhance the racial diversity of the teaching force, and ensure the education system is inclusive and free of discrimination. As the bulk of the discussion centers on Indigenous people, the article also incorporates tribal critical race theory (TribalCrit) to speak of the specific experiences of Indigenous teachers within the school system.

Canada's Position as a Multicultural Nation

Canada is often positioned as a nation that embraces multiculturalism and racial diversity. Brosseau and Dewing (2018) point out that Canadians are generally supportive of a multicultural society. Statistics released by the Environics Institute for Survey Research indicate the percentage of Canadians who viewed multiculturalism as a key component of Canadian identity increased from 37 percent in 1997 to 54 percent in 2015. The number of people surveyed who felt immigration levels were too high in Canada also decreased to 37 percent in 2016 from 61 percent in 1977 (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018). While this survey shows significant support for the ideals of multiculturalism and immigration, a racially accepting society is not the status quo in Canada. Systemic racism is widespread and affects the lives of BIPOC people in numerous ways. Douglas et al. (2022) note how BIPOC individuals have suffered numerous injustices through colonization and enslavement. The lingering effects of these colonial legacies continue to affect BIPOC people in terms of access to education, impoverishment, incarceration, and poor health outcomes (Douglas et al., 2022). Canada's position as a country that embraces multiculturalism and racial diversity is more principle than practice.

Critical race theory is profiled as the research indicates it is useful in elucidating racial barriers within the education system and dismantling the ill effects of colonization (Hodler & Batts Maddox, 2021; Ortiz & Jani, 2010). CRT assumes that race permeates all components of society and encourages the use of a structural approach to address the issues of a diverse society (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). CRT commits to social justice and prioritizes counter-storytelling to augment

marginalized voices (Cheruvu et al., 2015; Hodler & Batts Maddox, 2021). The implementation of CRT promotes changes being made internally to institutions such as schools, not expanding upon and modifying existing resources (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). In the school system, this equates to hiring policies being overhauled to ensure the racially diverse representation of teachers is fulfilled continually, not simply in times of teacher shortage or as a means of symbolic representation.

A Call to Racially Diversify the Teaching Force: The Case of Manitoba

Student body populations are more racially diverse than ever, so there is an increasing need to diversify the teaching force in the Canadian education system (Janzen & Cranston, 2016; Schmidt & Janusch, 2016; Sulz et al., 2023). Research by Childs et al. (2011) determined that Indigenous and racialized students are often underrepresented within post-secondary institutions because of being less informed about admissions protocols and prejudice relating to the probability of success. These factors likely lead to a lack of BIPOC individuals applying to teacher training programs and deduces why the number of students with diverse backgrounds typically outpaces the number of diverse teachers (Abawi, 2021; Sulz et al., 2023; Turner, 2015).

Educational institutions within Manitoba, however, have made modifications to B.Ed. enrollment protocols and diversity hiring practices to increase the number of BIPOC teachers. In 2016, the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Education overhauled its admissions protocols and began accepting applicants from a diverse set of criteria. The new admission regulations increased the number of spots for pre-service teachers identifying as Indigenous (15 percent), racialized (7.5 percent), and LGBTQ (7.5 percent) (Dunfield, 2016; Martin, 2016). In similar fashion, the University of Winnipeg increased the number of Indigenous faculty members in 2024 by devoting a cluster of tenure-track positions to Indigenous applicants (Parisien, 2024). An increase in Indigenous faculty at the University of Winnipeg is a means to reconciliation and a meaningful initiative to increase BIPOC representation on campus.

The University of Winnipeg also partnered with the city's largest school division, the Winnipeg School Division, to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in the provincial teaching force. A teacher development program called Build from Within was launched in 2019 to increase Indigenous representation in the teaching force. The Build from Within program provides Indigenous high-school youth with college-level courses to certify as educational assistants and a pathway to the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg (University of Winnipeg, 2019). The above are a sampling of the programming and policies that have been implemented in Manitoba to increase BIPOC representation in the teaching body.

Despite these EDI policies in place, Manitoba continues to struggle to bridge the gap between the number of diverse students and educators. Martin (2016) estimates that 70 percent of the teaching workforce in Manitoba consists of White females working in elementary classrooms. In the Winnipeg School Division, Indigenous students comprise roughly 27 percent of the student body population, yet only 9 percent of the teaching force identifies as Indigenous (Macintosh, 2022; Martin, 2016). BIPOC students also equate to approximately 50 percent of the student body population in some Manitoba school divisions, which contrasts with the roughly 5 percent of BIPOC teachers comprising the provincial teaching force (Stephenson, 2020). A 2021 report conducted by the Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle (WIEC) indicated there is an underrepresentation of roughly 600-700 Indigenous teachers in Winnipeg schools (WIEC, 2021). The report also indicated that on average only 35 Indigenous teachers graduate annually from the

province's two largest universities. Of the six school divisions in Winnipeg, only the Winnipeg School Division has implemented a plan to address the lack of Indigenous teachers, and of the four leading universities in the province with teacher training programs, only the University of Manitoba has set enrollment targets for Indigenous B.Ed. students (WIEC, 2021). The above data suggests that additional initiatives and programming are needed to diversify the province's homogenous teaching force.

Increasing the number of BIPOC teachers is vital for several reasons beyond symbolic representation. The research indicates White students benefit from BIPOC teachers who possess important racial experiences and knowledge systems and employ a myriad of curricular approaches – approaches that tend to be disregarded by the Eurocentric education system (Cheruvu et al., 2015; Othman, 2022). BIPOC teachers can contest the Eurocentric principles infused within the curriculum and use their lived experiences to diversify the curriculum and showcase to all learners that BIPOC educators belong in the school system (McDevitt, 2021; Nevarez et al., 2019). According to Ghosh and Galczynski (2014), a spectrum of perspectives and the acceptance of differences are key elements of an innovative society. In the school system, this equates to fostering the inclusion of different groups and recognizing that diversity is a key aspect of excellence. A diverse school system is important in creating a safe space for all learners, reducing feelings of alienation, and eradicating violence and racial bullying (Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014). Racially diverse teachers play a key role in creating this type of education system, so employing them for symbolic reasons alone is misguided.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory has been contested in Canada although not to the same degree that it has in the United States. In the U.S., public school teachers have been banned from teaching colonization in history courses and introducing concepts such as racial hierarchy, problematization of race, and White supremacy (Gomez et al., 2023). School boards have become battlegrounds as teachers' jobs have been threatened if they debate the merits of CRT (Rimer, 2022; Schwartz, 2023). Legislation has been passed in states such as Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi regulating how teachers approach and teach about racism, sexism, and systemic inequality. Teachers who broach these subjects using a CRT lens and administrators who conduct professional development with a CRT framework have been challenged and disciplined (Schwartz, 2023). These actions showcase the minefield and legality that schools and educators must circumvent in the United States to teach lessons with a CRT framework and offer classrooms that support inclusive and racially diverse perspectives.

The reaction to the implementation of critical race theory has been mixed in Canada. School officials and parents in the Durham Catholic School Board, for example, have brought forward concerns about language being implemented in school policies such as White supremacy and colonialism (James & Shah, 2022). Several school boards in Ontario have also been criticized for adopting pro-CRT stances. In the Waterloo Region District School Board, parents have brought concerns to the board that their children were being taught to feel ashamed and guilty if they were White (James & Shah, 2022). Canadian right-wing ideologists argue that CRT creates division within schools by addressing racism and that the theory implicitly teaches White students to feel ashamed of their race.

Nevertheless, the adoption of CRT frameworks in Canada has not yielded the significant pushback that it has in the United States. In the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), parents have been told by officials that it is important to engage children with issues such as racism and to challenge the notion of White supremacy (Blackwell, 2022). In the York Region District School Board, officials have acknowledged that the education system has evolved within a colonialist and White Supremacy context and that school policies and practices largely reflect this context. Both school boards have cited the poor outcomes of Black students, the overabundance of suspensions among Black children, and the elevated dropout rate among Black youth as contributing factors to the need for CRT-infused curricula in schools (Blackwell, 2022). The fact that some of Canada's largest school boards such as Toronto and York have supported the infusion of CRT is a strong indicator that Canadian teachers have more of a leeway to tackle systemic inequality than their American counterparts.

The faulty interpretation of critical race theory by its critics is part of the problem. CRT does not theorize that White students need to feel ashamed and guilty about their race. Rather, CRT theorizes the dominant perspectives of certain races ignore the collective experiences of historically marginalized groups, such as Indigenous and racialized people (James & Shah, 2022). As there is confusion in the public discourse on what CRT is, an overview of the theory, including a clear definition, is needed. Onwuachi-Willig defines CRT as a “movement by activists and scholars who are interested in studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, power, and the law” (as cited in Rimer, 2022, para. 5). Onwuachi-Willig confirms CRT does not suggest an individual is oppressive or inherently racist due to their race alone. Instead, she argues that race is socially constructed instead of biologically constructed, that colour blindness cannot alleviate racism, and that racialized people have a unique voice because of their experiences with racism (Rimer, 2022). A clear understanding of CRT could mitigate some of the contention around the theory.

Nevertheless, contention around CRT abounds as the theory attempts to unsettle the racial state and the hierarchy it imposes (Omi & Winant, 2015). Gomez et al. (2023) argue that attacks on CRT result from a fear of racial reconciliation. More specifically, Whites often fear losing their position at the top of the social hierarchical order that permeates North American society. CRT often comes under attack by White elitists as it names the agents responsible for upholding this hierarchy (Gomez et al., 2023). In the education system, this correlates to abundance of White administrators and officials, and in schools and teacher-training programs, this equates to a teaching force primarily comprised of White teachers and pre-service educators. White supremacy and privilege are central to this preservation and the non-racially diverse makeup of the Canadian teaching force (Gomez et al., 2023).

Tribal Critical Race Theory

As the article focuses on the experiences of Indigenous people and their lack of inclusion within the teaching force, it is vital to include tribal critical race theory (TribalCrit) into the theoretical framework. TribalCrit can speak of the specificity of the experiences of Indigenous people and like CRT, is an effective means of analyzing systemic racism (Hodler & Batts Maddox, 2021). Like CRT was developed to address the systemic oppression of the Black population in the United States during the civil rights era, TribalCrit arose to critique the colonial structures and systems that have marginalized Indigenous populations in North America (Brayboy, 2005). Brayboy (2005) notes that educational policies and practices within North America are often rooted

in White supremacy and imperialism. Castagno and Lee (2007) add that these policies and practices are typically entrenched in assimilationist aims and have pushed Indigenous culture, worldviews, and systems to the periphery. The harmful effects of settler colonialism and the poor relations governments have maintained with Indigenous people are components that need to be considered when educational policies and practices are implemented as the impacts often perpetuate racism and the continual domination of Indigenous people (Hodler & Batts Maddox, 2021). By employing a TribalCrit lens, educational policies, and practices can be critiqued more equitably according to the literature.

Methodology

The following section includes my position as a researcher, the research questions used to guide the study, the methods implemented (i.e., search criteria, sources), and a table of the sources gathered, including the types of sources used, the major themes, the data sources, and the race of the researcher(s) and participants.

Positioning

My personal and professional interests in teacher diversity prompted this literature review. I am a white, male, English as a first language educator and researcher. As a white educator, I am in contact with BIPOC teachers and students and hold a position of power over them as a university instructor and teacher educator, even if I desire to mitigate that power. Addressing my power is an ethical necessity when researching the topic of teacher diversity. Researchers should acknowledge their position of power and outline the power dynamics in hopes of creating a welcoming and non-intimidating educational environment. White researchers like me need to understand the concept of privilege and the importance of navigating the power and privilege they possess as Caucasian individuals.

While I have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of privilege because of my experiences and graduate work in education, I still have a lot to learn in terms of the nuances of privilege, including White fragility. DiAngelo (2018) defines White fragility as a set of unexamined assumptions that when questioned elicit a myriad of emotions and behaviours. DiAngelo (2018) offers advice concerning White fragility that fellow White educators like me must grapple with, including, abandoning the notion that experienced educators are free of racism, that an experienced educator's understanding of racism is ever complete, and that people with good intentions cannot be racist. An educator and researcher's learning journey is never complete, and as a White, privileged individual, I have much more to learn to ensure I engage my BIPOC students and research participants in a socially productive manner.

Research Questions

This article explores the merits of using critical race theory to elucidate barriers and opportunities for affirming linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity in Canada's educational institutions. The review of the literature is guided by the following research questions:

- What does the literature reveal about using critical race theory to increase the number of BIPOC teachers and break down the barriers that prevent greater racial teacher diversity in the school system?

- What facilitative programming and practices does the literature recommend to make schools genuinely and robustly more inclusive?

Methods

Using the research questions as a guide, I began searching for literature about how critical race theory can highlight and name racism inherent in the school system that leads to a lack of racial diversity in the Canadian teaching force. To begin the process of finding related literature, I began searching through educational databases such as ERIC, Scopus, and Pascal and Francis. I used the following search terms: critical race theory, tribal critical race theory, teacher diversity, BIPOC teachers, teachers of colour, diverse teachers, and White teachers. Some of the journals that provided informative articles were *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Canadian Journal of Education*, *The Urban Review*, and *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*. To review the journal articles, I read the title and abstract to see if the articles aligned with my research focus on critical race theory and teacher diversity. I also accessed grey literature including newspaper editorials, teacher union documents, and school division reports. In total, my search yielded 34 sources. While including the universe of texts in this review was not feasible, this scoping review offers a wide array of the prominent literature published on CRT, TribalCrit, and teacher diversity. I largely considered an article's citation count¹ when determining whether to include it in the review as a source with a higher citation count likely has more merit, significance, and impact. Through the review, I found four emergent and distinct themes: (a) interest convergence, (b) deconstructing injustices and scrutinizing policy regarding Indigenous populations, (c) critiquing Whiteness and White privilege regarding Black populations, and (d) theoretical critiques and counter-arguments. I chose these topic areas as they were featured heavily in the review of the literature and relate to teacher diversity and the diversification of the Canadian teaching force. The following table outlines the sources that I accessed, including the type of source, the major themes, the citation count, the data sources, the race of the researcher(s), and the race of the participants.

Data Analysis

Across the 34 articles that addressed critical race theory, tribal critical race theory, and teacher diversity, 18 studies offered a theoretical perspective and/or a review of the literature, 14 articles provided an empirical study with research participants, and two studies offered an analytical outlook. The most commonly collected data sources from the empirical studies were interviews (38%), case studies (9%), document analysis (6%), observations (6%), and surveys (6%). The least common data sources from the empirical studies were focus groups, archival data, blogs, census data, and testimonials – all factoring into 3% of the cumulative data sources. When examining the race of the researcher(s), 37% of the researchers were White, 25% were Latino, 16% were Black, 12% were Asian, 6% were Indigenous, and 4% identified as biracial. The races of the researcher(s) were gathered from position statements in current or previous works, faculty page searches, and news pages via online searches.

¹ The citation count was based on Google Scholar's citation count and was conducted in February 2024.

Table 1

Literature Pertaining to the Implementation of Critical Race Theory to Enhance the Inclusivity of Teachers in Canada and Related Facilitative Programming

Source	Source Type/Citation Count	Major themes	Data Source	Race of the researcher(s)	Race of the participants
Abrams & Moio (2009)	Journal article (863)	Critical race theory; student diversity; cultural diversity	Review of literature	White; unknown	n/a
Aitken & Radford (2018)	Journal article (48)	Non-diverse teachers; reconciliation; pre-service teachers	Interviews; blogs	White (European ancestry)	Not provided
Allen (2015)	Journal article (123)	Black male students; teacher ideology; resistance	Ethnographic interviews; field observations	Black	Black
Brayboy (2005)	Journal article (2,180)	Tribal critical race theory; Indigenous education	Review of literature; theoretical	Indigenous	n/a
Carleton (2021)	Journal article (17)	Residential school denialism; anti-Indigenous racism	Document analysis; theoretical	White	n/a
Castagno & Lee (2007)	Journal article (188)	Tribal critical race theory; student diversity	Ethnographic interviews; document analysis	White; Asian	Indigenous
Cheruvu et al. (2015)	Journal article (150)	Teachers of colour; critical race theory	Interviews	Latino; Indigenous; Asian; White	Black, Asian, Latino, Indigenous
Daniel (2019)	Journal article (86)	Black educators; racism among white females	Review of literature; theoretical	Black	n/a
Delgado & Stefancic (2011)	Book (13,567)	Critical race theory; racism; liberalism	Review of literature; case studies; theoretical	Biracial (White/Mexican); White	n/a

Source	Source Type/Citation Count	Major themes	Data Source	Race of the researcher(s)	Race of the participants
Gomez et al. (2023)	Journal article (1)	Ethnic studies; arrested semantics	Review of literature; theoretical	Latino (2); Black	n/a
Hambacher & Ginn (2021)	Journal article (54)	Minority group students; consciousness raising	Review of literature	Biracial (White/Asian); White	n/a
Harris et al. (2015)	Journal article (109)	Critical race theory; social justice; institutional diversity	Review of literature; theoretical	White (2); Black	n/a
Heringer (2023)	Journal article (0)	Black refugee students; hospitality; self-determination	Interviews	Latino (Brazilian)	Black
Janzen (2016)	Newspaper editorial (0)	Teacher diversity; diverse post-secondary admission protocols	Analysis	White	n/a
Kulkarni (2022)	Journal article (24)	Teachers of colour; disability and race	Interviews	South Asian	Black; Latino
Ladson-Billings (2013)	Chapter (810)	Interest convergence; intersectionality	Review of literature; theoretical	Black	n/a
Ledesma & Calderon (2015)	Journal article (758)	Critical race theory; CRT in higher education	Review of literature	Latino (2)	n/a
Matsuda (1987)	Journal article (2,616)	People of colour; critical legal studies	Review of literature; theoretical	Asian	n/a
Mocombe (2017)	Journal article (28)	Critical race theory; Western episteme	Theoretical	Latino (Haitian)	n/a

Source	Source Type/Citation Count	Major themes	Data Source	Race of the researcher(s)	Race of the participants
Othman (2022)	Journal article (1)	Teacher diversity; immigrant teachers	Review of literature	Saudi Arabian	n/a
Posner (1997)	Journal article (43)	Critical race theory	Analysis	White (Jewish)	n/a
Ryan et al. (2009)	Journal article (394)	Teacher vs. student diversity; race relations	Census data; review of literature	White (3)	n/a
Sandles (2020)	Journal article (57)	Black male teacher shortage; colour blindness	Review of literature; theoretical	Black	n/a
Schmidt (2010)	Journal article (150)	Systemic discrimination; immigrant teachers	Interviews	White	White, Indian, Bangladeshi, Filipino, Russian, Eastern European
Skelton (2023)	Journal article (1)	Decolonizing education; reconciliation	Document analysis; review of literature	White	n/a
Solorzano (1998)	Journal article (2,421)	Critical race theory; scholars of colour	Surveys; interviews	Latino	Latino (Mexican)
Solorzano & Yosso (2002)	Journal article (6,833)	Critical race theory; discrimination in education	Review of literature; theoretical	Latino (2)	n/a
Stephenson (2019)	Report (0)	Teacher diversity; racialized educators	Interviews; case studies	White	Black
Stephenson (2020)	Report (0)	Immigrant teachers; teacher diversity	Interviews; case studies	White	Indian; Filipino

Source	Source Type/Citation Count	Major themes	Data Source	Race of the researcher(s)	Race of the participants
Su (2007)	Journal article (136)	Communities of colour; critical race theory	Case studies; observation; archival; interviews	Asian	Latino; Black
Taylor (2014)	Journal article (19)	Critical pedagogy; colonization	Testimonials	White	White; Indigenous
Turner (2015)	Report (18)	Teacher diversity; employment equity	Surveys; interviews	Black	Black
Writer (2008)	Journal article (249)	Multicultural education; tribal critical race theory	Review of literature; theoretical	Indigenous	n/a
Yosso et al. (2009)	Journal article (2,190)	Critical race theory; discrimination in education	Focus groups; interviews	Latino (3); Black (1)	Latino

In terms of the race of the participants, 28% identified as Black, 24% as Asian, 20% as Latino, 16% as White, and 12% as Indigenous. The races of the participants were gathered from the methodology sections of each source. The data from this review of the literature indicates that Whites comprise the majority of researchers conducting studies on CRT and teacher diversity and that the voices of Black and Indigenous researchers are lacking from the cumulative research. Indigenous voices are also lacking among the participants. While the inclusion of BIPOC researchers and participants adds value to the quality of CRT research, this review suggests that Indigenous scholarship and participation is somewhat minimal within BIPOC participation as a whole and that a call to action is needed to amend the lack of Indigenous participation in CRT and teacher diversity-related research.

Review of the Literature

Interest Convergence

The literature indicates that one recurring principle of critical race theory and tribal critical race theory that makes them beneficial to analyze the lack of opportunities for racial diversity in educational institutions is interest convergence (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2011; Harris et al., 2015). This concept explains how advancements for BIPOC people are possible when Whites benefit psychologically or materialistically from the advancements (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Cheruvu et al., 2015). Delgado and Stefancic (2011) note that monumental gains for BIPOC members of society are rare as the dominant classes feel they have little to gain from inclusion.

Harris et al. (2015) explain that interest convergence explores how Whites tolerate the advancements of BIPOC people if progress is not too radical and the advancements do little to disrupt the status quo. CRT and TribalCrit scholars can use interest convergence to analyze and deconstruct school hiring policies and decision-making procedures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011). This allows scholars to identify the systemic barriers that ensure there is minimal disruption in the racial composition of the teaching force.

According to Harris et al. (2015), implementing critical race theory through an interest convergence lens permits scholars to analyze the language of inclusion school boards use in their operating policies and practices. A sample policy of inclusion from a division in Manitoba states, “Inclusive schools provide supportive learning environments that allow all students to reach their full potential as contributing citizens within a community of learners” and the division “celebrates that schools and classrooms reflect a broad diversity of cultures and abilities” (Seven Oaks School Division, 2017, para. 1). The language used in the above policy shows the division is committed to providing inclusive learning spaces for all learners to achieve their highest potential. However, by implementing interest convergence, CRT scholars can review the division’s record of hiring racially diverse teachers to accomplish this goal and question whether the division is following through on its commitment to racial diversity.

It is commendable if the hiring of racially diverse educators is common practice in the aforementioned school division. Approximately nine percent of the Manitoba teaching force identifies as Indigenous and five percent identify as educators of colour (Stephenson, 2020), so it is likely the division, like many others in Manitoba, is not hiring a sufficient number of BIPOC teachers to reflect the increasing diversity of the student body population (Janzen & Cranston, 2016; Sulz et al., 2023). The rhetoric used in the composition of inclusive policies shows school divisions are committed to inclusion and cultural diversity; however, the rhetoric may simply serve the interests of the division, not its clientele. Harris et al. (2015) explain that if BIPOC teachers are not hired in sufficient numbers, the policies do little to serve the interests of the benefactors, namely the BIPOC students, teachers, and administrators. By implementing interest convergence, the literature indicates CRT scholars can review whether educational policies and practices are adhered to or are symbolic gestures of egalitarianism.

The principle of interest convergence can also be applied using a tribal critical race theory perspective. A major tenet of TribalCrit is the focus on colonization and its harmful effects on Indigenous populations (Brayboy, 2005; Castagno & Lee, 2007; Writer, 2008). Writer (2008) notes that implementing a TribalCrit perspective can expose the colonial powers that continue unabated and affect the lives of Indigenous peoples in North America. Residential school denialism within the Canadian context exemplifies the harmful rhetoric that colonizers continue to put forward. In 2017, Conservative Senator, Lynn Beyak, delivered a controversial speech in the senate defending the aims of residential schooling and the appreciation that should be afforded to staff that assimilated Indigenous children into Canadian society (Carleton, 2021). Beyak dismissed the maltreatment perpetuated in the residential school system and called for more emphasis on the system’s positive aspects. Carleton (2021) argues that colonizers like Beyak tend to refute the atrocities committed in residential schools to legitimize their power and privilege. This denialism is an attack on Indigenous people and undermines the ongoing reconciliatory efforts within the country. The literature indicates that interest convergence within a TribalCrit framework can identify and refute this denialism.

Deconstructing Injustices and Scrutinizing Policy: Indigenous Populations

Critical race theory places importance on scrutinizing mainstream society and deconstructing the injustices and oppressions that have been inflicted on BIPOC individuals. By drawing from a diverse range of disciplines, CRT scholars can analyze and deconstruct racism at its core (Abrams & Moio, 2009). Its broad nature means it can be used to explore a variety of discriminatory injustices in society (Harris et al., 2015). Indigenous scholars (see Brayboy, 2005) can use CRT, and more specifically, TribalCrit, to examine the injustices that take place against Indigenous people, for example, an examination of why incarceration rates are high among the Indigenous and why there is a disproportionate number of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Regarding the school system, scholars can implement tribal critical race theory to examine why Indigenous educators are underrepresented. Abrams and Moio (2009) and Solorzano (1998) explain that critical theories like TribalCrit often draw from a variety of disciplines, such as sociology and history, to deconstruct and analyze how certain policies and practices in the education system are implemented to unconsciously discriminate against Indigenous people. For example, a close examination of post-secondary enrollment shows that the number of Indigenous students attending post-secondary institutions in Canada has been on the decline since 2008 (Ottmann, 2017). The total number of students attending post-secondary in Canada declined during the Covid-19 pandemic but increased during the 2020-2021 academic year (Statistics Canada, 2022). Data suggests that non-Indigenous youth, however, are graduating post-secondary at a lower rate than non-Indigenous students. In the 2021 academic year, for example, the number of non-Indigenous degree holders increased by 2.9 percent compared with Indigenous degree holders at 1.9 percent (Friesen, 2022). Recent data also indicates that Indigenous youth are 37 percent likely to have completed a post-secondary program or attended post-secondary studies compared with 72 percent of non-Indigenous youth who have attended or completed post-secondary studies (Layton, 2023). With fewer Indigenous students registering and completing post-secondary studies compared to non-Indigenous students, the number of prospective Indigenous teachers who apply to teacher education programs is likely to be insufficient. This results in a low representation of Indigenous educators in the school system and explains why provincial teaching forces are primarily homogenous across the country.

Tribal critical race theory can analyze and deconstruct why there is a significant gap between the enrollment and graduation rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners in post-secondary institutions. This analysis may show that Indigenous learners face numerous barriers in Canadian post-secondary institutions, such as a lack of financial resources to afford the high costs of tuition (Restoule et al., 2013). A more thorough deconstruction of the issue may reveal the existence of systemic racism in post-secondary institutions and a lack of acceptance towards Indigenous culture and worldviews. These barriers result in many Indigenous youths refusing to enroll in university studies or dropping out before graduation (Restoule et al., 2013). By employing TribalCrit, the incorporation of various perspectives, a thorough analysis of the issue, and a deconstruction of racial injustices can be applied (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2011). This makes TribalCrit a worthwhile theory to elucidate the potential barriers that inhibit the inclusion of more Indigenous teachers in the school system.

Critiquing Whiteness and Privilege: Black Populations

One reoccurring principle that permeates the critical race theory literature is Whiteness and the lack of privilege afforded to black educators. Daniel (2019) notes Blacks often have a challenging time adapting to workplaces that are dominated by Whites. In Manitoba, the majority of elementary teachers are White women (Martin, 2016), so this exemplifies the type of environment that Black educators would find challenging to work within. The rationale is that Whites often refuse to acknowledge racial discourses and White women tend to portray themselves as innocent victims in the fight for equality (Daniel, 2019). Daniel (2019) explains that White women reap many benefits from a homogenous teaching force like the one in Manitoba. More specifically, she notes a homogenous teaching force is an ideal environment for White women to perpetuate racial discrimination as this behaviour is not usually condemned by administrators, who are also likely to be White (Turner, 2015). Daniel (2019) reasons Whites do not appreciate being labeled as racists, so they will staunchly support diversity and equity measures to avoid this label and portray an inclusive allure. Whites need to partake in meaningful advocacy work to affect systemic change instead of passively adopting diversity efforts.

The literature also indicates that current education systems like Canada's are not necessarily conditioned to support Blacks in their roles as educators. Research by Sandles (2020) determined that Black teachers are often chided for not being team players and are sometimes deemed too radical in their teaching methodologies. Black teachers are often marginalized when they counter the majoritarian stories of Whites – narratives that dominate school curricula and tend to adversely affect the approaches of Black teachers. Sandles (2020) points out Black teachers tend to be greatly influenced by these narratives and sometimes further them onto Black students. Research by Heringer (2023) determined that Black refugee students, for example, tend to feel unwelcome, ignored, and undermined in Manitoba classrooms. Instances of racial discrimination and ridicule because of a lack of English language proficiency resulted in these refugee students feeling alienated and segregated (Heringer, 2023). This can be explained by Allen (2015) who professes that the amount of racial discrimination experienced by Black teachers results in them emulating White teachers to counter the harmful effects and improve their economic standing within the field. The fact Black teachers tend to align themselves ideologically with White teachers results in less than genuine role models for Black students (Allen, 2015). This supports Heringer's (2023) assertion that Black students often feel alienated and segregated even if they are taught by Black teachers.

Theoretical Critiques and Counter-Arguments

The literature reveals that critical race theory is not without critics (see Mocombe, 2017; Posner, 1997; Su, 2007). Some have argued CRT relies too strongly on lived experiences and narratives instead of on empirical data and rational inquiry (Posner, 1997). Posner (1997) argues stories are sometimes exaggerated, and exaggeration hampers the ability to have meaningful discussions on social and interracial issues. For example, an exaggerated story about racial bullying might hamper a BIPOC student's credibility in future dealings with a school administrator. Similarly, Mocombe (2017) argues CRT lacks rational-based argumentation and relies too heavily on lived experiences and narratives to condemn Western society for its faults, such as racism, sexism, and homophobia. Mocombe (2017) believes CRT offers little epistemological- alternatives to scrutinize the social structure of Western society. Likewise, Su

(2007) points out CRT scholars tend to offer little remedy to fight the ill effects of systemic racism and sometimes present a pessimistic and grim outlook for societal transformation. These are some of the prevailing critiques of CRT.

The literature offers a counter to the aforementioned critiques of critical race theory. Matsuda (1987) disagrees with Posner's (1997) and Mocombe's (2017) critique of CRT as she argues individuals who have experienced racial discrimination "speak with a special voice to which we should listen" (p. 324). She stresses CRT scholars benefit from listening to the perspectives of those who have experienced racial intolerance to further analyze and critique the structures of law and the principles of justice. Matsuda (1987) would likely be in favour of diversifying the teaching force so all students can hear the stories of how BIPOC educators have faced racial injustices but persevered. These "counterstories" are crucial to understanding racial subordination and encourage learners to respect experiential knowledge (Hambacher & Ginn, 2021; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso et al., 2009). The narratives of BIPOC teachers are vital in revealing the true nature of the educational experience. Ledesma and Calderon (2015) would also contest Su's (2007) notion that CRT offers little remedy and a pessimistic view of tackling institutional racism. To counter, they propose that a primary tenet of CRT is the importance of BIPOC people shaping the direction of societal transformation and engaging the community in completing the important work. By involving BIPOC people and engaging the community, Ledesma and Calderon (2015) counter CRT's pessimistic outlook.

Facilitative Programming and Practices

The final section of the article reviews the literature about the facilitative programming and practices that can make schools genuinely and robustly inclusive. The first suggestion from the literature is to bring reconciliation into the classroom (see Aitken & Radford, 2018; Janzen, 2016; Skelton, 2023; Taylor, 2014). The numerical disparity between Indigenous learners and teachers coupled with the societal and historical injustices Indigenous peoples have endured validate the need for reconciliation in Canadian classrooms. The second suggestion is to hire more educators of colour to represent the diversity in classrooms across the country (see Janzen, 2016; Ryan et al., 2009; Stephenson, 2019; Turner, 2015). The number of students with diverse backgrounds is increasing; however, the number of teachers with similar backgrounds lags and is not indicative of this growth (Janzen & Cranston, 2016; Schmidt & Janusch, 2016; Sulz et al., 2023). The third recommendation from the literature is to share the counter-narratives of BIPOC people (see Ladson-Billings, 2013; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso et al., 2009). This suggestion is paramount according to the literature to counter the narratives of Whites that tend to dominate the curriculum and devalue the experiences of BIPOC teachers and students. The following is an overview and analysis of the above recommendations from the literature.

Bring Reconciliation into the Classroom

The Indigenous people of Canada have suffered numerous societal and historical injustices, which have limited their representation in the teaching force. An increase in the number of Indigenous educators is an endeavour that serves many purposes, such as having a better reflection on the values of democracy, abiding by the aims of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and adhering to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (Janzen, 2016). Indigenous educators have important roles to play in the education system and can provide

all learners with opportunities to engage with reconciliation initiatives and examine Indigenous culture (Skelton, 2023). By parking in the reconciliation process, students learn about the Indigenous ways of life and appreciate the diversity evident in Canada.

Increasing the number of Indigenous teachers in the workforce is one way to achieve reconciliatory aims in Canada. Canada could follow the lead of Australia which initiated a plan in 2022 to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in its education system and alleviate the country's teacher shortage. Like Canada, Australia suffers from a lack of Indigenous teachers. Approximately 6.2% of Australian students identify as Indigenous, yet only two percent of the teaching force is Indigenous (Fricker & Auld, 2022). To alleviate this gap, Australia has pledged ten million dollars toward a national campaign to increase the number of First Nations teachers and mitigate the teaching shortage. The country has also allocated bursaries, some upwards of \$40,000, to incentivize Indigenous students to enroll in teacher-training programs (Fricker & Auld, 2022). Through its recruitment initiatives and monetary incentives, Australia is taking meaningful steps to increase the number of Indigenous teachers. Canada would be advised to initiate similar measures to increase Indigenous teachers in its own teaching force.

While an imperative initiative, bringing reconciliation into the classroom is often a contentious issue (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Taylor, 2014). Taylor (2014) notes teaching for reconciliation can have an emotional toll on educators as all students, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, hail from different backgrounds and bring different experiences and knowledge to the classroom. Eurocentric predispositions and White privilege are unconsciously inherent within society, so reconciliation is often a taxing and burdensome subject to broach with non-Indigenous Canadians (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Skelton, 2023).

While these challenges are indicative of the hesitation some educators have in facilitating reconciliation in the classroom, teaching for reconciliation is one way to make schools genuinely inclusive. Settler colonialism has done irrefutable harm to the Indigenous peoples, so reconciliatory initiatives are necessary to address these harms (Skelton, 2023). The literature indicates the goals of the TRC cannot be fulfilled without an improved relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, which includes an acknowledgment of the harms caused by colonialism (Aitken & Radford, 2018). Educators have the greatest ability to mend the inimical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians because education was once used to suppress the Indigenous peoples for generations (Skelton, 2023). Aitken and Radford (2018) note that teachers play a vital role in educating all students about the injustices that have been perpetrated upon the Indigenous, including the abusive nature of residential schools, dishonoured treaties, and misappropriated lands. By bringing reconciliation into the classroom, educators help young learners understand the harmful past of the country and the importance of facilitating cordial relationships with Indigenous peoples.

One such school division, the Winnipeg School Division in Manitoba, is at the forefront of bringing reconciliation into the classroom. The division provides numerous opportunities for the teaching of reconciliation in subject-area classrooms, such as in English language arts, social studies, music, art, and outdoor education (Skelton, 2023). One such reconciliatory initiative – Orange Shirt Day – pays tribute to the survivors of residential schools. Orange Shirt Day derives from the story of Phyllis Webstad, an Indigenous youth who was stripped of her orange shirt and forced to wear a uniform on her first day of school at St. Joseph Mission Residential School in British Columbia (Winnipeg School Division, 2019). The story has “become a symbol of the maltreatment that residential school survivors experienced and exemplifies the loss of culture,

identity, and traditions that took place in residential schools across Canada” (Skelton, 2023, p. 90). To mark Orange Shirt Day, some schools in the division invited Indigenous elders to share their experiences in the residential school system and explain the importance of forgiveness in the reconciliation process (Winnipeg School Division, 2019). The facilitation of reconciliation in the classroom has been successful in the Winnipeg School Division. This initiative in the literature exemplifies the facilitative programming that can make schools firmly inclusive.

Search for Classroom Colour

Student body populations across Canada are highly diverse, yet the teaching force does not parallel this diversity (Janzen & Cranston, 2016; Schmidt & Janusch, 2016; Sulz et al., 2023). Administrators of colour often confess that the teacher candidates they conduct interviews with from various teacher-training programs are not representative of the increasing racial diversity of the student body population (Hambacher & Ginn, 2021; Stephenson, 2019). Part of the blame for the lack of diversity in the future teaching force should be placed on teacher education programs, which likely do not admit enough BIPOC applicants. However, Stephenson (2019) argues it might be unfair to blame teacher education programs entirely if BIPOC applicants are not applying in sufficient numbers or if school divisions are not hiring an adequate number of racially diverse teachers to align with student demographics. The University of Manitoba’s Faculty of Education recognized the need for greater teacher diversity and overhauled its Bachelor of Education admissions policies in 2017 to admit an increased number of diverse teacher candidates (Dunfield, 2016). These efforts may have been in vain, however, if school divisions only employed a minimal number of BIPOC educators to maintain an egalitarian image.

The literature signals many repercussions for a lack of racial diversity in the teaching force. A lack of diversity among the teaching staff could create a less welcoming school environment (Janzen, 2016) and prevent parents from advocating for their children or seeking assistance if there are no BIPOC educators on staff to which they can relate (Stephenson, 2019).

A lack of diversity amongst the teaching force likely results in fewer role models for BIPOC youth. This is unfortunate as studies have demonstrated that students of colour benefit tremendously from the mentorship provided by BIPOC educators (see Demsash, 2007; Janzen, 2016; Othman, 2022; Stephenson, 2019). Janzen (2016) stresses that BIPOC educators incorporate diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives into the curriculum and contest the societal maltreatment shown to people of colour. Students of colour need to see teachers of colour in the classroom as these educators increase the student’s sense of cultural pride (Demsash, 2007). A teacher candidate of Rwandan ethnicity interviewed by Stephenson (2019), for example, spoke of the cultural pride a young learner in their practicum class felt when understanding the teacher candidate had a similar ethnic background and spoke the same language. The ability of BIPOC educators to impart a sense of cultural pride like the Rwandan teacher candidate motivates young learners of colour and allows them to see that a career in education is a worthy ambition.

While the literature outlines numerous benefits of diversifying the teaching force, school divisions are often reluctant to hire BIPOC educators in greater numbers. Less than five percent of the teaching force in Manitoba, for example, is comprised of BIPOC teachers (Stephenson, 2020), so the hiring policies of school divisions need critique. A BIPOC administrator interviewed by Stephenson (2019) presses for more educators of colour, saying, “Hire them, yes, but hire them in numbers that are great enough that they are not going to feel as though they are an only. You can

actually create systemic change” (para. 29). While systemic change is possible with the hiring of more racially diverse educators, it will also affect the status quo of a primarily White teaching force (Martin, 2016; Turner, 2015). This explains the hesitancy of many divisions to increase the racialized composition of the teaching force above five percent. This hesitation coupled with unyielding qualifications recognition and recertification processes for immigrant teachers across the country results in a predominantly homogenous and non-diverse teaching force (Marom, 2017). Increasing the number of BIPOC teachers in the school system is vital to disrupting this troubling practice and is an initiative worth exploring as per the literature.

Share the Counter-Stories of BIPOC People

The literature on critical race theory proposes the sharing of counter-stories of BIPOC people to counter the majoritarian narratives of Whites that dominate educational discourse. CRT scholars would support schools in organizing guest speakers to share some of their personal experiences of racial intolerance. A school might invite an Indigenous elder who is a residential school survivor, for example, to share some of the atrocities that took place in the country’s residential school system with the student body. The voices of teachers and students who have experienced discrimination in the school system and suffered from a lack of opportunities need to be heard, for these voices are valuable pedagogical tools that contest systemic racism (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) and have therapeutic and cathartic benefits (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) contend that counter-storytelling brings marginalized voices to the forefront and can disrupt the dominant narratives of Whites, such as narratives that defend the altruistic intentions of the residential school system. Gomez et al. (2023) add that the counter-narratives of BIPOC people are crucial in outing the problematic effects of White supremacy in the maintaining of racial hierarchy. This hierarchy pushes the experiences of BIPOC people and their historical sufferings under the White social order to the periphery (Gomez et al., 2023).

Research by Kulkarni (2022) determined that BIPOC teachers have important roles to play in interrupting these problematic behaviours and mitigating the perpetuation of deficit-orientated perspectives. Instead, BIPOC students need to be seen as good and smart. If deficit-oriented perspectives remain unchecked, systemic racism will continue unabated against BIPOC students (Kulkarni, 2022). The literature, however, implores school systems to go beyond introducing the counter-stories of BIPOC people to making sure they are used to work toward systemic change (Ladson-Billings, 2013; Yosso et al., 2009). Ladson-Billings (2013) argues that counter-narratives should not be used to rant or vent or as a retaliatory weapon; rather, they should be used to explore larger issues and to understand how certain policies are hindering the advancement of BIPOC people. To go beyond the sharing of counter-stories, Yosso et al. (2009) feel that educators should strive to share deeper critical insights within the curriculum. Regarding Indigenous curricula, this could involve creating space for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems and delving deep into particular practices, histories, and worldviews (Montero & Denomme-Welch, 2018). The literature necessitates the sharing of these counter-narratives and taking meaningful action afterward.

Conclusion

This literature review uncovered that critical race theory provides a holistic means to contest the systemic racism that exists in the education system. CRT provides a useful framework

to review the obstacles that prevent the teaching force from becoming more racially diverse. These hindrances include inclusive hiring policies that are not enforced and a homogenous teaching force that school divisions and the teaching force implicitly prefer. By implementing CRT, scholars can use interest convergence to analyze the rhetoric in such policies and determine how Whites benefit from the advancements of BIPOC individuals (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Harris et al. 2015). By using CRT, the lived experiences of those impacted by systemic racism can also come to the forefront (Yosso et al., 2009), such as Indigenous populations (Brayboy, 2005; Writer, 2008) and Black populations (Allen, 2015; Daniel, 2019; Heringer, 2023; Sandles, 2020). While some dispute the necessity of sharing stories of maltreatment (Mocombe, 2017; Posner, 1997), the sharing of lived experiences allows scholars to hear personal perspectives of racial injustice (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) and use the information to critique the legal system and the principles of justice (Matsuda, 1987). Ultimately, CRT scholars can review the education system as a whole – a system that inherently pushes BIPOC educators to the periphery. The facilitative programming and practices suggested by the literature – bringing reconciliation into the classroom, increasing the number of BIPOC teachers, and sharing the counter-narratives of BIPOC people – can also be implemented with a CRT and TribalCrit lens to affirm opportunities for greater racial diversity among the Canadian teaching force.

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