

FIVE FIRST YEAR TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON THE EFFECTS OF
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Sarah Straub

December 2016

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Abstract

The perceived disconnect between culturally responsive teaching and rigorous instruction is a dangerous one. Without acknowledging that culturally responsive pedagogical training is necessary in order for teachers to be effective in the classroom, many first-year teachers are attempting to operate in their classrooms under a profound disadvantage. This gap only widens over the course of their first year in the classroom as instructional coaches spend time on prescriptive classroom management tools rather than pedagogical training and culturally competent curriculum development. In an initial planning conversation with the head of Excellent Teaching, the rationale for not including culturally responsive pedagogical training was that beginning teachers needed to first focus on classroom management and lesson facilitation before moving into culturally responsive practices.

Students deserve more, and they deserve it from the minute we step foot into the classroom. In fact, it is imperative. Hammond (2015) argues that culturally responsive practices are rigorous instruction and that if we deny our teachers access to this training, we are denying them the opportunity to instruct our students most effectively. Gay (2002) defines culturally responsive teaching "as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (p. 45). It requires work on the part of the educator. The educator must dedicate time to learning about the specific cultures of his/her students and understand that these specific cultures affect learning behaviors and classroom interactions. It is only

through this dedication to self- and student practices that a teacher can become truly engaging.

Omnes Public Schools is a charter school district that was founded almost twenty year ago, within a large urban community in the southwestern United States to address educational inequality. It is an award-winning district with a 100% college acceptance rate. Many educators in this district have been teaching for three years or less and are alternatively certified through programs like Teach for America and the district's own alternative certification program for in-service first year teachers. This contributes to a very real gap in pedagogical training and the lack of a space to critically analyze such concepts as deficit thinking. Whereas educators pursuing teaching certification through traditional paths are engaged in multiple semesters of training, alternative certification teachers must squeeze this process into a two-week chunk over the summer and one Saturday per month in the first year.

Traditionally educated future-teachers have access to such classes as Educational Psychology, Special Populations, Second Language Acquisition, Assessment of Children, content specific courses and Student Teaching (University of Houston, College of Education Sample Degree Plan). The space for such self-reflection and professional development has been glaringly lacking in this district – where, per interviews with participants, the focus was largely on classroom management strategies and lesson planning. From my own participation this program in my first year of teaching as well as through corroboration by current participants and Instructional Coaches, diversity training and culturally responsive pedagogical training needed to be embedded in the already existing certification program and clear recommendations needed to be provided

to the developers of this program. This claim can be grounded in the research of Valenzuela (1999) and Page and Witty (2010) in which both sources articulate the gap that exists of pedagogical differences in teacher approach to students through the concept of “subtractive schooling.” In order to combat subtractive schools, alternatively certified teachers in this district must have access to teaching rigorous instruction through a culturally responsive lens so that students can achieve freedom and social justice rather than a simplified version of success identified through test scores (Grant, 2012 and Hammond, 2015).

Additionally, the teachers in this district are serving high populations of students of color and free and reduced-lunch. The teachers themselves – for the most part – are not coming into teaching from this community and, for this reason, it is imperative to have teachers engaging in exercises around diversity and privilege so as to deescalate the defensiveness with which [teachers uncomfortable with acknowledging systemic racism] typically engage in these conversations (Sleeter and Grant, 2007).

This study focuses on a case study using critical qualitative research. At the time of inquiry, diversity training at the campus level was popularly viewed as inadequate and was non-existent at the in-service alternative certification program. At the time, this study was just in its initial phases and so on-the-record interviews were not possible. These perceptions were gathered from informal interviews with teachers at the campus level and through the researcher’s own interpretations of the professional developments in which she participated that were provided by the district. The study analyzes the perspectives of five first-year teacher participants as they engaged with three radically different professional development series dealing with topics including, systemic

inequality and colorblindness, culturally responsive practices, and critical hope. The sessions were organized in different ways so as to analyze for receptivity of the teachers and to see which types of sessions led to clear reflections and takeaways. Teacher perceptions through journal reflections and post-participation interviews led to recommendations to Omnes Public Schools.

Analysis of these participants' experiences lends itself to having deeper discussions about race, privilege, social class, ethnic identities and how these factors contribute to and influence classroom pedagogy. These conversations can extend to the campus-offered diversity sessions developed by the district and to how Omnes' alternative certification program for first-year teachers can include this necessary pedagogical training for their participants. Additionally, first year teachers will have a space in which to develop their own informed pedagogical approach in order to function as change agents in their classrooms and schools.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The email was ridiculous to me. I had been rejected from Teach for America. I did not even get to the in-person interview phase. As a college senior, I was incredulous. I was a triple major graduating cum laude. I had worked a full-time job while playing Division I soccer. I had volunteered all throughout my college career and I spoke Spanish! What were they looking for that I did not have?

The sting of rejection did not stay with me for a long time. About a week later, I was accepted to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's TransAtlantic Master's Program. My goal of being a teacher faded as the excitement of international travel and politics enticed me. Living in Prague and Madrid was life changing but I struggled to find a place for myself in the political niches of Washington, DC, and Brussels. Throughout my entire program, I was most energized by a research project I was assigned while interning at Amnesty International in Prague. I was meant to update the research on the Roma populations of the Czech Republic. Oftentimes forgoing my classes at Universitat Karlova, I would pour through stacks of files on the Romany gypsies. The stories were heart wrenching and unimaginable – Romany women undergoing forced sterilization procedures to control population growth and Romany children being classified as mentally retarded regardless of cognitive ability.

I submitted my findings to my supervisor and asked what we were going to do. We were Amnesty International for a reason, right? I expected action to be taken immediately and was surprised to discover that we were merely an information-seeking enterprise rather than action to combat inequality. There was no plan besides sending the

findings off to the government and requesting that the policies be changed. After a few months at that internship, it was time for me to move to Madrid for my next semester of courses and so I left Prague without having the chance to see if policies had changed.

Early Influences

Even as I researched welfare systems for illegal immigrants into the European Union – specifically Ecuadorian and Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries – I could not shake my absolute horror over the situation of the Roma children. I imagined my own education and my own experiences with special education. In elementary school, we knew the program as St. Marks. These were students who were permanently restrained in wheelchairs, who were all in one classroom whose academic activities consisted mostly of art projects. My schoolmate's sister, Ashley, was in the program and she was unable to learn to speak. While even at that age, I could understand the benefit of programs like St. Marks for students who needed them; as an adult, I could not believe that students with full cognitive abilities were being forced into these inadequate school situations. At what point would the student give up and drop out?

I had not been effective in Prague and I must admit that despite my lessons on Czech language, I barely registered as conversational. I knew that I could not make the kind of impact that I wanted to make and so I began to look to the United States. Remembering my rejection from Teach for America, I contacted a classmate from college who had been accepted to ask for some pointers. He advised me against Teach for America. He said that the trainings had not been helpful in his first year and the additional expectations required of Teach for America corps members would only serve to push me out of education rather than keep me. Rather, he gave me some information

on Omnes Public Schools in the southwestern part of the United States. I checked out the website and was impressed by their 100% college acceptance rate and their call to transform the city. In my naivete, I was eager to begin with this organization, fully believing that I would be able to have the impact that I wanted to have. I was further sold on this organization because they did not require a teacher certificate to begin.

First Year Experience at Omnes Public Schools

I moved to the city of study while I was working on my master's thesis. I was placed as a founding teacher at one of the new Omnes campuses in southwest Houston. With less than two weeks of teacher training under my belt, I was given three separate classes for which I was responsible to prepare and an empty classroom. Honestly, in that first year, I did not have any concept of educational inequality in America. I knew that I was a new teacher and not a very good one. I knew that I loved school growing up and I wanted to recreate that experience for my students. I taught Spanish and I had moved to Houston from Spain, so many of my students and their parents thought I was actually from Spain – my use of a Spanish *seseo* (Spanish for 'lisp') supported this claim. At the time, I did not realize that their perception of me as not-White was playing a large role in my ability to connect with my students.

I embraced this new identity mainly because I found it flattering. My Spanish was good enough for them to think I was really Spanish? And then, I was introduced to the concept of critical consciousness. During a staff meeting – there were eight of us on staff that first year – we were having a conversation about language acquisition. As an international school, we were proud to offer Chinese, Spanish and French. Our staff was also very international. Our Chinese teacher came from China. Our French teacher was

from sub-Saharan Africa. Our math instructors were from Tanzania and of Indian heritage. People were boasting about how many languages they spoke and our science teacher, a White woman from Michigan lamented that she only spoke one language. Our Indian teacher laughed dismissively, reaffirming the perception that White people do not learn a second language. I countered that I spoke two. Mohammad paused for a second and then asked me if I was Hispanic

Once again, I was proud of my deception. “My Spanish really must be pretty phenomenal,” I remember thinking. I told my colleagues about how the kids often made the same mistake and how I loved it! I felt like it helped me connect and I knew that in my Spanish class – with my 85% Hispanic student population – it gave me more credibility as their instructor. Everyone laughed for a moment before another teacher brought the conversation to a whole new level.

It was at this point at a veteran teacher interjected. He asked me if I was aware that this was an intentional deception. We had a long conversation about cultural appropriation and authentic selves. I had reduced my students to a simplification and as such had limited the quality of interaction between my students and myself. By speaking Spanish, I believed, I was bonding with all my English as a Second Language (ESL) students rather than taking the time to view culture at a deeper level. Smith, Warrican, and Kumi-Yeboah (2016) observe that when a teacher has adequate pedagogical information of multicultural education, it allows for the teacher to allow the student to have a positive learning experience. My reduction of my students had prevented this level of complexity required for impactful instruction. I left the meeting a bit embarrassed and a bit defensive. This was an initial step in my own development of a

critical consciousness as I began to analyze my school environment. One immediate change that I made was that I no longer pretended to be something that I was not. I would correct my students whenever they categorized me as Hispanic. Seven years later, I still smile though when a kid raises his hand in my class and shouts out asking me if I am White.

Personal Experiences with Developing Cultural Competency

My relationship with race had originally been single dimensional. Colorblindness is a catchphrase these days to describe how most people of privilege are taught to address race: We are all equal on the inside; I don't see color. Colorblindness is a dangerous wolf wrapped in sheep's clothing. It seems attractive and safe. From my own position of privilege, I can assert that all people are equal. This assumption was called into question the more I exposed myself to situations and to people outside of my typical sphere. When we fail to realize the structural limitations – the systemic racism that exists in the United States – we fail to accommodate for the barriers that have been placed on our students of color. According to Alexander (2012):

In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don't. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color "criminals" and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind. Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you're labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination—employment discrimination, housing

discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal. As a criminal, you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a Black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it (p. 15).

This oppressive structure is a surprise for many White educators. Sleeter (2001) suggests that the “overwhelming presence of Whiteness” serves as a detriment for students in culturally diverse schools until the teacher engages in a series of self-reflection and critical analysis of the current system of education (p. 96). Indeed, it was a surprise for me. However, this is a reality for the Black and Brown students that are served by my school district and many districts around the country.

Fortunately, colorblindness was not how I was raised. I saw colors from the beginning. My elementary school friendships included William, Cheng and Kenyon – two Asian-American students and one African-American student. I remember my mom thinking how precious Cheng was and wanting me to invite him over. He did not return my feelings so I moved on to Kenyon. When Kenyon came over, my German Shepherd attacked him – another strikeout in my blossoming social life. What I do remember from this situation is what I heard when I told one of my girlfriends about it the next day in school. She suggested that the dog had attacked him because he looked like someone who would try to break in to a house. I was puzzled by this comment and communicated that we had walked up to my house together. Using her elementary logic, she continued by justifying that people who are Black break into places. We were in the fourth grade.

I learned something from that conversation and I cannot in good conscious say that I learned the right lesson. For years, I thought about how lucky I was that I knew the good Black people. The ones I knew were not thugs or robbers. And I would stand up to anybody who said otherwise! The notion of White perception of “good” verse “bad” Black people was mentioned in Swartz (1993) and discussed how these patterns of supremacy were created at early ages to perpetuate the idea that Black culture was deficit in some way and that “good” Black people were the ones who were willing to subscribe to the White narrative. The whole focus of this article, however, was to disrupt this pattern of supremacy in schools.

High School Experiences

There are three situations in my high school career that stand out to me when I reflect on educational inequality and race in America. The first is one that I use often in my seventh-grade writing class as an example for expository writing. My students are given the prompt: “Is it better to speak up or stay silent?” I tell them the story of my sophomore year at my private school.

We were all sitting in Mr. Dunlap’s English class at the end of the day. We were about to be given our report cards and our report cards always had our class rank on them. I was competitive but I knew that since school was not my life, that I would probably be 3 or 4 in the class. One or two would go to Krystal. That day, though, a new person moved into the number one spot. I remember Krystal looking at the paper, glaring and hissing her anger that someone else had edged her out of the number one spot. Diana, an African American girl in the class – the ONLY one in our school – shared her success with the class.

I smiled. I was number 4. Then I heard another girl in class whisper to her table in disbelief that a Black girl could be smarter than Krystal. At this point, I stop the story and ask the class what they think I did. My current group of students is a roughly 60-40% Hispanic and African American class. The Black kids are rightfully appalled. They asked me what I had done and, fortunately, I did not have to invent my response. I stood up, got my teacher's attention, and told the class that Diana was just as smart as Krystal and that her color had nothing to do with her ability to perform at that level. I sat down and let the teacher handle it but I did not checked in on Diana to see how she was doing. This situation mirrors the conflict of bystander anti-racism as discussed by Nelson, Dunn, and Paradies (2011). In this article, the authors discuss the term "everyday racism" coined by Essen (1991) to describe the normalization of racist ideologies into everyday practices. In a society such as this, functioning as a bystander anti-racist can be unsettling for those present. The authors define bystander anti-racism as "action taken by a person or persons (not directly involved as a target or perpetrator) to speak out about or to seek to engage others in responding (either directly or indirectly, immediately or later) against interpersonal or systemic racism" (p. 265). When I spoke out to the class against the notion that Diana could not be as smart as Krystal because she was Black, I had assumed the bystander anti-racist role. It created an atmosphere of discomfort, but was hopefully one that challenged the accepted idea that color dictated the level of intelligence a person could attain.

The other event that resonates with me after having focused so much on social injustice and specifically educational inequality for people of color is when I was a junior. I had transferred to the largest school in North Carolina, unofficially dubbed Red

Neck Tech. I was taking nearly all AP courses – my only non-AP courses were weightlifting and yearbook. I would see my elementary school friends all the time, but I did not really spoke to them. Laura, a Black girl from my elementary school, was in my AP World History course. One day, she shared her frustration with being called Whitey due to her placement in Advanced Placement classes and her lighter skin. She lamented that she was not Black enough to be in that community. Naively, I told her she was great and that I was her friend. I remember thinking back to what I learned in elementary school; she's one of the good ones!

In support of this specific situation is an article by Whiting and Ford (2009) which references additional research claiming that African American students are underrepresented in gifted education classes. Per the College Board 2007 data as analyzed by Whiting and Ford, Black students' participation in AP exams ranges from a low of 1.7% to a high of 9.7% (p. 24). The article outlined several common factors in the underrepresentation of Black students in AP courses including the low rate of referral for Black students to these programs. This connects to the anecdote about Laura because she did not feel as though she was a part of the Advanced Placement community. Had there been a larger representation of Black students in her classes, perhaps the feeling of isolation would not have been present.

The last event happened my senior year. Vance, another high school, had overcrowding issues and a lot of those students were rezoned to North. Phil, one of my elementary school friends, was one of the transfer students. I remember seeing him and being so excited. I know I had not seen him in nearly six years, but we had been such good friends. I raced up to him and threw my arms around him in a huge hug! He

looked at me with such shock and confusion that I let go and stammered that we had gone to elementary school together. I was surprised that he did not remember me.

Still obviously confused, he confirmed that he did, in fact, remember me but then he trailed off. Rebuffed, I tried to make small talk but after a few unsuccessful attempts to engage him in conversation, he stopped me and told me that we did not hang out anymore – that we each had our own people. Then, he walked off. I knew that when he talked about our people he meant White people for me and Black people for him. I knew what he was saying but I did not understand it. I was hurt but then annoyed and I did not try to talk to Phil again.

As I read these experiences. I cringe. The glaring institutionalized racism that I can see clearly see now escaped me as a child. I addressed the racist remarks of my peers but failed to see the bigger picture. The racist undertones of my own interactions with my peers of color now sting and shame me.

Post-Graduate Experiences with Cultural Competency

As a doctoral student at the University of Houston, I focused my courses on social justice and critical pedagogy. I learned about a system that I had been complicit with – the structure of educational inequality. When I read about Black and Hispanic students not having access to AP courses, I think back to my own classrooms. Diana in my private school and Laura in my public school were one of few spots taken by students of color in my classroom. Laura friends mocking her for being in the White classes is more a product of their systemic exclusion from upper level courses. Regretfully, I think about the Roma being relegated to substandard education paths as well. My own categorization

of “thug Blacks” and “good ones” was a product of having learned unconsciously that this opinion was valid.

The ability to reflect on what I learned at the University of Houston allowed me to change my pedagogy as a teacher. I still made mistakes but I could reflect on them and I could prevent some of them. I tried to bring my students’ lives into the classroom and into the curriculum. I tried to encourage dialogue on campus. But I needed to be more intentional. I needed to act!

Dissertation Focus

One of the first texts that I read about educational inequality in the United States also pushed me in the eventual direction of my dissertation research. Tatum’s (1997) book *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?: And other conversations about race* was originally a scary book for me to read. I kept thinking about what sorts of judgements I would receive when people would read the title over my shoulder. Would they think I am racist for reading this? The title is direct and nobody (at least in the circles I frequented) talks about race that directly. The reactions were almost as I predicted. My White colleagues would ask what I was reading, I’d share the title and with slightly raised eyebrows they would acknowledge they had heard me and then walk away.

My coworkers of color would ask me what it was about. I would stumble through my first attempts to explain systemic racism. They were initially interested and then annoyed at my own ignorance on a topic they had lived through their entire lives. Then, my realization happened.

I had quickly heated up my lunch in the teacher's lounge before running downstairs to duty. I gave quick greetings and farewells to my coworkers and that was the extent of our conversation. In the cafeteria, I walked around monitoring the students. I saw a group of teachers sitting at one of the cafeteria tables. I initially thought about how sore my feet were and how nice it would be to sit down. Then, I noticed my surroundings. Much like Tatum's book, I saw that not only were the Black kids all sitting together in the cafeteria, but so were the Black teachers. I thought back to the teacher's lounge – White teachers, all together. And then I looked at the cafeteria – Black teachers, all together. I remember thinking that I had a revelation. I could not quite put my thoughts together but knew that there had to be some sort of systemic reason we would automatically seat ourselves by race.

I continued to see our biases working to the detriment of our students. It can be as simple as requiring students to be silent while they work. For many students of color, oral expression is a dominant cultural trait. Teachers give consequences to our English Language Learners (ELLs) when they speak in a language other than English, encouraging negative associations with that student's language. Teachers belittle African American Vernacular English (AAVE), which is also labelled as 'African American English', 'Black English', 'Black Vernacular English' or 'Ebonics' (Kuthe, 2007). In the past, this dialect has been referred to as 'Negro English' and 'Negro Dialect' (Durgut, 2009). Rather than respecting this form of speech, it is called the "wrong way to speak" (p. 9). Students who are perfectly fluent in this form of English now have negative associations with academic English because they feel unprepared or unable to master this

secondary form. Perhaps the most detrimental behavior that I have seen teachers show is in mindset.

Still in the infancy of my own critical consciousness development, I mustered up the courage to have conversations with staff members who I thought would be open to them, but shied away from conversations that I thought would not be pleasant. I knew that I was not making change but I was not confident enough yet that I had something worth people listening to. I experienced a sense of powerlessness described by Tatum (1997):

Many White people experience themselves as powerless, even in the face of privilege. But the fact is that we all have a sphere of influence, some domain in which we exercise some level of power and control. The task for each of us, White and of color, is to identify what our own sphere of influence is (however large or small) and to consider how it might be used to interrupt the cycle of racism (p. 32).

The platform for conversation changed when our new leadership at the district level released the “Diversity Push” for the 2015-2016 school year. There would be a Diversity Leadership team that would develop three required professional development sessions that would be delivered at the campus level. I was so excited – this would be a chance to engage authentically. It would be a chance to share our own biases and to reflect on them – a chance for all of us to get the same sort of access to the conversation. We were given a pilot session in the spring of 2015. With giddy anticipation, I sat down. I knew that I would need to model vulnerability so that my group would all be willing to be vulnerable in these conversations, but my excitement waned quickly when I realized

that the session was not one of conversation, but one with a lecture-style. It was a disengaging, slow-moving session that barely even tackled the gravity of the situation. As I looked around at my colleagues, I saw a mixture of glazed over eyes and eye-rolling. The topic had been a necessary one, but the method of delivery only served to disengage the participants.

I thought about what I would do. I talked with a few of my colleagues to solicit their feedback. We were aligned. We wanted something that was more challenging – more of a call to action rather than an independent and isolating experience. I went to one of the Diversity Leaders to share my thoughts. She agreed but quickly stopped me before I got carried away. She suggested that we roll these sessions out in a way that did not anger or upset people. She continued by communicating that many of the participants were not ready for this type of conversation and so the sessions would need to be delivered in a way accessible to those so as not to upset.

When I think about my own classroom, I do not slow down my rigor so that the entire class goes at the slowest pace. I put interventions in place to support that student to meet the rest of his peers. When I think about the topic of diversity and our role as educators, if we are not able to jump into that conversation, we do not belong in a classroom filled with our students of color. I was stumped about what I could do until I thought about another avenue of teacher education that Omnes Public School provides – Excellent Teacher Training alternative teacher certification program.

I reached out to the Senior Director of Excellent Teacher Program, and pitched my idea. I asked if I could lead some sessions on culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching (CRT) for first-year teachers. We spent some time negotiating on a few issues,

but eventually the details were worked out and I was able to get a group of teachers to opt-in to my three-part professional development series.

Development of the Culturally Responsive Pedagogical Training

To provide a relevant and applicable professional development series, I had to do a great deal of research. I knew I did not have to be an expert in the field, but I did want to have access to those experts so I could guide our conversations in the sessions or refer participants to readings after the sessions. I collaborated with Victoria, an Omnes Public School Diversity Leader, to get input and I developed a plan for my research.

Primarily, I would need to develop my own background on the state of inequality in education for students of color. I would need to increase my critical awareness of the systems of oppression that operate around us daily. I would need to reflect on my own blindness and complicit ignorance.

I would spend time delving into the works of Michelle Alexander's *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness* (2011), Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America* (2014), and Lisa Delpit's *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom* (2006). Alexander's (2011) text primarily discusses race-related issues with specific focus on African-American male mass incarceration and colorblindness. Bonilla-Silva's (2014) text echoes the topics discussed in Alexander's work and furthers it through a discussion of the dominant group's use of abstract liberalism to "emphasize the bootstrap concept of how people of color should work hard to reach their goal without special support, such as the Affirmative Action program" (p. 28). This claim "requires

ignoring the multiple institutional and state-sponsored practices behind segregation and being unconcerned about these practices' negative consequences for minorities" (p. 28).

This abstract liberalism allows White people to excuse themselves of the racist foundations that permeate contemporary society. The final text that guided my own personal path to increased knowledge on this topic was Delpit (2006). What I appreciated so much about this text is the concept of teachers as "cultural transmitters" and the danger that this role implies. Delpit also addressed the dynamics of power; a concept to which I constantly refer in my own practice.

After this initial exploration, I would then need to research teacher education programs and specifically alternative certification programs. What were some of the most effective strategies that these programs employed? What could I replicate? How could I fit what I would want in an ideal world within the framework I was given? It took me some time, but I was able to identify researchers who primarily focused on the development of teacher education programs aligned with multicultural education.

Christine Sleeter's *Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of Whiteness* (2001) was a foundational text when it came to the creation of my own professional development series. Sleeter spoke about the necessity of educating new teachers through a multicultural lens. Many new teachers understand that they are going to work in schools with children who have a different cultural background, but they still bring with them "stereotypic beliefs about urban children, such as believing that urban children bring attitudes that interfere with education" (Sleeter, 2001, p. 95).

This article also talked about the benefits of teacher education programs that "develop a range of insights that do not emerge when focusing mainly on how to prepare

traditional White students” (p. 102). Developing a teacher education program that focuses on the students-to-be-served was of paramount importance throughout this process.

Two concepts that often parallel each other when it comes to culturally responsive pedagogies are those of multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching (CRT). For this, I would focus on works from Gloria Ladson-Billings including *“Stakes is high”: Educating new century students* (2013) and Geneva Gay’s *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice* (2002). Under the burden of Race to the Top and No Child Left Behind, multicultural education and CRT take a backseat to preparing students for standardized tests (Ladson-Billings, 2013). But this led me to how I wanted to frame my sessions: Culturally Responsive Teaching as an Applicable Pedagogy for Rigorous Curriculum and Student Achievement. Oftentimes, we view culturally responsive teaching as gimmicks and more work that does not actually have high dividends when it comes to standardized test performance (Gay, 2002). I wanted to combat this misconception with my teachers.

Need for the Study

There is a clear need for more research that informs best practices in culturally responsive teaching, and the social education community at large is in general agreement with this (Grant, 2012). The National Center for Education Information released a study on “Profiles of Teachers in the US 2011” based on the accumulated research of C. Emily Feistritzer. The facts that she presented were interesting and alarming. Per the US Department’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), there are 3.2 million public school teachers across the United States who are educating more than 49.4 million

children in PK-12 schools (Feistritzer, 2011). The National Center for Education Information has been studying teacher demographics since 1979. Five national surveys of teachers have been conducted – in 1986, 1990, 1996, 2005 and 2011 – with the purpose of identifying who the teachers are and what they think about a wide area of issues with which our nation's public education system are currently dealing (Feistritzer, 2011).

In the table below, there are several clear trends that are happening to the teacher workforce in the United States. The age of the teachers who are in the workforce is decreasing with almost double the percentage of teachers aged 29 or below who are currently employed. The percentage of teachers of color is increasing, however at a very small rate. The number of years of experience for teachers is dropping, which is obviously correlated to the decreased age of teachers in the classroom. The percentage of female teachers is on the rise while education level has remained roughly equivalent. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the student population is approximately 50% White, 16% Black, 24% Hispanic, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian and 3% multiple races (NCES, 2015). These percentages are radically different, however, in high poverty school districts.

What this suggests is that our student population does not match our teacher workforce. This has resulted in initiatives to recruit more teachers of color around the country but it does not need to imply that our current workforce cannot teach our students at the same level as a more diverse teacher workforce. In order for that to be successful, however, our teachers need to learn culturally responsive practices in order to relate with and engage with the more diverse student population (Gay, 2002b).

Table 1*Demographic Profile of Teachers in the US*

N =	Public School Teachers				
	2011	2005	1996	1990	1986
	1,076	1,028	1,018	2,380	1,144
Age					
≤29	21	11	11	15	11
30-39	27	22	21	37	36
40-49	22	26	44	35	31
50+	31	42	24	13	22
Gender	%	%	%	%	%
Male	16	18	26	29	31
Female	84	82	74	71	69
Race					
White	84	85	89	92	91
Black	7	6	7	5	6
Hispanic	6	4	2	2	2
Other	4	5	2	1	0
Highest Degree Earned					
Bachelor’s – Education	29	31			
Bachelor’s – Other	15	11			
Master’s – Education	43	47			
Master’s – Other	12	10			
Doctorate – Education	1	1			
Years of experience					
1-5	26	18	12	16	8
6-9	16	14	18	18	16
10-14	16	16	13	21	24
15-24	23	25	37	33	37
25+	17	27	20	12	15

It is easy to say that our teachers need to be more culturally responsive, but this is more difficult than it appears. There is a taboo associated with conversations about race for most White Americans. Teaching teachers how to talk about race will hopefully serve to bring students and teachers closer together (Sleeter and Grant, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of culturally ignorant practices has many contributing factors – too many, in fact, for this dissertation to discuss at length. Many White teachers have not had much interaction with people who are racially, ethnically, culturally and linguistically different from themselves (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Tatum, 1997). In addition to this, there is a growing percentage of teachers who are entering the workforce without having a background in education who have been inadequately prepared to work in culturally diverse classrooms by their alternate certification programs (Feistritzer, 2011). This is not to say that White teachers cannot successfully educate students of color, but that training in culturally responsive practices is imperative.

Without teachers taking time to explore their own racial and cultural background and how these factors will impact their beliefs on education, there is a risk of teachers alienating their students of color (Dickar, 2008 in Henfield & Washington, 2015). Such risks include deficit thinking and decreased academic expectations. Deficit thinking is seen in classrooms where African American students' differences are seen as impediments to learning (Grantham & Ford, 2003). Additionally, in our “post-racial” society, the notion of colorblindness has been readily adopted. The result of this mentality is that when academic difficulties emerge for students of color, the student is often blamed (Henfield & Washington, 2015).

Are teachers of color more likely to help their students of color achieve academic success than White teachers? According to Ladson-Billings, the short answer is Omnes (2005). However, White teachers who are exposed to different cultures, ethnicities, and languages have been able to mitigate those discrepancies to a degree. Teacher education

programs ranging from college courses to preservice training to professional development have historically excluded a focus on culturally responsive practices and pedagogy. These practices have been found beneficial to both teacher and student (Sleeter, 2001). However, more research is needed to support the fact that culturally responsive practices being taught to White teachers will have an improved effect on the success of their students of color.

Research Questions

Given the reality of our teacher demographics, our teacher workforce is now in a state of controversy. Can a predominantly White teacher workforce effectively teach students who are culturally and racially different from themselves (Milner, 2006; Thompson, 2004)? Since the purpose of this study is to describe the effects of providing opportunities for first year teachers to reflect on culturally responsive practices, the study will address the following research questions:

Research Question One. What are perceptions expressed by first-year teacher participants regarding the various structures of this professional development series?

Research Question Two. What are first-year teacher participants' perceived understanding of culturally responsive practices and how did this perception change over the course of the professional development series?

Research Question Three. After participating in the professional development series, what were the major takeaways expressed by the first year participants and what has been implemented into their classrooms?

Overview of the Study

Studies on teacher effectiveness have traditionally implemented both quantitative and qualitative forms of analyses (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Sleeter, 2001). Parent and student interviews, discipline data and teacher journaling and interviews were used to identify trends in teacher effectiveness. This study focused on an ethnographic case study of an optional professional development series offered to first-year teachers in an alternative certification training program.

The research questions were examined using a convenience sample of first year teachers. The case study units of analysis were analyzed for comfort in multicultural settings as well as perceived student relationships and culturally responsive implementation of curriculum. The suggestion was that increased access to materials on culturally responsive practices and conversations around multicultural education would increase first year teachers' success with students of color.

Five of these teachers also completed post-session interviews in addition to the requirements of the optional professional development series. The participants in this study were drawn from a group of over 150 first year teachers of multiple races. These participants were self-selected (i.e. agreed participation) in the study over a three-month period. It was an additional professional development session that these preservice teachers opted into during their alternate certification sessions. The data was analyzed for teacher reflections on the professional development series specifically, their own development of a culturally responsive pedagogy and a critique on the current existing system of education for alternatively certified first-year teachers.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Many of the teachers in my program expressed frustration with administration. “Don’t they believe I’m trying to reach my students? But whenever I make a reference to someone like Kendrick Lamar in class, I’m docked for a ‘lack of rigor’” (Archival Data, Group Conversation, Session 1)! “I try to be friendlier with my students and show that I care, but I get docked for a deficiency I’m showing in my classroom management skills. I think it’s wrong but what do I do?” (Archival Data, Group Conversation, Session 1). There is a frustration on behalf of some and outright anger on the parts of others. And this is a difficult road to navigate.

As a novice teacher, I faced similar issues. A student had arrived straight from Honduras and did not speak any English. As a Spanish-speaker, I translated his first quiz into Spanish for him. It was the same exact test, but in the English version he earned a failing mark while in the Spanish version, he earned an 82%. When I went to my Dean of Instruction to share the good news, I was told that I could no longer do this because it was not setting the student up for success. I was informed that state tests would not be translated into Spanish for him. This felt wrong to me, but I did not have the research to support this sentiment. I did not even know that first year English Language Learner students were exempt from state testing. I felt that allowing this student to consistently fail when he was cognitively capable of performing well would only teach him to identify as a failure. I had the feeling, but I lacked the facts. And then I started to do the research.

In order to prepare for my own dissertation, I had to expand on this research even further. The purpose of this study was to demonstrate the effect that engaging in conversations about race and the development of culturally responsive pedagogy can have on first year teachers in multicultural classrooms.

The events of this year have created an atmosphere conducive to growth and change in our district. While racism and acts of violence against minorities is an everyday reality for the clear majority of our students, the teachers had been able to either ignore it, compartmentalize it, or refute it as invalid. Examples of this are even as basic as methods of discipline and the role of power in the teacher-student relationship. Under the direction of senior leadership in the Omnes Public Schools district, however, diversity has become a bit of a buzz word and a major push for new teacher education. As Christine E. Sleeter (2001) argues it is not merely just the lack of knowledge of preservice teachers, but also instruction that guides these individuals to be strong multicultural and culturally responsive teachers. My dissertation focused on the development of such a program for Omnes Public Schools.

The mission of Omnes Public Schools is that one day, every student, regardless of zip code will have access to high quality education. This specific charter organization has made progress in the push for college acceptance rates for students of color, however, on a national scale and even outside of this specific network, equal access to education is still not a reality for many communities of color. Education in most communities of color and impoverished White communities are in a state of crisis. There are many obstacles that contribute to this – unequal access to resources, transitory student populations, inexperienced teachers being placed in schools with minimal support and

preparation are several of these (Grant, 2012). Of these factors, there is one that the teacher has direct control over. This factor is the preparation that she takes to be able to best serve her students and the community in which she works (Sleeter and Grant, 2009). Chapter two included three main topics: (1) foundations of systemic inequality in education for students of color, (2) current trends in teacher education programs and specifically alternative certification programs, and (3) culturally responsive pedagogy. The subsections for foundations of systemic inequality in education for students of color were: (1) institutionalized racism in the United States and (2) curriculum violence. The subsections for current trends in teacher education programs were: (1) policies and practices, (2) current alternative certification programs, and (3) teacher identity and teacher knowledge. The subsections for culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural education were: (1) defining culturally responsive pedagogy, (2) theory and research, (3) instructional strategies in multicultural education and (4) success stories in multicultural education.

Systemic Inequality in Education

Equality in education for people of color supposedly began with the passing of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) when the Supreme Court of the United States of America made it illegal to continue segregation of Black and White students in public schools. Since then, busing projects have been implemented to desegregate schools and the United States has essentially been “desegregated” since. However, this is by name only. Due to zoning laws and other practices of institutionalized racism, it is believed that almost 90% of students of color attend hyper-segregated schools (Orfield and Frankenberg, 2008).

How can this be? As hinted at above, practices of institutionalized racism make it nearly impossible for the rulings to be realized. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and *Serrano v. Priest* (1971) were monumental cases with rulings to desegregate and equally fund schools. However, as US schools are traditionally funded through property taxes, this makes the end goal something radically unattainable. This is because many families of color are not able to live in communities with property values high enough to result in tax revenues at a level sufficient to fund their schools to the same degree as suburban counterparts (Ladson-Billings, 2013). These facts are damning and equally depressing. However, below will be a discussion on social justice education theory – a theory that is very much married with the concept of action. Action is what will make a difference in the lives of our students of color and action is what is advocated for in the fight for social justice.

Social justice is a term that should be consistently present as a point of consideration in the development of curriculum. In an age where test scores are the determinant of a student's ability to be successful in life, social justice seems to be an afterthought if it is even mentioned at all (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Stovall (2006) suggested that social justice in education, while broad, is a necessary part of education in a world where young people are pushed to accept the status quo. For our students of color, the status quo is a systemic oppression and exposure to a culturally irrelevant curriculum. The focus is not merely on the dissemination of knowledge, but on the collaborative learning process and on the need to act as citizens in a democratic society.

Examples of social justice in education according to Stoll (2013) are Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and affirmative action. Social equality can only happen

when social justice is advocated for, including demands for equal rights under the law such as voting rights, property rights and access to education and healthcare (Stoll, 2013). The foundation for social justice comes from the term devised by political philosopher John Rawls. Rawls states: “Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason, justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others” (Rawls, 2005). When we look at this in terms of the socioeconomic and political positions of our students of color, it is glaringly obvious that social justice is not set as a norm or a necessity for education. The discussions on the goals of education often leave teachers searching for a connection with students of color (Grant, 2012).

Education is the key to liberation for oppressed peoples, argues Grant (2012), who, in his study of social justice practices found that the United States system of education is still alarmingly deficient. Again, there is an element of activism in social justice theory.

Grant (2012) includes an excerpt from James Baldin’s “The Negro Child – His Self- Image” to highlight the disconnect that children of color – specifically African American students in this case – feel while they are being “educated”:

Any Negro who is born in this country and undergoes the American educational system runs the risk of becoming schizophrenic. On the one hand, he is born in the shadow of the stars and stripes and he is assured it represents a nation which has never lost a war. He pledges allegiance to that flag that guarantees “liberty and justice for all.” He is part of a country in which anyone can become president, and so forth. But on the

other hand, he is also assured by his country and his countrymen that he has never contributed anything to civilization – that his past is nothing more than a record of humiliations gladly endured. He is assumed by the republic that he, his father, his mother and his ancestors were happy, shiftless, watermelon-eating darkies who loved Mr. Charlie and Miss Ann, that the value he has as a Black man is proven by one thing only – his devotion to White people (Baldwin, 1985 in Grant, 2012).

While this excerpt is written explicitly to draw an emotional response, the undertones, and the facts behind it are legitimate. The history that our students of color learn is that they are victims. They learn that they can stomp their feet and demonstrate, but it's a White man who signed the Civil Rights Act. In the way that education has traditionally been shared with students, the action that resulted in change was not due to self-advocating. This sentiment also informed the professional development session on curriculum bias and testing through a White Eurocentric lens. Educators can expect a sense of disengagement from students when the history of those students is not presented as a relevant part of a class like United States history.

One may argue that there have been major advancements in the quality of education for students of color as evidenced by desegregation policies and policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) which were designed to target low achieving students and students of color (Grant, 2012). What the author suggests, however, is that this legislation may help students with basic academic achievement, but it does not create the foundation for students to be active participants in a democratic society capable of critical thinking and action. Coined as “subtractive schooling” by Valenzuela (1999), Page and

Witty (2010, p. 36) disclose evidence in support: “the average African American public school twelfth grader’s performance on academic measures approximates that of the average White eighth grader”. Subtractive schooling and the deficit model were discussed during the first professional development series. This first session was meant to present the harsh realities of institutionalized racism in education and while facts such as those presented by Page and Witty (2010) can be used to justify why students of color underperform, it was necessary for the participants to also examine the factors that contribute to academic performance and to work to combat their own role in that deficit model.

Grant (2012) includes five core principles that are necessary for students to achieve freedom and social justice: (1) self-assessment, (2) critical questioning, (3) practicing democracy, (4) social action, and (5) criteria for adjudication (2012). All of these are active in that it requires the students to take on a more collaborative rather than receptive role in the classroom. With self-assessment, Cornel West (2004) states that the “Socratic love of wisdom holds not only that the unexamined life is not worth living but also that to be human and to be a democratic citizen requires that one muster the courage to think critically for oneself”. This self-assessment must happen on the part of the students and the teacher. With critical questioning, the teacher must be comfortable with questions that analyze systems of oppression (Grant and Sleeter, 1996). When it comes to practicing democracy, it means that our students learn more than the system of checks and balances; it means that they learn that participating in democracy can and will make a difference. It means that democracy can work for a person or group but that it can also work against that person or group if those individuals are not heard. This goes hand in

hand with the core component of social action. This involves interactions between groups with the specific aim of social reform (Grant, 2012). The final component is criteria for adjudication. This serves as the check to allow educational reformers to see the extent to which these policies affect social justice and to be critical of these practices when it appears as if education is compounding poverty.

Only through an active curriculum can social justice make strides. Students and teachers must collaboratively engage in self-reflection, questioning, and action at various levels of democratic engagement. They must also assess whether progress is actually being made or not and continue in the path of active engagement or try something new. That is social justice in education.

Institutionalized Racism in the United States

Institutionalized racism is a term that many Americans have a hard time accepting as legitimate (Alexander, 2011). This is the process by which certain groups are purposely discriminated against through the implementation of biased laws or practices. Perhaps the most blatant example would be the redlining of districts that kept people of color from moving into certain places in the 1950s and 60s (Alexander, 2011).

In education, the numbers are very alarming. Urban high schools (oftentimes synonymous with high schools with a large population of students of color) have dropout rates that are typically above 50% and college-going rates of less than 10% (Harvard Civil Rights Project, 2005). It is apparent that success rates for students of color are directly correlated to their socioeconomic position. There have been several reforms (i.e. those founded by the Carnegie Foundation and the Gates Millennium Foundation) that have not been controversial at best in that these focus on educational reform through such

programs as charters rather than addressing the systemic issues affecting our public institutions. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) suggest that this is in large part due to the lack of focus on the poverty. Thus, academic success (or lack thereof) for students of color is directly related to the poverty in which these students live which stems from the institutionalized oppression of marginalized groups in American society. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) provide a meaningful resource to teachers participating in the provided culturally responsive pedagogical training in that the findings provide a detailed and conceptual idea of the realities of the lives of the students for teachers who would otherwise not have seen those.

Michelle Alexander (2011) also explores the school-to-prison pipeline, another data proven method of institutionalized racism. Mass incarceration is the new face of racial discrimination in the United States wherein the number of people who are incarcerated has increased 600 percent since 1970. Alexander further clarifies this number, showing that there is a larger percentage of the United States' Black population that is behind bars currently than there ever was during South African apartheid. In fact, there is a 75 percent chance that if you are a Black man in Washington, DC that you will have spent some time behind bars (Alexander, 2011).

This impacts students of color because many of our Black students will have a parent or relative who has been incarcerated. Once an individual has a criminal record, the discrimination that our Black community once faced due to their skin color is now legitimized due to our legal system – employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service (Sokolower, 2012). This means

that these students will most likely be raised in extreme poverty and an increased likelihood for family separation.

Another warning for our students of color in the school setting is the rhetoric of “zero tolerance policies.” This verbiage, taken from a US Drug Enforcement Administration manual, has helped to criminalize students of color. In what Duncan-Andrade (2009) refers to as a “dysfunctional relationship with school” (p. 29), students who are constantly harassed and viewed as criminals have less of a chance at being successful in school. While this specific concept was only briefly touched on in the professional development series, the conversations and self-reflection on teacher discipline strategies are beneficial not just to that teacher, but also to the team of which the teacher is a part.

There were many articles that referred to the influence that test scores had on prison construction and just as many articles that refuted this claim. In one of the more nuanced articles, it seems that while in and of itself this statistic is inaccurate, upon additional analysis, there IS a correlation between literacy and prison construction. Per a study conducted by Steve Cohen, “60% of America’s prison inmates are illiterate; and 85% of all juvenile offenders have reading problems” (Cohen, 2010). Using data from the *National Assessment for Educational Progress* tests, Cohen shows how this relates to school performance because, as of 2010, 67 percent of American fourth-graders could not read at a proficient level (Cohen, 2011). How does this relate to race? It can be grounded in research on child development. There is a greater degree of brain stimulation for children who receive more verbal, visual and tactile stimulation from their parents than those who do not (Cohen, 2011).

For students in poverty, parents are working atypical hours and interaction between parent and child becomes limited. Thus, this results in less brain stimulation for these students than what was recorded for parents who worked more traditional hours. University of Kansas researchers Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley conducted a two-and-a-half-year study involving forty-two families from different socio-economic backgrounds. The purpose of the study was to analyze the ways in which daily exchanges between the child and the parent would shape language acquisition and vocabulary development in the child. Eighty-six percent to ninety-eight percent of the words that were found in the child's vocabulary came from their parents (Hart & Risley, 2003). The chart below comes from their study.

Table 2

Families' Language and Use Differ Across Income Groups

Measures and scores	Families					
	13 Professional		23 Working-class		6 Welfare	
	Parent	Child	Parent	Child	Parent	Child
Pretest score ¹	41		31		14	
Recorded vocabulary size	2,176	1,116	1,498	749	974	525
Average utterances per hour ²	487	310	301	223	176	168
Average different words per hour	382	297	251	216	167	149

¹ Parents were given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT).

² Parent utterances and different words were averaged over 13-36 months of child age. Child utterances and different words were averaged for the four observations when the child was 33-36 months old.

In terms of socioeconomic situation, what did this mean? In the chart above, there is evidence to suggest that the number of recorded vocabulary size, average utterances per hour and average different words per hour were all directly proportionate to income groups. Additionally, over time not only was vocabulary smaller for children living at a welfare level, but language acquisition rates were also alarmingly slow. The conclusion was that in “four years, an average child in a professional family would accumulate experience with almost 45 million words, an average child in a working-class family 26 million words, and an average child in a welfare family 13 million words” (Hart & Risley, 2003). Unfortunately, this is likewise mirrored where English is the second language.

In the research presented by Winsler et al (2014), there were three givens: (a) Hispanics are the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States; (b) there is an incredibly disproportionate number of Hispanic children living in poverty; and (c) Hispanic children, as a group, struggle with academic achievement. To be clear, the article did not suggest that English language acquisition was the only indicator for future success. It also included competence in Spanish as a first language. The more proficient a child is in their first language, the easier a second language acquisition is (Ordóñez, Carlo, Snow, & McLaughlin, 2002 in Winsler, Yoon Kyong, & Richard, 2014). As with Hart and Risley, Winsler et al (2014) included references to studies that indicated that family factors such as parental education, poverty status and immigrant generation are related to the speed of a second language acquisition (Bohman et al., 2010 in Winsler, Yoon Kyong, & Richard, 2014).

Cancio et al. (1996) suggested that the differences in Black and White earnings would lead to increased discrimination and Farkas and Vicknair (1996) expanded on this research, clarifying that the earnings gap could be explained by a gap in cognitive skills (Cancio et al, and Farkas & Vicknair in De Anda & Hernandez, 2007). This cognitive skill gap can be attributed to education – perhaps not the quality of the schools themselves, but the access to these skills that our children of color have – dependent on such variables as bus fare, necessity to work, etc.

Additionally, critical pedagogues such as Paolo Freire have described the current educational system as the “greatest tool in the hands of the oppressor” (Freire, 1970, p. 2). According to Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008), education is used to prepare the oppressed people (students of color) to adapt to the current situation (that which has been influenced by the dominant White culture).

Curriculum Violence

With so many roadblocks already in place for many of our students of color outside of the classroom, it is daunting to even consider that more challenges exist in the very space where teachers work to challenge the status quo. Oftentimes, the challenges to our students come from the teachers themselves and the harm that they cause their students is unintentional. That is a scary thing to consider. We are harming our students and we are doing so unwittingly (Hutchison, Wiggan, and Starker, 2014).

Hutchison, Wiggan and Starker (2014) argue that this is due to the fact that “educators are unable to identify the reasons why they experience such challenges, partly because of their insufficient exposure to other cultures, and insufficient preparation for teaching across cultures.” While the teachers unfortunately can claim ignorance, school

administrators cannot. According to The Education School Project report, 28% of school principals said that their teachers were very well or moderately well-prepared to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, 21% were well-prepared to work with parents, and 16% were well prepared to work with students with limited English proficiency (Levine, 2006). Some principals try by holding diversity training sessions while others fail to act. Knowing this and failing to act is intentional neglect on the part of the school district.

It is also dangerous. Hutchison, et. al. (2014) describe the cultural exclusion that was intentionally implemented throughout the history of the United States. In a two-pronged attack: (1) the contributions of people of color were excluded or de-emphasized with the goal of maintaining privilege for non-minority citizens and (2) the social construction and “institutionalization of contrived disabilities through the curriculum-development process” (2014). Examples of this include the system, school, or teacher induced disabilities prescribed to students of color such as the disproportionate rate of out-of- school suspensions and the extreme number of students of color who are tracked into special education (Harry & Klingner, 2006).

Hutchison, et. al. discusses under-education in their article. Under-education occurs when the educational potential of a person is limited – not due to a lack of interest, but to a lack of opportunity (2014). Woodson confirms:

When you control a man’s thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him to stand here or go yonder. He will find his “proper place” and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without behind told. In fact, if there is no back

door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary (Woodson, 1933/2006).

Teachers are complicit in the construction of such a detrimental identity. We contribute to the failure of our students when we do not take the time to adequately challenge the mandated curriculum that we present to them. Curriculum is given to teachers either completely through scripted courses or partially through standards and unit plans. This curriculum is a subjective product that is the result of debates on what has been decided as what knowledge is most worth sharing (Tanner & Tanner, 2007). Because the curriculum can be inherently biased, a thoughtful and culturally responsive teacher will take the time to identify these biases and modify the curriculum as appropriate.

When we fail to do this, we contribute to a concept known as curriculum violence. Curriculum violence is the “deliberate manipulation of academic programming in a manner that ignores or compromises the intellectual and psychological well-being of all learners” (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2011, p. 14). The result is the reinforced marginalization of certain groups and the perpetuation of underachievement along racial and ethnic lines. More directly stated:

The exclusion of minority contributions and perspectives is a central issue in creating social-psychological and academic trauma in students. This phenomenon can lead to school avoidance and dis-engagement, low achievement levels, and negative social-psychological dispositions in students. In the case of African Americans, based on the legacy of omission and persistent denial of educational opportunity, the identified

curriculum challenge is an extension of the developments in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2011, p. 24).

Our teachers, who were educated in the same Euro-centric system that we currently employ have been conditioned to the same ideas of racial inferiority that we are currently pushing on our own students (Zinn, 2010). It is something that must be acknowledged, however, before it can be addressed.

McIntosh (1989) expressed the sentiment held by many White teachers when she said, “I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group” (p. 10). She identified daily effects of White privilege in her life. This sort of tactic has been used in multiple White privilege sessions on college campuses and school settings. White people are asked to identify one of the daily effects (included in Appendix A) and to discuss the reality of this for them. The hope is, at the end of the conversation, White teachers – or White students – are able to recognize and accept that White privilege actually exists. Examples of these effects include: “If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live”, “I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed”, “I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race”, and “I can choose blemish cover or bandages in ‘flesh’ color and have them more or less match my skin” are several of these indicators (McIntosh, 1989, p. 10). The hope, with an exercise such as this, is that the uneasiness and obliviousness of White privilege can be exposed in

a way that will deescalate the defensiveness with which White people typically engage in conversations of this subject (Sleeter & Grant, 2007).

Returning to the concept of curriculum violence described by Hutchison, et. al. (2014), when White teachers are able to acknowledge the cyclical disenfranchisement of their students based on the curriculum utilized in class, they are exposed to reverse curriculum violence. The authors continue, “when many adult Whites in multicultural courses enunciate the phrase, ‘I did not know that,’ in reference to basic canons of knowledge prevalent in racial minority circuits” (p. 92), they are now in a position to combat the status quo.

Current Issues in Teacher Education Programs

Teacher preparation comes through not only analyzing one’s preconceived notions, but also an intensive study of our students’ realities. For example, Schultz, et al. (1996) discovered that many preservice White teachers come into the classroom with stereotypic beliefs about the urban children that they will serve, such as bad attitudes and volatile responses to discipline. In addition to this, many White teachers enter the role of educator while still adopting deficit-thinking when it comes to the children they will serve, either “implicitly or explicitly [the teacher blames] children’s environmental, sociocultural, or linguistic backgrounds for their failure in the classroom” (Minami & Ovando, 2004 in Kidd, et al., 2008, p. 323). Even when these White preservice teachers receive some sort of diversity training, the response is either a feeling of discrimination against White teachers or a response using colorblindness to cope with their ignorance (McIntosh, 1998).

Another challenge is that these teachers are first-year teachers. “Survival mode” is a phrase that many experienced teachers chuckle at but also reminds them about their first few years of teaching. When preservice teachers should be spending their time learning about multiculturalism, they are too busy or too overwhelmed to give culturally responsive pedagogy the time that is required (Sleeter, 2001). While studies have suggested that culturally responsive pedagogical training is necessary for all teachers regardless of race (Sleeter, 2001 and Gay, 2002), it appears as if the district of study has clung to the concept that preservice teachers of color are vastly more prepared to teach in schools with high percentages of students of color (Grant, 2012). While this is only focusing on one of the several attributes described in the article, it appears as if Omnes Public Schools has decided that color is a prerequisite for successful teaching and so the school has two choices: (1) recruit more people into the teaching profession from culturally diverse communities and/or (2) work to develop a program that addresses the preparation needed for White teachers in order to grow their multicultural knowledge base. While both of these choices are needed, the focus on this paper will be on the development of the concurrent training for first year teachers.

For the first choice, a seminal researcher who focused on that route proposed that these new teachers should have several attributes – or as many of these attributes as possible: older (30 to 50 years of age), of color, from an urban area, have children, have had experience in the workforce, and have learned to live normally in a possibly violent context (Haberman, 1996). In a district where many recruits are White, middle to high income, and fresh out of college, teacher preservice training is going to be weighed heavily in how to fill the classroom with quality educators.

Policies and Practices

Much of Sleeter's work is directed at developing cultural awareness and culturally responsive practices in White teachers. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, Sleeter's work will be generalized to the first-year teacher population. While race does indeed play a significant role in establishing a strong baseline for teachers of color in urban school settings, it does not totally engender a strong relationship and strong instructional practices. Sleeter suggests one very reasonable, albeit extreme method to engage White teachers in cross-cultural experiences. Along with her peers, Sleeter suggests that community-based cross-cultural immersion programs, in which preservice teachers live in the communities in which they will teach, are an incredibly powerful way to learn more about the teacher's students (Sleeter, 2001). In another study, Merryfield (2000) proposed that White teachers who had spent time living in countries outside of the United States had similar benefits when it came to culturally responsive teaching in low-income schools in the United States.

In my own personal experiences with moving to Houston, I tried to find a location that was as close to my school as possible. Being ignorant of "good neighborhoods" and "bad neighborhoods" helped me to find myself in one of the neighborhoods with the highest murder rates in the city. I lived in two different neighborhoods in the same part of Southwest Houston for nearly six years. In that time, I had my apartment burglarized, ate dinner at my neighbors and students' homes multiple times, and experienced firsthand what a "food desert" was. While in school, I was able to relate to my students' experiences in their neighborhoods. When they said that the street one of my students lived on was dangerous, I knew exactly why. When it was time to go to the party behind

the corner restaurant, I knew exactly which venue to go to. Being able to identify even geographically with my students aided my ability to empathize and ability to teach in the classroom.

Mandating where our teachers live, however, is not something that Omnes Prep can do. Our schools encourage interactions in the neighborhoods from which our students come through home visits and small group field trips. Perhaps an increased focus on the frequency of these visits will help to replicate – to a degree – the benefits of community-based cross-cultural immersion experiences.

Another integral part of teacher education includes reflective analyses. These reflective analyses can include journaling, debate and simulations, with the end result being an increased awareness about race, culture and discrimination (Sleeter, 2001). The next integral step for pre-service teachers is for teachers to understand the institutional level of oppression that exists to create and maintain the marginalization of people of color. Hyland and Hueschkel (2010) proposed that the best way to understand how far spread this systemic racism went was for pre-service teachers to complete an institutional inquiry assignment in which these teachers had to visit and analyze a public institution other than a school to better understand oppression and the potential roles that teachers can play for social justice. Preservice teachers must see themselves as political allies for their students – thus, a focus on what is happening at our state and national levels when it comes to education and other social programs is imperative to developing White allies in education.

Alternative Certification Programs

A controversial trend in teacher certification is the alternative certification program. This program is meant to address the growing problem of teacher attrition as many of the “baby boomer” educators are nearing retirement or are being pushed out for other bureaucratic reasons. The following section will discuss the controversies, struggles, and arguable successes of the alternative certification programs.

One of the main arguments for alternative certification programs is that they have the opportunity to bridge the “long-standing gap between theory and practice” (Consuegra, Engels and Struyven, 2014, p. 79). It serves as the chance for teachers to mitigate the reality shock that many first-year teachers experience going from the world of hypothetical teaching to the realities of it. Alternative certification programs are not new. In fact, they have a twenty-year history in the United States (Feistritzer, 2005). A key identifying characteristic of alternative certification programs is that teacher preparation is condensed into a smaller period of time. The Excellent Teacher program models this example in that teacher training is limited to a two-week summer induction followed by coach-ins and monthly trainings. This is radically less than the traditional certification routes where students major in Education and have a year-long apprenticeship in the classroom.

Research legitimizes the idea that learning on the job is viewed as more valuable by many teachers. Consuegra, et al. (2015) references studies conducted by Allen (2009) and Wilson, et al. (2002) which combat this argument, however, saying that theoretically the workplace can be a powerful learning environment, but practically this is not necessarily the case. The researchers also are clear in their intention that one cannot

discredit all alternative certification programs but must analyze the program in question specifically. The lens through which Consuegra, et al, (2014), conceptualizes their programs is through the corporate curriculum model (van Lakerveld and Engels 2010 in Consuegra, et al., 2014). Teacher learning is defined through several domains including: (1) subject matter expertise, (2) problem solving skills, (3) reflective skills and meta-cognition, (4) communication and cooperation skills, and (5) self-regulation of motivation, emotions and affections.

As a former participant in the Excellent Teacher program, I can speak to the workability of the program from my own experiences. In terms of subject-matter expertise, we met with our content teams four times per year. While we were encouraged to meet with and plan with our teammates over the course of the year, most of us were too overwhelmed to do so and the additional meetings ended after the first two months of school. In terms of problem-solving skills, I did have an Instructional Coach. If she happened to see a problem during her infrequent observations, we would discuss it and come up with alternate approaches but for the most part, we were on our own.

One specific memory I have of this is in regards to the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) exam. This test focused on a theoretical approach to human development and the application of this knowledge on instruction and teacher responses to student behaviors. The instruction I received before I took this test was that I should attack the questions from the perspective that I lived in an ideal world. This would in no way model my own classroom realities, but that was not the point. With regard to reflective skills, I would argue that this is dependent on the Instructional Coach and the Dean of Instruction in terms of helping first-year teachers develop this skill. In my first

year, my biggest support with this was my grade level team. We had weekly meetings in which to discuss our struggles. One benefit to the lack of consistent engagement with a coach would be the autonomy that I had as an instructor. I could develop as I wanted to. I was able to create a pedagogy that worked for me. The effectiveness of that was something to be determined.

While my experience was less than satisfactory, Excellent Teacher Training has changed significantly since 2009. The one glaring deficit that still existed at the time of this study, however, was a focus on diversity training and the development of a culturally responsive pedagogy. It appeared that the need for such training at Omnes Public Schools existed. According to Keohler, et al. (2013), there would be a demand for over 1.5 million new teachers in the next decade. These teachers must be trained to serve in the communities in which they are employed. The study conducted by Koehler, et al.(2013), focused on a series of questions to gauge teacher preparedness at the beginning of their alternative teacher training. These questions were on a Likert-style scale and included such indicators as:

1. I feel prepared to develop effective lesson plans.
2. I feel prepared to handle classroom management issues.
3. I feel knowledgeable in the content area I will teach.
4. I feel prepared to assess student learning.
5. I feel prepared to support the psychological needs of secondary students.
6. I feel prepared to teach a diverse group of students.

The responses were illuminating. For this group, many participants felt prepared to assess and with content knowledge. The gaps that existed were in diversity,

educational psychology and classroom management. Excellent Teacher Training tends to focus on lesson planning and classroom management but skims over educational psychology and – at the time of the study – avoided the topic of diversity altogether.

The current program includes a five-part model:

1. Induction: Teachers and coaches work together throughout the summer to prepare for setting up a strong classroom culture, establishing rules and procedures, instructional planning and operating as a teacher leader.
2. Instructional coaching: Each new teacher is paired with an instructional coach that works with them throughout the year. The focus of the IC is on instructional skills, problem-solving and personal development.
3. Professional Learning Experiences: The focus is on accelerated instructional and content pedagogy.
4. Professional Learning Modules: This provides access to research-based instructional practices.
5. Certification: The Excellent Teacher program has a professional development schedule that meets both the Texas Education Agency requirements for certification hours and aligns with Omnes Public school development (information taken directly from website and was not included here for anonymity purposes).

While a deficit may currently exist with Excellent Teacher Training, this does not necessarily have to be the case. According to Linek, et al. (2012), “alternative certification has the potential to increase both the quantity and quality of teachers” (p. 68). Benefits as articulated in this article include that alternative certification programs

cater to more nontraditional candidates, including older and more mature candidates who have experience in non-education fields (Dill & Stafford-Johnson, 2002 in Linek, et al. (2012). Additionally, Linek et al. found that oftentimes, alternative certification programs had a larger representation of minority male candidates who were members of the community in which they were slotted to teach.

This is further articulated by Kee's (2011) study on teacher preparedness (2011). This was a study involving over 1,500 participants. When compared with traditionally certified teachers, the demographics of the alternatively certified teachers were different in a number of ways. A greater percentage were older (58% vs. 42%) and male (31% vs. 22%). In terms of racial identification, there were fewer alternatively certified teachers who identified as White and statistically more Latino/a teachers (15% vs. 7%) (Kee, 2011, 29). For a district like Omnes Public Schools who is also increasingly focused on the diversity of the teacher population, alternative certification routes may be more directly aligned with that goal.

Haberman and Post (1998) argue:

In order to perform the sophisticated expectations of multicultural teaching, selecting those predisposed to do it is a necessary condition.

Training, while vital, is only a value to teacher candidates whose ideology and predispositions reflect those of outstanding, practicing teachers (p. 96).

This belief is predicated on the idea that most alternative certification teachers are older and possess a strong degree of self-knowledge, non-cognitive skills and community knowledge. While Omnes Public Schools' Excellent Teacher Training does have some

more mature candidates, for the most part, they are fresh-out-of-college individuals without prior educational training or experience.

The Excellent Teacher Training Program may also be out of necessity. Ng (2003) argues about the shortage of teachers in urban schools and how alternative certification routes are filling that void. Ng (2003) discusses this shortage in alarming language: “Sixty percent of responding districts allow individuals to teach under emergency permits, 60% use long-term substitutes, 37.5% hire teachers with certification waivers, and 35% of districts recognize internship programs or permits” (Urban Teacher Collaborative, 2000, p. 381). This echoes my experience when I first started at Omnes Public Schools. The high turnover rate had an alarming effect on school culture and the need for teachers was of utmost importance.

While these characteristics can be enticing, Darling-Hammond (2000) suggested that putting instructors with little to no pedagogical training in the classroom would only hurt the students. From my own experiences through alternative certification, I did not even learn about the word “pedagogy” until my fourth-year teaching, let alone specifically think about my own pedagogical development. My effectiveness as an educator greatly increased once I was exposed to a basic knowledge of educational pedagogy. Indeed, my own struggles were corroborated: “Uncertified teachers who have full responsibility [of their classrooms] struggle with classroom management, pedagogy, and a teacher’s daily responsibilities more than do fully trained teachers” (Freytag, 2002 in Linek, et al., 2012, 69).

Darling-Hammond (1999) furthered this sentiment by stating:

Studies of teachers admitted with less than full preparation – with no teacher preparation or through very short alternative routes – have found that such recruits tend to be less satisfied with their training, and they tend to have greater difficulties with planning curriculum, teaching, managing the classroom, and diagnosing students' learning needs (p. 11).

This relates to my own experiences working with teachers who had been trained through traditional methods. While I struggled with differentiation and reaching all learners, these teachers excelled. It was not because they were more intelligent than me, but because they had more training specific to the occupation.

Teacher Identity and Teacher Knowledge

What I came to realize as I was preparing for the professional development sessions was that I needed to remember one of the key lessons that I had learned in my first few years teaching. The best teachers are not the ones that provide information to students, but the ones who help students develop their knowledge-based independent of the teacher. To that effect, it is necessary to include a brief synopsis of studies on teacher identity, teacher identity development and teacher knowledge development. The information presented in this section lends itself to the research questions in that the changes undergone by the teacher participants will inform best practices for future professional development sessions so as to effect teacher preparation for rigorous instruction in a culturally responsive manner.

In my initial research into teacher identity, I found a musing that resonated with me very much: “My problem lies in the whitish-grey area that although you do what’s right, you could have done it many different ways” (Uitto, Kaunisto, Syrjala, and Estola,

2015, p. 162). This is relevant to all types of beginning teacher scenarios and one that I can emphatically apply to this professional development series on culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers will many times find themselves in situations that were handled in a manner that is appropriate but could have been handled a myriad of other ways. This can be confusing in a world where answers tend to be more clearly defined.

A teacher's identity is being formed even before she steps into the classroom and the intriguing part of this identity development is that there are so many external factors that contribute to it. Challenges are most often related to disciplinary issues in the classroom, individual differences among students, workload and the pressures associated with this workload, and attempting to find and navigate her own place within the school environment (Uitto, et al, 2015). What I found interesting as I began my research on teacher identity was the gap that existed in terms of teacher identity and the challenge of working in schools that were radically different ethnically, culturally, or socio-economically from the teacher force. This influenced the questions implemented in the post-session interviews of the dissertation study.

The lasting impact of the professional development series is also a point of intrigue for me. According to Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), the construction of teacher identity is a multiple and continuously changing process. The personal and professional elements are contributing factors but Goodson and Gill (2011) also include the impact of social context. Another fascinating element to teacher identity is the role that the "model teacher" paradigm plays and its impact on the development of individual teacher identities (Shapiro, 2010). I needed to dissect that a "model teacher" looked like through the lens of Excellent Teacher and Omnes Public Schools as this is the model that

would be promoted at the alternative certification days in which my teacher participants would be taking part. The program at the time of the study did not include a component on multicultural education or culturally responsive pedagogy and this led me to conclude that the “model teacher” would likewise not include elements of character based on those areas. This suggests that I would come to find several instances of conflict in my interviews with teachers regarding their own identity development. If it is true that you cannot be what you cannot see (Wright Edelman, 2008), what impact would it have on the teachers who are participating in this program and their own identity development as teachers? What impact would it have on their students?

A final discussion of teacher identity and knowledge development that is included in this literature review builds upon the research of Proweller and Mitchener (2004). Their work centered on the construction of teacher identity with a specific focus to the questions posed in the previous paragraph – building identity with urban youth. In their discussion of identity development, the development was based on the process of socialization into a community of practice (Proweller and Mitchener, 2004, p. 1044). They argued against the linear models of teacher development that are traditionally prescribed to a teacher’s growth. The traditional contributing factors are discussed as well as the influence of the students, the subject that is being taught, and the culture of the school (Hargreaves, 1994). These interactions between teachers and students have a profound impact on the teachers’ pedagogy, self-confidence, and job satisfaction (Bullough, 2001). Recent studies have begun to analyze the teacher-student relationship through the lens of race, ethnicity and social class (Davidson, 1996; Ferguson, 2001).

The key characteristics of “model teaching” that I first learned when going

through the Excellent Teacher program were at odds with what students identified as characteristics of teachers who demonstrated authentic care and who were most effective in the classroom. The strict emphasis on the enforcement of rules often serves as a relationship-killer rather than a relationship-builder with students (Davidson, 1996). The concepts articulated in this section led me to postulate that the characteristics shared through the Excellent Teacher program for effective classroom strategies will be at odds with culturally responsive pedagogy.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Multicultural Education

Over the course of my dissertation research, there have been texts that have been highly selective in regards to the proper naming of terms. Some argue that the only proper term is multicultural education. Others suggest that it is culturally responsive pedagogy – or culturally relevant practices. What I have found, however, is that regardless of the name, the basic tenants are true. Our current form of curriculum and instruction is culturally biased in favor of our White European descendants. Other cultures are either marginalized, misrepresented or altogether eliminated from the curriculum. It is one of the most glaring examples of White privilege that exists. One famous meme says it best: “White privilege is your history being part of the core curriculum and mine being taught as an elective” (Haney, 2016). Matthew Haney is the President of the San Francisco School Board and the Policy Director for “Close Prison Doors, Open Doors of Opportunity”.

What goes without saying is that as teachers become more aware of the deficiencies in the provided curriculum, there comes a responsibility to learn how to counteract this challenge. One of the reasons that many of us are still educators is

because of what we can learn from our students. Perhaps, we should adopt this identity of “learner” and expand it to what we can learn for our students. One area in which teachers should immediately focus is the development of culturally responsive pedagogy and awareness of multicultural education.

Defining Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy can be complicated. There are so many terms for the same concept that have been developed over the years that many educators find themselves more confused about what to call their pedagogical approach than on the actual development of an appropriate pedagogy for new teachers in classrooms of color. It has been called “culturally appropriate” (Au & Jordan, 1981), “culturally congruent” (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981), “culturally responsive” (Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982), and “culturally compatible” (Jordan, 1985; Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1987). The supposition was that if a student’s home language was incorporated into the classroom setting, the student would more likely experience academic success – including dialects, accents, and distinct languages.

The term “culturally relevant” was first coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992). She had been studying effective teachers of African American students. She had been asked to share her results as to how these teachers were so successful when academic performance for African American students nationwide was traditionally quite poor. Ladson-Billings’ article entitled “But that’s just good teaching!” is her response as to what makes a good teacher. Since that was not enough, Ladson-Billings attempted to describe this culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally responsive pedagogy must meet three criteria in order to fit within the definition: (a) students must be academically

successful; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Academic success comes from high academic expectations placed on students by the teacher as well as investment in academic success engrained in the student through critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy was first introduced by Paulo Freire in 1970 in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and has been reintroduced in Henry Giroux's *Theory and Resistance in Education: Toward a Pedagogy for the Opposition* (2001) and Peter McLaren's *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy and the Foundations of Education* (2003). Giroux (2001) informs the way the professional development series sought to communicate with teachers on their role in empowering students when he said, "in order for critical pedagogy, dialogue, and thought to have real effects, they must advocate the message that all citizens, old and young, are equally entitled, if not equally empowered, to shape the society in which they live" (p. 13).

Critical pedagogies allow teachers to develop a better understanding of the role that our education system plays within a society that has been divided along racial, class and gender lines. This practice promotes the idea that schools are functioning as "normalizing agencies" that are legitimizing the current social structure of the United States – and to caution against this normalization (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). The foundation of critical pedagogy can be credited to Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire describes critical pedagogy as problem-posing education. This expectation of high output from students as developed in them by their educators is best described as a method in which "people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist

in a world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (Freire, 1970, p. 27).

Teaching students about this concept will allow them to discuss feelings of oppression and be much more relevant than prescribing to the provided standards.

Theory and Research

Geneva Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002b, p. 114). The result of such implementation is that the academic achievement of these ethnically diverse students will improve (Ladson- Billings, 1994). Rather than an achievement gap, Ladson-Billings refers to the pattern of underachievement for students of color as an “educational debt” (Ladson-Billings, 2006 in Ladson-Billings, 2013). The reason for the intentional wordsmithing is that an achievement gap tends to suggest that the fault be with the individuals who are failing whereas the educational debt is more aligned with what these students deserve as citizens but are failing to get and that needs to be rectified.

Another theory that is incredibly relevant to this study is critical race theory. It suggests that race and societal interpretation of race are socially constructed but plays a powerful role in American social life (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The demographic composition of the United States has shifted over time. Whereas in the beginning of the nation’s history, the racial composition was essentially White and Black (with the obvious underrepresentation of native populations), American society is now inarguably composed of many racial and ethnic groups (Lee & Bean, 2004). In addition to this, there has been a growing rate of marriages between ethnic and racial groups (Bean &

Stevens, 2003). These shifts have led to a growing awareness of group discrimination known as colorism (Hunter, 2005). Critical race theories assess social systems and groups that recognize the following statements as true: (a) race is a central component of social organizations and systems, including families; (b) racism is institutionalized; (c) everyone within racialized social systems may contribute to the reproduction of these systems and social practices; and (d) racial and ethnic identities, in addition to the “rules, practices, and assignments of prestige and power” associated with them, are not fixed entities, but rather they are socially constructed phenomena that are continually being revised (Bonilla-Silva, 2009; Brown, 2003 in Burton, et al, 2010).

One example of critical race theory as it applies to an individual is a study on African American male students in the mathematics department. Jett (2011) uses case study research along with critical race theory to examine the schooling and racial experiences of an African American mathematics student. The fluidity of racial construction was identified in this student. Academic achievement in general and a propensity for mathematics specifically have not been traditional stereotypes when it comes to African American males. In this study, Malik, an African American male, wanted to be a pilot in the future and needed to take advanced mathematics. Through school petitions, a Precalculus-Calculus course was offered and Malik specifically petitioned his African American peers to join the course (Jett, 2011). For those students, an identity of academic underperformance had been altered.

When critical race theory is more generally applied to the educational setting, one sees the emergence of an educational racial contract (Mills, 1997). Mills suggests that the existing race-based hierarchy needs to be reevaluated:

My claim is that the model of the Racial Contract shows us that we need another alternative, another way of theorizing about and commenting on the state: the racial, or White supremacist, state, whose function *inter alia* is to safeguard the polity as a White or White-dominated polity, enforcing the terms of the Racial Contract by the appropriate means and, when necessary, facilitating its rewriting from one form to another (Mills, 1997; p. 32)

Under this institutionalized system, Whites, while perhaps not actual signatories, are the actual beneficiaries. In terms of education, Mill's racial contract means that a deliberate effort on the part of the White teacher must take place in which the student of color is viewed as someone who is not "beyond saving" but is actually a human who can be taught (Mills, 1997).

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges when it comes to teacher education programs and the "race conversation" is that there is an incredibly strong discomfort associated with these conversations. Beverly Daniel Tatum (1992) identifies the major sources of student resistance to talking about race in her article "Talking about race, learning about racism" as well as strategies to overcome the resistance that teachers can show. Tatum designed a course for her students with the mission of "[providing] students with an understanding of the psychological causes and emotional reality of racism as it appears in everyday life" (Tatum, 1992, p. 65).

The definition of racial identity development theory that is used by Tatum in her text comes from Janet Helms (1990) in which she defines this theory as a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group ... racial identity development theory concerns the

psychological implications of racial-group membership, that is belief systems that evolve in reaction to perceived differential racial-group membership (Helms, 1990 in Tatum, 1992, p. 37).

It was interesting to discover that racial identity development happens in different ways. The models included by Tatum come from the work of William Cross (1971, 1978) for Black racial identity development and Helms (1990) for White racial identity development. Models for other students of color were not included but it was mentioned that their development was similar to that of members of the Black community (Highlen, et al., 1988).

Per Cross (1978), the Black racial identity begins with the absorption of White values and beliefs which can manifest as the individual seeking White acceptance and distancing himself from peers of color. Eventually, however, this child will experience a social rejection or another event that brings new information to him about the realities of racism and the need to focus on his identity as a member of a group targeted by racism. The anger that was previously directed will begin to dissipate in the next phase when the individual dedicates an increased amount of time to learning about his group and self-exploration. In the final stages, the person will begin to translate their sense of racial identity into a plan of action or a commitment to the concerns that affect his group. This is not a linear process, Tatum wants to affirm. Rather, this process is a spiral and the individual will constantly revisit all stages.

A similar process was developed regarding White racial identity development. The end goal is the development of a nonracist White identity, which, according to Helms (1990), states that “he or she must accept his or her own Whiteness, the cultural

implications of being White, and define a view of Self as a racial being that does not depend on the perceived superiority of one racial group over another” (Helms, 1990). Not surprisingly, this stage begins with a lack of awareness of racism and White privilege. It is characterized by a naïve curiosity about people of color based on stereotypes that have been picked up through family, friends and the media. Most White people tend to stay within this stage as our lives are so institutionally segregated that interactions with people of color are limited or nonexistent. When White people have increased interaction or are exposed to new information, there is a movement along the path of White racial identity. During this stage, many White people will begin to have feelings of guilt and shame at the recognition of their own advantage because of being White.

This is a dangerous phase for White people as the reaction can be increased anger directed towards people of color who are seen as the source for the discomfort that White people feel when talking about these issues. At this point, one path would be for a White person to reshape her belief system to one that is more accepting of the current racist situation. The alternate path would be to push forward with self-examination. She is beginning to abandon her beliefs about White superiority but may be still unintentionally acting in ways that perpetuate the system. The discovery phase will continue with the White person continuing to learn as much as possible in order to legitimize or debunk the stereotypes with which she was raised. There is a focus on learning accurate accounts of American history and learning about White allies to people of color.

Tatum is very intentional with the language that she uses, identifying racism as a “system of advantage based on race” (Wellman, 1977, p. 7). She defines prejudice as a

“preconceived judgment or opinion, often based on limited information” and separates prejudice from racism (Katz, 1978, p. 43). This distinction was made to help clarify the dynamics of power and privilege. White people can be racist as they benefit from the system of advantage. By this definition, people of color cannot be racist, but they can be prejudiced. It is important to make clear in these conversations that both racism and prejudice are harmful.

The three sources of resistance, as outlined by Tatum are:

1. Race is considered a taboo topic for discussion, especially in racially mixed settings.
2. Many students regardless of racial-group membership, have been socialized to think of the United States as a just society.
3. Many students, particularly White students, initially deny any personal prejudice, recognizing the impact of racism on other peoples' lives, but failing to acknowledge its impact on their own (Tatum, 1992).

As children, Tatum proposes, most often we create negative associations with conversations on race. People of color remember name calling and bullying while White children remember being quieted and discouraged from even talking about race. As the sessions progressed there was an ebb and flow in participation. As White students realized the factual legitimacy of systemic oppression, they tended to become increasingly quiet in class because of their sense of guilt. As students of color learned more beyond their personal experiences, they tended to be more vocal. It is only through a careful acknowledgement of the motivations behind behavior that the students begin to feel comfortable again engaging in the conversation.

Ultimately, all students involved in Tatum's course were empowered to act as change agents. Tatum cautioned that "heightening students' awareness of racism without also developing an awareness of the possibility of change is a prescription for despair" (Tatum, 1992). Students were asked to work in small groups to develop an action plan to "interrupt" racism. Tatum does not require these projects to be implemented, as this should be a personal choice, but she does require the students to think about the possibility.

According to Lisa Delpit (2006) in *Other People's Children*:

To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment – and that is not easy. It is painful as well, because it means turning yourself inside out, giving up your own sense of who you are, and being willing to see yourself in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze. It is not easy, but it is the only way to learn what it might feel like to be someone else and the only way to start a dialogue (Delpit, 2006, p. 82).

Most teacher education programs begin – and end – with mastery of content knowledge and pedagogical skills. Our teachers learn the standards and then teach those standards to the students. However, many of our teachers, while prepared with *WHAT* to teach, are not prepared with *HOW* to teach it to ethnically diverse populations. There are still debates on when or even if multicultural education programs should be included in preservice training (Sleeter, 2001).

Teachers must learn about the cultural characteristics of their students. According to Gay (2002b), teachers need to know "(a) which ethnic groups give priority to communal living and cooperative problem solving and how these preferences affect

educational motivation, aspiration, and task performance; (b) how different ethnic groups' protocols of appropriate ways for children to interact with adults are exhibited in instructional settings; and (c) the implications of gender role socialization in different ethnic groups for implementing equity initiatives in classroom instruction" (p. 43). Gay cautions that too many teachers, especially those in science and math, believe that their subjects are not compatible with cultural diversity initiatives. The response is that multicultural educational strategies could be adopted.

Instructional Strategies in Multicultural Education

Teachers must learn how to take their contents and incorporate culturally responsive curriculum designs into their teaching. Gay (2002) proposes three such opportunities for teaching cultural diversity: (1) Formal plans for instruction, (2) symbolic curriculum, and (3) societal curriculum.

Formal plans are the standards provided by national commissions and by the state. Culturally responsive teachers will take the time to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the content that has been provided and make changes to improve the final output. The red flags in these formal plans include, but are not limited to, avoidance of controversial issues such as "racism, historical atrocities, powerlessness, and hegemony; focusing on the accomplishments of the same few high-profile individuals repeatedly and ignoring the actions of groups; and giving proportionally more attention to African Americans than other groups of color" (Gay, 2002b, p. 110). One specific way to help with this process is to teach preservice teachers how to do these cultural analyses of the texts that they will be using.

Symbolic curriculum includes items such as symbols, icons, mottoes, and awards to teach students knowledge, morals and values. Teachers spend time creating bulletin board decorations, public displays of behavioral norms and symbols of achievement. It is easy to post these without analyzing the cost of what is included versus what was absent. A best practice would be to ensure that the images in the classroom are representative of a wide variety of social class, gender, and positional diversity across ethnic groups (Gay, 2002b).

Societal curriculum is perhaps the most pervasive for of knowledge sharing. Societal curriculum is essentially how different ethnic groups are portrayed in the media (Cortés, 2000 in Gay, 2002b). For many students, and teachers, media is the only source of information that they have about different ethnic groups. Unsurprisingly, the majority of media programs only serve to “perpetuate the myths about life outside of White ‘mainstream’ America ... [that] contribute to an understanding of minority cultures as less significant, as marginal” (Campbell, 1995 in Gay, 2002b). Culturally responsive teachers will engage in dialogue with their students about these stereotypes and the effects that these stereotypes can have on their students.

Even with these instructional strategies, another major strategy for having an effective classroom conducive to multicultural education is creating a climate of care in the classroom. All preservice teachers have heard of the necessity to build from background knowledge, but often teachers assume that this background knowledge will be similar – if not the same as – the background knowledge that they themselves had at that age. Rather than use the term “background knowledge” and more intentional phrase would be cultural scaffolding. In this way, the teacher will attempt to build from the

background knowledge, but will take the time to use the cultures and experiences of their actual students to help these students expand their knowledge base.

The idea of a culture of care has the potential to be problematic. The issues emerge when teachers begin to make excuses for their students in an effort to empathize rather than providing the rigorous supports required for rigorous instruction. Caring does not mean making excuses for students of color. It does not mean a hands-off approach to be respectful of the student's needs. What it means is that teachers of ethnically diverse students care so much that they desire nothing less than high-level success. There is an expectation of hard work and the teacher will ensure that this will happen (Gay, 2002b). Teachers must also be advocates for their students. This social responsibility requires knowledge about their students of color and requires action in the form of innovative strategies that will include all students in the classroom.

Perhaps the most difficult concept of culture that White teachers will have to learn is the community element of learners of diverse ethnic groups. According to Gay, many students of color “grow up in cultural environments where the welfare of the group takes precedence over the individual and where individuals are taught to pool their resources to solve problems” (Gay, 2002b, p. 112). This is extremely exciting for culturally responsive teachers who now have a platform in which to engage students with collective tasks that will help to develop a community of learners.

Another controversial topic when discussing academic success is language. Characteristics of ethnic communication styles are central traits for different groups and are not descriptors of behavior. Teachers tend to hesitate in discussing cultural descriptors due to fear of stereotyping and generalizing about their students. As is typical

of a White response to conversations on race, the response is to ignore these cultural influences.

Gay provides some strategies for preservice and in-service teachers. One of these is the protocol for participation in discourse. A typical classroom is modeled after the didactic approach in which the teacher plays an active role and the students play a passive “listener” role. When the teacher is done sharing information, a question-answer style session ensues in which the teacher will focus on one individual, wait for a “correct” factual answer, and then move on to the next student. It is important to note, however, that most students of color come from a communicative style that is more active, dialectic and multimodal. What this means is that the speakers (teachers) should expect the listeners to engage with them while they are talking. Knowing this, it is easy to see how uninformed preservice teachers might view this behavior as rude and distracting. The result is that the students are silenced and student engagement falls... along with academic success.

Another communication technique is understanding ethnic groups’ patterns of task engagement. The popular classroom trend is a very logical, linear approach. This topic-centered approach is challenged by the topic-chaining approach: “it is highly contextual, and much time is devoted to setting a social stage prior to the performance of an academic task” (Gay, p. 13, 2002b). The communication style is circular, much like storytelling, but to the untrained teacher ear, this could be viewed as disjointed rambling. One can clearly see the importance in multicultural communication competency.

The breadth of this topic is daunting to say the least. When preparing the culturally responsive pedagogical training, it was necessary to first acknowledge the time

limits and second to determine which branch of culturally responsive practices should be presented first. The literature presented in this section was underrepresented in the provided sessions and is information that should be included in future trainings.

Success Stories in Multicultural Education

Darren Woodruff (1996), a research associate with the School Development Program in New Haven, Connecticut, described a classroom in which he found where multicultural education theory met multicultural education practice. He was in a math classroom but rather than having heads bent over textbooks where the only function of the teacher was to provide instruction, the atmosphere in the room was one of casual social interaction. In the first part of class, students were engaged in conversations about their lives. The teacher was passing around apple juice, chiming in on conversations, and writing math equations on the board. There was a sense of authentic care. According to Noddings (1998), good teaching must have a foundation in caring relationships built on trust: “Genuine education must engage the purposes and energies of those being educated. To secure such engagement, teachers must build relationships of care and trust, and within such relationships, students and teachers [must] construct educational objectives cooperatively” (p. 43).

This teacher was modeling Noddings’ suggestion of engrossment in these students (Rolón-Dow, 2005). This engrossment simply meant the receptivity of the teacher to hearing, seeing, and feeling what [the students] were trying to convey (Noddings, 1992). There is a caution in this. Per Noddings (1992), “no matter how hard teachers try to care, if the caring is not received by the students, the claim ‘they don’t care’ has some validity. It suggests strongly that something is very wrong” (p. 56). In Rolón-Dow’s study of

Puerto Rican students, she found a gap in Noddings theory and sought to explain the sociocultural context by incorporating Angela Valenzuela's (1999) development of care. According to Valenzuela, there is a way for Noddings' caring theory to be beneficial to historically oppressed groups. The teacher must be open to engaging in politicized analysis of racial dynamics (Rolón-Dow, 2005). Valenzuela (1999) wrote:

Less obvious to caring theorists are the racist and authoritarian undertones that accompany the demand that youth at places like Seguin High “care about” school. The overt request overlies a covert demand that students embrace a curriculum that either dismisses or derogates their ethnicity and that they respond caringly to school officials who often hold their culture and community in contempt (p. 24-25).

When we return to Woodruff and his description of the mathematics teacher's classroom, this authentic care was modeled with a focus on the students' lives themselves. Sadly, Woodruff was so engaged in this teacher's classroom because these sorts of positive teacher-student interactions are a rarity in urban school settings (Woodruff, 1996). Camp and Oesterreich (2010) talk about another teacher who had shied away from the “homogenized” curriculum of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Sleeter, 2005). This educator has deliberately decided against the use of premade worksheets, scripted lessons and boxed curriculum sets (Camp & Oesterreich, 2010). In the case of these researchers, what the teacher is trying to do is called uncommon teaching rather than multicultural education. However, the definitions are relatively close. Per Camp and Oesterreich (2010), uncommon teaching “offers the possibility of re-centering education on the students and away from the common-sense of scripted and restricted curricula to promote

acquisition by students of a critical consciousness in order to become agents of change for social justice” (p. 23). This teacher who was the focus of the case study is a White middle-class fifth grade history teacher in the Southwest part of the United States.

Deeply passionate about issues of social justice, she could not conform to the curricular standards to which her district placed her students. She observed that the required curriculum created a culture of mediocrity and included a “pedagogy of poverty... in which learners can ‘succeed’ without becoming either involved or thoughtful” (Haberman, 1991, p. 14). This teacher used an inquiry constructivist approach to engage her students in developing an understanding of such abstract concepts as democracy, justice and multiculturalism. She also focused on bringing personal connections (from herself and from her community where her students live) into the curriculum. The example included in Camp and Oesterreich (2010) was about her students’ reading of *And Now Miguel*, which is a text set in their community of northern New Mexico. The teacher creates a physical environment that reflects the multicultural ethic that she possesses. The texts that her children can access are representative of a variety of cultures, languages and genres.

Another example of the implementation of multicultural education theory is in Swartz’s (1993) study of preservice instruction for new teachers. A group of 17 elementary, middle, and high school administrators were interviewed by Swartz in 1991. This group participated in one of several in-service sessions led by Susan Goodwin. The goal of the session was to “[disrupt] dominant Eurocentric curricular patterns in schools by making it clear how supremacist expressions are allied with and legitimized by the

curriculum” (Swartz, 1993). The administrators then collaborated on ways to deal with hegemonic expressions in their school settings.

It should come as no surprise that multicultural education theory is being practiced through the development of official titles and positions. One such position is the Chief Diversity Officer (Wilson, 2013). While the focus of this study is on preservice high school teachers and the CDO is a position that is gaining momentum in higher education, there is perhaps something to be gleaned from such a development. Wilson outlined the challenges faced by CDOs on their campuses, but focused on seven specific CDOs who met with varying levels of success. The CDO position was created in the wake of four driving forces (Williams and Clowney, 2007): (a) legal and political dynamics; (b) changing demographics; (c) rise of a postindustrial knowledge economy; and (d) persistent societal inequities. The success came from creating buy-in with staff and could be seen in increased retention of students of color. There was, likewise, a push for retention of faculty of color (Wilson, 2013).

A final example of a successful multicultural education practice is the development of empowerment groups for academic success. In their study, Bemak, Chi-Ying, and Siroskey-Sabdo (2005) analyzed these empowerment groups as an innovative approach to prevent high school failure for at-risk, urban students. The specific group, called Empowerment Groups for Academic Success (EGAS) were put into action in a Midwest inner-city high school that faced such issues as high expulsion/suspension rates, teenage pregnancies, absenteeism, poverty and poor academic performance. These EGAS are spearheaded by school counselors as a means of dealing with less than ideal student-to-counselor workloads. Especially in environments with high ratios of students of color,

it is imperative that school counselors consider their level of racial consciousness and the racial identities that may impact the dynamics of the group in order to effectively facilitate these groups (Bemak, Chi-Ying, & Siroskey-Sabdo, 2005). Such groups have been evaluated by multiple researchers, including Walker (1991) who found that students' self-perception increased for African American, European American, and Portuguese children when they have been involved with culturally responsive groups. Additionally, Baca and Koss-Chioino (1997) expressed similar improvement for Mexican American students with regards to their educational achievement, quality of life at home and their mental health.

In terms of larger organizational level success with multicultural education, there are two main examples that I would like to describe. The first, La Raza studies in Tucson Independent School District is controversial in that the program ended up being eliminated. However, the success of this program extends beyond Tucson. In fact, the documentary *Precious Knowledge* (2011), which highlights the struggle that the students and teachers had with the school board served as an inspiration for my own social justice research project. This project produced a student-published anthology entitled *Rewind: A reverse chronological study of concepts of American (in)justice*. Chicano Studies was one of several ethnic studies programs offered in Tucson and it had positive effects on the student body including increased persistence through high school graduation – a 93% graduation rate for students involved in the program. Topics included in the La Raza program were magical realism through banned books such as *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and *Critical Race Theory* through a class discussion on the no pass-no play rule for student-athletes. Having had the opportunity to meet Curtis Acosta and Jose Gonzalez,

two of the instructors involved in the controversy, multicultural education was something that permeated beyond the classroom. During our conversations, they expressed the level of activism required to aid in the development of critically conscious students as citizens in this world. It was not an instructional engagement gimmick, but rather a highly-developed pedagogy for student voice and activism.

The second example is one with which I was less familiar – the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools. This program is a summer and after-school enrichment program focusing on high quality academic engagement and family involvement. The purpose is to increase student motivation towards reading and learning. As I was researching this program, what struck me was the organization of the learning program. Each program begins with a 30-minute “Harambee” and ends with a fifteen-minute one. Harambees can be individual or whole group but the point of these activities is to bring children, staff, parents and community members together in celebration. It is a true community initiative geared towards three generations – children and youth, young adults, and parents/grandparents. This is reminiscent of the *In Lak’ech* call that students participate in at the beginning of class in Tucson. It is changing the relationship that students have to learning. This community relationship to learning is a major success for culturally responsive pedagogy in action.

Summary

The United States has known for years that a focus on educational practices is required if we are to ever hope for equity in education. The problem is that we have yet to find a workable solution. The thought was that if students of color were allowed to integrate into White schools that they would have equal access to the materials and

supplies of their White peers. With equal access to resources, equal performance would follow. However, this is a naïve thought when the impoverished condition of many students of color is ignored. It is also equally naïve to believe that desegregation has indeed been achieved. All one has to do is to dedicate a morning of driving around the city of this study to see predominantly White schools and schools with nearly homogenous populations of students of color. All one has to do is review the achievement records of White students compared with students of color to know that performance is not equal.

This performance is oftentimes blamed on the student for such characteristics as laziness or poor behavior when in fact these students are dealing with a system of oppression (Alexander, 2011). If a teacher fails to recognize that this system exists, he will not be able to effectively teach his students in a way for them to be prepared for what comes beyond bubbling in answers on an answer sheet. This literature review has examined policies and practices in teacher education, instructional strategies in multicultural education, culturally relevant pedagogy and racial identity development theory. It has continued to provide theoretical context about social education and social justice educational theory. It has exposed the realities of institutionalized racism and is now serving as a call to action for teachers who find themselves in low-income, minority teaching positions. Through embracing the tenants of multicultural education and understanding the role of activist and advocate that we play as educators, teachers may serve as allies in the fight for social justice and be able to recognize symptoms of academic underachievement in our students of color.

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

This study lent itself to a qualitative approach for several reasons. Qualitative research methods are also particularly useful in the attempt to discern meaning that people give to the events that they experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This relates to the purpose of the study as the aim was to discover the perceptions held by a group of first-year teachers about the diversity training they were already receiving in their alternative certification program as compared with the optional training focusing on culturally responsive pedagogical training.

Additionally, a qualitative research approach is necessary when the research questions do not limit themselves to simplified answers, but rather answers that require exploration (Stake, 1995). Qualitative research questions traditionally begin with how or what so that an in-depth construction of what is happening can be generated (Patton, 2002). For this study, the focus was on participants' experiences with an optional culturally responsive pedagogical training session offered during the traditional alternative certification program provided by Omnes Public School. The research questions included:

- (a) What are perceptions expressed by first-year teacher participants regarding the various structures of this professional development series?;

- (b) What are first-year teacher participants' perceived understandings of culturally responsive practices and how did this perception change over the course of the professional development series?; and
- (c) After participating in the professional development series, what were the major takeaways expressed by the first-year participants and what has been implemented into their classrooms?

To add to this, a qualitative study allows for a more holistic interpretation of the data. It permits the researcher to explore singularities such as emotions or thought processes that may not be observable through traditional quantitative approaches (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For this current study, I explored the perceptions and actual experiences of the participants regarding diversity training offered by Omnes Public School compared with the optional culturally responsive pedagogical training.

Next, qualitative research lends itself to the study of phenomena in natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) which is apropos for this type of study in which the researcher attempts to discern perceptions using archival records from the training as well as post-session interviews.

Lastly, an added benefit of qualitative study is the highlighting of the researcher's role as an active participant in the study (Creswell, 2005). For this study, I was the key instrument in data collection and the interpreter of the collected data.

Qualitative research methods used in this study included: convenience sampling, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of archival data including audio transcriptions and journal reflections. Convenience sampling was used as the subjects were readily accessible to the researcher.

This specific study is based on the constructivist paradigm in that learning is an active process. The participants are actively constructing their own subjective interpretations of an objective reality. Through this active process, I hoped to glean first-year teacher perceptions on culturally responsive pedagogical training through the lens of what Omnes Public Schools offers through Excellent Teacher Training Program as well as through the context of the opt-in pedagogical training sessions. This chapter will describe the research paradigm, approach and design implemented to accomplish the aim of the study.

The foundation of qualitative research is in the emphasis on the development of a depth of understanding and the construction of meaning that the individual participants ascribe to their experiences. This concept is best articulated by Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) which suggests that the goal of qualitative research is, through an in-depth exploration, to elucidate and comprehend the robust lives of human beings and the environment in which they live.

A qualitative approach is most appropriate for this study because it focused on an understanding of the lived experiences of the participants (first-year teachers in an alternative certification program) and their own understandings of their experiences with provided culturally responsive training in the alternative certification program and at the district level when compared with the optional professional development series. This study allows for the participants to complete self-analyses through journaling activities and to share their own expression of the way they constructed their realities. The essential elements of a qualitative research progression include epistemology, a

theoretical perspective and methodology (Crotty, 1998). This chapter defines these terms and discusses them regarding the study.

Context

Through my own experiences, I know that opportunity existed within the current framework for our diversity trainings at Omnes Public Schools. I know that the topics addressed are valid and important to address, but the method for facilitation left something lacking. There could be a push for increased engagement and participation. It could be differentiated to meet each new teacher where he or she comes into the conversation. I wanted the same desired outcomes but knew that the method needed to change. If this study were to be replicated, the context of the provided professional development series would have been different. I would have met with my participants once a month for the entire year. I would have required community-based experiences and would have facilitated a self-analysis at the end of the session. I would have made these diversity sessions mandatory for all first-year teachers and I would have extended the length of time for each session. However, this is not possible and the setting through which my professional development series would be offered needed to be modified.

In the end, I provided three forty-five minute sessions that happened during lunch breaks. Every first-year teacher could not be required to attend as it did not fit into the state mandates for alternate teacher certification. I was not able to conduct this study over the course of an entire year, but had three dates approved by the school district. The title of the entire professional development series was: Culturally Responsive Teaching as an Applicable Pedagogy for Rigorous Curriculum and Student Achievement.

The purpose of these sessions was to reframe culturally responsive teaching and rigorous instruction as not exclusive of each other. I hoped to discover teacher participant perceptions of highly applicable professional development sessions by using three different structures for each of the sessions.

The first session set the stage with the hard realities of systemic racism in our education system and acknowledged how many teachers, regardless of race, have become complicit, either intentionally or not, to the perpetuation of this system. The second session functioned as a wake-up call highlighting real life examples of culturally irresponsible teaching practices and utilized Delpit as a framework for developing our identities as educators at Omnes Public School. The final session was meant to leave the participants with hope and resources through an analysis of Jeff Duncan Andrade's (2009) *Note to educators: Hope required when growing roses in concrete*. The themes focused on included White privilege, multicultural education, deficit thinking, culturally responsive pedagogy and teacher self-reflection. My intent was to provide the participants with teaching and learning opportunities that would promote and develop cultural responsiveness that emphasized rigorous instruction and campus advocacy for students.

In addition to my opt-in professional development series, the Omnes Public School District offers three mandatory Diversity Trainings. While the diversity trainings offered at the district level are mandatory for the over 1,000 employees working for Omnes Public Schools, my professional development series was limited to opt-ins who are drawn from a first-year teacher population of less than 200 teachers. My first session had a small group of eight teachers but each session had an increasing number of

participants due to word of mouth suggestions from attendees. The sessions were monthly, which was both helpful and detrimental to the study. It provided time for participants to process what was discussed, reflect on it and read a pre-session article. The detriment was that the elapsed time could lessen the sense of urgency I felt was necessary when tackling this subject area.

Given this context, my intention was to structure the series so that the participants would have access to seminal texts, have a chance to process and not to be overwhelmed by “research”. I had to limit how much research I exposed my subjects to and had to become much more intentional with regards to the selected readings. This included providing participants with a hard copy article and a video link in order to try to engage them in different ways. It incorporated debate, analysis of standardized test questions, panel discussions and activities that promoted self-reflection and conversation.

Philosophical Foundation

The epistemological framework of this study is a constructivist one. This approach suggests that different people construct their own meaning in different ways even when experiencing the same event (Crotty, 1998). In this instance, it is the first-year teachers’ perceptions of the culturally responsive pedagogical training. Dodge (2011) suggests several postulations of constructivism including: (1) Because meaning is constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting, qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions, so that the participants can share their views; (2) humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives; and (3) the basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community (Dodge, 2011, p. 44-

45). This lends itself to the concept that the interpretations and findings of this study are context-specific.

How this relates to the methodology of this study is the concept that seemingly incongruent forms of analysis come together to create cohesion (Nicholson, 1990). While I attempted to find meaning as it was constructed through the interviews, there was also a very specific focus from which I reflected on the study – the effectiveness of the study to create pedagogical development in teachers with specific inclination towards cultural responsiveness.

Additionally, constructivism is a useful philosophical framework for this research. Per Stake (1995), “most contemporary qualitative researchers nourish the belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered. The world we know is a particularly human construction” (p. 99). The shared experiences of the participants lead to different understandings and these understandings can be used to generate a constructed knowledge.

This research centers around the interpretations of first-year alternative certification teachers at Omnes Public Schools and their feelings regarding a lack of culturally responsive pedagogical training in that first year, as well as their interpretations of the optional professional development series to which they opted in. The primary focus is their experience with the optional professional development series as a way of making recommendations for future trainings for alternative certification teachers at Omnes Public Schools. The study’s participants constructed a shared lived reality based on their experiences in the training and in their classrooms. Their interactions – or the lack thereof – reflect the complexities of human interface and suggest a constructivist epistemology.

In terms of analysis, the interpretive theoretical perspective was adopted to provide a foundation for understanding the ways that the first-year alternative certification teachers made meaning of their experiences at Omnes Public Schools and in the context of the optional professional development series. This study was interested in the meaning that was generated regarding future possibilities and areas of focus that are currently lacking within the existing system. The interpretive theoretical perspective begins by examining the context as opposed to assumptions. As the researcher, I was interested in understanding how the participants made meaning of their experiences. This is realized through the concept of researcher-as-instrument. Rather than prescribing an assumption to the study, the researcher immerses themselves in the environment to be studied (Esterberg, 2002). Both the constructivist and interpretive approaches endorse the idea that social reality is constructed and modified by the people involved (Stake, 1995).

This human construction of knowledge was only able to be analyzed through an examination of the lived experiences of the participants. Thus, for this study, there is an analysis of archival data from audio transcriptions of the professional development series as well as semi-structured open-ended interviews with five of the original participants in which the focus was on existing culturally responsive pedagogical training for alternative certification teachers at Omnes Public Schools as well as their shared experience with the opt-in professional development series. This data was analyzed in an attempt to both understand and construct meaning of these stories and perceptions with regard to adequate pedagogical preparation for alternative certification teachers.

Research Design

Qualitative case study research functioned as the main methodology for this study. This section focuses on a brief history of case study research, provides a definition of the case study methodology, explores the misconceptions of case study methods and the potential for case study design creation from case study research. The benefits of this vein of study is based on Maxwell's (2005) rubber band analogy: "This 'rubber band' metaphor portrays a qualitative design as something with considerable flexibility, but in which there are constraints imposed by the different parts on one another, constraints which, if violated, make the design ineffective" (p. 6).

To create an effective case study, this study included an initial examination of well-known case study researchers including Robert K. Yin (2009) and Robert E. Stake (1995). Both researchers suggested techniques for organizing and conducting case study research effectively.

While the benefits of case study are useful for the specific environment of study, there are several misconceptions as identified by Flyvbjerg (2006). The five greatest misunderstandings of case study research include: (1) theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge; (2) one cannot generalize from a single case, therefore, the single-case study cannot contribute to scientific development; (3) the case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; (4) the case study contains a bias toward verification; and (5) it is often difficult to summarize specific case studies. When analyzing the lived experiences of the five first-year teacher participants, these limitations were considered.

Case Study

Case study is one of the most frequently used qualitative research methodologies. Yazan (2015) talked about the questions of legitimacy surrounding case study and qualitative research. Specifically, this author addressed three seminal authors who provided procedures for case study research. These texts included Yin's *Case study research: design and methods* (2002), Merriam's *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (1998), and Stake's *The art of case study research* (1995). Yin (2002) defines a case as a "contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context" (p. 45). It is more beneficial to view case study as the study of a program or people rather than a study of events and processes.

Case study methodology, as defined by Stake (1995), is a strategy of inquiry through which a researcher analyzes a program, event, activity, or process for one or more individuals. These cases are limited by time and activity and researchers collect data using a variety of data collection procedures over a determined period of time. For this study, the phenomenon being investigated were the perceptions of first-year teachers in an optional professional development series on the development of a culturally responsive pedagogy. The case was the five participants in the professional development series that participated in the post-series interviews. Data was collected through an analysis of archival data including audio transcriptions of the three sessions and submitted journal reflections by the original participants. Additionally, interviews with five of the original participants using a semi-structured approach allowed for more in-

depth analysis of trends discovered through original analysis of audio transcriptions.

District documents were also reviewed and data was coded for emergent themes.

Yin (2009) identified five components for effectual case study research design: (1) research questions; (2) propositions or purpose of study; (3) unit analysis; (4) logic that links data to propositions; and (5) criteria for interpreting findings. As mentioned previously, the most appropriate question-type for qualitative case studies are “how” and “why” questions in that the open-ended questioning strategy allows for more in-depth examination of the participants by the researcher. Specifically, the focus of the initial interview was on the existing gaps in culturally responsive pedagogical training for first year teachers in the alternative certification program at Omnes Public Schools. The second interview was on perceptions of the optional professional development series of which the first-year teacher participants were a part.

The second component, according to Yin, is the determination of the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to determine the effectiveness of the provided professional series in the development of a culturally responsive pedagogy for the first-year teacher participants in comparison with the preparation provided by the Excellent Teacher Training Program with the aim of providing recommendations to this existing program.

Yin’s third component is the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis for this particular study is the optional culturally responsive pedagogical training offered in conjunction with the Excellent Teacher Training Program at Omnes Public Schools – a large charter school network located in the urban setting of Houston, Texas.

The fourth component of case study research design is connecting data to propositions. The connections are developed through the data collection phase and themes will emerge from this data analysis. The emergent patterns serve as answers to the research questions posited in Chapter 1.

The final component of case study research design is the criteria for the interpretation of findings. Traditionally, the researcher codes data prior to the development of themes (Yin, 2009). During this phase, meaning is extracted from the findings and recommendation for future practice and research can be determined.

Participants

It was relatively easy to secure participants for this study. As a former participant of the Excellent Teacher Training Program, I knew that a gap existed in terms of culturally responsive pedagogical training. I also knew the main organizers of the program and spoke with them directly about offering these sessions as a supplemental option for participants. The Excellent Teacher Training program is an alternative certification program bound by state mandates on what should be included in teacher preparation. The general sentiment, as internalized by many teacher participants including myself in 2009, was that the focus is on classroom management. If the class cannot be managed, incorporating culturally responsive material would not be successful. The perception was that being culturally responsive was in the course material presented to students rather than the pedagogical method of instruction. The hope was to bridge this gap in the professional development series that was offered.

The participants for this study were drawn from the population of new to teaching educators who are enrolled in the Excellent Teacher Training program for Omnes Public

Schools. These teachers are first year teachers from Omnes Public Schools, another large charter school district or one of the charter compact schools and may or may not be a part of the Teach for America program. While the data included next does not sort for teachers who have experience versus first year teachers, the data shows that for new instructional hires for Omnes Public Schools for the 2014-2015 academic school year that 26% identified as African American, 21% as Hispanic/Latino, 6% as Asian and 47% as White. Of these numbers, 25% of these new hires were not new to education. All first-year teachers are required to participate in Omnes' Excellent Teacher Training program. Data for the incoming teachers for the 2015-2016 school year showed a continuation of this trend: 39% identified as African-American, 19% as Hispanic/Latino, 7% as Asian and 35% as White. Of these numbers 27% of these new hires were not new to education.

The sample group – new district hires - included teachers of all races and ethnicities. The researcher attended Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs) as well as provided instruction for the narrative self-study analysis which was an optional post-session assignment in which participants could contribute. Additionally, cultural and institutional inquiry assignments were proposed to further the opportunity for critical analysis of the status quo. Consent for participation was sought and received from the university, the school district, the district Superintendent, the participants and the Senior Director of Programming for Excellent Teacher Training program. For this specific study, there were 23 first year teachers that originally expressed interest. Of this sample, 18 identified themselves as female and 5 identified as male. 9 identified as White, 10 as African American, 3 as Hispanic and 1 as Asian-American.

Teachers communicated various reasons for wanted to participate in this program. Several of the reasons included a desire for a more “real” conversation, a desire to have a more student-focused professional development series, and the chance to learn specific tools and strategies with regard to culturally responsive pedagogy (Archival Data, Group Session Transcript).

The site for this study was at the Excellent Teacher Training facility – one of the fifteen campuses in Omnes Public Schools. Omnes Public Schools serves grades 6 through 12 and is a public charter school. At the time of study, it served approximately ten thousand students across the city.

Convenience sampling was used for this study for participants to opt-in to the professional development series. The selection criteria were based on first-year teacher participation in the Excellent Teacher certification program and these teachers self-selecting into this optional training. After the sessions were complete, the five participants that agreed to further interviews were the ones that responded to an open call for additional interviews.

While I wanted a diverse range of participants (based on gender, race, and subject area), I did not control for it. This random group of teachers that opted in to the program happened to satisfy this aspiration, however.

Data Collection Methods

Intuitively, case study research benefits from having multiple sources of evidence. This concept suggests that the findings will be more robust due to these multiple sources (Yin, 2009). In a case study, the concept of triangulation is readily employed. Triangulation allows for the use of multiple sources of evidence to provide a clearer

picture of findings. Yin (2009) suggests that triangulation is imperative to the formation of a clear and reliable case study. Through these multiple sources, the ability to construct meaning can be achieved. Per Seidman (1991), “I interview because I am interested in other people’s stories. Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people tell stories, they select details of their experiences from their stream of consciousness” (p. 12). The interview process lends itself to meaning-making and thus, interviews are the primary source of data. In order to richen the findings, additional data points of archival audio transcriptions and journaling as well as supplemental district data were used.

Interviews

When conducting interviews, relationships and trust building must be considered: “The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind. We interview people to find out from them those things we can’t observe” (Patton, 1980, p. 196). Two ways to ensure that these are considered is to be an active listener and to refrain from judgement. To complete the interviews conducted with the five first-year teacher participants, six different types of questions were employed (Patton, 1987): (1) experience/behavior, (2) opinion/belief, (3), feeling, (4), knowledge, (5) sensory, and (6) background/demographic. A complete list of guiding questions can be found in Appendix B.

In a semi-structured interview setting, the interview should feel conversational. As the researcher, I often shared information about myself with the participants to build rapport and relationships. Participants felt at ease throughout the process and allowed for an optimal interviewing situation.

One of the primary goals of the interview was to determine perceptions of the culturally responsive pedagogical training and the gaps that exist within the current structure in terms of alternative certification through the Excellent Teacher Training Program. The behavior exhibited in the archival data was given context through the interviews. According to Seidman (1998), “Interviewing allows us to put behavior in context and provides access to understanding their action” (p. 128).

There are many reasons to utilize interviews as the primary data source in a qualitative study. These reasons have been outlined above and range from the opportunity to create meaning through stories through the benefits of triangulation to create a richness in the study findings.

For this particular study, five of the original participants agreed to further interviews after the initial professional development series. Of these participants, four were female and one was male. Two were Latinx, two were White and one was African American. Two were social studies teachers, one was a science teacher and two were ELA teachers. One of these participants is a member of Teach for America and all participated in the Excellent Teacher Training Program. These participants are what Patton (2002) calls “key informants” in that they are individuals with particular knowledge about the setting and program in question. Wolcott (2001) expands on this by saying that key-informant interviews “refers to an individual in whom one invests a disproportionate amount of time because that individual appears to be particularly well-informed, articulate, approachable, or available” (p. 31).

This study’s participants were interviewed between June 2016 and September 2016. As the majority of this time was during the summer break at the conclusion of

these teachers' first year of teaching, the majority of these interviews happened at local coffee shops. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and the average interviews lasted between 30 and 55 minutes.

With the approval of the participants, the interviews were recorded to allow for accurate transcription (Merriam, 1998). At the completion of the interview, I remained at the interview site to collect main takeaways on behavioral observations and to track key points (Appendix C).

Each interview began with a reminder of the purpose of the interview as well as the procedures for questioning. I reminded participants of their right to withdraw from the study and for their protection using confidentiality. I asked for questions and for permission to record the interview.

As mentioned previously, I used a semi-structured interview approach (Miriam, 2002) with a uniform set of guiding questions. I already had demographic information because each of these participants had already completed the optional professional development series with me. Open-ended questions were used throughout the interview process to encourage depth of responses. I also shared personal accounts in order to build trust and to model depth of responses for the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

The transcription process began immediately after the first round of interviews between June 2016 and September 2016. To ensure that the transcriptions were accurate, I initially used the voice-to-text feature in Google Drive and immediately reviewed each transcript while listening to the audiotapes. Each participant had two interviews. The first interview lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour and a half. The second follow-up interview lasted between twenty-five and thirty-five minutes.

Archival Records

Although the interviews were the primary method of data collection, I also referenced archival data sources of audiotapes of the three professional development sessions as well as the journal reflections. The audiotapes, all of which included initial statements made during the actual session by the interview participants, were used to augment and clarify the participants' statements during the interview process. In addition to these, several district documents were referenced as well to provide environmental context to the study. These documents included:

- a. Omnes Public Schools' Diversity Report (See Appendix D - document has been redacted to remove identifiers). This document was beneficial in analyzing the demographic identifiers of the teaching staff at Omnes Prep with regard to teaching experience, race and gender.
- b. Omnes Public Schools' 2015-2016 One Pager (See Appendix E - document has been redacted to remove identifiers). This document was beneficial in analyzing the student population served by the teachers at Omnes Public Schools.

The following subsections were included so as to provide a more complete description of what was offered during the specific trainings. The goal of the variance between the sessions was to glean teacher receptivity to the session so as to inform future diversity and culturally responsive pedagogical sessions at the district level.

White Privilege and Recognizing a Failing System

The first session was meant to push the participants into a place of discomfort. I intentionally tried to create discomfort but I wanted to ensure that the participants had at

least some sort of shared foundational knowledge base. In order to create this foundation, the participants were asked to do some pre-work. Participants watched Debby Irvin's TED Talk called "Finding Myself in the Story of Race" and were asked to read a Huffington Post article that provided a basic introduction to the topic entitled, "What is Culturally Responsive Pedagogy?"

Participants were given a handout of Peggy McIntosh's "Invisible Knapsack". For this activity, all participants rated themselves on a scale and tallied up the number. Participants then lined up in order from least to greatest. My hope was that the resulting conversation would illuminate the reality of White privilege and lead to a conversation on what this might mean for our students and for ourselves as teachers.

Participants were given the opportunity to reflect on this experience in terms of preconceived notions, how it relates to their perception of themselves as educators, how it relates to their reality on their campus and the hope they have for what sort of changes it created in their own identity. After each session, the participants received an email with a link to reflection questions. The reflections were inconsistent from the participants and were used minimally.

Curricular Biases and the Role of the Teacher

The second session was meant to highlight inequity at a state level with specific examples and to begin the process of intentional teacher identity building within the context of Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children*. Participants were asked to read through excerpts from the text (see Appendix F) and watched a short introductory video to *Precious Knowledge*, a documentary about the elimination of Ethnic Studies courses in Tucson, Arizona. Participants were asked to discuss the article and video through a

critical lens and then were provided with example questions from STAAR and unit tests that have inherent biases against students of color and high-poverty students. Again, teachers were asked to reflect on themselves in the context of this session and to analyze their schools in the same context. These reflections were also emailed out via a secure link at the culmination of the session. Participation was minimal.

Audacious Hope and a Call to Action

Session three involved another pre-session article and video. The article was Jeff Duncan-Andrade's (2009) "*Note to educators: Hope required when growing roses in concrete*" and a clip from the Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore (2015) of Roni Dean Burren and her interview about fighting against curricular racism. The participants engaged in an interactive panel discussion with five high-performing teachers – all doctoral students at the University of Houston. Participants could ask their own questions and engage in direct, unfiltered conversation. The hope was for participants to be able to see some successful examples and be inspired to engage in a similar struggle in their own classroom. Participants again were asked to reflect on this experience in regards to themselves, their students, the classroom and their school.

Data Analysis

The messiness of this study necessitated multiple methods of analysis – a common struggle in social sciences. As a researcher-participant in the initial archival professional development series, I had first-hand experience with each of my participants. This was incredibly beneficial in the relationship building and trust-building that made the later interviews so robust. Work like this is inherently challenging when considered through what Shields (Steinberg and Cannella, 2012) calls critical advocacy research.

She suggests that “critical research begins with the premise that research’s role is not to describe the world as it is, but also to demonstrate what needs to be changed” (pg. 3). In a study focusing on culturally responsive pedagogical development in teachers, the premise that this pedagogy must be developed is not disputed. What is disputed is the methods employed to educate teachers.

Data analysis in terms of my initial emerged through my reflections on the audio transcriptions. I was able to formulate key points out of each interview and correlations between the interviewees became apparent. These interpretations were “fuzzy” and resulted in the ability to evaluate for trends per what Bassey (2000) describes as an “intellectual struggle with an enormous amount of raw data in order to produce a meaningful and trustworthy conclusion” (pg. 84). The understanding is that, as a case study, the stories of those interviewed are unique.

Per Esterberg (2002), a process of open coding was utilized in which you “work intensively with your data, line by line, identifying themes and categories that seem of interest” (p. 158). Once the data from these interviews was analyzed through the open coding process, these codes were further reviewed for emergent themes.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an essential part of the qualitative research design in that the researcher takes an active role in the collection and the interpretation of the participants’ stories. If the researcher is not trusted, the credibility of the research comes into question (Miriam, 2002). The participant becomes guarded and is less likely to share their authentic realities of the shared experience.

To generate trustworthiness in this study, I implemented several strategies. As mentioned above, I incorporated triangulation of data to confirm the themes that were emerging (e.g. through interviews, archival data and district documents) as described in Yin (2009). Additionally, I requested peer review of my findings as they emerged (Merriam, 2002). Peer review is the discussion of the study and the emergent findings regarding the interpretations with colleagues. This allowed for a clearer analysis of the emergent themes. Lastly, to allow other researchers to make decisions about transferability of the results of this case study, I used rich, thick description as outlined in Merriam (2002). These descriptions contextualize the study to allow readers to determine the extent to which their own situation mirrors the case study.

With the first-year teacher participants, I outlined the goals and purpose of study and confirmed confidentiality. I also informed them of their right to remove themselves from the interviews at any time.

Researcher Personality

This characteristic of qualitative research is perhaps the most apparent distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methods. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and is also a researcher-participant – meaning she is interacting directly with the subjects. Due to this quality, it is vital for the researcher to consider her own biases, limitations and views. Per Merriam (1998), qualitative research assumes that the researcher's biases will impact the outcome of the study. Thus, in the interest of full disclosure and to guard against unintentional influences, the following outlines my own personal experiences that are relevant to this study.

I began my teaching at Omnes Prep as an alternative certification teacher enrolled in Excellent Teacher Training. I did not go to college for education and so I entered the program without experience with educational philosophy or pedagogy. During my first year, this program did not provide any training on multicultural education or culturally responsive practices. When the district began to provide district-level professional development on diversity initiatives, I found the trainings to be superficial and irrelevant to serving our students. For this reason, I advocated for the creation of an opportunity for first-year teachers to be exposed to culturally responsive pedagogy during their Excellent Teacher Training. The result was an optional and additional training during the lunch break. In its first inception, this program served a small percentage of first year teachers who had radically different experiences in the same program.

In addition to this professional background, my personal background mirrors many of the teachers that are joining Omnes Public Schools. I am not from an education background and I do not share the same racial or socioeconomic background as the majority of my students. I am not from the community and this served as an area of contention for me in my first year. The benefits that I did have as a first-year teacher included the fact that I am bilingual and that I was a former athlete who played basketball and soccer with the students after school. Knowing that I shared a background with many of the teacher participants for this case study meant that I had to be extremely diligent and aware of my own biases.

The standard relationship between the researcher and the researched has traditionally been that of the observer removed from the participants. This is not possible in this course of study. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) push that, “the relationship is key

to what it is that narrative inquirers do” (p. 22). The researcher and the participants function collaboratively to navigate the experience. Each role brings valuable and necessary perspectives. Thus, as the researcher-participant, I functioned as both the inquirer on the experiences of others as well as a contributor of my own perceptions of my experience. Like my participants, I too am developing my cultural literacy and struggling through the development of culturally responsive pedagogical practices. This process was mutually beneficial and collaborative; and that is what made it so valuable.

Limitations

As is typical with research involving human subjects, Institutional Review Board approval was received prior to the start of data collection. Ethical considerations were a primary concern when including human subjects, especially considering the setting for the study was during PLE days where their evaluators were present. It was necessary for me to assure them of their anonymity and that I would not allow evaluators into the session so as to promote this shared space as a space of trust. Pseudonyms were given to protect the identity of the participants so even when quotations are included in this study, their identity will be concealed. I fully informed and engaged participants throughout the inquiry process regarding the purpose of the study. I shared notes from specific reflections and generalized comments from participants so that they could contribute to the meaning-making process (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Additionally, the validity of qualitative research methods can be called into question. Unlike quantitative methods, narrative inquiry relies on criteria other than validity, reliability and generalizability. Beaudry (2014) suggests that research should “instead seek to convey trustworthiness through presenting readers with depth and

richness that enables a kind of vicarious experience in which they can interpret the events in relation to their own experiences” (p. 78). In order to develop this, I promoted a collaborative experience and utilized the original words from participants as all sessions were recorded.

Additional limitations included: 1) no true randomization was possible due to the necessity of equity of samples and the inclusion of all teachers regardless of race or ethnic identification in the study; 2) participants may have had radically different experiences and comfort with discussions on race based on upbringing or previous experiences that are not related to receiving this specific diversity training; 3) each campus placed its own value on the Omnes Public School Diversity Initiative and as such, some teachers will have access to additional support; and 4) the results would be limited in generalizability to different populations as it is only surveying one group of teachers in a charter school alternative certification program.

The second limitation discussed above is in regards to the radically different experiences and degrees of comfort expressed by the participants regarding discussion on race. The different levels of awareness that each participant brought to the session was not something for which I could control.

Additionally, the third limitation intrigued me specifically as it encourages me to move forward with my research. The limited generalizability speaks to concepts of teacher identity and how this identity is largely shaped by the individual school culture (Hargreaves, 1994). While all of the teachers were a part of the same Excellent Teacher program and all teachers were also educators in the Omnes Public School network, the

gap lends itself to a future discussion on the impact of the individual school cultures on teacher identity development.

Summary

Throughout this study, I hoped to gain insight into participant interpretations of pre-existing diversity initiatives and how they compared these sessions with the ones received through this study. I hoped to make meaning of their experiences in the study, self-reflections and interviews so as to draw generalizations and make recommendations for future sessions at our district-level.

I also sought insight into my own practices as a critical pedagogue and an analysis of my own perception of how culturally responsive my curriculum was. I used a case study research method informed by a constructivist epistemology to guide this study. I triangulated my data through multiple sources so that I could provide a complete account of the individual and shared experiences of participation in this study. In doing so, I sought to add to the discourse of first year teacher alternative certification trainings specifically, and culturally responsive pedagogy more generally, to promote new insights and questions into our practices.

For a complete copy of the IRB, please consult Appendix G.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to examine the perceived effectiveness of a three-part culturally responsive pedagogical training. This training was offered because of a gap identified at the district level and on the campus level for teachers who were able to educate in a culturally responsive way. The following research questions informed this study:

- (a) What are perceptions expressed by first-year teacher participants regarding the various structures of this professional development series?;
- (b) What are first-year teacher participant's perceived understandings of culturally responsive practices and how did this perception change over the course of the professional development series?; and
- (c) After participating in the professional development series, what were the major takeaways expressed by the first-year participants and what has been implemented into their classroom?

Through an analysis of archival transcripts from the professional development series as well as in-depth interviews, study participants described their perceptions and experiences with diversity training at the district level and the incorporation of culturally responsive pedagogical training to inform their curricular development. They also discussed their recommendations to improved diversity training at the district level.

The research findings that this chapter reports are based on analysis of the following data sources: archival transcriptions of pedagogical sessions, semi-structured interviews, school district documents, and the researcher's observations as a researcher- participant during the trainings.

Background

There were between ten and fifteen participants involved in the optional professional development sessions dependent on the date of session delivery. The reflections of these participants were elucidated from the audio transcriptions of the sessions and the journal reflections. Both of those sources are a part of the archival data. There were seven females and three males. Four of these instructors identified as English/Language Arts teachers. Three identified as social studies teachers. Two identified as science teachers and one was a Physical Education teacher.

Three of the participants identified as White and an additional participant identified as Irish American. There was one African American and one who identified as Black/Native American. Two identified as Latinx. Two additional participants identified as multi-racial or mixed. Participants could self-identify without any categories provided to ensure that personal identity was recorded accurately. In addition, age ranged from twenty-two to fifty years old.

Three of the participants were also Teach for America Corps members. Half of the participants began teaching as their first profession and the other half had held previous professional occupations before transitioning to education. For the majority of participants, their parents had earned a master's degree or other advanced degrees

including doctorates. There were three participants with parents who had never attended college but had finished high school.

In terms of interviewees, the group included five participants. There were four females and one male. There were two Latinx, one African American and two White participants. Two of the participants were social studies instructors at the middle school level, two were English instructors and one was science. One of the participants was a Teach for America Corps member.

Zada was an African American female who had grown up in a different part of the country but felt as though her story resonated with that of the students at Omnes Public Schools. Zada's first job out of college was at Omnes as a social studies instructor. She dominated the group conversations and spent the majority of her post-session interviews outlining her disgruntlement with the gap in pedagogical training for teachers at her campus.

Bella was a Latinx female educator in her first year of teaching. She had also attended Omnes Public Schools as a student and, after completing her university studies, had tried to come back into the classroom. She spent a few years working at a district campus as the After-School Coordinator before moving full-time into the classroom.

Daniel was a White male who was also in his first year at Omnes. He worked at the middle school level as an English instructor. Daniel often articulated feelings of guilt at his own privilege and shock at the things he learned along the way as realities for people of color in America. This guilt would lend itself to a lack of confidence in his ability to provide culturally responsive instruction, as articulated in his post-session interviews.

Valeria was a Latinx female teacher in her first year at Omnes Public Schools. She taught middle school mathematics. While from the same city as the Omnes district, Valeria did not attend the charter school. Rather, she attended a traditional public school before going to a Tier-1 university in the same city. She often commented on the shared background that she had with the students she taught in her first year. She was also the only Teach for America corps member that participated in the post-session interview.

The last participant was Abaigael, a Jewish female who taught English at the middle school level. Abaigael had previous work experience in an education-field, although she was not an educator. She struggled with her relationships with students and even dealt with multiple scenarios of prejudice against her by her students (Post-session Interviews). She had originally joined this program for specific strategies to employ for a more culturally responsive classroom.

Table 3

Post-Session Interview Participants

	<i>Participants</i>				
	Zada	Bella	Daniel	Valeria	Abaigael
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female
Ethnicity	African American	Latinx	White	Latinx	White
Age	>25	>25	>25	>25	>25
Subjects Taught	Social Studies	Social Studies	English	Math	English
Teach for America	No	No	No	Yes	No

At the time of the study, Omne Public Schools had fifteen 6-12 schools in Houston serving approximately 10,000 students. These students are 97% African American or Hispanic and 85% economically-disadvantaged¹². Omne Public Schools offered an alternative certification program called Excellent Teacher Training for first-year teachers. The district had provided three diversity training sessions held on each campus and prepared by Diversity Ambassadors in the central office. Excellent Teacher Training did not offer a session on any of the following topics: Culturally Responsive Teaching, Multicultural Education, Diversity, or any topic aligned with that messaging. The professional development series at the district level basic and introductory format to introduce concepts of diversity.

The sessions focused more on self-analysis and description of self-identity rather than on greater issues of systemic inequality and the necessity of culturally responsive practices in our own classrooms. When this study was conducted, all fifteen campuses were required to send their first-year teachers through the Excellent Teacher Training Program and these three sessions were the only source of diversity education provided to teachers at the district level. During the interviews, several study participants referenced the lack of adequate diversity and culturally responsive pedagogical training.

Interviewees contributed differing amounts of information to the three themes that comprise the narrative. Some participants talked at length on one or two of the themes; some participants made nearly equal contributions across all three themes. Thus, all participants' voices and views are represented in the study.

Study Findings

Three themes emerged from the data:

- I. What are perceptions expressed by first-year teacher participants regarding the various structures of this professional development series?
- II. What are first-year teacher participant's perceived understandings of culturally responsive practices and how did this perception change over the course of the professional development series?
- III. After participating in the professional development series, what were the major takeaways expressed by the first-year participants and what has been implemented into their classrooms?

While the themes are reported as discrete, there is considerable overlap among them. Further, participants' responses to interview questions often addressed more than one theme. In those cases, the interview data are described where they appear to fit most logically.

Theme One: Perceptions on the Professional Development Series

This theme is discussed in two parts: (1) collection of data, and (2) analysis of data. Each part is further divided into sections based on participants' perceptions of and experiences with the professional development series. The three sources for this data include the archival data of session transcriptions and participant journals as well as interview transcriptions for the five participant's post-professional development series. The goal of the professional development series was to have the participants constantly thinking about culturally responsive pedagogy rather than the three-times per year model that existed at that time. To that end, participants had an element of pre-work, attended

the session and later would reflect on that session and their own pedagogical development.

Just as the sessions developed, the intention was for critical self-reflection to develop as well. Constructed meaning takes place as the participants create their own meaning. Therefore, the sessions were intentional in the specific message. In the first session, participants were meant to confront privilege. For some, this was a new concept and a completely jarring one. Daniel, for example, could not move past the specific question regarding the color of Band-Aids. He could not fathom the idea that this was a reality for people and that he had not considered it. At the same time, there were others who were very familiar with concepts of privilege. Seeing that there was an awareness gap between participants, some of the more aware participants began to work towards educating the other participants rather than continuing with their own self-reflection.

The second session was meant to focus specifically on curriculum and curriculum violence. The conversations revealed commonalities and differences in opinion. There were conversations coming from a place of opportunity (e.g. authentic care (Valenzuela, 1999)) and through a conversation of injustice and oppression. The defeatist attitude permeated the space and influenced the reflections of the participants.

The third session likewise began with a specific intention. That intention was to leave the participants with a desire to explore the concept of audacious hope. Subsequent interviews consistently referred to this session – however with the sense of an inadequate skill set to address the social injustices that exist in our classrooms rather than with the sense of hope that teachers can be prepared to address this gap.

Table 4*Professional Development Series Outline*

	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3
PRE-WORK	<p>Watch “Finding Myself in the Story of Race” by Debby Irving https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5nqN8tmfok</p> <p>Read “What is Culturally Responsive Pedagogy” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-lynch-edd/culturally-responsive-pedagogy_b_1147364.html</p>	<p>Excerpt from “Other People’s Children” by Delpit to be sent as an attachment one week before our meeting.</p> <p>Excerpt from “Precious Knowledge” video link to be sent out one week before our meeting.</p>	<p>Jeff Duncan-Andrade text “Note to educators: Hope required when growing roses in concrete” http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity/pdfs/Duncan_Note%20to%20Educators_%20Hope%20Required%20When%20Growing%20Roses%20in%20Concrete.pdf</p> <p>Roni Dean Burren Nightly Show: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6toBUyEAjM</p>
SESSION AGENDA	<p>I. Project Introduction</p> <p>II. Consent Agreement</p> <p>III. Demographics Survey</p> <p>IV. Peggy McIntosh and White Privilege Exercise</p>	<p>I. Reflection on readings. Whole group discussion.</p> <p>II. Analysis of test questions and lesson plan for culturally responsiveness.</p>	<p>I. Social Education in Action Panel (Roni Dean Burren, Cameron White);</p> <p>II. Small group debrief – hopes/fears/challenges, etc.</p>
POST REFLECTION	<p>Journal Reflections to be completed via survey link to be sent out after session. If you would like to keep your reflections for yourself as well, please copy and paste into a Word document.</p> <p>What was your biggest takeaway from this session? Describe an experience that you have had in a school setting where White Privilege was a clear factor. What is your hope in learning more about culturally responsive pedagogy?</p>	<p>Journal Reflections to be completed via survey link to be sent out after session. If you would like to keep your reflections for yourself as well, please copy and paste into a Word document.</p> <p>What is your thought process when it comes to culturally responsive pedagogy and your curriculum development? Describe challenges and successes you have had in your classroom OR describe a future lesson for which you could more intentionally incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy?</p>	<p>Journal Reflections to be completed via survey link to be sent out after session. If you would like to keep your reflections for yourself as well, please copy and paste into a Word document.</p> <p>How can you be an advocate for change in a culturally responsive way in your classroom or school community? What have you done so far? What is a situation in which you may have acted in a different way?</p>

Each session was one in which participants who were already involved with Excellent Teacher Training Program could self-select into during a lunch break on a Saturday training day. Each session lasted approximately forty-five minutes.

Archival Data: Session 1

The first session provided a simple introduction to culturally responsive teaching as well as had each of the participants participate in Peggy McIntosh's "Invisible Knapsack" activity. Several of the participants were surprised by their level of privilege. Lisa remarked, "On the back side of my sheet, everything was zeros and I think that the points that I got have more to do with me and my family's economic status than anything else" (Archival data, Group Session). She continued, "I do have thoughts sometimes when I'm renting like, 'is my race going to be a factor?' But I think because of my education and my upbringing, it's balanced out when they meet me so it's like, oh, she's not really one of those Black people... so yeah." Bruce continued with the same realization about privilege and education:

My score on the front was very high and it was just zeros down the back as well. But my score on the front was high because I felt the same thing. Even though I grew up a certain way, I landed a very successful career and essentially bought those points. I'm able to not have to worry about a bunch of things because skin color might be one thing if you're wearing a twelve hundred dollar suit when you walk in the restaurant, all of a sudden it seems to be less of a problem (Archival data, Group session).

Many additional teachers reiterated this identity struggle that they face with their students. Valeria discussed a conversation among herself, a Latinx student, and her White co-teacher:

In lunch, one of our [Hispanic] students said something to [the White teacher] like, 'You must shop at Kroger ... because you're White.' And

I'm like, 'No, I always shop at Kroger.' And he's like, 'No, but Ms. Martinez is basically White.' And I'm like, 'I don't look White. I'm even darker than you.' It really hurt me that he assumed that I'm basically White because I'm educated and have a degree... It's sad because if a student is my same race and she doesn't count me as Hispanic. It's like you can't be Hispanic and educated. I really want my students to feel like, yeah, you can be Black, Hispanic, Asian, White or whatever and be educated and that should be the norm. But right now, I don't really feel like that (Post-Session Interview).

The concept that race can be hidden also emerged during this professional development series. Bella discussed this concept at length:

And for me, it's different. Because I feel like a lot of my race is hidden. So, I'm Hispanic, but I appear very White for people. So anything that was appearance-based, I can score fairly high on because people – I don't, like, stick out very much. But when I look at publications; no, I don't see a lot of Hispanics or Latinos on anything. And if I stand up and talk to a group of people, I always feel like I have to prove my race... I feel like it's a real issue that I've had with my students. To connect, I have to say, 'No, I grew up poor. I went to Omnes Public Schools. I am on your level.' And I have to speak Spanish in front of them with my accent for them to believe that I am one of them (Post-Session Interview).

Zada echoed this idea, "In front of my kids, I get told all the time ever since I was young that I was either well-spoken, or I talk White, and that I didn't get real with my kids." She

continued, “I actually grew up in a poor neighborhood. It wasn’t until I got a call while I was teaching that my cousin had been killed from gang violence that my kids were like, ‘Miss, you are Black’ (Archival Data, Group Conversation). One of our White participants also discussed this hidden privilege or lack of privilege. She had a hard time identifying as White due to her own background in the inner city of Detroit:

I was the only White girl in school. I never even noticed that I was the White girl in school. I never noticed. And when I wanted to rent my first place, I was told, ‘Hey, we really don’t want White people here. And I was like, ‘What?!’ I mean, it really threw me off, and I was like, ‘You mean, I’m White?’ So the first half of my life was, I couldn’t do this because I was White... But now where I’m at it’s a completely mixed area where I’m living. But I don’t know. I had a hard time with these questions. I was like, ‘How am I supposed to answer?’ (Archival Data, Group Conversation).

An additional revelation that emerged for the participants was how this survey could be received by their students. The idea that scores could be different depending on when in life it was administered created a moment of clarity for the participants. Bella believed that “if this [quiz] didn’t say ‘White privilege’ and my kids just took this, because Houston is still so segregated in certain areas, they would have a relatively high score because they are surrounded by Hispanics.”

Zada continued:

I get this because of where I teach. We are having this struggle of getting our kids to realize that you, darling children, are minorities. When you

travel two exits down 59 into Humble, you are a minority. So I think that their scores would be high because they only see people that are like them. It's hard to get them to realize. Like, we've had conversations about food deserts. They argued me down. 'We don't live in a food desert, Miss. There are two grocery stores.' Find me four organic items that you have in those grocery stores. They don't understand. If you grew up in this neighborhood, you very rarely leave this neighborhood. So, I think the strong communities is a double-edged sword for them. Their scores will be high, but they won't be realistic (Archival Data, Group Conversation).

Lisa tied this concept to teacher identity for teachers of color engaged in the Excellent Teacher Program. "I was active in Houston and involved in a strong community but when I began teaching at Omnes Public School, I feel more isolated in a sense that at the Excellent Teacher sessions, I think that while at the bottom level we are more diverse, at the top level we are not." She continued, "I looked at the pictures of all the people who were running everything and at the pictures of our Instructional Coaches, and I was like, who am I really going to be able to connect to and talk to about how I really wanna be in the classroom" (Post-Session Interview). She wanted to empower her students but the training that she was receiving had not taught her how to celebrate the identities of her own students.

The final commonality that emerged during the first session was the realization of privilege by the White participants. Daniel contributed, "I can remain oblivious to languages and customs of other people. I feel like it's almost difficult to have these kinds of conversations because I don't even have words or language to discuss these types of

things because they are not relevant in the circles that I frequent” (Archival Data, Journal Reflection). Carla agreed:

I was thinking about this survey and if you asked me growing up if I felt privileged, I would have said that I felt fortunate. I mean, I lived in a suburb in Pennsylvania. I had a mom and dad that were still together. I went to a good public school... And then I fill out surveys like this and I’m like, ‘Wow, I never even thought about these things growing up.’ Like thought that some people couldn’t get an apartment easily, you know? Or that some people couldn’t get the foods that are part of their culture at the grocery store and stuff... I always just feel kind of guilty that I never realized the privilege that I had growing up. And I kind of worry, like, how do I translate, how do I share this experience with my kids, how do I connect with my kids when I am coming from a completely different background than them? (Archival Data, Group Conversation).

Abaigeal reiterated this feeling, “I think one of the reasons that I haven’t said anything yet is because these activities make me feel kind of sad. Two themes I see that emerge out of this are awareness and identity.” She pushed, “For me, growing up, it was like a Jewish person, not-Jewish thing. So I just wonder about identity awareness. Where at Omnes Public Schools does this happen” (Archival Data, Group Conversation)?

Post-PDS¹ Interviews

The participants generally enjoyed the first session. They appreciated the pacing and the opportunity to share personal stories and experiences. It was not a problem-

¹ PDS – Professional Development Series

solving session, but a chance to create community and understanding within a small cohort of first-year teachers. According to Valeria:

In comparison to the ones offered by Omnes Public Schools, it got much, much deeper. Like, with the Invisible Knapsack, I felt like it was very straight to the point. We got in a circle and reflected. Then right away, we started talking about ourselves and our students. I've felt very frustrated with the Omnes. In terms of what I wanted to get out of them, we weren't even talking about the students yet. I felt like I really got those out of the sessions that you offered (Post-Session Interview).

While the purpose of the Invisible Knapsack activity was to recognize elements of privilege, Zada had a very different perspective:

I was at the very back of the line. And you know what, I think I'm lucky. So, the people that were in the front – they can't even see me. But I see them. I see the whole story. They don't see any of it. It helps me to see that, yeah, obviously they don't get their privilege. They don't even see where other people come from (Post-Session Interview).

Daniel, the participant who ended up in the very front of the line, had a strong reaction to the activity. "It was really uncomfortable for me to see something I hadn't seen before. I mean, band-aids not being flesh color? I had not even thought of that. Grocery stores? How can that not be an option for people" (Archival Data, Journal Reflection)? The general sentiment expressed by both Daniel and Abaigael was the need to grapple with White guilt but not being comfortable with diving into this guilt during such a short session.

Theme Two: Perceptions on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

In the second professional development series, the focus was on culturally responsive teaching and curriculum development. Participants were asked to read an excerpt from *Other people's children* by Delpit (2006) and to watch an excerpt from the *Precious Knowledge* (2011) trailer. During the session, participants reviewed examples of questions demonstrating dominant-culture bias and were asked to discuss their own perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Archival Data: Session 2

Maria remarked that the first session had created a space for her to critically analyze the word choice of her colleagues with respect to culturally responsive practices:

Since being in this group, I've been really cognizant, or more aware I should say, of comments that teachers and staff are making at [my] school, and some of them are really inappropriate and almost disrespectful to students. For example, teacher Y was very livid because a student right before an exam said, 'I was absent for two days.' When she gave him the unit test he said, 'What did I miss when I was gone that I might need to know for my test?' And she said, 'I looked at him and said you should been here, that's what you should have been doing. It's not my job to make sure that you are here.' And with that, the student got very upset, left the class, called his mom and the mom called the teacher's cell phone to tell her she wasn't doing her job. The teacher said, 'I'm the only one doing my job in all of this. Her job is to get her son to school every day and it's his job to be at school every day.' I felt that it was totally

disrespecting their culture, totally disrespecting him as a student, and it was very, very upsetting (Archival Data, Group Conversation).

The stories began to pour out of the participants. Carla talked about an example from testing week. “Another teacher was talking about scores for her kids saying they weren’t as high as she would like them to be and ... ‘it’s not my fault that these kids aren’t achieving where they are supposed to be.’ I just kind of sat there and I didn’t say anything” (Archival Data, Group Conversation). This is the start of a second strand that emerged in this professional development session. The first-year teachers grappled with the idea that they may not have the experience or the relationship with the other colleagues involved to say anything when they see injustice. Abaigael continued:

I think you’re walking a really fine line about deciding to talk to someone because if the initial approach gets the reaction of like, well, I don’t agree, you’re calling me out; then you can actually end up confirming whatever the person has already decided. Like, this is just somebody else who doesn’t get whatever, and I’m gonna continue on, and so not only are you not doing anything positive, but you’re potentially reinforcing something that you personally disagree with (Post-Session Interview).

The participants continued with ways they had either avoided or confronted overt or “borderline”² racist comments. Lisa had a group of students come to her about a borderline racist comment made by a fellow teacher. She had them write a letter to the teacher so that their reaction would be coming from them rather than from her. “I had read them before. And they weren’t mean, they weren’t ugly. And I think it was really

² The term “borderline” racist was included verbatim from an interview with Lisa.

great because they were able to address it themselves with a teacher” (Archival Data, Group Conversation).

Additionally, teacher participants began to critically analyze the materials that are provided to them at the beginning of the year. They critiqued the state standards and how they are taught to teach. Carla mentioned, “There’s so much pressure on a teacher to teach specific objectives so kids are ready for tests. And this stuff (culturally responsive content) is so important to teach as well. It’s more important, probably. I feel like it’s the job of the admin and school districts to force the incorporation of this kind of material” (Archival Data, Group Conversation).

Maria provided an example of a recent activity in her own classroom:

I teach science and after I read [the Delpit article], I went back to my lab and was like, okay, what would be a traditional – ‘cause we had to grow plants – plant grown for our students? I have students from this part of Mexico, this part of this part of the world or whatever and I got seeds for those plants. Then they planted those. So that’s incorporating that, you now what I mean? I feel like I can pull it in, I just need to do the background work (Archival Data, Group Conversation).

Lisa tried a different approach: “I do feedback forms and they get to tell me certain things, maybe even letting them drive the direction where you start so it doesn’t feel as overwhelming to develop an engaging lesson when you don’t have the background.” The emergent trend here was that during these conversations that the teachers of color participating in the professional development series were ready and

willing to dive into their own manipulations of the curriculum while the White teachers struggled to determine a starting point

Post-PDS Interviews

The teachers that agreed to participate in these interviews shared additional thoughts on this session. Zada talked about her experience with a disagreement between her and her Dean of Students. According to state standards, the Alamo is traditionally taught as a tragedy. Zada made a decision to modify the curriculum to include a more non-dominant perspective of the event. On the district-level assessment, her students “bombed that question. And my Dean was mad that I didn’t teach it the right way. I told her that I made the decision to teach what was right. And our relationship hasn’t been the same since” (Post-Session Interviews).

In terms of the actual session, the reviews were mixed. “We didn’t spend much time getting into the pre-reading which I thought was more interesting than looking at test questions,” (Post-Session Interviews) explained Valeria. Zada continued, “It seemed like this session was a bit of a reach. If time were not an issue, I would say that [the presenter] should have had some concrete examples for us, we then talk about them in small groups, and then have work time for an upcoming lesson” (Post-Session Interviews).

Abaigeal also was frustrated with what had been (or had not been) provided in the session. She struggled to find her place as a culturally responsive pedagogue and seemed to find the biggest challenge in getting lost in the terms themselves. She explained:

I do not feel I am a competent, culturally-responsive teacher so I’m afraid that I do not have specific ideas about how to further this in my classroom

or school. I understand that it is relationship-driven and building relationships is not a default strength of mine – unfortunately, I think this is something that I will have to develop and feel my way through over-time. Talking and reading about it will help I’m sure, but I doubt that any professional development can do anything like turn a switch and suddenly make me into a culturally responsive teacher. This is perhaps a misunderstanding of culturally-responsive teaching, but it seems to me that it’s just a specific type of responsive teaching (teaching that responds to specific students’ needs in a way that is the best fit for them). Being able to identify and then meet every students’ need takes a ton of time and practice because it is a skill like any other. Some people start with high natural skill level and can refine it quickly; others need to do more work at the beginning (Post-Session Interviews).

For my part, I fit into the latter category and wish that teacher professional development included more explicit discussion about how to understand who students are, how to build relationships with them, how to understand what their needs are (beyond data that demonstrates specific academic need), and different ways of meeting those needs for different types of students.

Theme Three: Takeaways, Recommendations and Implementations

The final session included a panel discussion with five experienced teachers. One of the panelists was a Latinx female. She attended a local public high school and returned to it following the completion of her degree. With eight years of teaching experience, this panelist had formed a pathway-to-college program at her school while teaching AP U.S.

History. One of the panelists identified as a White homosexual female. She had eight years of teaching experience in ELA and social studies. Two of the panelists identified as African American females. One had eight years of teaching experience and the other had twelve years. The final panelist identifies as a multiracial male. The focus of the session was Duncan-Andrade's (2009) critical hope. As the final session, the endeavor was meant to leave the participants feeling excited about the adoption of culturally responsive practices in their own classrooms.

Archival Data: Session 3

To preface, this session involved a panel and due to the forty-five minute time constraint, there is not much archival data based on participant observations. The majority of the data included below drew from participant journaling that was optional for teachers at the conclusion of the session.

The feeling that emerged, however, was one of disenchantment and hopelessness.

Bruce articulated:

This is a group of young teachers who are here at an optional session. It is the last day of the year for our Excellent Teacher Training Program which is yet to have a single diversity session. I have yet to see anyone have to talk about how White people talk to colored kids in their classroom, right? It just doesn't exist here. So, I'm on board with fighting to keep the students within my walls safe, but how do we make real systemic change to education (Archival Data, Group Conversation)?

One of our panelists responded with reference to Geneva Gay: "Just be you and just be what you are doing in the classroom. Because kids can smell when you're faking

it. So be a part of their community. Invite more teachers to be a part of the community.”

The sentiment of being overwhelmed was very typical of the participants, however, after they had a chance to process, the feeling generally changed to one of possibility and action.

Post-PDS Interviews

The reflections that emerged from the post-professional development interviews reflected a shift in mindset and a growth in the teachers as they began their second year in the classroom. It also outlined some key gaps that existed within the offered professional development series.

Rigor of PDS

One component of the professional development series included the pre- and post-journaling activities. The response by the participants was well under 25%. When asked about the difficulty of the preparation and reflection, Abaigeal responded that it was easy to complete these deliverables in addition with her teaching workload. “For me, I would classify that under professionalism. Like, I agreed to do something so I will find a way to do it.” However, she did not find the practice very beneficial. “I am a really reflective person myself. Most of the questions are like, yeah, I’ve been there, I’ve done that. I don’t really need these questions to help me.” Bella had a mixed experience, however. The pre-activities were manageable but the post-reflection journaling activities were too much for her as a first-year teacher.

Daniel thoroughly enjoyed the pre-work, “I really liked the articles. I had time to dig into them. It felt like I was in college again. The YouTube videos I think were great, too. But the journaling activities. I was like, what a pain! But I think they were

valuable.” His reaction again reiterates the difficulty with managing the workload of a first-year teacher and the additional requests of this professional development series.

Bella realized that there was such a huge gap in her own knowledge and credited the professional development series with providing a lens through which she could analyze her own experiences and continue her own education beyond the professional development series:

My biggest takeaway was that there was just so much for me to learn. And that I wanted to learn. Then I realize that there was a huge gaping hole in my teacher certification around diversity and the reality that a lot of teachers Excellent Teacher Training Program is training are White. They are willing to teach minority students but they have no idea what they are doing. And that they want to know but Excellent Teacher is just not offering that opportunity to them. I am very excited to see where we are going with this program and I really hope it is offered to first-year teachers next year (Post-Session Interview).

She continued, “[this professional development series] borders on just enough. I think it’s important to feel that vulnerability [in a session] – like, have that uncomfortableness and then push past it. Because even if it was hard, we had this experience together. When you are vulnerable together it builds comradery.”

Daniel enjoyed the professional development series. He felt challenged and pushed to a safe place of discomfort. He liked that he had a place to learn more about the feelings he was having as a first-year teacher and as a White male teaching in the Omnes Public School environment: “I understood that before I was unaware of race. [These

sessions] solidified it for me. It put words to the reality of racial bias and institutional bias. It made me more aware of how different parts of [the city] are welcoming to different groups. I've been happy bumbling around and there are people living with these things that I am not even aware of" (Post-Session Interviews). It encouraged him to pursue further educational opportunities.

A final takeaway that emerged from the post-session interviews was the lack of training that existed beforehand. Each of these teachers were alternatively certified. The first question of the interview was on the type of training that existed related to diversity before the opt-in training. Across the board, this question was met with confusion.

- Valeria: "So actual professional work training? I graduated from college and didn't do anything with education. Then I joined Teach for America. It was a summer institute that lasted for five weeks. Well, I guess I did Breakthrough as well. The trainings were on lesson planning. And TFA had that one session where they made all of us "minority teachers" feel like we could have great connections with our kids while the white teachers could have "good connections". It was really awkward. But at Omnes? Nope."
- Abaigeal: "So I really don't honestly remember almost anything that strikes me as being about culturally responsive practices or sensitivity, or responsiveness from the summer training. I think there were always references to it, like we have a diverse student body and you need to meet the needs of your students, but there

wasn't a specific training or session or even strategies that we talked about that addressed that."

- Bella: "So in college I took an Ed policy course and it got me really interested in teaching, and what's going on in the teaching world. And so, I enrolled in an internship. And the class was about food justice, so we interned at an alternative school in southern California where we had a garden and so we would do this seed-to-table fundraiser every year, so outside of gardening and teaching kids how to cook and life skills, we also talked to them about social justice and what is a food desert, and why does your family not have access to organic food, why are they more expensive, and so that really got me interested in teaching. I started working for the after-school program. And so, I learned a lot of behavior management. After two years, I was like, okay, I am going to join TFA. Because I wanted the networking. I joined TFA, I went through Institute. And then I started TE. So most of my real experience comes from Institute. But as far as Omnes? No. I didn't receive training."
- Daniel: "No. We weren't educated in diversity or culturally responsive pedagogy or multicultural development or any of that. I felt like I needed to hide who I was. I was ashamed of being White and knowing that my kids knew that I didn't get them."

What I noticed about these answers was a lack of anger. The respondents appeared very matter-of-fact about the reality that culturally responsive training did not exist. They were not surprised simply because these practices were likewise absent from their day-to-day schools.

Existing Gaps in PDS

Abaigeal laments that what she had hoped for was not quite offered. Her biggest disappointment was that “it was mostly just discussion about experiences and not strategies. A lot of those conversations I felt like I had during [my previous work experience] and readings I had done on my own. I mean, I heard more perspectives from teachers I hadn’t heard before, but I didn’t feel like I learned a lot that was truly new for me.” She also felt a disconnect with the other participants:

I just felt like I was in a different place. Like, there were some that were coming from a place of anger. For me, it is more of a frustration with an inadequate structure of support to change it rather than a frustration with the situation. And I think there was a lot of frustration especially with the people of color that were there. They are frustrated, and I understand. I just don’t share it. I’m not saying they shouldn’t feel frustrated but it just stopped there and I was like.. and... and? And then there were the people who were like, ‘Oh wow, this is totally new and different and I never thought about it like this. So I just felt like I didn’t have a lot to contribute. The more emotional the people talking are, the less I am likely to contribute as well (Post-Session Interviews).

Daniel reaffirmed this disconnect with the participants. “People in our sessions felt very despairing about what could be accomplished with our educational system as it stands and some are very passionate about being better, teaching with culturally

responsive pedagogy. I actually feel like if you can work within the system, you can do better. If it can't work, I don't know the solution."

The biggest takeaway for Abaigeal was the article by Duncan-Andrade on critical hope. She pushed that she wished there was a space for first-year teachers to develop their own pedagogical philosophy informed by culturally responsive research. Without an informed teaching "philosophy, it's just a list of things to do. I wanted to know there is an actual next step, but I didn't have one."

Additionally, a constant area of growth articulated throughout the interviews was the desire for longer sessions. For Abaigeal, this was not in terms of the length of each of the three sessions. Rather, the amount of material presented in each of the sessions was too much. "It meant that everything was kind of rushed. So, I feel like, maybe, more focused sessions and more of them. And I'm also a big believer in that anything you do on a more regular basis becomes a habit and how you interact" (Post-Session Interviews). Bella agreed with this sentiment in her interview:

I felt like there was such a great group of people and we had such great conversations started. Because we were only in there for less than an hour, we just didn't have enough time to dig into things the way they were meant to be (Post-Session Interviews).

Daniel and Valeria also expressed their disappointment over the limited time. Valeria stated, "It seemed like we were constantly on the edge of a breakthrough or someone who rarely spoke was finally going to say something. But then we had to end. It was tough to leave knowing there was something left unsaid."

A final recommendation was the idea that not all participants got to share.

Abaigeal suggested that small groups be used so that each person may have more time to share during a discussion and may feel more comfortable in a smaller setting. Bella agreed but for a different reason. “I feel like some people were there to just shout out their own ideas on diversity. Like, they had a very set mindset about what they wanted to know. They didn’t seem like they were really there to learn. It was really hard to get a chance to speak with them there” (Post-Session Interviews). Again, Bella agreed. She proposed such modifications as smaller groups for more intimate conversation and increased space to talk about the pre-work.

Implementations

For the next several months following the conclusion of the professional development series, I would contact the teachers via email to remain in contact and available for conversation. For the most part, the conversations suggested that the development of a culturally responsive pedagogy had been a priority. Valeria shared her insight on culturally responsive teaching and mathematics:

Our students need to know how to analyze statistics and draw conclusions for themselves using their mathematical skills. The end goal of these lessons is not to persuade students to share all of their opinions and perspectives, rather to provide our students with mathematical tools to be able to understand the nuances of the real world so that they can draw their own conclusions. Also, we want to ensure our students attain a deep understanding of math so that they are less likely to fall prey to statistics (Post-Session Interview).

She spent her introductory classes educating students on the achievement gap. She said that she had been aware of how disempowering this topic could be for seventh-graders and that she focused intensively on the fact that the students are not to blame for these systemic problems. She had also reached out to a mentor teacher at a neighboring campus for help with incorporating social justice in her classroom. The following table shows the themes that she was encouraged to include in her own teaching practice:

Figure 1

Social Justice Themes for Mathematics



Social Justice Themes	
Minimum Wage	Affordable Housing
Childhood Poverty	Flint Water Crisis
Racial Profiling	Incarceration Rates
Unemployment	College Matriculation
Presidential & Local Elections	Heroin Epidemic (Ohio & WV)
Syrian Civil War	Immigration Reform

This chart was used as a starting point for incorporating current events into math lessons. The conversation that Valeria had with this advanced teacher and other teachers across the district led to a scaffolded approach to the civil war in Syria beginning with ratios in sixth and seventh grade to sampling methods in statistics.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings of the study. These findings are based primarily on analysis of post-PDS interviews as well as an analysis of transcriptions from the PDS and journal by original PDS participants. Findings were discussed in three parts

that parallel the three key themes that emerged from the questions. Data in the first section focused on the perceptions on the professional development series itself. It included archival data such as audio transcriptions and journal activities. It also included specific ideas collected during the post-session interviews. Themes that emerged were concepts of White guilt, privilege as it related students and to education via the Invisible Knapsack activity and the necessity for more time.

The second section addressed the evolving perceptions on culturally responsive pedagogy. It included archival data from the second professional development session as well as transcriptions from post-session interviews. The main trends that emerged in this section were that the session did not lend itself to in-depth discussion and that our first-year teachers feel unequipped to handle confrontations with more experienced teachers who demonstrate “borderline” racist thoughts or actions towards students. The suggestion for more training on this topic as well as a clearer session on strategies were offered during this time.

The third section discussed the takeaways, recommendations, and implementations of the five first-year teacher participants. One trend that was observed was that in both the archival and post-session interviews, the call for more time was very clear. Additionally, the desire for small group conversation rather than whole group was suggested to meet the needs of quieter participants and to create a safe space to share ideas. Each of these recommendations will be analyzed further in Chapter 5.

Diversity training in its current form at Omnes Public Schools is in its initial phases. The training provided by the researcher was welcomed. However, it was viewed as a necessary first step rather than a complete version to which first-year teachers should

be exposed. Just as we do not “check our identity at the door”, we cannot “check” cultural responsiveness to an “as-needed” technique. Rather, the organization of and frequency of these trainings are crucial in the development of teacher educators. Omnes Public Schools can shift their focus from diversity initiatives as something supplemental to one that informs and drives instructional practices. The push for rigor through cultural responsiveness would be the next step for this training. To that end, Chapter 5 discusses the themes that emerged from this study and recommends future practice and research.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of first-year teachers participating in an alternative certification program on culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching practices. A gap had been identified in previous years – teachers could go an entire year without having a single conversation about race and diversity or even pedagogical development. This study was a foray into teacher perceptions when confronted with information regarding culturally responsive practices and how it aligns with rigorous instruction. The three professional development sessions were very different in terms of content and structure so as to get a clearer understanding about how to approach culturally responsive pedagogical training with first-year teachers at Omnes Public Schools.

Research was conducted through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with five first-year teachers participating in the Excellent Teacher training program as well as archival transcriptions and journals from the actual professional development series. This chapter reviews, analyzes and discusses the findings of this study. This chapter will also elucidate the implications of these findings for the school district and for teaching training with Excellent Teacher. It will make clear the potential impact that culturally responsive pedagogical training may have on first-year alternatively certified teachers at Omnes Public Schools.

The three fundamental research questions that were pursued throughout the course of this investigation were:

- I. What are perceptions expressed by first-year teacher participants regarding the various structures of this professional development series?
- II. What are first-year teacher participant's perceived understandings of culturally responsive practices and how did this perception change over the course of the professional development series?
- III. After participating in the professional development series, what were the major takeaways expressed by the first-year participants and what has been implemented into their classrooms?

These questions were answered by the emergent themes from interview and archival data.

Theme One: Perceptions on the Professional Development Series

Each of the professional development series lessons was organized in different ways. The first was primarily conversation based and included an activity to spark a conversation about privilege. The second was focused on providing examples and non-examples with less time for individual contributions. The third was dominated by a panel and did not provide an opportunity for reflections in the moment. The content was also different so as to analyze for teacher perceptions of the sessions. The first one was meant to be a visual representation of privilege and a way to confirm the existence of systemic racism. It was meant to create an atmosphere of discomfort. The second session dealt with culturally responsive pedagogy in terms of classroom instruction. The last session discussed hope in all its forms as described by Duncan-Andrade. It was meant to leave the participants inspired to continue in their own pedagogical training.

Based on archival data and on the subsequent interviews, the least engaging of the sessions was the second session. Participants had been asked to read a 2.5-page excerpt

from Delpit's (2006) *Other People's Children* and to watch an excerpt from *Precious Knowledge* (2011) prior to the session. The problem with this session, in addition to the lack of time, was the lack of structure for the discussion. By the time the group had settled in, approximately fifteen minutes remained during which norms and expectations would be set and questions would be posed. At the end of that fifteen-minute chunk, the follow up activity on analyzing test questions for cultural responsiveness would need to begin. The problem that emerged from the beginning was not all the participants had completed the pre-work. This meant that time was spent providing short summaries of the sources and clarifying misconceptions. In an effort to allow more time for discussion, norms setting had been almost eliminated. The effect that this had on the session is that only a few people engaged in the conversation due to unlimited airtime and dominant characteristics. Many participants felt disengaged as a result.

The follow up activity also lacked the structure necessary to be effective. Many teachers – similar to myself – disengage when it comes to conversations about testing and effective test questions. Had a greater amount of emphasis been placed on why we were reviewing questions for culturally competency and had the questions been more representative of the content that the participants taught, perhaps the discussion could have been richer. In fact, the conversation was so limited that the journal reflection questions were modified to include a reflection on an academic journal article that was specific to each of the participant's contents and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Approximately half of the participants engaged with the academic articles while journaling, however, their engagement with these sources would lead me to include them

as a pre-activity and small group discussion element in future courses. The journal articles were:

- I. Flood, V., F. Amar, R. Nemirowsky, B. Harrer, M.R.M. Bruce and M.C. Whitmann (2014). "Paying attention to gesture when students talk chemistry: Interactional resources for responsive teaching." *Journal of Chemical Education*, 11-22.
- II. Mei Lin, S. (2012). "A study of ELL students' writing difficulties: A call for culturally, linguistically, and psychologically responsive teaching." *College Student Journal*, 237-250.
- III. Epstein, T., E. Mayorga, and J. Nelson. (2011). "Teaching about race in an urban history class: The effects of culturally responsive teaching." *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 35:1, 2-21.
- IV. IV. Torrey, C. and M. Ashy. (1997). "Culturally responsive teaching in physical education." *Physical Educator*, 54:3, 120-128.
- V. V. Stairs, A.J. (2007). "Culturally responsive teaching: The Harlem Renaissance in an urban English class." *The English Journal*. 96:6, 37-42.

The reflections were just as lackluster as the session. The teachers reiterated how they were overwhelmed. They reiterated that they were using a provided curriculum and they did not feel skilled enough to modify the curriculum in a way that would be both rigorous and culturally responsive. This session ended in a generally defeatist way and therefore the push for a more hopeful third and final session became paramount.

However, the third session had its own challenges. The panel was filled with people from the community who had been successful in the classroom and successful as

mindset changers on their own campuses. The hope was that the participants could see themselves in at least one of the panelists and be galvanized in their own pursuit of knowledge. Just like the previous session, the pre-reading was touched on but not discussed at great length. This discussion was relegated to a post-session reflection and the call was clear – the teachers wanted to discuss this with each other. They wanted to work through these concepts with people who were at a similar place in their professional careers.

Theme Two: Perceptions on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

One of the most repetitive perceptions for the professional development session participants was the idea that there were tools and tricks for improved culturally responsive teaching practices. There was a constant desire for resources and steps to take in order to plan culturally responsive lessons. I struggled to accommodate these requests and it was not until the end of the sessions and during my own internalization of the data that I finally understood why meeting these requests were so difficult. Culturally responsive pedagogy is not a tactic. It is not buying the *2016-2017 Planning to Change the World: A Plan Book for Social Justice Teachers* (2016) and then automatically meeting the needs of all our students. It is a constant developmental path for educators.

It is a path that is unique for all – and perhaps this is the most frustrating part of it all. Someone like Zada enjoys the discussions and the collaboration on projects to develop her own teaching style. Daniel prefers to read academic texts that allow him to enhance his own pedagogy through a research-based approach. Carla prioritizes journaling as a way for her to understand her role as an educator and advocate for her students. Valeria needs the structure of systematic implementation and inclusion of

social justice in her lessons. She needs that section in her lesson plans to hold her accountable.

Regardless of the differentiation required to develop this culturally responsive pedagogy, a concerning trend in each of the participants' reflections was the inconsistency with recognizing that rigorous instruction and culturally responsive pedagogy were both required and not exclusive of each other. Zada articulated this sentiment in an archival journal reflection:

Culturally responsive pedagogy seems necessary to connect with students from different cultural backgrounds, but it still seems like an addition to the content and not a fundamental element. In other words, while I value culturally responsive pedagogy it falls into the balance of priorities between content and culture and time. I also wonder about the relevance for younger students who may not be as clued into their own cultures.

One might perhaps work to include more from Hammond (2015) in which the author argues that culturally responsive practices are rigorous instruction and that if we deny our teachers access to this training, we are denying them the opportunity to instruct our students most effectively.

It is easier to reflect on this in terms of what I know now. However, it is important to recognize that in terms of where I was at the time of this professional development series, I was also unclear with the relationship between rigor and cultural competence. If I, as the facilitator was confused, it is likely that this confusion passed to the participants. Now, I would take these reflections and dissect them in follow-up conversations. Possible probing questions would include: (1) How do you balance

content and culture? (2) Why does it need to be balanced? (3) How do you determine success for your students? (4) How do you determine success for yourself as an educator? (5) You make an assumption in your final question. What do you assume about your students? (6) Why do you assume that?

I feel that taking the time to follow up with teachers throughout the process rather than interviews at the end would have pushed the level of discomfort that I feel is required for growth and would have resulted in greater growth on an individual level by the participants.

Theme Three: Takeaways, Recommendations and Implementations

As mentioned throughout this study, the biggest constraint throughout the entire process was time. These participants had opted in and had a genuine interest in developing cultural responsiveness for their students. They were overwhelmed with the struggles of first year teaching and the structure of the sessions did not lend itself to being accessible to all. Perhaps the largest “missed opportunity” were the resources that were provided in the pre-session and post-session materials. These texts are foundational to the development of a culturally responsive pedagogy and they were glanced over, if mentioned at all. Treating these texts in this manner undermined their importance. It taught the participants that they did not have to complete their pre- and post-work in order to be engaged and this represents a missed opportunity.

I was able to follow up with five of the original participants and of those five the interviews were conducted at different times. Some of the interviews happened over the summer when teachers had the professional development series clear in their minds but were not thinking about content for the upcoming year. Other interviews happened after

the start of the year when the professional development series had culminated almost four months previously and they were working more with modifying their curriculum to meet the needs of students. This allowed for a more longitudinal study.

In terms of consistency, the quality of answers were different based on their ability to recall and based on the amount of time they had already had in working with their new curriculum.

There were successes resulting from this study and I am in a unique position to be able to see them firsthand. This year, I was moved to a new content as was another of the participants. Coincidentally, three of us are now teaching the same curriculum. This course – a hybrid United States and Texas history course – has allowed for a prolonged interaction with two of the participants. Zada and Bella are both in their second year and both dedicated to social justice. They are in different places but have been collaborating with each other and with me throughout the entire fall semester. It has been invigorating to see where their classes are going and how they are implementing culturally responsive pedagogy. We are able to talk about assessment, classroom management and content on a much deeper level than I have been able to with the other participants. Similar to what Grant (2012) suggests as foundational principles for helping students achieve freedom and social justice, the conversations that began as a result of the interactions initiated by this professional development series allowed for a more intentional focus on assessment for practicing democracy and social action.

Recommendations as a Result of This Study

Throughout this study, there have been challenges and successes. The purpose of the study remained constant – a need existed for first-year teachers in the Excellent

Teacher alternative certification program for culturally responsive pedagogical training. This had previously not existed. The training provided touched on the key tenets of culturally responsive teaching and it still has a long way to go in order to be truly impactful for teachers and their students.

Time

Time is a key element that did not have much flexibility. Excellent Teaching has a curriculum that is mandated by the state in order for our teachers at Omnes Public Schools to be certified. The hours had already been determined and the director did not want to modify the preexisting schedule. He also was not sure how to create a system in which all of the first-year teachers would have access to the sessions. This was a challenge that I did not have an answer for, myself. Time was constrained by two main parameters – the frequency of the sessions and the length of each of the sessions.

Excellent Teaching program only met one Saturday per month. This limit already created a length of time between interactions that was less than ideal. In addition to this, situations outside of my control only allowed for three sessions to be delivered. The original plan was for there to be one session per month for the entire year. I believe that the limit of three sessions also limited the depth to which we could explore each topic.

Additionally, the session was limited to an optional lunch session. While lunch was provided in order to speed up how quickly each session could start, the length of time became dependent on additional factors. This was the one opportunity for free time for the teachers over the course of an entire Saturday. This led to tardiness to sessions as teachers had to take care of their personal needs. In total, nearly ten minutes were lost each session due to tardiness and clean up times. To compensate, I sped through norms

setting and clarifying questions. I did not set expectations for speaking time and I rushed through article discussions – which I will address in the subsequent section. I believe that sessions of an hour or an hour and a half would have been more appropriate and would like to see this change implemented in future sessions.

Academic Journals

A resource that I feel was radically underutilized was the academic research that served as a major foundation for my own pedagogical development. I struggled with incorporating participant stories and experiences and basing these experiences in the literature. I viewed the sessions as an opportunity to share information rather than to discuss and dive deep into certain topics. While I said that my goal was to create discomfort in order to develop our own pedagogy through a culturally responsive lens, I found in retrospect that I had fallen into a “teacher talk” trap that limited participant engagement with the content. The academic journals and resources could have been used in a more meaningful way. I discussed previously how I modified the post-work of a session to allow for participant engagement in content specific to their own subject-area. In order to enhance this further, it would have been helpful to discuss this at length in a session.

I also feel that the resource selection could have been more robust. In total, all of the participants were exposed to Delpit, Duncan-Andrade and McIntosh. The major researchers in this area were left out. Participants did not read literature by Sleeter, Gay or Ladson-Billings. The benefits of including Sleeter would be literature grounded in teacher education and the difficulties of true multicultural education implementation. Gay’s work lends itself to an educator’s critical self-analysis of the cultural relevance of

the curriculum being delivered. Ladson-Billings works to provide a strong foundation from which all educators can be a part of the conversation and not hold back from conversations on educational inequity. This could be rectified in future sessions.

Researcher-Participant Interaction

One of the key elements of a qualitative case study through a constructivist approach is that knowledge is constantly emerging. The researcher-as-participant lends itself to a nuanced perspective that can draw additional conclusions in addition to the conclusions based on the actual perspectives of the participants. In this sense, the study lends itself to opportunities for growth. While interaction was strategically planned, it often led much to be desired. If I had truly wanted to participate as a researcher and participant, the framework of the sessions would have been less knowledge-providing and more knowledge-developing through discussion. In addition to this, the amount of time between sessions without interaction would also need to be modified. One way to do this is to engage in conversations with the participants throughout the process. This could have happened via email, phone call or face-to-face interactions dependent on participant preference.

Knowing the level of insight I could achieve with the two participants who ended up on my content team this year, I feel at a huge disadvantage when compared to my interactions with the other participants. I feel like the identification of a professional learning community was lacking in that we were not learning together throughout this process. This lends itself to an opportunity for growth and follow up in future trainings. Perhaps the cohorts that participate in the trainings would be more intentionally designed

so as to allow for culturally responsive curricular implementation through a collaborative effort by participants who had been educated on this type of instructional practice.

Participant-Participant Interaction

Another recommendation that seemed to permeate the post-session interviews was the idea that each person was not able to contribute. During our limited discussions, norms were not set to monitor air time or to ensure that each participant had a chance to share. Processing time was not considered and this could alienate the participants for which processing time is vital for comprehension. Another way to increase the amount of time during which each participant could share his or her own experiences would have been to make the groups smaller. This would have provided a much more robust amount of archival material for the study. I did consider this option but opted against it simply because I did not feel qualified to be able to authentically engage in each and I wanted to be a part of the conversation so I could guide it in the direction in which I wanted it to go. This was in part due to my desire to remain on schedule with the time constraint and in part because of my lack of actual understanding that if knowledge is to be constructed, it cannot be limited.

Recommendations for Future Research

An insight shared by Daniel left me considering how I would change the study to best meet the needs of the teachers who had opted in. One of the sessions focused mainly on the 2009 article by Duncan-Andrade, *Note to Educators: Hope Required When Growing Roses in Concrete*. Daniel had been very engaged in the various concepts of hope that had been supplied by the author. At the end, he contributed his concern:

The solution wants schools to begin “revamping teacher recruitment, credentialing, and support structures so that schools can attract, reward, and retrain educated teachers who come to the profession with demonstrated commitments to critical hope”. The article’s wish list of teach qualifications reads more like hope deferred than genuine audacious hope for the future. If educational equality is going to become a reality there needs to be much less emphasis on recruiting a mythical teacher and more time focusing on how to train an ordinary teacher (Archival Data, Journal Entry).

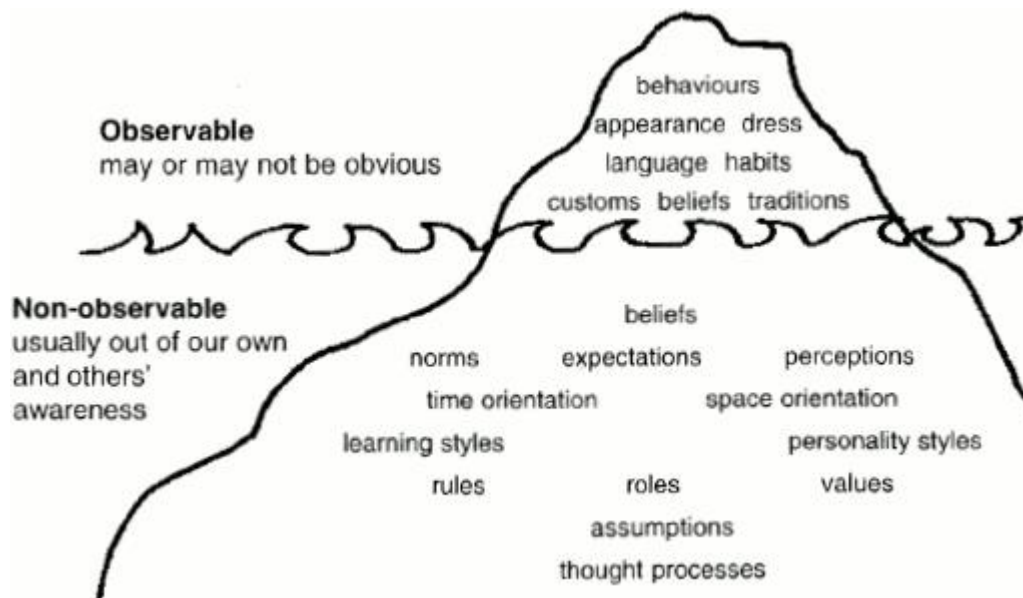
On a foundational level, this professional development series was meant to provide a space for knowledge growth, specifically through the lens of culturally responsive teaching. If the article was pushing for a change in recruitment processes, the people participating in the study were already being dismissed. Daniel was accurate in his request that pedagogical training should be focused on the support for teachers already in the classroom rather than on modifications to hiring practices. That is a different topic altogether meant for an entirely different audience.

Omnes Prep has committed to increased Diversity Training. While the case study focused on first-year teachers involved in the Excellent Teacher training program specifically, the district has grown its own diversity initiative and selected a few Diversity Ambassadors from each campus that are trained to deliver three sessions per year. As previously mentioned, the trainings in 2015-2016 were met with limited enthusiasm. They touched on diversity but only in terms of self-identity. It would be remiss for me to fail to mention that the diversity training at the district level has

improved. Rather than the initial session focusing on Hall's (1976) "Cultural Iceberg", teachers were asked to dive into the actual lives of our students through an analysis of access to resources based on zip code.

Figure 2

Hall's Cultural Iceberg Model



Excellent Teacher has also made some advancements. Based on surveys that Excellent Teacher requires their participants to fill out at the end of each Saturday Professional Learning Experience, there was a consistent and loud call for diversity training for first year teachers. To this end, I felt compelled to share my resources and findings with Excellent Teacher. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

To this end, my suggestions for further research would be a follow up case study on the first and second years of diversity training being included in Excellent Teacher. I would collect the stories of the teachers as they attend each session and to hear how they are developing their personal pedagogy based on these sessions. The benefit of the

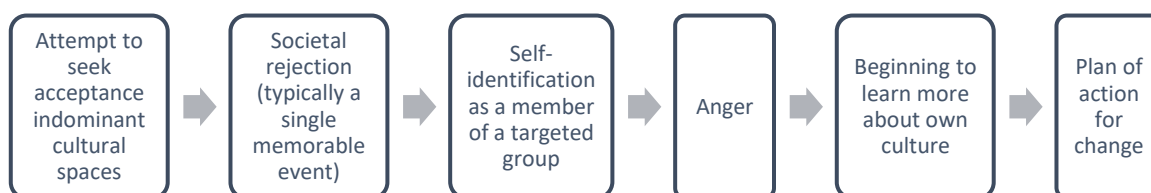
current model is that it is a required component for all teachers rather than the optional professional development series that was offered last year. It has its own space and is not limited to the challenges of a lunch time forty-five-minute slot. Beyond that, the content has not been shared and I feel that further study on the resources to which first-year teachers in this alternative certification course would be beneficial as Omnes Public Schools continues its path towards a more inclusive school community based on culturally responsive practices.

The case study will necessitate an intentional use of racial identity development theory. As described by Tatum (1992), there are two unique paths. These paths are in a state of constant flux so once a person reaches the “end”, there is always the chance that an event will occur that will have that person “take a few steps back.” By not intentionally focusing on the individual journey of the participants, potential conversations or potential opportunities for self-realizations were not achieved. Perhaps the reason why districts shy away from conversations about race is that the participants are engaging in these conversations from different starting points. The fear of alienating a part of the workforce is very real for principals who are focusing on teacher retention. When this conversation is pushed on people who do not have a background in critical race theory or even a basic understanding of institutionalized racism, the reaction can be counterproductive. Per Tatum (2007), “Many White people experience themselves as powerless, even in the face of privilege. But the fact is that we all have a sphere of influence, some domain in which we exercise some level of power and control” (p. 32).

This is in direct contrast to the basic identity conversations described above. The simplified iceberg method is predicated on the idea of a sameness of experience – this sameness is simply not there when viewed through the lenses of privilege and power.

Figure 3

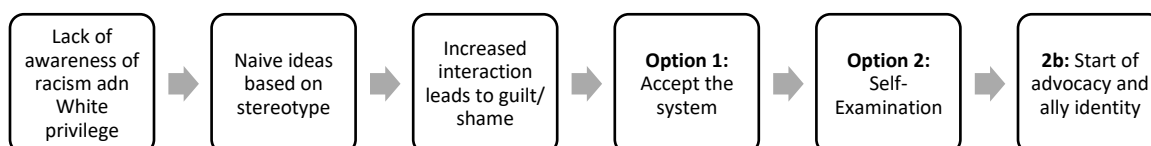
Black Racial Identity Development Process³



One of the main concepts that Tatum outlines is that as students (teachers) become more aware of their own journeys, the reactions are very different. The participants of color began to participate more in the conversation while the White participants began to participate less. Tatum argues that this is primarily influenced by the guilt/shame phase for the White racial identity process (Tatum, 1992).

Figure 4

White Racial Identity Development Process



Regardless of the challenges in continued conversation, the conversations do need to take place. Sleeter (2011) warned of leaving teachers without hope and that approaching the

³ Tatum (1992) suggests that the Black Racial Identity Development process is most easily adopted by other peoples of color.

gap that exists without offering solutions only serves to disengage teacher and oftentimes leaves teachers in despair.

Omnes Public Schools has an imperative to develop its cultural responsiveness. This can be done incrementally but it must be done intentionally. Trainings can begin with the focus on Ladson-Billings' (1992) easily digestible "but that's just good teaching." This lends itself to an easy separation from acknowledgement of privilege if a teacher is not yet at a place to accept that. It also leads to a space of intense reflection when a teacher is able to understand that good teaching does not mean what was "good for them". It could continue with the tangible suggestions of Gay (2002b) in which she described a focus on formal plans and symbolic curriculum. Teachers can easily modify the way they discuss background knowledge as something that should already exist to the idea of cultural scaffolding in which the teacher must think about what knowledge exists based on the cultures of the students in the classroom. Additionally, per Gay (2002b), the symbolic curriculum of a space is something to which all teacher can focus.

The fight against the educational inequity of the status quo cannot exist if the cultural responsiveness is limited to the basics of these two incredible pedagogues. Rather, these would serve as intentional and rigorous starting points for people at the beginning stages of their own racial identity development.

Finally, I was galvanized by my research on teacher identity and teacher knowledge. With the huge scope of this professional development series, it was impossible to focus on all factors that were impacted by this study. To what extent was teacher identity constricted by the influences of the alternative certification program? The work of Davidson (1996) encourages me to pursue additional studies on the conflict

that exists between *how* teachers are taught to teach and what is actually most appropriate for culturally responsive classrooms. Is identifying our students as “at risk” or “problem” students only serving to propagate the cycle of deficit model thinking that permeates urban school districts (Ferguson, 2001)? A recommendation for future interviews would be to focus intently on concepts of identity and how they relate to the current structure of teacher preparation programs.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most illuminating conclusion that I could draw would be the one I generated about myself. This entire process has been my own breakthrough in culturally responsive pedagogy. I have already shared my own history with cultural awareness through my experiences in a predominantly mixed race magnet elementary school, a predominantly White private school, and a segregated 4A public school. While I did not understand what these interactions meant at the time, it has generated a whole wealth of information for me to process as an adult. My experiences abroad likewise shaped my perceptions of the effects of poverty and faulty education systems on students.

Coming into this study, I felt that I had an adequate base from which to provide the professional development series. I acknowledged that I was not completely “literate” in my own pedagogy with the participants and that this was a study in which we would all be developing – myself included. However, until this moment, I was unaware of the effects that my own gaps would have on how I made meaning of this study. Perhaps the most glaring of these gaps is when I asked my participants to share a lesson that they had done since the training that demonstrated culturally responsive pedagogy in action. This request is problematic for several reasons: (1) it assumes that the culturally responsive

element is something to be added to the curriculum and (2) it assumes that not all lessons can be culturally responsive. As I write this, I can only feel frustrated with myself. I read the literature. Hammond's text *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (2015) was one of the foundational texts I had used in my own preparation prior to the professional development series. She had warned:

For some, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is simply an engagement strategy designed to motivate racially and culturally diverse students. It seems simplistic to think that students who feel marginalized, academically abandoned, or invisible in the classroom would reengage simply because we mention tribal kings of Africa or Aztec empires of Mexico in the curriculum or use "call and response" chants to get students pumped up (pg. 3).

And yet, that was what I was looking for. When teachers asked for examples, I would proudly share my lesson on the French and Indian War told from the native population perspective. I would share my lesson on the Virginia House of Burgesses and how popular culture portrays it in a White Eurocentric perspective. I felt superior when my seventh-grade students could explain history from both the White Eurocentric perspective and then through a critical lens. Now, I am still very pleased with the depth of critical analysis achieved by my students. However, at that point, I was impressed with my own incorporation of multiple narratives. The analysis is the rigor that Hammond talks about. My own pretentiousness was questioned when I received a reflection form Daniel, one of the participants. He wrote:

I still have difficulty changing the materials I use to teach to be more culturally responsive; however, I have been more responsive to the high ELL student population at my school. In class I have specifically targeted TEKS 6.2: SWBAT correctly use and manipulate parts of speech for vocab. To help my students, I have started teaching the unwritten rules of English instead of relying on what “sound correct”. Now I focus more on identifying parts of speech through word endings and finding what part is missing from the sentence. Also, on quiz day I modify the vocabulary quiz so there are not multiple answer choices that have the same part of speech (Post-Session Interview).

What I appreciate most about Daniel is that he understood that culturally responsive teaching was not a “bag of tricks” – he attempted to “bring the same rigor, consistency, and serious implementation to it as [teachers] do with other instructional practices” (Hammond, 2015, pg. 3).

My hope moving forward is that the lessons I have personally learned throughout this process can be transferred to teachers who are in a similar place as I am. I plan to constantly revisit and hold myself accountable to the idea that culturally responsive practices and rigorous instruction are not mutually exclusive and to push my teachers to think critically about this idea. We can only strive to implement systemic change to our instructional practices if we are willing to accept the importance of this pedagogical shift.

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Appendix A

Invisible Knapsack by P. McIntosh

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

by Peggy McIntosh

*"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness,
not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group"*

DAILY EFFECTS OF WHITE PRIVILEGE

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

Peggy McIntosh is associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988), by Peggy McIntosh; available for \$4.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181. The working paper contains a longer list of privileges. This excerpted essay is reprinted from the Winter 1990 issue of Independent School.

22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.
25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared.
28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.
29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.
30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.
31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.
32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.
33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.
34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.
36. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.
37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.
38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.
40. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.
43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.
44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.
45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.
46. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.
47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.
48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.
49. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.
50. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.

Peggy McIntosh is associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988), by Peggy McIntosh; available for \$4.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181. The working paper contains a longer list of privileges. This excerpted essay is reprinted from the Winter 1990 issue of *Independent School*.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Interview 1 – Diversity, Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools and Classroom	Interview 2 – Experiences with this specific professional development series
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain your teacher training (pre YES, during YES, etc.). • What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in diverse, multicultural and inclusive settings? • What is your definition of diversity? How do you challenge stereotypes and promote sensitivity and inclusion? • How do you seek opportunities to improve the learning environment to better meet the needs of your students? • What is your method of communication with your students? • Describe your experience in serving or teaching under-represented communities. • How do you define social justice? • Describe a situation in which you encountered a conflict with a person from a different cultural background than yours. How did you handle the situation? • What has been the greatest obstacle in the development of multicultural-competent staff? • Describe a situation in which you utilized your multicultural skills to solve a problem. • What ideas do you have for educating students about diversity? • What is a time when you changed your style to work more effectively with a person from a different background? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were you expecting to get from this professional development series when you first heard about it? • What was your biggest disappointment in the professional development series? • What was your biggest takeaway in the professional development series? • In terms of sustainability, what was your experience with the out of the session preparation work that you were requested to complete? • What was your experience with the journaling activities that you were asked to complete? • How did this professional development series compare with the diversity training that you received on campus? • How did this professional development series compare with the diversity training that you received in TE? • What would need to be changed in order for this development series to be more effective? • Describe the topic to which you had the most resistance. •

Appendix C

Field Notes Example

Session 1

Date 1/23/2016

Location WO Km 156

Participants: 8

Several participants appeared stressed during Univ. dropout activity

- 1) Guilt
- 2) Confusion
- 3) Denial?

Initially dismissive - Abigail - b/c she had done this before

Daniel = quiet

~~Chad~~ - did not speak

Zada = a lot to contribute

Thane = education & how people answered

Diff b/w race & education &

next

* Discussion on our students...

Shelton, "zip code"

"I won't leave the neighborhood"

Detroit had very diff persp.

Group seemed to dismiss her,

older, removed from group,

she's very engaged

* Prince = able to articulate, Dan very apologetic

Appendix D
Diversity Report

The following excerpt was taken from a 12 page document.



Appendix E

One Pager

OUR MISSION

will increase the number of students from underserved communities who graduate from college prepared to lead. By 2020 will create 6,000 more seats in Houston, allowing us to serve more than 18,000 students across the city.



● OPENING IN 2016-2017



GENERAL INFO



RECOGNITION

- Top 100 High Schools in the Nation
U.S. News and World Report (2007-Present)
- Winner of the Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools
The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation (2012)
- America's Most Challenging High Schools
The Washington Post (2015-present)
- #1 Best Place to Work
Houston Business Journal (2013)
- Gold Ribbon District
Children At Risk (2014)

Appendix F

Delpit Excerpt

new aspect of the regular citywide curriculum, Stephanie connects this knowledge to aspects of their African ancestry: while covering a unit about libraries she tells them about the world's first libraries, which were established in Africa. A unit on health presents her with the opportunity to tell her students about the African doctors of antiquity who wrote the first texts on medicine. Stephanie does not replace the current curriculum; rather, she expands it. She also teaches about the contributions of Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos as she broadens her students' minds and spirits. All of Stephanie's students learn to read by the end of the school year. They also learn to love themselves, love their history, and love learning.

Stephanie could not teach her children the pride of their ancestry and could not connect it to the material they learn today were it not for her extraordinarily broad knowledge of the liberal arts. However, she told me that she did not acquire this knowledge in her formal education, but worked, read, and studied on her own to make such knowledge a part of her pedagogy.

Teachers must not merely take courses that tell them how to treat their students as multicultural clients, in other words, those that tell them how to identify differences in interactional or communicative strategies and remediate appropriately. They must also learn about the brilliance the students bring with them "in their blood." Until they appreciate the wonders of the cultures represented before them – and they cannot do that without extensive study most appropriately begun in college-level courses – they cannot appreciate the potential of those who sit before them, nor can they begin to link their students' histories and worlds to the subject matter they present in the classroom.

If we are to successfully educate all of our children, we must work to remove the blinders built of stereotypes, monocultural instructional methodologies, ignorance, social distance, biased research, and racism. We must work to destroy those blinders so that it is possible to really see, to really know the students we must teach. Yes, if we are to be successful at edu-

cating diverse children, we must accomplish the Herculean feat of developing this clear-sightedness, for in the words of a wonderful Native Alaskan educator: "In order to teach you, I must know you." I pray for all of us the strength to teach our children what they must learn, and the humility and wisdom to learn from them so that we might better teach.

*Let me question
the one Communist.*

Appendix G

IRB Reference Materials



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Learning. Leading.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
Division of Research
Institutional Review Board Application

Generated at:
10/21/2015 1:05:48 PM

Institutional Review Board
Application ID :

(7256)

Title :

Teacher Narrative Inquiry Study on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
Professional Development Series

Approval details for the Application Id: 7256

	Decision	Approver Name	Date	Comment
PI signature	Approved	Straub, Sarah Ms.	10/21/2015	Sarah Straub

University of Houston

Division of Research

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
 Houston, Texas - 77 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

October 9, 2015

Re: Sarah Straub

To Whom It May Concern,

[REDACTED] excited for the opportunity to cooperate with Sarah Straub, MA in her doctoral dissertation studies focusing on culturally responsive practices. Sarah has agreed to provide three 45-minute sessions on culturally responsive pedagogy to a self-selected group of in-service teachers who are participating in the [REDACTED] program.

Sarah will be conducting her trainings at our Saturday sessions in January, February and April of 2016.

Sincerely,

Carla [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 Senior Director [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]



**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

PROJECT TITLE: Teacher Narrative Inquiry Study on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Professional Development Series

You are being invited to take part in a research project conducted by Sarah Straub from the College of Education at the University of Houston. This project is part of a dissertation study conducted under the supervision of Dr. Cameron White.

NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Taking part in the research project is voluntary and you may refuse to take part or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any research-related questions that make you uncomfortable.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze the narrative inquiry process for a group of in-service teachers participating in a culturally responsive pedagogy professional development series. This will take place once per month in the months of January, February and April of 2016. Each session will be forty-five minutes. In addition to the sessions conducted at Teaching Excellence Saturday trainings, teachers will have short pre-reading/watching assignments and reflective journaling to do after each session. This follows Dewey's research in the teacher as a researcher and teacher as an agent of change philosophy.

PROCEDURES

You will be one of approximately 25 subjects invited to take part in this project. OR

- Data will be collected based on field notes and observation of sessions, interviews, pre- and post-surveys and reflections.
- There will be three 45-minute sessions conducted at Teaching Excellence Saturday sessions.
- Participants will do a pre-assignment for each session (reading or video).
- Participants will do a written reflection for each session. Participants will be required to be in attendance at each session and to complete the required tasks.
- Participants may be selected for interviews not to exceed two over the course of a three month period.
- Participants will be asked to provide the following information:
 - Subjects Taught
 - Race
 - Gender

- o Experience Level
- o Educational Background
- o Name
- o Email Address

CONFIDENTIALITY

Describe if a subject's identity will be held in confidence. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number by the principal investigator. This code number will appear on all written materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from all research materials and will be available only to the principal investigator. Confidentiality will be maintained within legal limits.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There is no foreseeable risk involved in this study.

BENEFITS

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand the effects of narrative inquiry processes for subjects participating in the culturally responsive pedagogy professional development series.

ALTERNATIVES

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

INCENTIVES/REMUNERATION

The only incentive that is provided will be lunch for the three 45-minute sessions.

PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however, no individual subject will be identified.

AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF AUDIO/VIDEO TAPES

If you consent to take part in this study, please indicate whether you agree to be audio taped during the study by checking the appropriate box below. If you agree, please also indicate whether the audio tapes can be used for publication/presentations.

- ☐ I agree to be audio taped during the interview.
 - ☐ I agree that the audio tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.
 - ☐ I do not agree that the audio tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio taped during the interview.

The subject can still take part in this study even if he/she does not agree to be audio taped.

CIRCUMSTANCES FOR DISMISSAL FROM PROJECT

Your participation in this project may be terminated by the principal investigator:

- if you do not keep study appointments;
 - if you do not follow the instructions you are given
-

SUBJECT RIGHTS

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.
2. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or to stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any question.
3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me, as have any potential benefits.
4. I understand the protections in place to safeguard any personally identifiable information related to my participation.
5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Sarah Straub at 281-685-8873. I may also contact Dr. Cameron White, faculty sponsor, at 713-743-8878.
6. **Any questions regarding my rights as a research subject may be addressed to the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713-743-9204).** All research projects that are carried out by Investigators at the University of Houston are governed by requirements of the University and the federal government.

SIGNATURES

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions to my satisfaction. I give my consent to participate in this study, and have been provided with a copy of this form for my records and in case I have questions as the research progresses.

Study Subject (print name): _____

Signature of Study Subject: _____

Date: _____

I have read this form to the subject and/or the subject has read this form. An explanation of the research was provided and questions from the subject were solicited and answered to the subject's satisfaction. In my judgment, the subject has demonstrated comprehension of the information.

Principal Investigator (print name and title): _____

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____

Date: _____