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From Platforms to Pedagogy: Exploring How Youth's Social Media Practices Can Shape Teacher Education Through Culturally Digitized Pedagogy

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This paper explores the digital literacy practices of youth of Color on social media within the context of teacher education. Despite being critical stakeholders in education, youth of Color are often overlooked in teacher education. Digital spaces, particularly social media and youth literacies on platforms, have the potential to facilitate critical, antiracist teacher learning. This paper represents an examination of these issues through a teacher education lens and suggests that a culturally digitized pedagogy framework could be valuable in guiding preservice teachers toward supporting youth's digital civic literacies using an asset-based approach. Additionally, the authors discuss ways English education programs can benefit from studying the ways youth of Color utilize social media platforms for digital activist work, providing text-based classroom resources emphasizing antiracist pedagogies, offering practical recommendations for integrating antiracist coursework, and posing inquiry questions for English education programs to consider their efforts in the development of fostering equity-minded preservice teachers.

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Social media platforms play an increasingly influential role in shaping English language arts (ELA) classrooms. A 2021 study showcased how six youth of Color utilized social media platforms like Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube to engage in justice-oriented responses to social justice issues (McDaniel, 2022, 2023). Rooted in their lived experiences, their literacy practices fostered solidarity and activism in digital spaces. These youths responded to ongoing racialized events during the study period, highlighting the importance of learning from their digital activism.

At the time of publication of this article, the role of ownership of these digital platforms has been brought into question in relation to ways platforms are moderating content in reaction to political pressure. While social media platforms provide a space for free speech, the type of speech, including hate speech, and how it is moderated, is counterbalanced by the financial pressure of appearing nonrestrictive to the majority of its users (Noble, 2018).

Additionally, with the continued adoptions of artificial intelligence (AI) models into these applications, scholars have questioned how AI may affect Black voices and engagement online (Shaw et al., 2024). This reality makes a study of this kind all the more pressing and relevant to understanding how youth of Color can continue to build communities grounded in activism and navigate such complications in these online spaces.

This article reports an examination of the impact of youth of Color literacy practices online, focusing on the influence of social media in educational spaces, namely English teacher education classrooms. This article also draws upon Culturally Digitized Pedagogy (CDP; (McDaniel, 2023, 2024) for insights into culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2014) and sustaining (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014) teaching in digital environments. Furthermore, it is informed by Racial Literacy for Activism (#RL4A); Price-Dennis & Sealy-Ruiz, 2021) and scholarly literature supporting youth of Color literacy practices in digital spaces.

Based on justice-oriented literacies demonstrated by youth of Color, we advocate for the preparation of preservice teachers to actively engage with these literacies enacted on social media platforms. Additionally, we provide practical suggestions for educators interested in integrating these literacies into teacher education programs. This coursework has the potential to influence how preservice teachers approach learning in their own classrooms. By modeling assignments after their coursework experiences, preservice teachers can promote teaching and learning in a more equitable and humanizing way, supporting all students, but especially youth of Color.

Theorizing Youth's Digital Activist Work

Culturally Digitized Pedagogy

CDP (McDaniel, 2023, 2024) represents a significant advancement in educational theory and practice, offering a perspective that examines the importance of nurturing the digital experiences of all students, especially

youth of Color. Following calls for the development of a conceptual framework to undergird student's sociotechnical consciousness (Tanksley, 2024), this framework serves a dual purpose: to provide a critical lens for examining digital literacies and to merge culturally sustaining pedagogy principles with the realities of youths' online presence. Consequently, CDP extends both theory and practice by empowering students to leverage their existing digital skills rooted in activism through civic engagement via social media. CDP adopts a social-justice-oriented approach, delving into ways youth of Color utilize digital platforms to challenge inequalities, celebrate culture, and address social justice issues.

Positioning CDP as a pivotal concept for integrating youth culture into digital literacies and practices is essential for fully supporting their cultural fluidity. This perspective offers a timely lens that highlights the significance of youths' digital engagements in education, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and people of Color (BIPOC) students, complementing existing critical frameworks (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012) and culturally rich curricula (Gay, 2010).

Five CDP tenets (McDaniel, 2023, 2024) aligned with students' online experiences enable educators to refine classroom pedagogy and emphasize the digital dissemination of youth culture, language, and diverse literacy skills:

1. Advocates transforming education by integrating culturally infused digital aspects into pedagogical and curricular practices, connecting to youths' evolving lives, and incorporating cultural and digital practices into curriculum and content.
2. Reveals the role of digital contexts in integrating justice-oriented literacies for a more just experience for diverse learners.
3. Enhances student belonging, validating cultural identities to foster classroom communities mirroring online critical cultural discussions.
4. Promotes asset-based pedagogy, recognizing students' digital cultural wealth in education.
5. Acknowledges youth engagement in online activism and allyship, urging educators to adopt a justice-oriented lens in pedagogical practice.

Digital environments provide platforms where youth of Color engage in online literacies for action-oriented purposes. Their use of digital spaces facilitates discussions on critical social issues such as civil unrest, systemic injustices, antiracism, and equity, often translating into digital advocacy through social media (McDaniel, 2022, 2023). Through a culturally digitized pedagogy framework aimed at preserving and promoting digitized literacies, English education programs can harness the digital civic engagement of youth of Color. This approach challenges the diminishing emphasis on social justice in education by recognizing the significance of youths' critical literacy work in social media spaces. It also creates opportunities for preservice teachers to integrate and learn from

youths' critical digital literacies, particularly concerning their grassroots online activism.

A Theory of Teacher Learning

Other theoretical influences related to teacher learning that we draw upon include culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogies. Derived from her work with successful teachers of African-American students, Ladson-Billings (1995) coined the pedagogy culturally relevant pedagogy, defining this pedagogical practice as a “theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement, but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequalities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (p. 469). Ladson-Billings’s foundational theory also serves as the article that catapulted asset pedagogies. The broad idea in this work pointed to “the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 77). To demonstrate, Ladson-Billings (2014) found three major domains of the successful teachers’ work including,

- Academic Success, referring to the intellectual growth students achieve through classroom instruction and learning.
- Cultural Competence, referring to the skill to help students embrace and honor their own cultures while also acquiring knowledge and fluency in at least one additional culture.
- Sociopolitical Consciousness, referring to the capacity to extend learning beyond the classroom, using academic knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world issues. (p. 75)

Moreover, Ladson-Billings (2014) called for people to transition to what she defined as the remix to culturally relevant pedagogy, noting how “remixing is vital to innovation in art, science, and pedagogy, and it is crucial that we are willing to remix what we created and/or inherited” (p. 76).

Extending this work, Paris and Alim (2014) introduced culturally sustaining pedagogy as a framework encompassing the changing lives and practices of youth, and as a concept that “seeks to perpetuate and foster — to sustain — linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 94), extending Ladson-Billings (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy. Paris further defined culturally sustaining pedagogy, noting,

The term culturally sustaining requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people — it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. Further, questioning “if the very terms “relevant” and “responsive” are descriptive of what we are after in teaching and learning in a pluralistic society. (p. 95)

In this article, culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies form the foundation of the CDP framework. These theories of teacher learning not only guide the practical recommendations we make later in this article but also provide further justification for integrating literacy practices of youth of color into teacher education.

A Review of Relevant Literature

Black and Brown Youths' Digital Literacies

In an increasingly social mediated world, the importance of understanding Black and Brown youths' digital literacies on social media becomes increasingly significant. Recent studies highlight how youth of Color and marginalized youth-led communities engage in critical consciousness and activism through digital compositions. These communities utilize various mediums, including sketches and writings shared on video conferencing platforms (Barton & Cappello, 2023; Thakurta, 2023), social media posts (McDaniel, 2022, 2023), and YouTube videos (Patterson, 2017; Shrodes, 2022).

For instance, Kelly (2020) illustrated how Black girls utilize social media platforms like Instagram, X, and Snapchat to create digital compositions that resist oppression. This study illustrates how social media affords youth of Color platforms space to engage critically in writing practices online. Thus, as demonstrated by the literature, social media spaces are promising avenues for examining the role of critical literacies in youths' content creation and justice-oriented activism.

Current literature focuses on the language and literacy lives of youth of Color through digital literacies and multimodality (Aleo et al., 2023; Barton & Cappello, 2023; Jones et al., 2023; Zapata & Kleekamp, 2022), social justice activism (McDaniel, 2022, 2023), civic engagement (Hadley et al., 2019), and participation in social media communities (Kelly, 2020; McDaniel, 2023; Shrodes, 2022). Additionally, scholarly discussions confirm youths' significant online presence (Mirra & Garcia, 2021; Muhammad & Haddix, 2016; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017).

For example, Stornaiuolo and Thomas (2017) highlighted that "young people are using digital media in myriad ways to connect, promote social change, and counternarrate the world from their perspective" (p. 338). Through social media, BIPOC youth explore identities, activism, and allyship, amplifying underrepresented voices. Their online participation opens new ways of thinking about current events, civic life, and their roles as social commentators, citizens, and agents of change. Literature also explores what it means to be a youth activist of Color and what change-making opportunities exist for youth activists (Boveda & Boveda, 2023). Thus, youth digital and popular literacies, both in and out of school, are complex and dynamic (Haddix & Sealey-Ruiz, 2012; Skerrett et al., 2013).

The multimodal nature of these online spaces also provides an avenue for youth of color to express multiple identities in creative and celebratory ways, demonstrated in Griffin's (2022) analysis of an online website created by nine adolescent Black girls. This kind of work provides a space for youth of Color "to render articulations of themselves that [are] more

than mere regurgitations of knowledge, but knowledge production” and “allows opportunities for collective authorship and learning experiences” (p. 1723). This research complements the findings of Shaw et al. (2023), who found in a study examining how youth engaged in computer programming can “draw upon their upon their experiences as Black girls, which recognizes that their everyday knowledge generates rich epistemological contributions that can be used to restory dominant narratives” (p. 70). In both studies, although there were limitations imposed by online structures due to hegemonic structures inherent in their design, Black adolescents were able to utilize critical literacies to express their complex multiple identities in these spaces.

Previous to these works, Price-Dennis (2016), who investigates how Black girls display critical literacy practices in digital spaces, positioned youths’ digital literacy practices as sophisticated and savvy. For instance, in exploring how Black women and girls use social media to respond to misogynoir (a term referring to the intersection of anti-Black racism and misogyny toward Black women in U.S. culture, coined by Black feminist writer and activist Bailey, 2021) from both on and offline, she found that Black women and girls’ digital literacies are complex, deeply layered, and nuanced. Black women and girls use social media to address various elements of Black female identity, achievement, safety, and self-expression (e.g., #SayHerName; #BlackGirlMagic; #BlackLivesMatter).

Price-Dennis (2016) found that Black girls’ digital literacies are complex, deeply layered, and nuanced. Additional findings indicated Black girls’ literacy practices were often situated in social justice discourse, fostering a sense of activism in these digital spaces (Garcia et al., 2020; Haddix et al., 2015; Price-Dennis, 2016). Furthermore, Price-Dennis et al. investigated the diverse literacies of Black girls by creating platforms for their voices and showcasing how curriculum redesign supports their digital literacy in online spaces (Price-Dennis et al., 2015; Price-Dennis et al., 2017; Price-Dennis & Muhammad, 2021).

Other research has suggested a need to balance digital media fatigue with mental health resources and course offerings to undergird the digital resistance of young Black women (Tanksley, 2024). The reality of corporate interests influencing algorithmic subjugation and producing fatigue, as well as the need to prepare youth of Color for that reality, is one that should be acknowledged. Still, it has been argued that “Black cyberculture builds a compelling vision of Blackness as an informational identity that avoids the essentialization of Black cultural identity despite the hegemonic influence of Western racial and technocultural ideology” (Brock, 2020, p. 25). In that sense, online spaces may provide a dimension where the multiple identities, including activist identities, of young people of Color can flourish, despite the hegemonic pressure in those spaces.

Racial Literacy for Activism

Youth of Color leverage their digital voices to address societal inequities, highlighting the imperative for teacher educators to enhance their racial literacy alongside that of preservice and in-service teachers, thereby supporting student activism. In navigating digital spaces, educators must critically address issues such as race and harmful online narratives, which

significantly impact classroom dynamics (Price-Dennis & Sealy-Ruiz, 2021). Price-Dennis and Sealy-Ruiz established their framework, Racial Literacy for Activism (#RL4A), with a focus on educating both preservice and in-service teachers in racial literacies.

Moreover, Price-Dennis and Sealy-Ruiz's (2021) framework supports learners as they question assumptions, engage in critical conversations, and practice reflexivity. They outlined six fundamental principles within their framework: videos, images/photos, animated GIFs, infographics, and charts and graphs. These principles served as the cornerstone for addressing their inquiry: "How can we utilize digital tools to promote awareness of race and equity in teacher education?" (p. 48). Price-Dennis and Sealy-Ruiz offered a framework to empower educators in tackling systemic inequities in education through curriculum and pedagogy, with the aim of better preparing teachers for the U.S. school system. Having implications for English education programs, the scholars offered a conceptual model of racial literacy in the digital age of social media that advances civic engagement and issues of equity.

Recent scholarship has pointed to problematic tendencies in online algorithms (Noble 2018, Tanksley 2024) and artificial intelligence programs (Shaw et al., 2024) in potentially obfuscating Black voices online. In a recent study, Shaw et al. contended that "AI's default setting is antiblackness, so it is imperative to critically consider the underlying surface of technological innovation" (p. 691).

Considering that artificial intelligence programs are increasingly being incorporated into social media applications, it is even more critical to examine youth of Color's voices in these spaces. CDP provides an apt conceptual framework to examine youth of Color's engagement in online spaces to bulwark the innovative practices of these students.

Civic Element of Youth of Color Literacy Practices

Literature related to the civic engagement of youth of Color explores the relationship between youth voice, democratic participation, and online civic engagement. For instance, Jimenez et al. (2023) examined the barriers that youth of Color encounter in democratic participation and the often unnoticed efforts involved in youth activism, such as developing critical awareness and accessing platforms for making change. In their work, Jimenez et al. highlighted how youth of Color assert themselves as knowledgeable individuals, countering assumptions related to their age and using their voices in online civic engagement.

Civic teaching and preservice teacher preparation are also explored in the literature, specifically focusing on integrating the social media literacies of youth of Color into teacher education spaces. The authors took up Mirra and Garcia's (2020) definition of civic engagement. They drew from critical race perspectives on civic education and democracy to explore how young people consider social and political issues that impact their lives. The study investigated how youth engage in storytelling and dialogue as they envision civic futures, described as humanizing and hopeful. The findings revealed that youth created counter stories to address their lack of recognition as citizens, participated in civic life by shaping their own

experiences, and imagined possibilities for engaging in an inclusive democratic community life using their own literacy practices.

Moreover, Garcia et al. (2021) investigated youth's digital civic literacy practices and the intersections of critical literacy and civic engagement in the digital era. In alignment, Mirra and colleagues (Mirra et al., 2013, 2016, 2018, 2021, 2022) have advanced the study of digital advocacy as a form of youth civic involvement. These scholars have significantly enhanced the field's comprehension of digital literacies and their diverse enactment in today's society.

In McDaniel's recent study (2022, 2023), it was found that six young people of Color engaged in civic literacy practices on social media. They used social media to advocate for social justice, reform government structures, take part in activism and allyship, and make sense of their overlapping marginalized identities within social media spaces. Their work in these spaces allowed them to highlight their perspectives and experiences, often using language to bring about positive societal changes, which are often overlooked.

Youth composed social media posts that served as counter stories, resisting the notion that youth are too young to be considered civically engaged (Lesko, 2012). Hence, there is a civic element of youth of Color literacy practices on social media that teacher educators might tap into. Additionally, cross-case data analysis revealed that youth of Color engage social media platforms by employing literacy practices in three primary ways: (a) advocating activism, action, and allyship through digital literacies; (b) envisioning societal change and new governance structures through these literacies; and (c) navigating the complexities of marginalized identities online. This work, centered on antiracism and social justice, holds significant implications for teacher educators and preservice teachers alike. There is a lack of understanding regarding how teacher education, particularly English teacher educators, utilize insights from the work of youth of Color in social media spaces to prepare teachers for justice-oriented and antiracist education.

Preservice teachers may benefit from additional preparation to teach topics related to politics and community engagement. For instance, they could receive support in exploring ways to incorporate civic engagement into the teaching and learning of English language arts (ELA). This support could also involve creating opportunities for students to engage critically in learning about politics, the democratic process, and community engagement (White, 2024). White's research aimed to bridge the gap in the literature by investigating how preservice teachers' civic ideas and knowledge are connected to specific civic-related teaching practices. The study examined the extent to which preservice teachers' civic competencies correlated with expectations to engage in particular types of civic teaching in their future classrooms.

Considering the multiple identities of youth of Color, as well as the complex interaction between those identities and digital engagement, it is important to consider the civic aspects of youth when preparing preservice teachers. Through civic teaching (both digital and nondigital) in literacy spaces, preservice teachers can help cultivate the next generation of

community members to participate in political and social processes, address social issues, and work to improve communities.

Bringing Youth of Color Social Media Literacies Into Teacher Education

This paper contributes to literature, particularly, by bringing CDP and its inspiration — youth of Color literacy practices — into teacher education, which is a space where youth of Color, despite being critical stakeholders in education, continue to be stubbornly absent. Similarly, we assert that digital spaces, especially around social media and youth, hold potential for critical, antiracist teacher learning, a salient and undertheorized point in the teacher education literature.

Translating the CDP Framework Into Teacher Education

Though initially conceptualized from the sophisticated online literacies of youth activists, the culturally digitized pedagogy framework has a place in traditional spaces, such as teacher education programs, even though it derives from a space where there was little to no guidance from teachers, facilitators, or adult supervisors. Particularly, the CDP framework could provide useful heuristics for orienting preservice teachers toward asset-based approaches of supporting youth's digital civic literacies.

English education programs could integrate the CDP framework into preservice teacher coursework (see Table 1). If it is not possible in university classes, a justice-oriented professional learning community (McDaniel & Osborn, 2024) could provide support for culturally relevant and sustaining teaching. Given the current political climate, such a framework might not occur in formal college classrooms but could thrive in other informal college spaces. Recognizing the significance of CDP in enhancing the inclusion of digital spaces, especially around social media and youth, programs could integrate this work into required courses, aligning the content with professional standards. In Table 1, we outline how the CDP framework principles can be implemented in teacher education spaces, crystallizing what the CDP framework offers to teacher education.

Considering Teacher Education Literature: Theory to Practice

ELA Teacher Education Classrooms

Recent teacher education literature also focuses on critical pedagogy in teacher education classrooms. For example, Alarcón et al.'s (2022) action research study focused on teacher educators' practices, grounded in critical pedagogy and democracy education. The study identified instructional practices in a methods course that reflected critical pedagogy. Their findings highlighted instructional practices, such as reflection folders and the jigsaw reading strategy, that led to shifts in preservice teachers' understanding of building relevant relationships and the importance of including multiple perspectives.

Table 1
Implementing the CDP Framework in Teacher Education

CDP Framework Tenets	Example of Teacher Education Aspects
<p>Advocates transforming education by integrating culturally infused digital aspects into pedagogical and curricular practices, connecting to youths' evolving lives, and incorporating cultural and digital practices into curriculum and content.</p>	<p>Inviting critical approaches toward pedagogy to infuse culturally relevant and sustaining English teaching and learning experiences, teacher educators can include critical and culturally infused experiences aligned with BIPOC students' online practices (e.g. multimodal counternarrative; social media participatory culture).</p> <p>Adding the context of digital spaces and youths' literacy practices in these spaces provides tools for preservice teachers to position ELA classrooms as contexts that support teens' timely critical and culturally infused literacies online.</p> <p>Preservice teachers can engage in more critical readings, experience culturally-infused website resources, and learn how to create more lessons related to creating critical consciousness.</p> <p>Programs could ensure differentiated instruction is part of the rubric, in which student teachers are evaluated on.</p>
<p>Reveals the role of digital contexts in integrating justice-oriented literacies for a more just experience for diverse learners.</p>	<p>Including assignments completed on or turned in via social media platforms such as YouTube and TikTok.</p> <p>Teacher educators could consider non-traditional spaces for assignment completion and submission.</p> <p>Programs could ensure digital context is part of the rubric under the technology (e.g., technology proficiency, technology integration, and competency) standard, in which student teachers are evaluated on.</p>
<p>Enhances student belonging, validating cultural identities to foster classroom communities mirroring online critical cultural discussions.</p>	<p>Shifting the classroom climate of college spaces towards an open space for discussion, teacher educators could offer opportunities for preservice teachers to engage in justice-oriented dialogue.</p> <p>Teacher educators could ask justice-oriented questions about English content related to inequity, the status quo, representation, and what preservice teachers can learn about society through English content.</p> <p>Programs could ensure student belonging is part of the rubric under a positive learning environment (e.g., well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and encourages respect for all) standard, in which student teachers are evaluated on.</p>
<p>Promotes asset-based pedagogy, recognizing students' digital cultural wealth in education.</p>	<p>Offering preservice teachers a choice to include digital civic/activist literacies in project-based assignments (e.g., choice boards) or writing assignments (e.g., narratives).</p> <p>Programs could ensure equity and fair mindedness is a criteria for a teacher candidates attitudes rubric, in which student teachers are evaluated on.</p>

CDP Framework Tenets	Example of Teacher Education Aspects
Acknowledges youth engagement in online activism and allyship, urging educators to adopt a justice oriented lens in pedagogical practice.	Weaving advocacy into teacher education curriculum and instruction (e.g., offer action oriented projects, include texts about teen advocacy in readings). Programs could ensure critical and creative thinking is a criteria for a teacher candidates attitudes rubric, in which student teachers are evaluated on.

This study contributes to understanding how teacher educators can use their instructional practices to promote critical pedagogy. Given the existing inequities in society, this work is timely and enacts a commitment to prioritizing equity, access, and diversity. Further, this work was addressed in the context of civil unrest, COVID-19, and the Black Lives Matter movement, centering race, racism, and access in education spaces and the greater society. Now, given the politicization of the U.S. Department of Education, social media moderation being influenced by political pressure, and the increasing adoption of hegemonic AI models in these social media programs, work concerning youth of Color’s engagement in online spaces is all the more critical.

Caughlan et al.’s (2017) national study of English teacher preparation in US colleges and universities found that teacher educators are addressing changes in content and context relevant to English education. This includes curriculum, demographic, political, and technological changes through initiatives at both the program and methods course levels. The programs require extensive field placements, a high number of credit hours in the subject area, and subject-specific methods. The responsibility for addressing institutional and pedagogical change is spread across courses.

Methods courses raise awareness of key issues and provide opportunities for preservice teachers to discuss these issues. However, there are limited opportunities for applying knowledge through practice. This article discusses tensions in English education related to conceptual coherence at the program and course levels, as well as tensions between awareness and practical application. In relation to youth digital work, culturally digitized pedagogy could be a space where preservice teachers enact awareness and practical application.

Moreover, Caughlan et al. (2017) explored how promoting awareness that classrooms are complex places with constantly changing dynamics has, at times, overshadowed links to practice. Nevertheless, teacher educators must ensure that applications to practice are thoroughly integrated into teacher education classrooms. That is, ELA teacher educators could demonstrate and employ teaching practices that encourage justice and inclusivity in the classroom. This involves actively using pedagogies — and language around them — to create, analyze, and convey knowledge in a world of diverse and sometimes conflicting ideas and values.

ELA Coursework Shaping Teacher Practice

The literature makes it clear that ELA coursework influences teacher practice. This is shown in Barnes and Smagorinsky's (2016) research on ELA teacher candidates' learning experiences in their coursework and their student teacher practicum experiences. Specifically, this research explored the learning experiences of participants from three university teacher education programs. The study involved interviews conducted between the end of coursework and the start of student teaching and took a sociocultural perspective to examine how the participants' learning was influenced by various factors, including formal teacher education courses and mentor teacher guidance.

Additionally, the study considered a wide range of factors that introduced competing conceptions of effective teaching. The findings suggest that despite the three programs having radically different structures and processes, the teacher candidates reported similar learning outcomes, albeit with variations that could be attributed to their respective program structures. Additionally, it was found that teacher education was just one of several sites of learning identified by teacher candidates, rather than being their sole or primary source of learning.

Education literature highlights the significance of critical concepts in influencing teacher practice, such as racial literacy (Price-Dennis & Sealy-Ruiz, 2021), culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2014), and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Irizarry, 2017; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). It is vital for teacher education scholarship to continue exploring how culturally infused ELA coursework shapes teacher practice.

In line with this, incorporating literacy practices of youth of Color into teacher education is crucial, and one approach is to integrate culturally digitized pedagogy in teacher education spaces. In essence, ELA methods coursework significantly influences the future practice of preservice teachers in their classrooms. Therefore, it should empower candidates to become teachers who strive for social transformation, as "preparing English teachers is part of the larger effort to imagine and create a more just and democratic society" (Alsup et al., 2006, p. 285).

Digital Platforms and Social Media Reshaping Teacher Education and Learning

Current studies in teacher education literature indicate that social media and digital platforms are reshaping teacher education and learning (Currie & Kelly, 2022; Greenhow et al., 2020; Stornaiuolo, & Thomas, 2017). Thus, it is important to acknowledge the digital literacies of youth of Color in social media spaces and the impact of digital platforms and social media in reshaping teacher education and learning.

Recent literature has explored improving youth schooling experiences by integrating various digital aspects (Skerrett et al., 2013). Schofield Clark et al. (2023) focused on online youth engagement on TikTok via smartphone use; Currie and Kelly (2022) investigated creating spaces for youth activism and social justice in classrooms; Jimenez et al. (2023) explored

democratic participation and youth activism efforts related to critical consciousness development and change-making mediums; Oden and Porter (2023) examined social media influence on teens' political interests and behaviors online, specifically their civic engagement on TikTok. Further, recent scholarship by Jerasa and Burriss (2024) explored how social media platforms like TikTok have transformed the ways young people engage in multimodal composition, particularly in how they write for, with, and against AI-powered algorithms. This research highlights the potential of TikTok as a space for youth of Color to reach audiences while resisting censorship and gatekeeping, making it a possible refuge for these communities.

While the literature acknowledges social media as a refuge for youth of Color, it is crucial also to consider how traditional contexts such as K-12 classrooms can provide additional refuge for them. Thus, understanding of how schools promote youth activism is essential. Chang & Gamez (2022) explored the roles and responsibilities of educational leaders in championing justice and navigating (re)surging youth activism.

Currie and Kelly (2022) furthered this discourse by detailing how teachers cultivate youth activism and social justice within classrooms, emphasizing popular culture as both an asset and an opportunity for fostering justice-oriented teaching and guiding educators in preparing for mediated youth engagement. Specifically, they asked, "How can teachers create space for youth activism and social justice in their classrooms," while conducting a study with K-12 educators, starting with a teacher education seminar in media analysis. During the seminar, participants created classroom activities using board games, popular films, music videos, and advertisements. These activities were then tested in the participants' classrooms, allowing the researchers to address practical issues encountered by the students. The study included case studies describing the design, implementation, and retrospective assessment of activities that involved students in media analysis and production. After the case studies, the authors discussed how their approach can promote ethical practices in the digital environment. Therefore, the authors provided theoretically informed yet practical tools to help educators prepare youth for engagement in today's complex world of media. In short, there is an imperative to bring youth of Color literacy practices into teacher education and to better understand how it fits within and also challenges aspects of that scholarship.

Preservice teachers often have limited knowledge about using culturally sustaining practices with students (Johnson et al., 2019). However, the CDP framework could guide preservice teachers toward asset-based approaches for supporting youth's digital civic literacies. Despite apprehensions about potential resistance to incorporating these types of lessons in the classroom, many preservice teachers are willing to apply these practices in their future classrooms. They often anticipate pushback from cooperating teachers who serve as mentors, as well as from school and district administrators. This pushback aligns with previous findings about the teaching environments encountered by preservice teachers during their fieldwork, which often prioritize safer, scripted lessons (Cercone & Pastore-Capuana, 2019). This work also has implications for teacher educators in a society marked by systemic injustice and racism, aligned with Aronson and Meyers (2022), emphasizing the essential role

of teacher educators in cultivating critical consciousness and challenging perceptions of racism, whiteness, and white supremacy, influencing teacher education curricula.

Learning From Youth: Possibilities for English Teacher Education

Teacher educators should prepare preservice teachers to tap into the literacies students of Color are enacting in social media spaces. In the following section, we provide practical suggestions for doing so via texts and coursework in teacher education programs, emphasizing antiracist pedagogies and justice-oriented ELA teaching and learning. In short, engaging in this coursework can shape how preservice teachers interact with students of Color in the future, transitioning them from learners (e.g., students) to facilitators (e.g., teachers-in-practice). This process cultivates a space for their own students to participate in justice-oriented experiences, inspired by the impactful work of young people in online spaces.

Antiracist Pedagogies Through Justice-Oriented Text

Social media platforms significantly influence curricular decisions, including text selections such as antiracist books (see Table 2) in English education program coursework. In McDaniel's online study (2022, 2023) teens used social media to share a variety of justice-oriented content, such as books they were reading, books written by youth of Color, or original written pieces. By studying youth of Color in digital environments, teacher educators not only gain insights into their sophisticated literacies around antiracism and social justice issues, but also gain understanding in what they value. These findings have implications for teacher education programs seeking to reshape their curriculum with a focus on antiracist pedagogies. For instance, teacher educators can promote antiracist pedagogy by incorporating course readings and projects that engage with social justice readings. This approach fosters the development of justice-oriented skills and attitudes in preservice teachers throughout their program, starting from the early stages and continuing through student teaching.

Teacher educators and leaders in English education programs may consider the following questions:

- How can teacher educators effectively integrate this text into our program?
- Where should specific sections, chapters, elements, or resources be placed within the curriculum to support an anti-racist program thread?
- How do the positionalities and identities of preservice teachers within programs impact the selection of course texts during lesson planning assignments, lesson demonstrations, and student teaching experiences?

Table 2
Antiracist Books for Curricular Applications

Anti-Racist Textbooks for English Education Coursework
<i>Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy</i> , Gholdy Muhammad
<i>Critical Race English Education</i> , Lamar Johnson
<i>Letting Go of Literary Whiteness</i> , Carlin Borsheim-Black and Sophia Tatiana Sarigianides
<i>Not Light But Fire: How to Lead Meaningful Race Conversations in the Classroom</i> , Matthew Ray
<i>Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word</i> , Linda Christensen
<i>Textured Teaching: A Framework for Culturally Sustaining Practices</i> , Lorena German
<i>The Anti-racist Writing Workshop: How to Decolonize the Creative Classroom</i> , Felicia Rose Chavez
<i>We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom</i> , Bettina Love

Furthermore, programs can incorporate multimodal antiracist texts, such as video clips (see Table 3), into their ELA instruction. It should be noted that two of the authors in Table 3, Ibram Kendi and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, have been involved in recent controversies, and it would be up to the professor’s discretion if they felt these controversies precluded the inclusion of these texts. Alternatively, these controversies could serve as a point of discussion regarding the broader context of antiracism and pedagogy.

Table 3
Antiracist Multimodal Text for Curricular Applications

Multimodal Antiracist Texts for English Education Coursework
1. <i>Danger of a Single Story</i> , Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche
2. <i>How to Be an Antiracist</i> , Ibram Kendi
3. <i>Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors</i> , Rudine Sims Bishop
4. <i>Three Ways to Speak English</i> , Jamila Lyiscott
5. <i>Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix of the National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning</i> , Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi

Over a 3-month period, studying youths' of Color on social media (McDaniel, 2022, 2023) revealed how they employed critical literacies to create and disseminate antiracist content. Youth utilized various social media features to create public service announcements supporting justice for Black lives on platforms like YouTube and Instagram, sharing antiracist messages categorized by social justice themes. Thus, youth of Color actively created and shared their own antiracist texts, leveraging digital platforms as powerful tools for social justice advocacy.

English educators can enrich their curricula alongside this by integrating antiracist literature into their classrooms. Programs could also facilitate assignments such as book discussions centered on antiracism, addressing emergent societal needs. In short, digital platforms, particularly when utilized by students of Color, provide English education programs with avenues to integrate antiracist principles. ELA teacher educators focused on justice-oriented practices are able to equip candidates for ELA classrooms by aligning antiracist pedagogies with relevant texts, mirroring the activism and advocacy undertaken by youth of Color on social media.

Antiracist Coursework

Social media platforms have a significant influence on English teacher education. In an ELA course focusing on technology and digital media, students could learn to effectively use digital media and technology in the classroom. English education programs could provide courses, allowing students to explore, experiment with, and implement various technologies to improve their digital proficiency. The following sections provides examples of projects that could be integrated into a course focused on technology, digital media, and English teaching and learning. These examples (e.g., multimodal counternarrative and social media participatory culture) are drawn from McDaniel's English education program. These types of assignments or activities can be utilized by preservice educators, once they become educators, to incorporate digital literacies in a way that supports students' development of a critical consciousness. A few guiding questions framing these assignments and projects are "What does a critical digital literacy lesson look like in practice?" and "How can preservice teachers be encouraged to incorporate digital activism in their work?"

Analysis of Race and Media Representation Project

In alignment with ways platforms are shaping content and instruction in ELA teacher education, preservice teachers could engage in an analysis of race and media representation. Specifically, this project might engage in an analysis of cultural appropriation in multimodal literacies, a portrayal of deficit perspectives for historically marginalized individuals, or a discussion of ways positionality influences the messages received from various racialized media representations.

A project analyzing race and media representation could draw from the social media literacy practices of youth of Color. It could involve examining how race is portrayed across various media platforms like social media, entertainment, and advertisements. Preservice teachers could additionally explore how race intersects with other social categories like gender, class,

and sexuality. Aligned with previous work (McDaniel, 2022, 2023), this project could involve analyzing writings by teens from different contexts and audiences, including allies, justice-oriented social communities, personal friends, strangers, onlookers, and parents.

Preservice teachers might also discuss how different audiences interpret and respond to representations of race in the media. An analysis of race and media representation assignment could be tailored to various justice-oriented ELA teaching and learning, accounting for a variety of standards and curricular needs. These suggestions align with previous work by Griffin (2022) and Shaw et al. (2023) in providing space for youth of Color to utilize knowledge from their multiple identities in a manner that restories dominant narratives while developing and utilizing their digital literacies.

Multimodal Counternarrative Project

Another option, like a multimodal counternarrative project, might ask preservice teachers to describe themselves from different perspectives, using a variety of composing modes. After generating a written composition (e.g., conventional narrative) about how others may see them, candidates could create a digital composition (e.g., counternarrative) that speaks back to certain assumptions about their identity. In the same way, students could compose a conventional narrative of their identity, as told from the outside; that is, the story of them as told from afar, using only the conclusions that others may draw without knowing them well. Then, they could create a counternarrative that responds to, corrects, challenges, or adds complexity to the conventional narrative.

The counternarrative could take the form of a multimodal digital composition (e.g., a short movie-like text that uses elements such as images, graphics, video clips, music, text, and narration). For this work, they would consider online or digital tools as well as mobile-device apps and platforms (e.g., TikTok), providing the opportunity for preservice teachers and potentially their students to address their identities in traditional text-based ways as well as in digital forms. This could help them see the affordances and constraints of different modes of expression and give them practice in using different technologies to convey ideas and meaning. Thus, this assignment would be in alignment with the ways youth of Color enact social media literacies (McDaniel, 2022, 2023), speak back to stereotypes and assumptions, and engage in sophisticated literacies to tell their own stories.

Social Media Participatory Culture Project

A third project related to the social media activism of youth of Color, might consist of a participatory culture project focused on platforms such as X and Instagram. This assignment would cultivate an opportunity for preservice teachers to consider social media as a productive venue for professional growth and student engagement. For instance, they could practice managing a student-focused social media channel to build the skills to facilitate digital and cultural literacy with future students. A possible secondary goal might be the emergence of a preservice teacher's

own professional learning network (PLN). Preservice teachers could manage their program's (e.g., English education) X or Instagram accounts for a period of time throughout the semester. Worthwhile material related to the objectives of the accounts could be curated, and used in a positive, innovative, and professionally productive way. Further, they might keep current on events and happenings related to English education at their university institution, ELA classrooms, language learning programs, or the English education field, in general.

This project may ask preservice teachers to consider a range of interesting topics, from the immediate and local (what they are doing in class or other courses) to the classic and global. They might consider their audiences (e.g., current and potential students, English education faculty, university community, or the broader public) and how those audiences affect voice (e.g., friendly and inclusive, informal and collegial, humorous, supportive and passionate, and broadly supportive of social justice issues) and possible content. Finally, preservice teachers could compose a reflection using either a digital tool (e.g., TikTok video, Google Doc, YouTube video), reflecting on the following questions:

- How did you use the social media account? What material were you interested in promoting?
- How did your individual and professional growth occur through using social media to participate/engage with broader cultural contexts outside the classroom?
- What literacy skills might using social media in this manner require of students?
- How might you use social media to create a participatory culture in your own ELA classroom?
- What affordances do activities and assignments leveraging participatory cultures offer your future students? What constraints do they present?

In short, ELA teacher education content and instruction would continue to be shaped by the ways in which youth utilize social media. Courses on critical issues in English education could enhance the preparation of preservice teachers by addressing the realities and challenges of the profession, drawing insights from the critical literacies of youth of Color. Extending this work, preservice teachers of Color could establish a professional learning community on social media to address critical issues in ELA through their shared experiences and perspectives. This would extend course content, fostering community and critical discussion.

This initiative might empower preservice teachers to actively participate in antiracist teaching and develop innovative English teaching methods in nontraditional settings. Simultaneously, it would enhance their online presence, thereby amplifying the visibility of preservice teachers of Color in predominantly White English education programs.

Likewise, practicing ELA teachers could empower students to create positive changes in their communities by integrating advocacy, activism, and civic engagement opportunities into their coursework and projects. Following are inquiry questions for English education programs to contemplate as they strive to develop justice-oriented and antiracist curricula.

Considerations for English Education Programs

Social media platforms hold the potential to influence the integration of justice-oriented content and antiracist instruction within English education programs, particularly through the examination of literacy practices exhibited by youth of Color on social media platforms. This presents an opportunity for teacher educators to tap into previously unexplored knowledge reservoirs, such as the assets and resources (Paris, 2012) of youth of Color. Utilizing this knowledge as a foundation, educators can shape content and instruction in ways that promote social justice and antiracism, with a focus on amplifying youth voice. Following, we propose three questions for English teacher education programs to contemplate as they consider reimagining programs from a justice-oriented and antiracist perspective.

- How can social media platforms help us understand youth reactions to the present societal landscape, subsequently informing the transformation of English teacher education programs?
- How can English education programs use social media spaces to adapt to the current socio-political landscape, considering pandemic adaptations, civil unrest, and issues of social justice, to better prepare student teachers?
- How can English education programs accommodate the different social media experiences of preservice teachers?

Exploring these questions could enhance our understanding of the role social media plays in English education.

Engaging With the Broader Cultural Context

To understand how new laws and regulations are restricting students' access to knowledge, it is important to connect the arguments presented in this paper with the broader cultural context. The recent surge in opposition to critical race theory (CRT; Johnson, 2018) in schools and the enactment of legislation banning certain books have made censorship efforts increasingly politicized. That politicization has now, as of the appointment of the new head of the Department of Education, become a driving force in the messaging of the current administration, who have made the stripping of diversity, equity, and inclusion policies a major focus of their agenda.

Given the widespread anti-CRT and book banning legislation, it is important to recognize how youths' online activism is a way for them to

resist this kind of work and gain access to what they cannot in schools. Over the past 3 years, the US has experienced a global pandemic, civil unrest related to police and state-sanctioned violence, and the implementation of laws and policies that restrict and censor content and texts. These events have disproportionately impacted certain communities, making it necessary to adapt teaching methods to address the new challenges, such as the lasting effects of the pandemic, civil unrest, restrictive legislation, and censorship.

Teacher educators can utilize frameworks such as culturally digitized pedagogy to integrate theory into practice. By considering how youth of Color engage in online literacies and how teacher educators can leverage these literacies to prepare preservice teachers, English teacher education can advance in a way that will anticipate the needs of youth of Color in navigating online futures. Social media platforms play a critical role in fostering justice-oriented and antiracist pedagogies, and conceptual frameworks such as CDP can equip educators to use these platforms to address the complexities of diverse classrooms effectively.

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