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Culturally Responsive Teaching Across PK-20

Honoring the Historical Naming Practices of Students of Color

Norma A. Marrun

Abstract

By the time children enter school, they know how to spell their names and are accustomed to their family's and community's pronunciation of their names; those names are generally the first aspect of their identity we educators recognize when they enter our classrooms. As the nation's classrooms become more diverse, there is an urgent need for educators at all levels to enact multicultural and culturally responsive teaching to bridge theory and praxis as central in developing critical race theory's commitment to social justice. My work builds on Pérez Huber and Solórzano's (2015) racial microaggressions model by analyzing historical and current naming artifacts that challenge the mispronouncing, Anglicizing, and (re)naming of students of color. I describe pedagogical tools that educators can employ to foster the development of critical consciousness about the importance of students' names and their connection to their identities. Finally, the 'hidden transcripts' of names and naming practices within communities of color reveal their intergenerational resistance to white supremacy.

Introduction

In this article, I argue that the first step in becoming a multicultural and culturally responsive educator is respecting students' names. When educators mispronounce, Anglicize, or (re)name students of color, they convey a colorblind message to their

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students that their racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and family and historical backgrounds do not matter in the classroom. This practice frames students of color with non-Eurocentric names as needing to be ‘fixed’ or ‘helping’ them ‘fit in’ through assimilationist practices such as ‘Americanizing’ their names.

I divide this article into three sections: first I share my name story and highlight the “juicy contradictions” of my last name, which are often overlooked because literature has primarily focused on first names (Harris, 2017, p. 439). I discuss how the literature within multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and critical race theory (CRT) has addressed naming practices in schools. Educators at the PK-12 levels have become more aware and somewhat more accepting of culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education, whereas CRT’s prominence has been in higher education and the examination of the experiences of students of color, in particular within college campuses. By bridging these frameworks, we can address the impact of race on the academic confidence of students of color, their retention, and the importance of creating learning environments that respond to students along the PK-20 pipeline.

Next, I describe pedagogical tools that educators along the PK-20 pipeline can employ to foster the development of critical consciousness through engaged dialogue about the importance of personal names, their connection to students’ identities and culture, and deepening historical knowledge about marginalized communities. I analyze historical and contemporary examples in the media and popular culture to understand how people of color experience racial microaggressions that are rooted in white supremacy. Specifically, I examine two online videos, *Key & Peele* (2012) and *Facundo the Great*¹ (2008), to explain how the use of humor can show educators what it is like when we flip the roll call script and move away from the Black-white racial binary. I show how colorblindness is a common response from white people attempting to reject racism by using racially coded language; I cite the white Duke professor who posted a comment on the *New York Times* criticizing the African American community for giving their children “strange” names that impede their upward mobility. I then analyze dominant discourses about naming practices from sociohistorical and political contexts that challenge the racial hierarchy of names.

Finally, I highlight pedagogical approaches that can help facilitate critical reflecting and conversations about the racial hierarchy of names, the politics, and the practices of naming that occur in classrooms to different audiences, including education faculty and students in a graduate multicultural education course and a course on teaching diverse learners. This article offers a starting point for educators to engage in responsive multicultural education pedagogies, to bridge theory and praxis as central in developing CRT’S commitment to social justice by reflecting on naming practices in the classroom. It also provides pedagogical tools that incorporate popular culture and social media to help educators critique and analyze the covert and subtle forms of racism when teachers mispronounce, Anglicize, or (re)name students of color, and demonstrates how names are tied to family history, culture,

language, and racial and ethnic identities. I apply a qualitative textual analysis of online videos and social media posts to analyze contemporary discourse around people of color with non-Eurocentric names.

My Name Story: A “Juicy Contradiction”

My name is Norma Angelica Marrun. My name has been mispronounced, Anglicized, and Spanglishcized throughout my education. My earliest school memory of mispronunciation of my name was in second grade. I remember feeling confused and frustrated every morning when my second grade teacher called roll. I had just arrived in the U.S. and did not speak English. I remember the first time I heard my teacher calling out Norma. She called my name once, but I did not respond; she called my name a second time and I still did not respond. By the third time, the teacher raised her voice and looked straight at me. At that moment, I realized that my name was Norma. I was confused and did not know how to tell my teacher that I preferred to be called by my middle name, Angelica, the name my family used at home and the name my teachers in Mexico used. I did not know how to explain it to my teacher because English was not my first language. From that day on, I was Norma in the public space and was Angelica in the private space of my family and community.

As a child, my family instilled the importance of respecting my elders; this included my teachers. Within the Latino community, children are taught to respect their teachers and questioning or correcting a teacher is a sign of disrespect and an indication of one’s family failure to raise *un hijo bien educado* (a child that is well educated) (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Valdés, 1996). In the aforementioned story, I would not have corrected my teacher even if I had been fluent in English because I was taught not to question her authority and to respect the values of the school. Respect for teachers in the Latino community prevents many students and their families from questioning teachers for (re)naming their children. Although I preferred to be called by my middle name Angelica, my teachers called me by my first name Norma because that was how I was listed on the class roster.

Although my first name and last name are simple to pronounce, they are often Anglicized. I often am asked, “How do you pronounce your last name?”, to which I respond, “It’s pronounced like the color maroon.” My response accommodates English speakers, and privileges their linguistic and cultural backgrounds by making them feel comfortable about their linguistic privilege. In the Latino community, and more specifically with Spanish speakers, my last name is Spanglishcized by adding an accent to become Marrún. Intentionally inserting an accent to my last name comes from a place of respect and affirmation of my cultural and linguistic identity. My last name signifies a straddling of differing linguistic borderlands that I negotiate in my everyday life (Anzaldúa, 1999; González, 2001). On one hand, English speakers who have not been exposed to, or do not attempt to accent my last name, often struggle with the double RRs. On the other hand, Spanish speak-

ers pronounce my last name correctly, but often ‘correct’ its spelling by adding an accent.

My family narrative demonstrates a much more complicated history. I was adopted when I was 13 years old and was given my last name by my adopted parents. I identify as Latina of Mexican nationality and racially *mestiza* roots. Although I do not navigate the world as a multiracial Latina, I can relate to the participants in Harris’ (2017) study of multiracial women’s everyday experiences with multiracial microaggressions, specifically when their last names and physical features did not match others’ assumptions about their monoracial identities. One participant referred to the juxtaposition of her last name and physical features as a “juicy contradiction” that often resulted in a source of discomfort when interacting with monoracial individuals and an invalidation of her multiracial identity (Harris, 2017, p. 439).

My adopted father’s family migrated from Lebanon to Durango, Mexico. His father added an extra R to their last name to blend in to the fabric of the Mexican culture. Our last name is a linguistic hybrid of Arabic and Spanish. Moreover, not only is it difficult for individuals to conceptualize race outside of binary conceptions, but also to (re)conceptualize family dynamics away from normative ideas of biological and nuclear structures of belonging in mixed families. My family’s last name ‘Marrun’ is rooted in a history of migration across geographic borders, triculturalism,² multiracial, and intergenerational resistance, a collective consciousness that bonds us together through our last name.

Theoretical Frameworks: Multicultural Education, Culturally Responsive Teaching, & Critical Race Theory

Multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and critical race theory work to build inclusive school environments and welcoming classrooms that validate and affirm the multiple, changing, and fluid identities of students of color, while also maintaining high academic expectations for all students. Bridging these frameworks can support teaching and learning that invites educators to respect and provide support for the emerging identities of students of color, to center and listen to their counterstories, and to enact culturally responsive pedagogies that transform deficits into assets and turn challenges into teachable moments. Multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching acknowledge both the growing diversity in U.S. classrooms and the importance of including student’s identities and ways of knowing in all aspects of learning (Gay, 2018; Nieto, & Bode, 2011). Instructors at the PK-20 levels often are faced with limited understanding about students of color and hold unconscious biases and stereotypes about them, leading them to have lower expectations, and to ignore and to devalue their contributions to the production of knowledge in the classroom. Students of color internalize these messages about themselves in ways that influence their academic confidence, as demonstrated in

the research of Joshua Aronson (2004) on “stereotype threat”, which indicates that deficit perceptions associated with one’s group (i.e. racial, ethnic, gender) can lessen feelings of belonging in school and can cause devastating effects on student’s identity and academic achievement (p.18). Of primary importance in a culturally responsive classroom is the importance for students of color to find relevant connections among themselves, with their instructors, peers, and most importantly with the curricular content. An important strategy for educators is to engage in critical self-reflection and develop historical knowledge about marginalized communities that challenge, unlearn, and disrupt dominant ideologies and the myth of meritocracy.

Through critical reflection, educators can gain awareness about their own biases and how they privilege certain names over others. After recognizing the connection between names and students’ identities, educators can challenge naming practices that exclude and reinforce a hierarchy of non-white inferiority in schools and society. Self-reflection and critical engagement enable one to understand the history of resistance of communities of colors to the dominant culture by giving their children unique names, names connected to their family history and cultural backgrounds. Peterson and Alley (2015) provided the following pedagogical approaches to honor students’ names:

- (a) emphasize correct pronunciation and writing students’ given names as a classroom practice;
- (b) engage students in language and literacy activities that explore written names and their spelling, name origins, family naming traditions, and the importance of names to cultural identity;
- (c) capitalize on “teachable moments” when questions or conflicts arise surrounding names; and
- (d) integrate critical discussions of multicultural literature that features names and identity into language arts and other curricular activities. (p. 44)

Educators can demonstrate cultural caring and respect by affirming students’ identities and taking the time to learn the correct pronunciation of their names. Most importantly, teachers must be patient and ask for help in learning how to pronounce a student’s name.

***Critical Race Theory & Racial Microaggressions:
(Re)claiming Our Names!***

CRT originated in Critical Legal Studies (CLS), a theoretical framework generated in the mid-1970s by legal scholars of color who were concerned with inadequacies of CLS in addressing issues of racial oppression in society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The movement towards CRT in education was led by educational scholars Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F Tate’s 1995 call for “the need for a critical race theoretical perspective to cast a new gaze on the persistent problems

of racism in schooling” (p. 60). Ladson-Billings and Tate were frustrated with the lack of under-theorization of race within mainstream educational research; thus, by utilizing CRT, they believed we could better understand and eradicate racial inequality in education. As educational scholars have responded to their call, the following core tenets have developed: (1) the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice and praxis; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) the use of interdisciplinary perspectives (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

CRT in education challenges liberal ideologies such as colorblindness, meritocracy, and beliefs of education as the great equalizer (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015). The ideologies of meritocracy and colorblindness contribute to the master narrative pervasive in education that blame students for their academic underachievement and their families for their stagnant upward mobility. A major assumption underlying CRT is that race and racism are central to understanding the permanence of racial inequality in every aspect of social life, including racial inequities in educational policies and practices. While many educators believe that school segregation and unequal schools were issues of the past, racial inequality in schools has never been resolved and students of color continue to attend segregated and underfunded schools, and to be taught by unqualified and often long-term substitutes (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014). Families of color are made to believe that their children have an equal and fair chance of achieving academic success based on their merits and hard work. The reality is that students of color enter schools that are inherently unequal and where their academic confidence and identities are slowly stripped away. They are denied the advantage of being taught by a teacher or an instructor who looks like them, who affirms their identities, or who learns to correctly pronounce their name.

CRT in education also seeks to uncover the historical and contemporary persistence of racial inequality and racial discrimination in schools, while also capturing the ways in which race intersects with other manifestations of oppression, such as having a non-Eurocentric or a gender nonconforming name or last name. From a CRT framework, Rita Kohli and Daniel Solórzano (2012) argued that students of color experienced racial macroaggressions when teachers mispronounced their names in school. Kohli and Solórzano (2012) argued that when students of color endured years of humiliation by teachers and peers for mispronouncing their non-Eurocentric names, they internalized negative perceptions about themselves, felt inferior and felt shame about their culture and families. Many of the participants in their study experienced high levels of anxiety and embarrassment during roll call because teachers often mispronounced their names. A native Hawaiian and multi-ethnic participant in Kohli and Solórzano’s (2012) study; Ku’ulani recalled her experience during roll call:

I used to always get nervous and dread the roll call, because especially at the beginning of the school year or when we had subs, there would always be a pause

before my name while the teacher tried to figure out how to say it. Then they'd butcher it. It's pronounced 'Koo-oo-luh-nee.' They would say 'Koolawnee' or 'Kaeceoolawnee' or 'Kalawnee'. Most times, they'd never ask, 'Is that how you pronounce it?' Or 'How do you pronounce it?' (p. 458)

As evidenced in other studies, educators can utilize multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogical approaches to recognize and connect student names to their cultural, linguistic, familial, and community wealth in the classroom (Nieto & Bode, 2018; Payne, Philyaw, Rabow, & Yazdanfar, 2016). By honoring students' names and creating opportunities for them to share their stories, students gain a deeper understanding of the sociocultural, historical, and political influences in naming practices. Ultimately, these acts can help students develop positive racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities, as well as empowering students to take action when they hear their peers making fun of non-Eurocentric names.

According to Pérez Huber and Solórzano (2015), microaggressions "are a form of systemic, everyday racism used to keep those at the racial margins in their place" (p. 302); they analyzed a photograph from the 1930s as a historical artifact to reveal how racial microaggressions are manifested through ideologies of white supremacy. They also analyzed a contemporary class-action lawsuit *Floyd v. City of New York* (2013) of 'stop and frisk' to show how the primary (men of color) and secondary (communities of color) targets experienced the effects of racial microaggressions. My work builds on Pérez Huber and Solórzano's (2015) racial microaggressions model by analyzing historical and current naming artifacts as pedagogical tools that challenge the mispronouncing, Anglicizing, and (re)naming of students of color. Mispronouncing, Anglicizing, and (re)naming students, then, can be read as an act of assimilation by stripping them of their cultural and linguistic identities and replacing their names with more Americanized sounding names. When one considers the racial identities of PK-12 teachers, the majority (84 percent) of whom are white, and enact heteronormative teaching practices, we see how they have the power to (re)name and impose what they consider 'normal' and 'American' (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Such practices are motivated by white superiority, and moreover, on the assumption of the inferiority of people of color. Educators can challenge naming practices by creating a safe space for students to feel a sense of pride about their names and helping them to recognize that they can maintain a positive racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity. However, too often, educators are faced with a limited understanding of cultures other than their own and are unaware of the rampant practices of Anglicizing and (re)naming students of color. The diversity of students' names in the classroom can either contribute to a deficit perspective about students' backgrounds, or can provide an affirming space of student identities that can, in turn, strengthen classroom relationships. As simplistic as it may sound, learning how to pronounce students' names correctly is a critical step in demonstrating respect and caring for students' identities, families, and communities.

Popular Culture and Humor: Flipping the Roll Call Script

Today's students are immersed in popular culture and social media that ranges from music to television shows to online posts. Popular culture and social media matter because they are a vital part of students' everyday lived experience. Multicultural scholars suggest that incorporating and critically teaching popular culture and social media is one pedagogical approach to make teaching relevant to the lives of students of color and to examine their role in shaping our perceptions of self and others (Clark, 2002; Gay 2018; Duncan-Andrade, 2004). In addition, placing CRT in the forefront allows both students and faculty to acknowledge how race and racism are imbedded in the daily practices of classrooms. Meaningful learning activities like analyzing the images and messages conveyed about the names of people of color within popular culture and social media allows students to disrupt, challenge, and critically (re)think the politics and practices of naming in PK-20 classrooms. Educators might also analyze their favorite shows and note the characters' names and compare them to names in their families and communities. This activity lends itself to discussions about the lack of diversity in names on television and to challenging stereotypes about ethnic and racial sounding names. Discussions can also deepen students' and educators' understanding of the implications of mispronouncing, Anglicizing, and (re)naming students of color. In the following sections, I analyze two examples from popular culture that disrupt dominant naming practices when the teacher and students flip the roll call script.

The Urban in Suburban Meets the Black/white Racial Divide

The comedy duo Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele, the creators of the *Key & Peele* show, had great success for five seasons on *Comedy Central*. The show's sketches focused the parody of aspects of Black culture and challenged and critiqued issues of racism. "Substitute Teacher," one of their most popular sketches, has been viewed over 130 million times on YouTube. Although racial microaggressions in this example are not directed at people of color, the comedy sketch inverts the roll call as a tool to show how racism is enforced and experienced by students of color in the mispronunciation of their names. In the episode, Mr. Garvey, an African American substitute teacher, introduces himself to a predominantly white classroom. He relies on his teaching experiences of over twenty years in the inner city as a signifier of his 'toughness' and 'coolness.' As he leans his body forward and presses down on his desk, he scans the room, raises his voice, and tells his students, "So don't even think about messing with me. Ya'll feel me!" Although his physicality and dress of a collared white shirt and tie convey an image of middle class Black male respectability, it is juxtaposed against an aging Black hypermasculine performance (he appears to be balding) through his 'toughness' and unapologetic attitude. After his introduction, he picks up his clipboard and starts taking roll. He

mispronounces the names of his suburban white students, but the students resist him by refusing to respond and by correcting his mispronunciation of their names. His mispronunciation of student names elicits the following responses:

Jakequaline – Uh, do you mean, Jacqueline?

Balakay – My name is Blake

De-nise – Do you mean Denise?

A-Aron – It's pronounced Aaron.

When he reaches the end of the list he calls out “Tym-oh-tee,” and from a corner of the room, a Black male responds to an elongated “Pre-sent.” With a relief in his voice, the teacher exhales, “Thank you.” Mr. Garvey’s presence in the classroom inverts the power of naming to show how white teachers are predominantly placed in urban schools (racial code to describe schools that predominately serve students of color) without understanding the communities in which they teach.

So, what happens when the classroom space is flipped and a Black male teacher asserts his authority in a predominantly white, suburban classroom? This three-minute script is a powerful pedagogical tool that shows what happens when the roll call script is flipped. I have shown the clip in my courses and students have appeared to grasp and to empathize with the painful experience that many students of color face when teachers mispronounce, Anglicize, or (re)name them. For many new teachers, pronouncing students’ names correctly can be a challenging task. After class discussions, however, students realized that what matters is showing students that their names matter by making an effort to learn how to pronounce their names, even if means making mistakes. My classes also discuss steps that they can take, such as having students introduce themselves on the first day of class and asking them what name they prefer.

***(De)centering the Black/white Racial Binary:
Contested Histories of School Segregation***

The precariousness and (in)visibility of the segregation of Mexican American students and their treatment as second-class citizens dates back to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, when the U.S. imposed a racial hierarchy and the demarcation of the Black-white binary (Nieto, 2004). Although Mexican American students were racially classified as white, *de facto* segregation excluded Mexican Americans from designated white spaces, including schools (San Miguel Jr. & Donato, 2010). However, schools relied on their last names to segregate Mexican American students into Mexican rooms and Mexican schools. Discrimination based on surname was documented, most notably with *Méndez v. Westminster* (1946), which served as a precedent in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), and argued that separate was not equal and thus ended *de jure* segregation in California’s K-12 public schools (Valencia, 2008). In *Méndez v. Westminster* (1946), the aunt of the Méndez children enrolled them at Westminster Elementary

school, but the school officials denied them from attending based on the grounds that they were deficient in English (Gonzalez, 2013). The aunt was surprised by the decision because her children attended the school; however, she realized that her children phenotypically passed as white and “their last name sounded acceptably French or Belgian to the teacher in charge of admissions...[whereas] The Méndez children, however, were visibly darker and, to the teacher, their last name was all too clearly Mexican” (Strum, 2014, p. 307). The official’s racial microaggression in this situation was the racial coded language of denying attendance to the Méndez children based on their deficiency in English without assessing their language proficiency. Placing Mexican American children in Mexican rooms and Mexican schools was an everyday form of *de facto* racism consistent with Pérez Huber and Solórzano’s (2015) definition of racial microaggressions.

In the 2008 animated StoryCorps story, *Facundo the Great*, Ramón “Chunky” Sanchez retells the story of his schooling experiences during the 1950s in a Southern California elementary school. Ramón recounts the painful experiences that Mexican American children endured when their white teachers (re)named them by Anglicizing their names. He recalls the discrimination and humiliation that Mexican American children experienced in schools as their names were changed from Ramón to Raymond, from María to Mary, and Juanita to Jane. When a new classmate named Facundo arrives at the school, Ramón recalled how the white teachers called an emergency meeting to figure out how they were going to (re)name him. After several attempts at trying to (re)name him by shortening his name, they realized that they could not shorten his name to Fac because “it sounded too much like a dirty word” and another teacher added, “You can’t say, ‘Fac, where’s your homework?’, you know?” This verbal assault and racial macroaggression was directed towards Mexican American students and enforced by white teachers as a normal practice. For Ramón, it was a day he would always remember because Facundo “was the only guy who never got his name changed.” Not (re)naming Facundo demonstrated an exception to the mispronunciation of the names of students of colors, and not the rule.

Mispronouncing or (re)naming students with non-Eurocentric names forces students of color to give up parts of their identities to fit into the education system. Furthermore, when the names of students of color do not fit into the dominant school culture, “they are marked as inferior, strange, difficult, or esoteric” (Payne, Philyaw, Rabow, & Yazdanfar, 2016, p. 2). The separate and un/equal treatment of students of color with non-Anglo names leads to internalize oppression and feelings of inferiority (Fanon, 2008). Ramón’s story was about the connection of students’ names to their identity and a message to children of color to (re)claim their names as an act of resilience.

Whites Policing the Names of People of Color

Every Asian student has a very simple old American first name that symbolizes

their desire for integration. Virtually every black has a strange new name that symbolizes their lack of desire for integration. (Hough, 2015)³

Jerry Hough, a professor at Duke University, contributed the preceding comment in a *New York Times* editorial. Hough argued that the uprisings that occurred after the murder of 25-year old Freddie Gray by Baltimore police officers could only be explained by their lack of “integration,” a kind of weak white liberal tolerance and benevolent act of dominance. He did not see how his comments were historically, economically, and politically inaccurate by generalizing that Asian Americans have not suffered from racial discrimination and thus reinforce the current social position of Asian Americans as the ‘honorary white’ buffer (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Chou & Feagin, 2015). In this example, Hough is the perpetrator—the one enacting the racial macroaggressions. Although there is not one primary target, the secondary targets impacted by the macroaggressions are African Americans in Baltimore who are forced to live in segregation because of institutional racism. Furthermore, a common response from white people is to deny the existence of racism by using racially coded language; Hough (2015) thought that because African Americans have “strange names” they are to blame for their lack of social mobility. Shortly after the editorial was published, Hough was placed on leave; it was inconclusive, however, if his leave was connected to his post.

University classrooms are supposed to be safe spaces of learning, but how can students of color in Hough’s classroom feel safe when their professor is blatantly racist and (mis)educated about the history of race relations in the U.S.? His comments indicated that having a “simple old American first name” is perceived as having greater privilege and being at the top of a racial hierarchy of names.

***Off-the-Record:
The “Hidden Transcript” of Resistance***

James W. Loewen (2015) responded by calling out Hough’s ignorance and lack of understanding on the history of race relations, including names and naming practices within the African American community. Dillard (1976) explained that the names of enslaved Africans could be easily found through plantation records, and “those who haven’t found them simply haven’t looked (p. 19). Loewen (2015) discussed the history of naming practices within the Black community, starting with how slave owners named enslaved Africans rather than the parents. He wrote, “Some owners, including George Washington, gave ‘their’ slaves pretentious names like Pompey and Caesar, making fun of their powerlessness.” Enslaved parents resisted this practice, however, by giving their children secret names that they used among their community. Laura Álvarez López’s (2015) work asked whether the names found in official historical documents were in fact the actual names used within enslaved communities. She found numerous examples in archival records where slave owners used the same names to name both enslaved Africans and

domestic animals. Her work expanded on James Scott's (1990) 'hidden transcript' by privileging non-hegemonic discourses, including the subtle and collective forms of every day resistance of enslaved Africans who (re)claimed their humanity and dignity through naming practices. Álvarez López (2015) explained:

And even when slaves were given official names by their owners, different strategies of resisting these names were possible ('the hidden transcript'), maybe as a result of the changes in how the enslaved populations valued and interpreted the world depending on the circumstances in which they lived. (p.168)

Here 'the hidden transcript' is key in understanding the resistance of enslaved Africans outside of the official records that were kept as part of the 'public transcript'. As a result, enslaved parents rejected their official names and those of their children by retaining African naming practices in their everyday life.

Black naming practices took a turn during the nadir of race relations from 1890 to 1940, when whites refused to refer to a Black man or woman as 'Mr.' or 'Mrs.' Sheila Walker (1977) further explained, "To express a sense of socially sanctioned superiority, many Whites—especially in the South—tried to deprive Blacks of their dignity by calling them only by their first name, whatever their age and however elevated their educational and socio-economic status" (p. 75). The verbal assault of infantilizing African Americans by using only their first name is a racial microaggression. The institutional racism of the Jim Crow Law subordinated, disrespected, and demeaned Black bodies within public spaces. The Black community responded to these racial microaggressions by giving their children "initials like T.J. [and] daughters might get named with positive adjectives, like Patience and Precious" (Loewen, 2015).

Black identity and pride were strengthened during the Civil Rights Movement as a result of uncovering more about their history, including the exposure of the horrors of slavery that Alex Haley (1976) portrayed in his novel and the subsequent television miniseries *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. The miniseries retold the story of one family's historical trauma of slavery, and also highlighted the family's intergenerational resistance. The family's resistance was portrayed in different forms including rejecting the naming practices of their white masters. In one of the most painful and powerful scenes, Kunta Kinte was brutally beaten and flogged for refusing to answer to his slave name Toby. The story of Kunta Kinte's refusal to give up his African name and to accept his slave name was passed down from one generation to the next. The family passed on the history of his survival by resisting and staying connected to Kunta Kinte's African name, values, spirituality, language, and cultural practices.

The 1960s Afrocentrism counternarrative and the (re)claiming of Black power and identity were attempts to forge an oppositional consciousness, including giving Black children Afrocentric and unique names. Joey Lee Dillard (1976) archived the resistance and survival of African names and naming practices through the 'hidden transcripts' or (un)official records such as folklore, jazz music, and linguistics pat-

terns and practices of African Americans. According to Dillard (1976), the shift in naming practices within the African American community during this time period was seen as giving up their ‘slave’ names and “Going back to the roots—looking for historical authenticity—was only a small part of what the Black parent wished to express when he gave his child an African name” (p. 18). Justin Kaplan and Anne Bernays (1999) also noted that “those who *do* shed their slave names in favor of African names are motivated...by an authentic and profound desire to touch and cling to their lost heritage” (p. 89).

***Sustaining Strategies of Resistance:
#SorryNotSorry***

Throughout history, whites have controlled and policed the names of people of color through the institution of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and through subtle and unconscious forms of racial microaggressions. We have also witnessed intergenerational strategies of resistance within communities of color through names and naming practices. Social media has produced strong collective responses and has served as critical platforms for national conversations about issues of race and institutional racism. Artists of color have used social media and popular culture to turn the script back to a white audience by centering the ‘hidden script.’ Notably, the lyric, “He better call Becky with the good hair” in performer Beyoncé Knowles-Carter’s 2016 song “Sorry” created social media frenzy to determine who was ‘Becky.’ The social media community did not identify Becky but was sure of one thing: she was a white woman because of the reference to ‘good hair’ and her Eurocentric name. Similar to *Key & Peele*’s skit of the Black teacher’s mispronunciation of white students’ names, Beyoncé flipped the script onto a white audience by using the name ‘Becky’ as a code word for whiteness. Those who failed to see how Beyoncé flipped the script onto a white audience reacted negatively, however, with accusations of reverse racism.

Communities of color continuously challenge institutional racism in their everyday life, from subtle forms of resistance by giving their children (un)official names that connect to their ancestral roots, to more visible ways as using popular culture to flip the script on a white audience.

Racial and Gender Signifiers in Names

A student’s name is one of the most important parts of their identity, but it can also reveal racial disparities. Parents and families invest time in choosing a perfect name for their child and many parents want to give their child a unique name. Others choose names that are tied to their family history, heritage, cultural backgrounds, and political or religious values. When choosing their child’s name, parents of color are confronted with the long-term consequences of how their child’s name will impact how they will be treated in school or perceived on job applications (Bertrand

& Mullainathan, 2002; Wykes, 2017). While parents of daughters especially must consider how their child's name could make her vulnerable to sexism. Moreover, some parents of color consciously decide to give their children 'American' sounding names in an attempt to hide their children's racialized identities, and thus protect them from being discriminated against and/or to access white privileges.

It is commonly believed that the end of legal segregation afforded different racial groups equal opportunities to education and employment. However, racial discrimination in education and in the labor force continues to be pervasive and more difficult to prove (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). In fact, many employers have adopted the practice of colorblindness in hiring. Banks and Banks (2016) argued that colorblindness, however, "can never exist because there are racial meanings attached to other racial markers...besides what a person looks like" and including a person's name (p. 211). At the same time, sexism continues to exist because there are also gendered signifiers attached to a person's name. When employers respond to prejudices and biases based on raced and gendered stereotypes of perceived intelligence, productivity, and criminality, racial and gendered macroaggressions surface when evaluating candidates and making hiring decisions.

Job Searching While Brown

Social psychologists have researched how individuals in positions of authority react and behave to other's name using the concept of implicit-egotism effect, which is when individuals tend to gravitate towards people and places, including individual's names that most resemble the self (Pelham, Carvallo, & Jones, 2005). Whether on a college or job application, individuals reviewing and making decisions have been shown to implicitly associate different characteristics with applicant's names, and to use that association to make judgments about the person's intelligence, work ethic, or moral values; consider also that the people in power who make these decisions are also predominantly white and male (Delgado, & Stefancic, 2017). In a BuzzFeed video, a Latino male named José shared his story of submitting online applications and his inability at receiving responses (Carrasquillo, 2014; Matthews, 2014). On any one day, he sent out an average of 50 to 100 resumes; these numbers show his strong determination to find employment, but they also debunk stereotypes of Latino males as lazy and unambitious (Romero, 2011). After several months of applying, he realized that because José might be read as a Latino-sounding name, so he changed it to Joe, a more white-sounding name. After only dropping one letter in his name, his email inbox was filled by responses from employers. In this example, José was the primary target of the racial microaggression and colorblindness functioned to sustain workplace segregation and to ensure the economic subordination of people of color by denying them access to employment opportunities. Before changing his name, the message from employers was that José was inherently unqualified for jobs that belonged to white

applicants. A second message that was reinforced was that everyone has an equal chance to find better employment opportunities, and that we live in a post-racial society with no structural barriers. When people of color are qualified for these jobs, but are denied or are told that they are not a good fit, messages that people of color are inferior to whites reinforces the internalization of oppression within minoritized groups. José's process of documenting his experience and sharing it through social media proved the institutional racism of the subtle, invisible, and often not intentional racial microaggressions that people of color endure daily. Social psychologists argue that employers discriminate based on implicit-egotism effect. This approach blames the individual, however, rather than showing how racism is systemic and rooted in white supremacy. Employers might adopt a colorblind hiring-process by saying that they do not see color. In this case they did not have to see a person's color but, rather, they saw it in the applicant's name.

Enacting Culturally Responsive Teaching Along the PK-20 Pipeline: Who Named You?

Although PK-12 teachers are encouraged to enact culturally responsive teaching, such teaching is often missing or glossed over in teacher preparation programs and across college classrooms. With the growing number of minority-serving (MSI), Hispanic-serving (HSI), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions (AANAPISI), colleges and universities struggle to retain and graduate students of color. According to Hayes and Fasching-Varner (2015), the problem with culturally responsive teaching in higher education is that it is not being spoken, in particular within teacher education programs; faculty are told "that diversity is the way 'it is going, like it or not,' and then shy away from actual engagement with diversity" (p. 112). If more faculty enacted culturally responsive teaching, students of color would see and experience a less hegemonic side of higher education and would be more likely to feel a sense of connectedness with instructors, peers, and curriculum. For example, important aspects of culturally responsive teaching are knowing yourself first, understanding your students' identities, and validating the linguistic and cultural assets that students bring to the classroom. Faculty's first step can be learning the names of their students and then taking the time to learn about their names.

For classroom teachers and college professors, the first day of classes can create anxiety about name pronunciation. While it may not appear overtly racist when instructors avoid calling on students with non-Eurocentric names because of their fear of mispronouncing a student's name, it can cause a student to feel invisible, humiliated, and disconnected from the classroom space (Harris, 2017; Kohli & Solórzano, 2005). As educators, we have a responsibility to learn how to correctly pronounce our students' names as a way to value and honor their families

and identities. Payne, Philyaw, Rabow, and Yazdanfar, (2016) also reminded us that, although it is not always easy to pronounce names that are phonetically unfamiliar, as educators “ensuring that the dignity of a student is maintained should be every educator’s goal” (p. 7). A student’s name is often the first piece of information we learn about them. How we respond as educators to the names, however, can either affirm their identities or can trigger feelings of shame or humiliation for students of color. I propose that the first step toward becoming a multicultural and culturally responsive educator is for the instructor to critically reflect on how they were named, how it defines them, and what experiences have they had with their name in school and the workplace. Thus, educators need to understand their own experiences about their names to understand how they respond to students with non-Eurocentric names.

Different pedagogical approaches and resources can disrupt practice of Anglicizing, (re)naming, or mispronouncing students’ names. Even in large lectures, faculty can attempt to learn students’ names by having students create personal name cards with academic (i.e. major) and personal information, such as a unique quality. These resources can help create a classroom environment where students feel connected and validated, and where they can feel they can succeed. Instructors can also take note on and reflect on how they pronounce their students’ name when taking attendance or upon whom they call to participate during class discussions.

I have incorporated the importance of names into my syllabus. My in-service students have shared how they often avoid calling students by their names because they are afraid of mispronouncing them. However, after discussing the sociocultural and historical implications of Anglicizing and (re)naming practices, they realized that their well-meaning intentions were grounded in deficit thinking. As a class, we have also discussed different strategies, including having students introduce themselves on the first day of class so that the instructor and peers can listen to the pronunciation. Students can also record their names as a way to remember the correct pronunciation. My students read articles challenging the issues of mispronouncing of names and (re)naming practices in schools, including Kohli and Solórzano’s (2012) article entitled “Teachers, Please Learn Our Names!: Racial Microaggressions and the K-12 Classroom”. Before discussing the articles, I have students answer the following questions:

1. Who named you?
2. How did your parents/family/legal guardian come up with your name?
3. Do you have different names in different contexts? For example, what name(s) were you called by at school, with your friends, or your family?
4. How does your name connect to your identities—race/ethnicity, language, culture, religion, and family history?

After they answer the questions, students share their stories in small groups. When we come together as a large group, volunteers from each small group share what

they learned about each other. After each group has shared its stories, I ask the class why names are important and what they learned about their peers. This activity of reflecting and sharing their stories provides an opportunity for students to define their own identities and to interrogate their biases. It also creates a sense of connectedness and openness. I pair the lesson with multimedia based instruction including the *Key & Peele* episode of the substitute teacher taking attendance and the *Facundo the Great* story. As the instructor, the activity provides me with a glimpse of my students' lives, families, and communities.

Educators across the country have also taken a pledge to correctly pronounce students' names by joining *My Name, My Identity* Campaign.⁴ The campaign was created in 2016 by the Santa Clara County Office of Education to raise awareness about the importance of respecting student names and identity in schools. Resources provided for teachers include guiding questions to help students explore their identities, docu-stories, publications, name tags, and buttons promoting the campaign.

Conclusion: Please Respect Our Names!

Although changing a student's name may come from a place of caring, educators need to be aware of how their unconscious bias of students with non-Eurocentric names reinforces racial hierarchies in the classroom. An educator who learns to correctly pronounce students' names signals respect and validates students' racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural identities. Learning students' names is the first step in becoming a multicultural and culturally responsive educator. Incorporating popular culture and social media as a pedagogical tool can also help raise all students' social consciousness. Lastly, changes in naming practices within communities of color are often a reflection of sociopolitical changes and expressions of oppositional consciousness. My work demonstrates the active participation of people of color within social media and race-conscious scholars in the production of counternarratives and the contestation of dominant naming ideologies. With an overwhelming majority of white teachers in the nation, it is critical for educators with diverse classrooms to respect their students' identities, starting with their names. Teachers, please RESPECT our names!⁵

Notes

¹ *Facundo the Great* is part of the story collection in StoryCorps broadcast by National Public Radio (NPR) where people from across the country can record their stories. The stories are housed at the Library of Congress.

² The ability to navigate three cultures, in my experience, includes the intersectionality of my linguistic identities of Spanish, English, and Arabic.

³ Hough's comment received 235 'thumbs up.'

⁴ I would like to thank my students Anabel Sanchez and Amanda Billington for sharing with the class the *My Name, My Identity* Campaign.

⁵ The last sentence was inspired by Kohli & Solórzano's (2012) article title. In addition to emphasizing that teachers must learn student names, I add RESPECT by emphasizing that learning student's names is a sign of respect for their identities.

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