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Leveling the Opportunity for Achievement: White Teachers' Critical Consciousness Development as an Entry Point

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LEVELING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ACHIEVEMENT: WHITE TEACHERS' CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS DEVELOPMENT AS AN ENTRY POINT

A dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

1. SPD – sociopolitical development theory
2. PD – professional development
3. CRT – culturally responsive teaching

Abstract

LEVELING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ACHIEVEMENT: WHITE TEACHERS' CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS DEVELOPMENT AS AN ENTRY POINT

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Although formal education is often lauded as the great equalizer in the U.S., schools often mirror and replicate the deep-seated inequalities of society. In a recent report, the U.S. Congress noted that race, gender, and socioeconomic status are the primary axes of inequality in educational achievement (Hussar et al., 2020). Scholars have long known the existence of this disparity in achievement outcomes, but efforts to close the gap have often been from a deficit lens aimed at changing the effort and motivation of students. This framing has problematized ethnic-racial minority students' abilities and behaviors from an ahistorical lens that fails to account for the ways in which schools have historically been structured to marginalize students of color. More equitable perspectives of disparate school achievement outcomes reframe the question of "why are Black and Latinx students not achieving as well as their White counterparts?" to "in what ways are schools not responsive to the needs of Black and Latinx students?"

One significant way individual schools commonly underserve students of color is in the monocultural platform that school norms, values, and practices emanate from. Given the

overrepresentation of White educators in a school system that serves a growing population of ethnically and racially diverse students, this dissertation project explored critical consciousness development of five White teachers across a two-year action research professional development program. Using a case study design, this study explored common themes in their development as well as areas of divergence by mapping teachers' critical consciousness development onto a model for a conceptually similar construct (i.e., sociopolitical development).

The findings of this study suggest that, for the focal teachers, there were multiple unique paths of critical consciousness development. In addition, comparisons across cases highlighted the potential for expanding the sociopolitical development model to include factors related to self-perceptions and identity as well as bidirectional influences between elements of the model. These results have implications for practitioners and broader education stakeholders that seek to call in equity and justice in education.

Leveling the Opportunity for Achievement: White Teachers' Critical Consciousness Development as an Entry Point

Introduction

Although formal education is often lauded as the great equalizer in the U.S., schools often mirror and replicate the deep-seated inequalities of society. In their report, the U.S. Congress noted that race, gender, and socioeconomic status are the primary axes of inequality in education (Hussar et al., 2020). For example, inequities are evident in allocation of school resources (Houck, 2010; Mckown, 2013), underrepresentation of Black and Latinx students in gifted and talented programs (Ford et al., 2021), overrepresentation of Black students in special education (Farkas et al., 2020), hostility of school racial climate experienced by students of color (Voight et al., 2015), disproportionate disciplinary action (Skiba et al., 2011), and differential expectations for achievement for students of color (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Each of these factors have been implicated in the persistent unequal school achievement data across ethnic and racial lines. Specifically, Black and Latinx youth are commonly referred to as being more likely to drop out of school and less capable of high academic achievement than White students (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Scholars have long known the existence of this disparity in achievement outcomes, but efforts to close the gap have often been from a deficit lens aimed at changing the effort and motivation of students (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). This framing has problematized ethnic-racial minority students' abilities and behaviors from an ahistorical lens that fails to account for the ways in which schools have historically been structured to marginalize students of color. More equitable perspectives of disparate school achievement outcomes reframe the question of "why are Black and Latinx students not achieving as well as their White counterparts?" to "in what ways are schools not responsive to the needs of Black and

Latinx students?" This reframe recognizes that despite the story being told by mainstream interpretations of achievement data, schools operate in service to students and should; therefore, be serving all students equally well.

One significant way individual schools commonly underserve students of color is in the monocultural platform that school norms, values, and practices emanate from. The cultural hegemony of middle-class European American/White culture in society is evident in most mainstream schools (Gay, 2002; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995) and serves to marginalize students who do not share in European American/White cultural capital. For example, common practices such as individual performance tests and ranking students by academic performance reflect the highly individualistic features of European American/White culture (Hofstede et al., 2010) and limit the capacity for the more communal and vervistic ways of learning evident in many ethnic-racial minority cultures (Tyler et al., 2006). For students of historically-marginalized backgrounds this means having an added burden of trying to decode features of their school environment (i.e., norms, values, and practices) while learning and performing to meet academic achievement standards. Scholars have termed this phenomenon cultural mismatch and have demonstrated the negative consequences of cultural mismatch in academic performance and behavioral outcomes of students (Tyler et al., 2010).

At the classroom level, cultural mismatch shows up in teachers' curricular and instructional strategies. In one study, Black students responded to questions about the learning values and behaviors their teachers and parents preferred for students to demonstrate (Tyler et al., 2006). Results revealed that Black students preferred ways of learning undergirded by the Afrocentric values of communalism and verve and believed that their parents preferred they learn in these same ways. On the contrary, Black students believed their teachers preferred

learning scenarios that reflected European American/White values around individualism. Further, Black students noted that if they were to display the individualistic behaviors preferred at school in their home environment, they would be more likely to be punished by parents whereas if they displayed their Afrocentric cultural values in their behaviors at school, their teachers would be more likely to punish them. This study highlights the cultural mismatch students of color often experience in the classroom and further captures the missed opportunities for using students' cultural knowledge as the platform for effective and relatable learning. To do so, teachers must value students as capable learners with existing knowledge and ways of learning that are valid and meaningful.

One proximal way to impact the mismatch students experience in schools is to educate teachers about the inequitable landscape of education so they can choose practices that subvert some of the most deleterious aspects of schooling that are not serving students of color (Black and Latinx students in particular) well. Although the student body of the United States education system has become increasingly diverse, the diversity of the teaching force has not mirrored this growth trend. The overwhelming majority of teachers in the U.S. are middle-class White women (82%; Fallis, 2013) who share in the cultural background of an increasingly smaller proportion of the students they serve. Studies have noted that ethnic-racial minority teachers are more equipped to understand the lived experiences and relate to the funds of knowledge of their ethnic-racial minority students (Milner, 2003). Other studies have documented the tremendous effects on academic outcomes that having a same-race teacher has on historically-marginalized students (Redding, 2019), though, most students of color attend schools with few teachers of color, if any (Fallis, 2013). It is important, then, for all teachers to be equipped with the knowledge of how to teach in ways that capitalize on students' cultural ways of knowing and

learning. To start, teachers must become conscious of the inequities that exist in education and critically reflective of their positionality within it all.

The current study explored how teachers' understanding of the landscape of inequity in the U.S., as it intersects with the education system develops over time. Teachers' thoughts and beliefs undoubtedly influence their teaching practices (Freire, 1965) and; therefore, have significant implications for their students' educational experiences. A qualitative case study was used to understand how teachers in a professional development program targeting the development of teaching practices rooted in critical perspectives developed a more critical disposition in their teaching.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical consciousness describes having an awareness of the landscape of inequality and knowing the levers through which to seek social change agentically (Freire, 1970). It is an acute understanding of the dynamics of power, privilege and oppression and having the ability to analyze the interplay between those three dynamics in a given social situation. In this regard, critical consciousness is an equity literacy. Paulo Freire (1970) thought that educators had the power to foster their students' ability to both "read the word and read the world" by engaging in teaching practices that promote critical consciousness. Freire (1970) posited that critical consciousness empowers students to understand oppressive forces that stratify society and have implications for access and opportunity dependent upon the socially constructed categories people are born into. He believed that this meta-awareness could function as a protective factor for historically-marginalized people to buffer the internalization of myths and stereotypes about themselves and their group. To this end, Freire (1970) believed that having critical consciousness disarmed the psychological aspects of oppression and enabled effective resistance. Although, in

order for teachers to effectively foster the critical consciousness of their students, they must be critically conscious themselves.

Freire (1970) conceptualized critical consciousness as having cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Scholars have operationalized critical consciousness as a multidimensional construct consisting of critical reflection, critical motivation/efficacy, and critical action. Critical reflection is the cognitive component that describes one's awareness of inequality and ability to analyze inequity in social contexts and interactions. Critical motivation is the affective response to critical reflection and critical action that refers to the motivation and efficacy to engage in acts of resistance. Critical motivation is sometimes referred to as critical efficacy with recognition that motivation may not be enough to drive acts of resistance; it is also necessary for people to feel efficacious in acts of resistance as well. Finally, critical action can be defined by the acts of resistance that one engages in to dismantle inequality. These three components continually develop in a cyclical fashion with each informing the other. Freire (1970) emphasized the importance of the application of critical awareness into action. For teachers, this is likened to their teaching pedagogy driving their curricular and instructional strategies.

To my knowledge, no studies have offered a guiding framework for critical consciousness development; however, sociopolitical development theory (SPD) (Watts & Flanagan, 2007) is conceptually similar to critical consciousness (Watts et al., 2011) and scholars often use the terminology from each theory/framework interchangeably. SPD consists of four core elements: worldview and social analysis, agency, societal involvement and opportunity structures. Worldview and social analysis is conceptually similar to critical reflection, agency can be likened to critical motivation/efficacy, and societal involvement is critical action. One

contribution of SPD to theorizing about critical consciousness is the attention to context. Watts and colleagues (2003) noted that the process of gaining critical consciousness is eco-transactional and mutually reinforcing such that experiences across contexts are influential to one another and past experiences contribute to the understanding of future experiences and future experiences contribute towards the reappraisal of past experiences. Though, developing critical consciousness is dependent upon the availability of meaningful ways to do so within a given context (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). In their SPD model, Watts and Flanagan (2007) defined opportunity structures as relevant and proximal opportunities to gain knowledge and skills in critically analyzing and navigating systems of oppression. These opportunity structures can include both factors embedded in the setting as well as the autonomy individuals are afforded to engage with the setting. The model for SPD shows that worldview and social analysis are mutually reinforcing while agency and opportunity structures moderate that bidirectional relationship (see figure 1). SPD offers a way to think about how critical consciousness may develop and the relevant constructs to consider.

Like the literature on critical consciousness, the SPD model was primarily developed to analyze how youth of color come to understand and resist oppression for the purpose of their psychological empowerment and agency. Though, scholars have begun to consider the importance of critical consciousness for those who are more privileged. Although those higher in the power structure may assess systemic problems from a different standpoint or perspective than those who are more marginalized, both privileged and marginalized folk can identify inequality and work towards justice. Modern perspectives of activism highlight the critical role of privileged groups in fighting for justice against the privilege they hold at the expense of others.

Research has shown that when teachers are more critically conscious and use affirming teaching practices, students report greater sense of belonging and demonstrate greater academic success (Byrd, 2016). Developing from acritical to the critically conscious is an intentional process that requires purposeful learning. Considering the overwhelmingly White middle-class teaching force, concepts related to the oppression of ethnic-racial minority students may be abstract in many ways and require diligent and intentional learning from teachers. Research suggests that White teachers may be less privy to the racialized experiences of their students (Quiocho & Rios, 2000) underscoring the importance of targeted training to develop critical consciousness.

Although many teachers do not experience opportunities for critical consciousness development in their preservice programs, teacher professional development (PD) programs have been used as a means to fulfill this developmental need. Previous programs that have aimed to develop teachers' critical consciousness have been longitudinal and incorporated a variety of effective PD strategies in their programming. For example, the Critical Civic Inquiry (CCI) program targeted White urban middle school teachers' critical consciousness through professional development that taught teachers how to enact critical pedagogy over the course of a school year (Zion et al., 2015). Within this program, teacher's also conducted action research projects based in CCI. In addition, teachers took a course on CCI in which they completed readings and engaged in discussions about social inequities. They also developed lesson plans for their students and other written assignments such as a paper about their action research projects. In addition, teachers annotated student work related to CCI and created curriculum maps. Zion and colleagues (2015) interviewed these teachers and analyzed their coursework at the end of the program and found that these teachers demonstrated more developed critical understanding of

privilege and oppression, the systemic marginalization of their students, and formed skills in taking action. Taken together, Zion and colleagues (2015) saw this as evidence that the teacher developed a greater consciousness of sociopolitical issues and injustice.

Although Zion and colleagues (2015) explicitly examined teachers' critical consciousness development through the CCI program, the majority of the extant literature has not clearly explored teachers' critical consciousness directly. Instead, most of the available research makes implicit assumptions about teachers' critical consciousness and/or focuses on students' critical consciousness development linked to teaching practices. Several studies have examined teachers' ability to enact critical pedagogy and culturally responsive practices under the assumption that teachers who engage in such practices do so from a critical lens. One potential reason for this assumption lies in the educational equity-based roots/theorizing that undergirds these teaching philosophies and practices. Researchers may presume that teachers who enact critical teaching practices are actively trying to mitigate educational inequity. Though, previous research has found that many teachers espouse egalitarian beliefs that can be divorced from a specific interest in equity (Van den Bergh et al., 2010). On the other hand, a second strand of research has explored how teacher practices are associated with students' critical consciousness development. These studies have shown that critical pedagogy and culturally responsive practices foster students' critical consciousness development. Still, the research lacks a systematic investigation how teachers' critical consciousness development takes place and further, what it looks like.

The Development of Teachers in the U.S.

For teachers born in the U.S., the whiteness reflected in schools today was likely evident in their k-12 school experiences as well. The schooling issues that modern scholarship has highlighted are longstanding issues within schools and society broadly. In many ways, the

inequalities present in society have become normalized and are more often justified by adults in the U.S. than they are challenged (O'Brien & Major, 2005). Susceptibility to system-justifying beliefs is not a problem exclusive to White teachers only, but White teachers are more likely to have lived experiences that affirm their beliefs in a just world; Therefore, they are less likely to have experiences that advance their awareness and understanding of inequality organically.

Most Americans live in relatively ethnically/racially homogenous neighborhoods and attend ethnically/racially homogenous schools (Frankenberg, 2013). Many emerging adults cite college as the first time they were able to develop meaningful relationships with people outside of their ethnic-racial group (Stearns et al., 2009). White people in particular are more likely to live in racially homogenous communities in which they do not regularly have meaningful contact with people of color (Charles, 2003). People develop their ideas, beliefs and attitudes throughout their lived experiences they have in their relatively insulated communities. For teachers, the majority of whom are White, this means having background experiences that are likely significantly different from the increasingly diverse student population. These differences can translate to misunderstandings of students' ways of speaking, behavioral expressions, and approaches to learning.

As students in teacher preparation programs, pre-service teachers bring their prior socialization, educational experiences, and beliefs with them. Furthermore, many teacher preparation students spend significantly more time developing teachers' technical knowledge than they spend preparing teachers to effectively lead classrooms of diverse students (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Ideally, teachers would enter the teaching force prepared to enact critical pedagogy and teach through a culturally diverse lens, however most teacher preparation programs fall short in this regard. Thus, the vast number of teachers that enter the field do so

without questioning who they are in relation to others and how they may either perpetuate or disrupt the status quo in their powerful position as educators. This remains a significant problem in the field of education (Carter Andrews & Richmond, 2019).

Ideally, one of the primary skills that all teachers would develop in order to become educators that disrupt systemic inequity and teach in service to their students is critical reflection. Critical reflection describes the iterative process by which teachers interrogate their beliefs and assumptions about themselves, others, knowledge construction and learning, and interrogate the lens through which they make decisions in their teaching (Larrivee, 2000). This is a skill vitally important for teachers regardless of the racial composition of their schools and classrooms. Ladson-Billings (1995) described the importance of teachers' critical reflection before being able to effectively enact a critical pedagogy such as culturally relevant teaching. Critical reflection enables teachers to move from a space of acknowledging inequality in education to having a self-awareness of where they are situated in the power struggle of systems of privilege and oppression as they operate within schools. Research has shown that when teachers reflect on issues of power, privilege and how those factors intersect with culture, they demonstrate greater cultural awareness (Acquah & Commins, 2015). Although critically important, many teacher preparation programs do not explicitly endeavour to develop critical reflection skills in preservice teachers as many education scholars have urged (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Larrivee, 2000).

Teachers as Opportunity Providers

Teachers have access to institutional power through their curricular and instructional practices and; therefore, play an integral role in students' schooling experiences. While teachers are usually bound to a set of state standards they must teach, they generally have autonomy in

making decisions about how to teach material. It is at the juncture between what is presented to teachers in their curriculum and their decisions about how to teach the curriculum that critical reflection is vitally important (Freire, 1970). Teachers that appraise the achievement gap as an opportunity gap − a gap in access to fair and equitable learning opportunities (Boykin & Noguera, 2011) − are apt to use more equitable curricular and instructional strategies that reduce the likelihood that social position factors such as ethnicity/race and socioeconomic status are determinants of academic achievement.

Freire (1970) described the influence of beliefs on action as *praxis*. More specifically, he regarded praxis as liberatory action informed by the continual pursuit of a greater awareness of oppression. For teachers, he described praxis as engaging in instructional practices that transcend novice-expert dynamics and empower students with the tools and skills needed to navigate an asymmetrically structured society. These teaching practices were theorized to be informed by teachers' awareness of oppression and beliefs about students as learners. Education scholars have described the ways in which teachers continually adjust beliefs and incorporate ideas and dispositions into their teaching practices as their adaptive learning expertise (Anthony et al., 2015). When teachers maintain a flexible disposition that allows them to take in new information about the changing context and needs of their students, over time they may develop an adaptive learning expertise (Anthony et al., 2015). Being able to flexibly adapt to the needs of students of varied background is an important undergirding principle of teaching equitably. When teachers rely on equity-based pedagogies/philosophies, they are more likely to use curricular and instructional strategies that mitigate the cultural mismatch experienced by Black and Latinx students. Research has shown that teaching strategies that incorporate students' lived experiences

and use their cultural knowledge as a platform for learning, have been related to improved performance and behavioral outcomes according to traditional metrics (Byrd, 2016).

Equity frameworks for this type of teaching and learning fall under the umbrella of multicultural education (Banks, 2004) and incorporate critical race theorizing into teaching pedagogy and practices (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). The multicultural education framework highlights areas of the school and classroom climate that should be attended to in order to create more equal educational experiences for students. Related frameworks such as culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay 2002) emphasize the role of teachers' mindsets and instructional practices in fostering educational equity. Culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on the teachers' beliefs about self and others as well as how knowledge is constructed (Ladson-Billings, 1995). By critically reflecting on those ideas, teachers are more capable of fostering better learning experiences for students of color by creating opportunities for academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. The culturally responsive teaching framework is more granular in that it highlights specific practices such as understanding students' cultural knowledge, skills, and philosophies and incorporating them into teaching as a platform for continued learning (Gay, 2002). A wealth of research describes the importance of incorporating students' existing knowledge and skills gained outside of school throughout their lived experiences into the learning process to improve the effectiveness of learning (Moll et al., 1992). This is particularly important for closing in on the opportunity gap for students of color fueled, in part, by cultural mismatch. Though, incorporating the diversity of students' backgrounds and lived experiences into the curriculum is also important for decentering whiteness and allowing White students an

opportunity to learn and develop the necessary intercultural skills and competencies they need to successfully navigate a 21st century global adulthood.

At a proximal level, teachers have a significant amount of power and influence over students' educational experiences. Their instructional strategies, classroom management practices, and relationships to students all have significant bearing on the ways students experience school as a whole. Each of these factors can also fundamentally alter some of the aforementioned contributors to negative schooling experiences for ethnic-racial minority students (Gay, 2002). The decisions teachers make about curricular, instructional, and classroom management strategies flow from their beliefs and assumptions about who is knowledgeable, how knowledge is created, and what kinds of knowledge are valid (Larrivee, 2000). In other words, it is their teaching pedagogy that influences the decisions they make that impact the classroom experiences of their students (Gay, 2002; Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Past research has shown that teachers beliefs have significant impacts on their students such that teachers who hold negative beliefs about students of color are most likely to engage in disproportionate discipline strategies for subjective offenses (Skiba et al., 2011), extend less caring relationships (Voight et al., 2015), offer fewer opportunities for participation (Bottiani et al., 2016), and hold lower expectations for achievement (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Conversely, when students perceive that their schools and teachers affirm and respect cultural diversity, they demonstrate greater sense of belonging, academic engagement, and academic achievement (Chang & Le, 2010). Teachers are positioned to significantly impact how students experience school and their opportunities for better academic and social outcomes within school. Though, in order for teachers to effectively engage in the practices that mend the opportunity gap and lend to higher student academic achievement, they must be critically aware of the landscape

of inequality that undergirds underperformance and feel motivated and efficacious in any efforts to redress it (i.e., teacher critical consciousness).

The purpose for this research study was to understand how high school teachers' critical consciousness developed across their two-year participation in a PD for culturally responsive teaching. This study relied on teacher interviews across their participation in the PD to glean insights about their critical consciousness development and the relevant factors that aided them in their journey.

Method

Participants

Thirty-two teachers from four schools in two school districts volunteered to participate in a PD program designed by researchers in a research-practice partnership with school district leaders. The current study focuses on the experiences of five teachers from one school. All of the teachers taught across different core subject areas and co-curricular subjects. The teachers range from early to late career in their years of experience. To protect the anonymity of the participants, specific participant demographic information is not included. The following participant profiles shed light on the individual characteristics of each teacher.

Participant 1: Terry

Terry is a teacher of a non-core/co-curricular class who, at the time of his first interview, had worked in public education for four years and worked at the school in which this study takes place for three years. He identifies as a White man that grew up in a lower socioeconomic status household. His personal experiences with economic inequality were foundational to his understanding of the effects of oppression on students' experiences in school. Prior to his engagement in the action research professional development program for CRT, he never read CRT-related content or thought deeply about the role of culture and race in education. His own

early experiences with learning have shaped his desire to make curricular content relevant to students' lived experiences. In his role at his school, his primary function is to provide supplementary instructional support to students who have been removed from another class. Thus, his teaching is not subject-specific and affords him more flexibility in what and how he chooses to teach.

Participant 2: Reese

Reese is an early career teacher who deeply believes in the importance of seeing students in their full humanity. She identifies herself as a White woman who "doesn't come from money." She entered the teaching profession because she was inspired by the teachers that supported her during her own education; she wants to be a resource for others and provide the same instrumental support she received. She sees the subject she teaches as another layer of being helpful to students because she believes it provides skills that are universally valuable. Throughout her time in the program, she was also pursuing a master's degree in education that provided her with opportunities to explore and increase her critical consciousness. Although prior to joining the action research professional development program for CRT she had a general understanding that students' social position can shape their schooling experiences.

Participant 3: Wynn

Wynn is a co-curricular course teacher that works primarily with African American students. In her class, she teaches alongside a co-teacher and together they provide support to meet students' academic and social needs. She described her upbringing as a racially homogenous experience, although her family espoused egalitarian beliefs. Before her current teaching position, she taught in a rural county that was primarily White. She identifies herself best by her faith, although she is hesitant to share that aspect of herself with her students for fear

of being perceived as religious. Above all, she is committed to creating positive and supportive relationships with her students and wants to do what she can to show them she cares.

Participant 4: Parker

Parker is a mid-career teacher who spent some time during his career teaching in another country. He speaks multiple languages, likes rapping and playing basketball which, he believes makes him relatable to his students. He is an observant teacher who described himself noticing patterns of differential treatment of students by race prior to beginning his project in the professional development program.

Participant 5: Valen

Valen is a veteran teacher who grew up in a rural and racially homogeneous environment. She questions whether her upbringing impacts the way she sees and interacts with her students. This wondering was the impetus for her joining the professional development program. She described feeling disconnected from her students and disillusioned by that aspect of her teaching experience. She values providing students enriching learning experiences but understands that building strong relationships with them is a key component to meeting that goal.

Research Context

Thirty-two teachers voluntarily joined a two-year long professional development (PD) project that used a participatory action research (PAR) approach. This training aimed to develop teachers' skills in incorporating culturally responsive teaching into their practice. Teachers were assigned readings to expand their awareness of educational equity work and met quarterly to discuss readings, relevant current topics, their action research projects and received feedback from the principal university partners and graduate students and peers in the PD. While teachers did not directly engage in the program to develop their critical consciousness, this was a likely

byproduct of their engagement with the program materials and discussions. The PAR framework was used to support teachers' development of culturally responsive teaching practices through their engagement with a curriculum (i.e., readings, discussions, presentations) that included elements of critical pedagogy while they also gained insights from their students through their action research. These teachers come from two districts that have seen tremendous shifts in ethnic-racial demographics over the past couple of decades (MERC Division Demographic Changes, 2018). Both districts were both engaged in initiatives to address educational inequities prior to the start of this professional development.

Towards the end of year 1 of the PD, the Covid-19 pandemic began and completely disrupted the landscape of teaching and learning as well as how teachers engaged in the PD. Teaching was moved online as schools were closed for in-person learning. Teachers were asked not to teach any new content and not to implement any punitive grading practices. Furthermore, students were exempt from taking standardized tests at the end of the school year. In addition, during the summer of 2020, a racial uprising took place in response to the extrajudicial murders of Black Americans across the nation and in the metropolitan area of the two participating school districts. Images of police violence and civil unrest were plastered across the media (i.e., social media, news) and for many of these students and teachers, the happenings in the local area were close to home.

The current study centered on one school that was described as racially and culturally diverse. The teachers at this school repeatedly cited the support of their administration, diversity of their students and the camaraderie with their colleagues as significant factors to their experience in the PD. At the end of the PD in 2021, the school board of the district that the focal school is in voted to ban the teaching and learning of any content related to critical race theory.

The sociopolitical constraints around teachers' ability to bring diverse perspectives into the curriculum as well as the aforementioned promotive factors of their engagement in the PD make this school a site for rich qualitative analysis.

Instruments

Participants in this study were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. The first interview protocol consisted of 19 questions that probed participants' reflection on their topics such as their teaching background, their identity, and their perspectives of culturally responsive teaching. The interview took approximately one hour to complete. The second interview protocol consisted of 18 questions. These questions inquired about participants' perceptions of their action research projects, their professional growth, implications for policy and practice, and changes to schooling due to Covid-19. The second interview was virtual and took approximately thirty minutes to complete. The third interview protocol consisted of 24 questions. The questions in the third interview probed participants' perceptions of their action research project and participation, the impacts of the professional development program, and their thoughts about CRT and culturally responsive schools. The third interview was also virtual and took approximately an hour and a half to complete.

Data Collection

Data was collected across three time points. All interviews were conducted by the research team for the larger professional development project which included faculty and graduate students, including myself. Each interview was recorded and later transcribed for analyses. The first interview took place in person at teachers' schools in winter 2019. The second interviews took place virtually on Zoom in spring 2020. The final interviews were also virtual and took place during the summer of 2021.

Research Design and Data Analysis

This study utilized a multiple case study design and thematic analysis to answer the research question. The case study design allowed for in depth analysis of each participant's individual trajectory of critical consciousness development. Each person's journey in critical consciousness development is embedded in the context of their own lived experiences, beliefs, and perspectives; therefore, a case study design was an appropriate approach to highlight the particularities of each case. In addition, the thematic analysis technique allowed me to systematically explore similarities and differences across participants.

To identify participant excerpts of interest, I relied on the inclusion criteria of a previous dissertation study exploring teachers' critical consciousness (Barber Lester, 2019). Table 1 displays each criterion for inclusion in the current study. A phronetic iterative (PI) approach (Tracy, 2018) was used to analyze teachers' responses to interview questions across three time points. The iterative phronetic approach is similar to the deductive elements of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2017); however instead of creating meaning solely from the data, the PI approach allows the researcher to focus on aspects of the data that answer specific questions and "alternate between considering existing theory and research questions on one hand, and emergent qualitative data on the other" (Tracy, 2018). To first become familiar with the data, I read the interviews. Next, open coding was used to examine first-level codes. First-level codes simply capture what is being said by the participant without using theory or existing knowledge of literature to make broad inferences (Tracy, 2018). After generating first-level codes, I searched for themes based on emergent data and existing theorizing about critical consciousness and sociopolitical development to develop second-level codes. After revisiting the data, I also noticed interesting variation to the contexts in which participants demonstrated critical consciousness.

Thus, I re-coded first level codes to reflect variation in context. Themes and codes are displayed in table 2.

Trustworthiness

In general, research is value-laden and, as part of engaging with this work as the first author and a graduate research assistant on the primary study, I wrote a reflective memo prior to reviewing participant interview data. This practice is used to help bring forth any assumptions that the researcher has and create a system of accountability in work that requires subjective interpretation and has implications for the lives of others. The memo included reflections about my perceptions of the teachers involved in this study as well as my own experiences within the education system and my perspectives of the inequities embedded in education. Doing this allowed me to document and acknowledge my preconceived notions and assumptions that I had coming into this work to ensure that I was being critically reflective throughout the process of completing this project.

To help with data analysis and increase validity, three research assistants were included on this project as additional coders to help account for different perspectives and life/educational experiences in the analysis and interpretation of data. Each research assistant completed a reflective memo documenting their own perspectives of the inequities embedded in the education system as well as any pivotal experiences that define their perception of schooling. These research assistants read articles to understand the framework of critical consciousness and SPD theory as well as the educational experiences of BIPOC students and students living in poverty. They were then trained to understand and apply the codes generated by the primary researcher coding manual to code interviews selected by the primary researcher. To establish consensus in our understanding of the codes and how to apply them, we each coded two interviews. We then

met for several hours across three weeks to clarify misunderstandings or present discrepancies between the primary author's coding and the research assistants' coding. To keep a trail of discussions about the application of codes, research assistants logged any questions or comments that they had about coding in a Google Sheet for the first author to consider and respond to. In addition, after coding a transcript, each researcher added reflections about the defining characteristics of each element of critical consciousness within and across each participant's interviews in a group memo.

Researcher Positionality

Our lived experience can never be disentangled from our perspectives and beliefs and therefore it is critical for researchers to continually critically reflect on positionality in relation to research practice. As a primary author I identify as a Black and Mexican cisgender woman who is deeply passionate about the educational experiences of students of color. I come to this work with my own educational experiences that have been both positive and negative and highly racialized. In addition, I have spent the past six years studying various issues related to education and working on research projects situated in the educational equity space. As part of my role as a graduate research assistant in this larger project I was often looked to as an expert on the topic of teachers culturally responsive teaching professional development, though I would consider myself to have intermediate expertise/experience in this area of research.

Findings

To answer the question of how participants' critical consciousness developed across their time in a professional development program for culturally responsive teaching, three apriori themes that aligned with prior conceptualizing of critical consciousness were fitted to participant interview data. Specifically, the first theme of Critical Reflection captured participants'

knowledge of how inequality presents in the classroom and their dispositions toward the importance or value of mitigating that inequity. The second theme of Critical Motivation and Efficacy captured participants' motivation toward equity and their sense of efficacy in equitable practice. The third theme, Critical Action, captured the actual behaviors and suggested behaviors that participants talked about to bring about equity in education. An additional theme emerged from the data that did not align with prior conceptualization of critical consciousness. The Self Analysis theme was added to reflect participants' reflections on their own identity and their general beliefs and attitudes toward people of other social groups.

In addition, to answer the question of how participants' critical consciousness was developed across educational contexts, subordinate themes emerged that captured the nuances of how participants commonly exemplified critical consciousness at different ecological levels. Three subordinate themes were retained. In particular, participants often talked about their critical reflection and critical action in the context of the classroom (micro level), school and district context (meso level), and education system and broader society level (macro level). Table 3 displays the frequency of themes across participants.

After an extensive process of coding, reviewing and refining coded data, I then organized each participant’s data in alignment with the core elements of the sociopolitical development model. As previously described, the SPD model shares conceptual overlap with the primary dimensions of critical consciousness but adds nuance by accounting for relevant contextual factors that promote or inhibit the process of critical consciousness development. Relying on this model allowed me to further explicate how critical consciousness developed within the context of a professional development program across time.

The following cases highlight each participants' critical consciousness development. Each participant's case is organized by theme. For the themes of Critical Reflection and Critical Action, findings are additionally organized in the order of nested ecologies (micro, meso, and macro). Finally, within the results shared for each theme, findings are further organized by interview time point. This organization is intended to provide consistency for the cross-case discussion about how participants' critical consciousness developed over time.

Terry: Colorblind to Race Conscious

Self-Analysis

In his teaching as a co-curricular instructor, Terry strives to help his students connect the material they learn to the real world. In his first interview, he expressed that what students learn in the classroom often lacks practical application and can be divorced from their lived experiences. He described the purpose of his role as being to "keep these guys and girls as caught-up academically as possible. Because, if they keep falling behind, you know what I mean? Then it's just going to contribute to this downward cycle." He viewed his practice as a point of intervention for students who were deemed to be struggling behaviorally and academically and was able to connect those challenges to the effects of poverty.

During his first interview, he described several instances of being particularly understanding toward students who were living in poverty. His own firsthand experiences with navigating economic disadvantage when he was a student shaped the lens through which he critically analyzed his students' economic challenges. Although he did not name poverty as a form of oppression, he was aware of some of the barriers that living in poverty posed for his students.

> I know the frustration of not having enough money to do what you want to do, or what you need to do. I know the emotional end of somebody coming up to you and going, "Hey, it's only 50 bucks. Just hand it over," and not having that 50 bucks. Those things make it harder... Make it easier for me to relate to some of our students that don't have it.

Although he was able to analyze students' economic challenges by relating them to his own experiences, he had a harder time affirming students on the basis of race. This may be in part because of his lack of prior critical reflection on his own racial identity. When asked about how his identity may impact his teaching and relationships with students, he responded by highlighting how others may perceive his identity. He said, “I am a white male. The generation that we are...The current political scheme... You can't not think about it, because White males are not very popular in certain circles right now.”

For Terry, his understanding of his identity as a White man involved a superficial description of how others perceived him but was decontextualized from the ways that White men are inherently privileged within the context of a racially stratified patriarchal society. Nevertheless, Terry acknowledged his potential to hold biases about students and believed that those biases could be managed and prevented from impacting his practice. He said:

> It's hard to say that I have no biases, because everybody does. But I try to be aware of the ones that I'm aware of and put them aside when I'm in an educational setting because they don't really belong here. What I prefer at my home is what I prefer at my home. My professional life is something else. I'm there to help all students, not just the ones that I want to.

Although he set out to make sure that his personal biases did not impact the way he supported his students, he went on to describe an instance when an African American student

approached him about experiencing discrimination from another teacher. His analysis of that student's experience indicated that he thought about racial discrimination as an infrequent interpersonal interaction that could be dealt with through administrative action or emotion regulation. He advised the student by saying, "If you feel this strongly, let's talk to the administration. Let's make sure your feelings are known." He situated the student's experience with racism in his school as an individual perception and later discredited the validity of the student's claim by saying, "The way you perceive the situation is not the only thing that happened in that room at that time. Every situation has multiple factors, if you will, that all take part of this." His lack of awareness of racial oppression and his own racialized identity undermined his ability to approach his students without bias.

In his second interview, Terry was noticeably more aware of his espoused beliefs about students who do not share his identity and the validity of the racialized experiences of students of color. He became aware of the way in which his lack of critical reflection about his own identity prohibited him from fully understanding the lived experiences of ethnic-racial minority students.

> It brought me into [the] student perspective. When the students would write about perceived racism or they would write about a student-teacher conflict and I knew the teacher, and the problems that they were having, it wasn't always a student issue. And that woke me up a little bit. When the protests, well, the protests are still happening here in Richmond, it just... The problem is nothing new. It's been here for a long time and my own white privilege didn't accept that for a very long time.

By the third interview, Terry was able to talk about his own social position and the identity in a more sophisticated manner than he did in his first interview. As he engaged in

critical reflection on his social position and identity, he talked about how those factors intersect with his role as a teacher by saying:

> There are things that are wrong where we're assuming that everybody blends into our culture, as a white male or an authority figure. You walk into my classroom; I expect you to follow my rules and do this and do this and do that. The police officer was like, "Well, these are the laws, this is what you have to do, you're going to follow my directions immediately." It seems like, as a country, our thinking has gotten narrow, and I view it as one of my jobs is to open up that thinking.

In his reflection, he directly analyzed his teaching role as it is embedded within the context of White cultural hegemony in education and related that to the current norms of society that undergird division around sociopolitical issues. In contrast to his earlier interviews, it is clear that by the time of his third interview, Terry took on a more critical perspective of the existence of inequality within society and the ways that it manifests in the classroom.

> So I think I've grown in this program. I've tried to look at everybody at an equal plane, but what I've learned is that part of that is the white privilege coming in. To say that everybody's equal in my classroom is a goal, it's not necessarily the reality. Think that might be one of the more uncomfortable things that I've learned through the program.

Terry's self-analysis became increasingly more grounded in the reality of racial oppression in the United States over time. Between the first and third interview, he became more aware of his own racial identity and social location. As he grew to understand the affordances that his racial identity and social location provided him, he was able to lend more understanding to the experiences of those from other racial backgrounds.

Critical Reflection

Classroom Level Reflection. At the time of his first interview, Terry started off by engaging in critical reflection and analysis about issues students face in the classroom related to socioeconomic challenges. In one instance, he stated:

> All the students have a Chromebook, but they have to pay their Chromebook fee. At the beginning of the year if a kid's telling me they don't have their Chromebook yet, I'm not assuming that they're being lazy or just not doing it because they don't want to do it. I asked a question. "Okay, is there anything I can do to help you get your Chromebook?" "Oh, I don't have the form." "Okay, well, here's how we get the form." "I don't have the money."

He is aware that not having disposable income to pay the fees associated with materials needed in a purportedly free public education is not a reflection on the student's behavior, but rather a challenge of their circumstances. Despite his engagement in critical reflection on the economic disadvantages of his students, his reflection on his students' racialized experiences demonstrated less criticality in the first interview.

> I had a student come in, an African-American student, come into my classroom and was complaining that he thought the response from the teacher that he had just interacted with was biased against him, because he didn't feel that it got the same response as a white student doing something very similar to him...He was an African-American student, yeah. He was really upset about it, and we talked about it. I brought in the administrator to talk to him about it, because he was feeling that strongly that he felt that he was being personally attacked because of his skin color and the way he dressed...

Terry remained open to listening to this student's experience and provided a potential avenue of recourse, but goes on to say that he has never seen racial discrimination show up in his

classroom. Although he acknowledged that the students in his class bore the burden of challenges outside of their control (i.e. socioeconomic challenges), he did not connect his students experiences with racial discrimination to a broader system of racism that impacts ethnic-racial minority students during the first interview.

In contrast to his first interview and similar to the growth in his self-perceptions, in the second interview Terry displayed an emergent understanding of the experiences of students of color within a White hegemonic schooling context. He reflected on his new understanding of racially and culturally diverse students' experiences and the importance of allowing students space for those experiences to enter the classroom. He stated, “The research team has not only opened my eyes to a lot of cultural challenges but also allowed me to more easily allow them into my classroom. There has to be a safe space in order to just have a difficult...Discussion.” His reflection on the importance of allowing students to bring the full authenticity and diversity of their lived experience into the classroom directly challenged notions of universalism in schooling by acknowledging the need to recognize difference.

By the third interview, Terry was more aware of the various ways he could engage in equitable practice which suggested a reflection on the myriad of ways that oppression manifests in the classroom. For example, he reflected on simple changes such as allowing students to express themselves in their attire without getting in trouble for such a subjective offense. He described:

> Other than that, it's opened my mind up more so to accept that, hey, the kid's wearing a bandanna. Well, that might be for a significant reason for that child, and it's not just an act of defiance.

In addition, he was also able to reflect on the power dynamics that exist between teachers and students in which students are generally forced to conform to the standards and norms that teachers set. He problematized this power dynamic and offered a reflection that demonstrated a more equitable orientation toward power-sharing in the classroom. He stated:

> When you're talking about culturally responsive teaching, and in this whole process, it's about...to me, the end goal is to build a better relationship between the students and teachers, break down the barriers that exist between us and allow them to tap into their norm and allow that to meet your norm rather than expecting everybody to just conform...

His burgeoning awareness of how students' backgrounds impact their experience in the classroom as well as his role in mitigating power dynamics served as a mental model that provided him the capacity to critically analyze the effects of oppression in the classroom.

School and District Level Reflection. Terry talked about his school with an acute recognition of the diversity of the student body in the first interview. Although he noticed the diversity among the students, he did not make the connection between the diversity in the school and the disparity in how students experienced the school. When reflecting on the reported experiences of African-American students at his school, he questioned the presence of racial discrimination and did not critically examine African-American students' racialized experiences in the school in relation to the ubiquity of racism and racial discrimination in broader society. He said, "From my experience, the African-American population does feel that they are being discriminated in some way. But again, I'm not 100% sure where that's coming from."

Similar to his reflections at the classroom level, by the time of his second interview Terry began to contemplate the merit of students' reported racialized experiences within the school.

> One of the things that came out in the study before the mass protest here was that race was an issue for at least a percentage of the students. I also looked at, was it a student-

student interaction that was causing the problem? Was it a student-teacher interaction that was causing the problem?

During the third interview, Terry pointedly highlighted issues stemming from racial and cultural differences within the school, particularly for African-American students. By listening to the experiences of his students, he was able to reflect on a new understanding of how racism shows up in his school in a way that he had not previously considered. He stated:

> There's an African American student, there's a white male and a white female in the group. The African-American female was trying to convince her colleagues, I guess, or fellow students, the differences in the way that some of the teachers perceived her versus the way they were, as a student, being perceived. Some of the classes, they say they get treated equally, but they definitely know the teachers where things are different. In this day and age, that was eye-opening for me. I know that it exists out in our world, but I didn't realize it existed right in the school.

With this deeper understanding of one way racism presented in his school, Terry was able to question and call out the status quo that racializes African American students' schooling experience. Racism, as he understood it, became less of an abstraction and more of a feature across contexts (e.g. classroom, school, world).

In addition to thinking about his school, he reflected on the political tensions around the district's school board and their decision to ban inclusive and diverse teaching practices and materials. He recognized that the decision to ban the teaching of critical race theory and related concepts in the district could affect teachers' ability to engage in equitable practice. He offered:

> Now, you take that, and you...there's a reason they voted that way, right? It reflects on the community around us. So you take the student that goes home and tells them, "Hey, this is what we're doing in school," and tells their parent, and the parent puts the pressure on the school board and the school and everything else. So I think the biggest roadblock that we have right now is, one, politics, like I was saying, and, two, just opening other people's minds, be it teachers, students, parents, administrators.

In his statement, he drew connections between the political happenings of the school board and the implications for teaching practice and student learning within that district.

Societal and Education System Level Reflection. In the first interview his reflection about the education system centered around testing and the performance orientation of schooling, but remained devoid of system-level critiques about how those factors influence the experiences of systemically marginalized students.

> I think the current education climate is testing. I think the people that are teaching in a more traditional classroom are rather concerned about getting their test scores up and keeping them up. In that philosophy, or that way of thinking, it's not so important to get into the meat that I was just describing. Getting to know the students. It's more important to [education system stakeholders] to know what's on the test, and get all that information out as quickly and efficiently as possible.

At the time of the second interview, Terry grappled with the ways that macro-level issues such as White privilege and racism impacted his teaching as well as the experiences of his students.

> When the students would write about perceived racism or they would write about a student-teacher conflict and I knew the teacher, and the problems that they were having, it wasn't always a student issue. And that woke me up a little bit. When the protests, well, the protests are still happening here in Richmond, it just... The problem is nothing new. It's been here for a long time and my own white privilege didn't accept that for a very long time.

Since students of color commonly experience racism and racial discrimination in student-teacher interactions, Terry's direct acknowledgement of the longstanding issue and his ability to call out his White privilege signify critical consciousness.

In his third interview, he continued grappling with the larger sociopolitical and racial issues happening in the world around him while also pointing to factors of the education system, such as the curriculum, that enabled social inequality to continue to exist. He found fault in the education system for not bringing such social issues into the curriculum to serve as opportunities for students to increase their critical consciousness, but he asserted that the sociopolitical climate at the time created an opportunity to be able to bring up such issues in the broader education system and discuss them:

> The textbook's answer is not...well, the textbook hasn't been written on these things yet, but the text is not going to give us the right answer. The news is not going to give us the right answer. What do you think about these things? I don't think three years ago that those conversations would have happened.

His statements about societal beliefs and the levers of education demonstrated his critical reflection about systemic issues in the U.S. education system. Similar to his reflections about the classroom and school, his reflections about society and the education system became more critical over time.

Critical Motivation and Efficacy

At the start of the professional development program, Terry was generally motivated to meet students with an empathic perspective that validated their humanity. For Terry, his efficacy was not a prominent feature of his reflection on his overall critical agency. Despite his orientation toward a universally affirming perspective, the criticality of his motivations were primarily grounded in a critical understanding of inequity for students who were economically disadvantaged. He demonstrated this by saying:

> We have wealthy people here in Midlothian, and we have people that don't have a lot. They all look the same. When you're walking down the hallway, you can't tell. So, you've got to be aware. You've got to be ready for that in the classroom. That also leads me to have all those materials in my classroom, ready to go. Because it might not be, "I forgot my backpack." It might be, "I don't have a backpack. I don't have the materials." In my philosophy of teaching, that's not something that stops us. I'll find a different way to get the materials. Let's move forward.

Although he did not express a particular motivation in the second interview, he did discuss being motivated to affect change with his colleagues in the third interview. By that point he recognized the pervasiveness of inequitable schooling experiences that racial, culturally, linguistically diverse students and students experiencing poverty had. He hoped to be able to share his learnings from the action research professional development program on culturally responsive teaching with his colleagues who were not part of the program. He felt motivated to call upon his colleagues that participated in the program with him to share their knowledge with the other faculty. He said, “I am hoping to inspire some of my colleagues [in the action research professional development program on culturally responsive teaching] to do some presentations with me for next year.”

His motivation toward spreading this awareness suggested an understanding of the importance of mitigating inequity at a broader level beyond just his classroom.

Critical Action

Classroom Level Action. In alignment with his critical reflection and critical motivation, at the time of the first interview Terry's equity-based classroom actions centered around mitigating the effects of poverty for students. For example, as described previously, he talked

about taking action for a student who could not afford the fee for a Chromebook. He asked the student, "Okay, is there anything I can do to help you get your Chromebook?" and proceeded to provide support in acquiring the Chromebook. In addition, he also described taking action to make whatever content he was trying to teach more relevant to his students. Though, he described these actions as though they were simply good teaching strategies. More specifically, he described two occasions in which he tried to incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into the classroom without speaking directly to targeting inequity. In one example, he attempted to validate students' lived experiences while also predetermining when they should express their authentic selves by saying:

> Teaching them social boundaries is also something that they need to know. There's just some topics that...topics, and choices of language. That's a big one that I've been working on this year...that are not appropriate in one setting, that might be appropriate in another setting. For example, with the language thing. You talk to your friends on the street, or on the basketball court, in one way. But that might not be appropriate in the middle of a classroom. You're cursing, or calling somebody whatever. Sure, you might get a rise on the basketball court while you're all doing that, but it's not the right conversation to be having in the middle of 32 students and one teacher. You're going to get called out on that. Some of my students didn't realize that until we started discussing it. "But this is the way I always talk!" Well, yeah, I appreciate that. That's valuable, but at the same time there are different cultures within our culture that we all have to adapt to. It's not just the students. It's not just one subsection of our culture or another subsection of our culture, it's... Everybody has to do this. If we walk in front of a judge it's, “Yes, sir. Yes, ma'am.” You get directly to business. You deal with what you do have to deal with, and you move

> on. If you start using your street jargon in front of the judge, you're going to get a different response.

In this example, he suggested that students' authentic expression is appreciated in certain contexts outside of school without recognizing that norms around student behavior in school are culturally-bound and can be a feature of the othering that happens to students of color.

In the second interview he described the need for critical action that would bring students' cultures into focus in the classroom through course assignments.

> The program has increased my knowledge of culturally responsive teaching and why culture is important in the classroom and the diversity of how many cultures we have just within one school, never mind how many infinite combinations of culture there are within our community. And trying to figure out ways to have projects and discussions be open-ended enough to bring those cultures out, or bring those points of view out, has been an interesting challenge.

Just as Terry's critical reflection and agency seemed to become increasingly sophisticated by the third interview, his critical action in the classroom did as well. In the third interview, he described his engagement in classroom level actions that decentered himself and his experience in recognition that students have varying lived experiences that have implications for how they show up and experience school. For example, he facilitated small group discussions amongst his students that created space for them to talk to one another about race, privilege, and their own experiences.

> I think it's giving the students who feel that they are disadvantaged in any way more of a voice, because they see the strength of the people around them that look like them that sound like them that are from similar backgrounds that they are from, speaking out. I give

> that partially credit for the small group work that we've been doing in my project, some of the success of those conversations. Because not only were some of the students being really courageous about having these conversations, but the other folks in their group were listening.

By allowing students an opportunity to talk about, listen to and learn from the experiences of privilege and oppression of their peers, his actions directly centered social justice in the classroom and challenged the status quo of acceptable classroom discussion.

School and District Level Action. Although less specific than the first interview he talked about school-wide action that should be taken to help accommodate students who are experiencing poverty and may not be able to pay the fees that come with accessing learning materials.

> What can we do as educators to go, "Okay, you need a Chromebook for today. Here you go, bring it back to me tonight before you leave. Okay? You need a pad, a pencil? Here you go, take one." It's not that much off of us in order to do these little things to help these kids succeed.

Terry did not discuss any particular school or district-wide action that he engaged in or felt needed to be taken during the second interview, however; in the third interview he focused on the advocacy that he engaged in or had a desire to engage in by talking about his hope to share what he'd learned with his colleagues. In addition, he described taking critical action by talking with administrators about issues related to race and culture among students. He stated:

> I've had more in-depth conversations with my administrators and a couple of teachers that work around me. But again, in the [subject], I work alone most of the time. The question of race and culture and teaching methods are more on the table lately than they have been

> in the past. I actually had a pretty decent conversation with my principal during my evaluation this year about cultural and different things he's seen and different things I've seen, and how do we move forward from here.

Although he mentioned a need for action across the school to accommodate students who are economically marginalized in the first interview, by the time of his third interview he is able to describe specific actions he can take or that he has taken to impact broader change in his school.

Societal and Education System Level Action. It was only during his final interview that Terry made a suggestion for critical action that should be taken within the education system. Specifically, he felt that all teachers should be provided with professional development on culturally responsive teaching in order to improve the experiences of schooling for students. Though, he did not explicitly mention how this action would serve to lessen the opportunity gap for students from systemically marginalized backgrounds. He recommended that:

> Kind of the same way we're trying to create the safe space in our classrooms for the students to have conversations where they feel comfortable bringing their culture into the equation, and their background knowledge into the conversation, and all that, doing that for educators and allowing us to participate in that forum, I think that's what really pushed my understanding of the CRT, and being able to dive deep into it and understanding where it's going and where I feel we need to go as educators and members of this society.

In his recommendation, he made connections between a system-wide factor related to teacher preparation and the potential for increasing students' sense of comfort and belonging.

Opportunity Structure Influences

At the time of his first interview, Terry's primary opportunity influencers that he drew upon were his social life and the encouragement of his administrator. In particular, he discussed his wife being of a minority religion and how that shaped his sensitivity to minority-status experiences.

> I have one of those multiple situations. My wife is Jewish. I married into a Jewish family, while I'm not. It makes me a little bit more sensitive, to know that even if we were all purple... Let's move away from our traditional colors. If we were all purple in the room. It doesn't matter... Our physical differences don't matter as much, because you never see what the differences are behind the scenes. You have to be sensitive to it. You don't know.

In the second interview, he primarily discussed the professional development program as being a support for his learning and, in particular, his relationships and interactions with his colleagues and researchers in the program.

> So, it was a bit uncomfortable. Some of the conversations got uncomfortable, but people within the cycle meetings were open enough and respectful enough to listen to difficult points of view and go, hey, and accept that, hey, wait a minute, I'm having trouble accepting what this particular author is saying, but how do we process this information together as a team? We had the pleasure of having some diversity on our team as well, so getting the information from a person rather than just the book or the article was immeasurable.

Finally, in the third interview he continued to talk about the importance of the professional development program as well as his colleagues in the program with whom he'd formed an informal professional learning community to engage in self-development toward more

equitable teaching; however, he also talked about learning from his students and their sharing of their lived experiences.

> Some of the classes, [students] say they get treated equally, but they definitely know the teachers where things are different. In this day and age, that was eye-opening for me. I know that it exists out in our world, but I didn't realize it existed right in the school.

In addition, he also described social activities he engaged in that bolstered his understanding of racism that he brought into his teaching. In particular, he talked about attending a seminar with a prominent Black actor and learning from the actor's testimony about staying at a local luxury hotel named after a slave-holding former president. He described:

> And he was upset by it. I'm like, wait a minute, that's one of the nicest hotels in town. He's like, "This hotel is named after somebody who suppressed my people" and whatnot, and then he went into how, when he, as a celebrity, got pulled over, and what he has to do in order to protect his life. Hands go outside the window, sunglasses and a hat immediately come off. All the stuff that I don't even think about.

This experience served to provide some cognitive dissonance between how Terry perceived his everyday experiences and that of a Black man whose celebrity one might presume would preclude them from experiencing racism.

Summary

During his first interview, it was clear that Terry had not previously thought about his racialized identity and the privilege that came with it. Most of his reflections at that time did not reflect a critical racial analysis. He was, however, able to critically analyze social situations related to socioeconomic status because it was an axis of his identity that he shared with some of his students. Across his interviews, he became much more aware of his racial identity and

thought about it in relation to his life experiences and the experiences of his students. As he understood his own identity better, he was able to then validate the racialized experiences of his students that he previously questioned. As a result, he engaged in more critical action to center those experiences in his classroom. He allowed students space for discussion of racial issues, though he never described action in which he directly incorporated concepts related to students' cultural backgrounds and social justice into the course content. In addition, across his interviews he became more motivated to share his understanding of culturally responsive teaching and the inequities in education with his colleagues.

Reese: Critical Action as Good Teaching

Self-Analysis

As a teacher, Reese's north star for her curricular and instructional practices rests on empathy and positive relationships with her students. Seeing students as people first is central to her core principles as an educator. When asked to describe herself as a teacher she replied, "Human in that I very much understand that students are not just students, they're people. Connection-oriented. Try to be compassionate. Sometimes it's hard, but I do try." In her first interview, she described the value of her central belief in viewing students through a lens of humanity by saying:

> I just think this is really important. Like I said earlier, so much of this was not my experience growing up, but I'm not the only type of human being. Especially with how vitriolic and violent and hateful people can be, I think it's really important to look at these things through an open lens and try to address people's inherent xenophobia or people's inherent prejudices. Because I think a lot of that comes from not understanding and fear and assumptions and stereotypes. I don't know. I think things like these can really help

> not only the students learn, but also our community as a whole. Because when we are celebrating lots of different types of cultures in the classroom, and welcoming students in the classroom, and making them feel valid and accepted, and we're family here, and we're safe and we're good, I think that really can make our society better because they'll be more comfortable with seeing XYZ.

While she wanted her students to feel comfortable in her classroom, she also saw the implications for the betterment of society when educators make room to address social issues in the classroom.

Reese expressed that she valued making students feel comfortable and supporting their success in her course as much as she could. She emphasized this as being of particular importance for her students of systemically marginalized backgrounds. She felt that allowing students to see themselves represented in the course curriculum and remaining open and empathic toward their experiences were important aspects of providing an affirming learning environment to her students. In recognition of the importance of doing so for her students and in alignment with her commitment to good teaching she talked about incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into learning as if it were a duty of a good teacher.

> But I think that it's important for students to see themselves reflected and others that are celebrated. Because for a long time I didn't think that was important just because that wasn't my experience. But then I started to see students really feel validated by that, and I was like, “Oh, that really does matter. I need to do that because that's important for them, and if I really love my kids, I'll do that for them.”

As White woman who went to a predominantly White high school and college and was privileged across her life experiences, Reese recognized that her students had vastly different

lived experiences than her own. In one instance, she talked about her surprise when learning of a student experiencing homelessness by saying, “I'm not saying I don't believe it. It's just surreal in a way. That's so outside of my own lived experience that it's totally foreign to me.”

In addition to critically reflecting on the differences between her students’ life experiences and hers, in the first interview she also questioned the extent to which her identity played a role in protecting her from negative schooling experiences. When asked about how her students' backgrounds affect her teaching, she talked about not having any experience with feeling unrepresented and unwelcome in school in the way her students do. Specifically, she said, “...in my learning experience as a student, I didn't ever really notice that happening with me, but I'm also a White and female, so I don't know if that [has an impact]... I mean, it probably does.” Her consideration of her identity as a protective factor in her schooling experience highlights her critical reflection on her privilege.

In her second interview, Reese continued to reflect on how her racial identity protected her from the negative experiences some of her students had to navigate. She was well aware that the lack of exposure to diversity in her upbringing may have limited her cultural competence. She said, “I grew up in a suburban, mostly white, middle-class area, and there's nothing inherently wrong with that, but at the same time, you were missing much of the world around you in a very, such a homogenous area.” She emphasized the importance of remaining open to learning from her students about their backgrounds that are different than her own by saying:

> And, I think it's very hard when you have issues like this, where you're talking about aspects of race; or aspects of socioeconomic status, or gender identity, or sexual identity, or the family dynamic, or the immigrant status, or the cultural background of a student, I think people really entrench themselves in whatever they believe, and they're not

necessarily willing to listen. I think why it's impacted me professionally, it's because I was really willing to listen.

In addition to allowing her students the space to talk about how they navigate social issues, she also reflected on being relationship-oriented and aware of the power difference that exists between teachers and students. She critiqued the assumption that teachers know more than students by describing an instance when a student was able to lend their cultural expertise to her.

> But, I don't know. I have always taken issue with the idea of, "I'm the teacher, you're the student." That's not how that works. We are both people. I happen to know more than you in this particular area. But, before I watched that video, I didn't know what Wagwan meant. So, guess who knows more in that position? It's [the student].

Her willingness to listen to the experiences of her students was a key feature of her teaching disposition that complemented her critical consciousness development. In the third interview, Reese reflected on her growth in her own beliefs by saying:

> It's just been honestly kind of like a personal metamorphosis of sorts for me to help me understand the nuances of different people's lived experiences in a more authentic way than just reading about it online. Because these are kids that I teach. These are people I love, people I work closely with, people I want to see succeed. Listening to things that have happened to them, some of them are great and some of them are awful. It just helped me understand and kind of bring my perspective around to better understanding their reality, I guess, because it was more personal.

Her disposition toward humanizing her students and her commitment to understanding the fullness of their existence, good and bad, in a context in which they are commonly thought of with a deficit perspective, was a consistent demonstration of critical consciousness in the classroom.

Critical Reflection

Classroom Level Reflection. During the first interview, when she engaged in critical reflection about the classroom context, Reese primarily centered reflections on the importance of diversifying the content of the curriculum. Admittedly, prior to joining the action research professional development on CRT, she had not thought deeply about how her students' cultural backgrounds are reflected in her curriculum and instruction. She said, "I know it's important, but it wasn't something that I had given a lot of thought to."

She believed that relying on culturally-affirming teaching practices and allowing students opportunities to make sincere connections with the material had powerful impacts on how students experienced and engaged with school. She said, "And when students are connected with content, it really makes them that much more engaged, but also, I think it affirms their identity." In addition to the impacts for her systemically marginalized students, she suggested that diversifying curriculum and instruction could also benefit her more privileged students by making "them less afraid, which makes them less prone to hate."

Although she saw the benefits of diversifying the cultural representation in the curriculum, she acknowledged that it was not always easy to do and demonstrated an awareness of her role as a gatekeeper in how students' cultural backgrounds are represented and affirmed in the classroom. She described an experience in which:

> I let them choose their team's names. One of the students made their team's name the NWA, and I didn't know that that was a group. And I assumed that if I was Black, I might know that more likely or be more likely to know that than I would if I'm White because it's dealing with attitude. I thought that they were saying that they were that and that they were trying to pull a joke over on me. And so I said they couldn't name their team that,

but I think that if I had been Black or a different race perhaps, I might have been more familiar with that group because it's not a traditionally White-oriented group.

Reese was aware that her students' cultural backgrounds impact the types of expertise that they are able to bring into the classroom, but also acknowledged that her lack of awareness can inhibit students' full expression of their cultural expertise and authenticity.

While she did not explicitly name the structural underpinnings rooted in systems of oppression that impact her students, she did believe that their experiences outside of school and across their education impact how they show up in her class. In one example, she reflected on how the Black boys in her class may perceive her by saying, "Sometimes I do worry, especially with my Black boys, they see another White woman telling them what to do or giving them grief for something, and so I try very carefully to pick my battles with all my students, honestly." She also talked about Black students having limited opportunities to see themselves represented in their teachers given the lack of diversity in the teaching force. She said, "But I could imagine that there are minority students who do [feel validated by same-race teachers] because that's not their typical experience. I could imagine that there were students who look at Mr. [last name] and say, 'Here's a Black man. Here's a Black teacher like me, and he's being successful.'"

In her critical reflection about the classroom during the first interview, she did not directly name structural or historical barriers to equitable learning outcomes for students like hers. Still, she reflected on the importance of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into the course content and recognized that students' lived experiences are impacted by their social positioning.

In the second interview, Reese made it apparent that she was still firmly grounded in seeing relationships to her students as foundational to her teaching practice. She also continued

to analyze the ways that students' lived experiences impacted how they were able to participate in her class. When she reflected on the impacts of the pandemic on her students in her class, she said:

> I had to recognize that my kids' responsibilities changed. And, if I hadn't heard from them, it might not be that they don't care. It might be because they don't care. But, it might also not be because they don't care. It might be because they have to babysit their two siblings now. Or, they have to get a job to put food on the table. Or, they might be dealing with mental health challenges now. Because, it's really depressing to be in your house every day and not go anywhere. So, I tried to be sensitive to that when I made my content. I would give my children feedback when they would give me work, but I didn't hound them for things that they didn't give me.

In addition to her continued reflection on her students' background experiences in relation to the classroom, at the time of her second interview she also moved to a more nuanced reflection on incorporating students authentic selves into the curriculum and instruction by contemplating the ways that students' authentic selves may be at odds with the White middle-class cultural expectations of acceptable ways to behave in class. For example, she talked about students' use of informal and diverse languages in school by saying, "Because talking about these issues of code switching, and these issues of the perception of intelligence or capability, whatever, can be kind of, challenging topics for a lot of students, because they have experience being discriminated against." She highlighted that students have experienced discrimination simply for the way they speak and seemed to understand her role in disrupting the dominant narrative that Standard English is the standard for all students. In this reflection, she endorsed a counter-narrative about the value of her students' cultural assets..

In the third interview she continued to emphasize the importance of allowing students to bring their authentic selves in the classroom by validating their use of informal language. She described how she modeled this for students by saying, “I make it a point like when I’m with my kids, I don't speak perfectly. I say dude, I say bra, I say like and that’s just kind of how I talk honestly at this point.” She believed affirming students' authentic selves made her relatable and was also beneficial for dismantling the power dynamic between teachers and students in the classroom.

> A lot of people view it teacher-student. No, it's this. Some of my students even noted that in responses that they gave me on their year-end reflection. They would talk about how like I never felt like you were looking down at me or talking down to me or anything like that. That is so important because I feel like once you acknowledge that that is a traditional power structure and you yourself can actively say, "I’m not part of this anymore," then you can have kids apologize to you if they've like been a butt and then you can apologize to them if you unfairly singled them out…

In addition to strengthening relationships by breaking down the power dynamic between teacher and student in the classroom, Reese also continued to reflect on her relationships with her students. She described the importance of being able to be a confidant to them when they needed to express difficult feelings or experiences related to oppression and inequity. She reflected on one instance by saying, “I had a kid disclose to me that he like went to a basketball tournament in [another state] and had horrible things said to him because of his race.” She went on to affirm this student by dismissing any validity to the claims made by those who verbally attacked him. Her belief in affirming her students who experience oppression directly challenges the status quo that drives students to the margins by commonly dismissing such experiences or treating them as

separate from the happenings of the classroom. She is able to recognize that when students show up in her class, they bring all of their experiences with them and that is okay.

School and District Level Reflection. In her first interview, Reese reflected on the racial, cultural, linguistic, diversity in the school she taught at and drew comparisons to other schools. She also compared the experiences of ethnic-racial minority students and students experiencing poverty to the experiences of their more privileged counterparts. In particular, she critically reflected on what she deemed to be asymmetry in opportunity and resource allocation between students who were in a school specialty program in the school she worked at and those who were not.

> I do see a bit of a disparity in investment of... I don't know if it's time or if it's resources or if it's dollars or ideas or energy or what, but I do see a disparity in the students who are zoned here and the students who were bused in for the specialty center. We're sitting at these nice desks and this is because of a grant that we were given, but a lot of the other students sit in like 30-year old desks and they feel that. They really do. They feel that they see that that's an investment in them, and "They don't really feel good about that at all." It sucks to sit in a little rinky-dink desk that's maybe too small for you or has gum all over it or whatever.

Reese's critical awareness and ability to analyze differences in the ways that students were treated based on social group membership was apparent in her first interview. Though, she did not explicitly attribute differences in investment in students to any particular system of oppression based on identity.

In her second interview she briefly continued interrogating the ways that students are treated differently in her school. In her reflection, she noted that having a diverse group of

students was an aberration from the norm in her more advanced class. She said, “I had a really diverse group of kids this year, too. Which is good. Especially, the honors level, you tend to see like, middle-class white females, and I did have a majority of that, but at the same time, I did have a lot of students of color in there.” Her reflection called out the status quo of inequitable course enrollment and named race as a primary factor.

Finally, in her third interview she further elucidated the differential treatment of students in her school by critically analyzing the intersection of race and poverty related to students’ school experience. She said, “I was also beginning to work in the [co-curricular] program at my school which specifically targets disengaged students who perhaps unsurprisingly as a result of how school is, are typically POC students or lower socioeconomic students.” In this interview, her critical analysis of students’ treatment at her school included a more intersectional reflection of students' identities as the common factor that differentiated treatment received and the narrative of disengagement as the onus of the student.

Societal and Education System Level Reflection. In contrast to her critical reflection on classroom and school inequity-based issues, in the first interview her reflections on the education system as a whole included references to the ways system-wide policies and practices disadvantage certain students based on an aspect of their identity or social location. She says:

> I would also say, too, that there are a lot of challenges that are inherently, structurally integrated into the school system. You have students that have to work a job to support their family, but they have to go to school for what six-and-a-half hours, five days a week too. So, there are some ways that... I don't want to say it's setting people up to fail, but there are some students that come in with a lot of other plates in the air, so to speak. And you're going to encounter that anywhere. But I see that especially with school because

there is compulsory attendance and there's not an accommodation made for that. There's no night school option.

In addition to connecting students' identities and social positioning to the ways that they experience school across the school system, she also pointed out teachers' lack of preparation to effectively connect content to the backgrounds of students from historically marginalized groups. She said, "I think that's a way that when you're… with [course subject], specifically, when you study [course subject], you do study like [the western contributions to the field]. It's all very traditional in the sense of…" She also said, "a lot of the decrees that are given to teachers about what to teach are aligned with tradition. And I think that some of those things need to change because they're not serving our students and that needs to." In her critical reflection about the education system, she called attention to the way that the training and mandates she received to be able to teach her course subject relied heavily on White and western contributions to the field. The lack of diversity represented in her subject area left her underprepared to teach course content that reflected the diversity of her students.

Similarly, she also reflected on pre-service teachers' lack of preparation for teaching historically marginalized students as a potential source of preserving the underrepresentation of ethnic-racial minority teachers.

> But my point is that, I think that, especially given the type of people that are currently going into the education profession, and because there's such a lack of minority representation in the education field in general, having that brought into pre-service classrooms could also validate those students that are there, and say, "Hey, you bring so much here, that is already so invaluable. Please, please come and help our students." So, seeing this at the college level, too, would be wonderful, because I think that it would

> validate those people who are, maybe, considering going into the profession but haven't seen themselves in it. That would just really help more students that come up. It's more representation. It's just really about integrating identities of multiple types in the classroom, so that students can feel validated, celebrated, heard, legitimate, represented, because it does matter.

In her reflection on the education system, she eloquently described the ways that the teacher pipeline preserved the status quo of a monocultural platform of schooling by prioritizing White learners.

In her second interview, she continued to reflect on teachers' education and training as a driver of their lack of understanding of how to practice equity-based teaching with their students. Specifically, she reflected on the required coursework for becoming a teacher and the absence of a focus on culturally-affirming pedagogy and practices.

> Unfortunately, it wasn't something that was discussed in my undergrad program. Not because I don't think they don't care, but there's so many other boxes to check, it just kind of got shifted away. I actually, I don't remember when it was, it might have been because of the class I'm taking right now, but I actually went and looked at the class requirements of being an education minor and there wasn't much of anything on there that talked about that. I do remember it being discussed in some classes, but never in the capacity that I think it should have been, and the way that we've learned about it now.

She also continued to reflect on the need for teachers across the education system to receive professional development to support their skills in enacting culturally-affirming teaching.

> Because, I think if you're not thinking about what your students are bringing to the table when they're coming into the classroom, you're not really thinking about your kids at all.

> Especially, if their experiences are more dark or challenging, they're not necessarily going to be forthcoming about that information. So, I would recommend kind of, a growth of this program, honestly. I think it'd be really helpful of educators of all experiences and all levels, whether or not they're new like myself.

In the third interview, she offered many more reflections on the education system. Related to her reflections on the lack of diversity and inclusion in the pipeline for teaching she also said:

> ...a lot of teachers, I believe, statistically speaking, are white and female and probably come from a middle class background or upper middle class if I had to assume and I am assuming. I think that this presents an opportunity for that demographic or those demographics to better connect with the kids that they're probably going to teach, honestly, and to understand them better and to humanize them and to love them.

Given the lack of preparation teachers receive to work with diverse populations of students, Reese recognized that not all students are adequately being served. She stated:

> Until our education system is such that it can affect and appropriately and significantly support all of our students' intelligences... And I don't even mean like just kinesthetic or like whatever it happens to be, just like there is a type of student being served right now and it's not all of them and that needs to change.

Later in the interview, she continued on to say:

> That could also partially, at least partially, explain why we see varying groups of different students whether it be racial or socio-economic background or male or female or non-binary or whatever it happens to be, that could partially explain why some students really struggle in some content areas because they're not able to make that connection

with their adult. It's just another person who may or may not be like them who's telling them to — do this, do this, do this and then get out of my classroom.

Reese's reflections on the lack of diversity within the education system broadly highlight her critical consciousness about the racial oppression that students of color face both as a result of the inadequate preparation of their teachers and the lack of diversity in the teaching force. This reflection directly calls attention to a need for social justice.

Finally, building on her previous reflection on the need for the structure of school to be as amenable to the lives of minoritized students as it is for others, in the third interview she also reflected on the need for the education system to more students with race-related issues earlier in their academic journey. Students who are less racially conscious also have a need to be educated on race and racism. She stated:

> Well, I don't know how I would have a discussion about racial tension with children because I don't teach elementary school…. but considering how this might be something that could be discussed in lower grades just so that by the time it gets to high school, it's not like they're seeing it for the first time and they have a very emotional response to it, if that makes sense.

In this she implies that teaching and learning about social issues is also important for more privileged students. This assertion challenges the dominant narrative in education that solely targets behaviors of students of color and students living in poverty to be changed in order to achieve equitable education and achievement outcomes.

Critical Motivation and Efficacy

In her first interview, Reese discussed her motivation to make her students feel valid and included in her class, but did not assess their feelings of being disaffirmed as a byproduct of a

larger systemic issue. Instead, she describes her motivation as a desire to be able to help students feel better in school. In one instance that captured her focus on students' feelings, she said, "But then I started to see students really feel validated by that, and I was like, 'Oh, that really does matter. I need to do that because that's important for them, and if I really love my kids, I'll do that for them.' Her motivation rested on her desire to be in-service to her students, but did not extend to redressing systemic inequity.

Despite feeling motivated to incorporate students' backgrounds into her instruction to make them feel validated in her class, she talked about feeling less efficacious in doing so given the lack of diversity in her training. She admitted, "I'll be the first person to say my [subject] knowledge is very White, very male, very old and that's an inadequacy that I'm slowly working on addressing." Although she referenced the lack of diversity in her training as a structural issue in her reflections, she seemingly took ownership for the problem and committed to working on familiarizing herself with diverse contributors to the course subject.

In one instance when she did talk generally about structural issues in education in the first interview, she did so with a diminished sense of efficacy.

> I can't fix the structurally flawed aspects of education. I can't fix that I don't agree totally with some aspects of standardized testing. I can't fix that sometimes students are pushed through, but I can love them and support them and try to address those weaknesses and praise their strengths as best as I can while I see them.

Is clear that at the time of her first interview Reese endorsed the idea that the public education system had many issues baked into the core structure, but she did not feel that she alone had the power to make structural changes.

In the second interview, Reese did not express any indication that she was still contemplating her ability to be able to incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum, but she did express a sincere motivation in making her course subject relevant to all students. When asked about the impact her action research project had on her, she replied, “I don't mean to be like over stepping anything, but I really do think it's changed my life. I really do. I want to take [subject] content and make it accessible and applicable for all students.”

By the third interview Reese’s motivation firmly shifted toward mitigating inequity.

> Even if I go eventually one day, to an all-white school, I’m going to still bring this with me because it's still stuff that really matters and it's stuff that those kids would arguably need more than anyone else because they're not seeing it.

In the third interview, Reese talked again about her efficacy related to bringing students’ cultural backgrounds into the classroom. She recognized her areas of growth and what she was doing well. She understood that she did not have the capacity to explore the full range of diversity that she could bring into her classroom more concertedly, but reflected on what she was able to do by allowing students the agency to make their own cultural connections.

> I had a Korean student who wanted to research Korean stuff that... And that wasn't even on my list of suggestions but I was like, "Yes, please do it." Because I can't make an exhaustive list of everything. Please, if you want to, please do. I try very hard to cultivate a space where they feel comfortable asking me that and I think they did.

She also talked about being able to witness students making connections to the diversity in the material that she was bringing in and how motivated that made her feel confident in her work. She stated:

> I have a student I know that is non-binary and when we were talking about Clive Barker in our [subject] unit, they really like talking about Clive Barker. They knew a lot about him they were very excited to talk about him. They were like, "I love Clive Barker's stuff. He's so good and creepy. Oh, my God." It was really cool. I feel like those were my like Hail Mary shots and the kids were like, "I got it," and then they made a touchdown. It was so cool.

Although she seemed to be increasingly more efficacious in her ability to bring students' cultural backgrounds into the classroom, she expressed doubt in her ability to engage in critical discussions with students.

> I've had some black students disclose to me some experiences they've had about prejudice and racism and things like that. I feel like when I am in a situation like that all, I can really say is, "That's bullshit. I'm sorry that happened to you." I think I think attitudes about that are changing, I hope attitudes about that are changing but I wouldn't experience it.

Critical Action

Classroom Level Action. In the first interview, Reese's actions primarily centered on allowing students the space and agency to bring their cultural backgrounds into the course content wherever they felt compelled to do so. For example, she described a time when a student was able to connect the content they were studying in the course with their knowledge about the culture and traditions of the Zulu people in Africa. She described herself as enthusiastically welcoming of these deviations from the traditional curriculum whenever students sought to make them. In regard to her own actions of bringing diversity into the course content, in this interview

she did not mention specific instances in which she did so. Although, she did contemplate ways she could. She said:

> For me that might look like instead of doing a unit on [subject specific content], maybe we do a unit on the rise of Black American [professionals in the subject area] and then onward.

In the second interview, she talked about specific action she has taken to incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum while still allowing them the agency to bring in their cultural expertise in as well. She described:

> I had a student who was Puerto Rican, and the section that I had listed, I had Native American peoples and I listed like, Blackfoot, and Sioux, different tribes like that, I can't list all of them because there are so many, but he asked if he could research the Taino people, who were native to Puerto Rico before it was conquered, basically. And, I said, "Yeah, please do. I don't know anything about those." And, those kids were really, really excited, to see those cultures brought into their classroom. And, we did a gallery walk. I had students write a myth about their own culture. And, we got to share them with each other.

It is clear that she was actively engaged in finding ways to diversify her course content. In addition, her actions lean in the direction of social justice by also allowing students to learn from one another and dispel myths about their cultural groups. In addition, she also found ways to disrupt dominant narratives in education through her curriculum. She said "But, I managed to incorporate the code switching and informal and formal language instruction into that." Her action not only empowered and affirmed her students that typically speak in informal language, it also provided a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse about academic language.

The third interview she reflected on many more critical actions that she had taken in the classroom. In contrast to her first interview when she was primarily describing instances in which she allowed students to bring their culture into the classroom, it became clear in the third interview that she was actively engaged in bringing students' cultural backgrounds into the classroom. She talked about:

> I brought in, I actually went to our library at the school and I checked out like a bunch of [relevant work in the field] and I was like reading through them. I found [names of Black and Brown contributors to the field].

Relevant to her core principles as a teacher, in the third interview she also talked about her relationships with students which demonstrated critical action as well. Specifically, she talked about providing a safe space for students to share their hardships and racialized experiences. In one example, she mentioned, "I've had some black students disclose to me some experiences they've had about prejudice and racism and things like that. I feel like when I am in a situation like that all, I can really say is, 'That's bullshit. I'm sorry that happened to you.'" Given the status quo of Black students generally experiencing less warmth in relationships with teachers, her commitment to being a listening ear and validating the experience of her Black student demonstrates the criticality in her action.

School and District Level Action. Across her interviews, Reese did not engage in or make suggestions for any particular school or district-wide critical action.

Societal and Education System Level Action. In her first interview, Reese reflected on one critical action that she felt could improve the education system. She said:

> I don't want to call them commandments, but a lot of the decrees that are given to teachers about what to teach are aligned with tradition. And I think that some of those

> things need to change because they're not serving our students and that needs to. That will support their learning and their engagement and them as people. And I think that's really significant.

She clearly identified an issue within the structure of the education system that limits the diversity of the curriculum.

In her second interview she did not discuss engaging in critical action or describe any potential system-wide actions that should take place. However, she did discuss a need for all teachers to practice CRT pedagogy.

> CRT is a good way to get there because a lot of teachers, I believe, statistically speaking, are white and female and probably come from a middle-class background or upper middle-class if I had to assume and I am assuming. I think that this presents an opportunity for that demographic or those demographics to better connect with the kids that they're probably going to teach honestly and to understand them better and to humanize them and to love them.

She believed that teachers that are given an opportunity to practice CRT would be able to see their students as people and relate to them better.

Opportunity Structure Influences

In the first interview, Reese primarily talked about factors related to her upbringing that promoted and inhibited her understanding of cultural pluralism and the lived experiences of systemically marginalized others. She described attending a relatively diverse high school for one year before getting zoned into a predominantly white school with far greater resources.

> I went to [school 1] my first year and then I was gerrymandered into [school 2]. I really, obviously, enjoy the nice school and the cream-of-the-crop teachers, but it was very different than [school 1], very, very, very different.

This disparity in resource allocation that she noticed between a predominantly White school and a more diverse school may have helped her to contextualize what inequality looks like. Later on in the interview, she described how she noticed the same kind of disparity in the school she worked at.

In addition to her upbringing, Reese talked about learning from the experiences of her students. Across the interviews she described learning about students' life challenges by listening to them and reflecting on her own experience.

> I've had students who have talked about living in poverty. I've had students that I've talked about not being able to go to the doctor when they're sick. I've had students talk about all kinds of things that are not my lived experience. They're not the lived experience of the people that I was around when I was younger so that's very foreign to me, but I hear that and I see them living that. That's kind of changing my perspective on a lot of things and in terms of how things should function in the world, I think.

In the second interview she continued to interrogate her racially homogeneous upbringing with the exception of one experience in which she attended a diverse middle school. She described being how eye-opening that experience was by saying:

> I don't know if you're familiar with that. But, because it, kind of, pulls in from a lot of different areas of Henrico, it's really diverse. It was insane to me. People had names I didn't know how to pronounce. People had all kinds of different foods they'd bring to lunch. It was a really cool experience to me.

Similar to her first interview, in the second interview she talked about how much diverse cultural knowledge she gained by listening and learning from her students. She described instances when she learned about her students' backgrounds. In her descriptions, she often reflected on her own background and the differences between what her students experience and what they know in comparison to herself.

> I had students who were actually Jamaican who were correcting me on my pronunciation of Wagwan. It was really cool to just see, these manifestations of a culture, in my classroom, that I know nothing about. But, that's what they're bringing to the table. That's so cool. I think the coolest thing about doing this culturally responsive teaching work that we've been doing, is it really just like, I don't know. I grew up in a suburban, mostly white, middle-class area, and there's nothing inherently wrong with that, but at the same time, you were missing much of the world around you in a very, such a homogenous area.

Importantly, during the second interview she began to clearly articulate that her participation in the professional development program aided her journey toward more equitable teaching as well. Specifically, she mentioned that, “doing this has opened [her] perception to a lot of different things.” Described the way that her participation in the professional development program provided her and her colleagues a space to convene and stay the course. She stated:

> But, at the same time, being surrounded by the professionals that I knew were engaged and dedicated, and willing to learn, was really refreshing to me. I think I said that on multiple occasions to like, different people involved. Like, "I really needed this today. Or, I really needed this group today and to be surrounded with like-minded people." I think sometimes especially when you're in the really rigorous times, or the got to get

> through it times, at school, it can be hard to remember why you're doing it. Just having that resuscitation was very needed and helpful for me. Honestly, I looked forward to those a lot. They were really a lot of fun.

Clearly, her interactions with her colleagues supported her ability to remain engaged with the work of the program which ultimately supported her critical consciousness development.

Summary

Across the program, Reese demonstrated growth in her critical consciousness in several ways. In her first interview, it was clear that she had a sincere orientation toward being empathic and relatable to her students. She described her work as being a way to help students and better society. Her reflections at the classroom level often reflected her orientation toward helping students as she saw her equitable practice as a way of helping students feel good, but did not explicitly make connections with systemic inequity.

In general, she desired to make students feel welcome in the class through culturally affirming content. In the beginning, she primarily did that by allowing students to bring their cultural connections into the content where they saw fit. In the first interview, she talked about feeling motivated to affirm students through her course content, but feeling less efficacious about her ability to do so because of the lack of diversity in her training. Though, across the interviews, as she became more critical of her White identity, her upbringing in racially homogeneous spaces, the treatment of students of color and students experiencing poverty, she also seemed to become more agentic and more assertive in her critical actions. Over time, she actively engaged in finding diverse contributors to her course subject and bringing their work into the classroom while still remaining open to allowing students to make connections that she didn't. In addition, she presented material to students that had the potential to build their capacity to feel welcome

and affirmed in the classroom by not only bringing in diverse course content, but also by empowering them to dismantle dominant narratives about who belongs in education and how. Above all, she saw this work as the work of a good teacher.

Wynn: Critical Reflection and Emergent Action

Self-Analysis

Wynn is a compassionate teacher who wants students to be treated with fairness and recognition for their effort. At the time of her first interview, Wynn demonstrated having a sense that her social positioning and identity made her life very different than that of most of her students. Although, when asked about her identity, she immediately admitted to having never thought about it in depth.

> I don't know, I guess I never really thought about it... if someone were to be like, “How would you describe your identity?" I have no idea. I'm a woman; I'm a wife. I mean, it's just like basic stuff. I don't know that I've ever really gone in depth to who I am to really think about it. Because that's kind of hard; I don't know, it's hard to think about who you are outside of just what people would see on the surface level.

Despite not engaging in a deep interrogation of her identity, she reflected on experiences with students that highlighted the difference in her life experiences compared to the predominantly ethnic-racial minority group of students she worked with. In her self-analysis, she said:

> I felt like working in this school in particular and having so many students who are different from me, I want to be able to interact with them in a way and interact with them and the material in a way that connects us because we are different. And it's not always a racial difference; it's just that our backgrounds are very different.

This reflection highlighted the social comparisons she made between herself and her students. She recognized that beyond the racial difference between herself and her students, there were life experiences that also differed.

The clear differences she noticed between herself and her students changed her perspective of others. In particular, she described how working with her students has made her reappraise the value and meaning of some of her prior experiences. She elaborated on a previous socialization experience that she thought of differently of by saying:

> But then I thought back to my time in high school and all the things that we did, and the one thing I could think that...like the one word that came to mind was related to my peers interacting with students who are different was some form of charity almost. So that's how you look at that. And it really shapes your view of, "Well sure, we get together with this school in this city, and we partner up, but it's like community service." And so your viewpoint is very different because you're providing a service; you're getting community service hours. And you're almost made to believe like, "Well, you're helping these people," as opposed to just like let's get to know people from down the road from us because they live in our community and we're all similar. Was, "Let's bring these people in and teach these kids how to read." And that's great. There's nothing wrong with doing those things. It's just then you learn to interact with people in a way that almost makes them seem, for a lack of a better way, like beneath you.

Wynn did not explicitly name privilege as a source of difference between herself and people from more marginalized social groups, but her reframing of her prior experience demonstrated her reflection on her beliefs as well as the antecedents to the lens through which she used to view people that were less privileged than her. Thus, it is clear that in the first interview she was

striving to see her students from a more humanizing perspective by questioning what she knew and believed to be true.

By the time of her second interview, Wynn was grappling with her beliefs about others and actively questioning her biases. Although she admitted the difficulty in engaging in this self-reflection, she thought it was important nonetheless.

> One of the toughest but most important things is that I didn't realize the bias that I held. I think it's been hard to change the way you think, and not know when you just look at other people. They think that way. That would never be me. But then when I really had to break things down, it was like, I guess I should admit that I'm sitting here with this bias or with this attitude, or whatever it might be. It's still a daily process, but it's that is the most important thing I'm taking away, is that I had to change my thought process if I was going to reach my students better and try to see things in a way that I guess I didn't want to admit I saw them.

Her reflection on her own biases illuminates her understanding that she has the potential to contribute to negative schooling experiences for the students that she serves.

Along with reflecting on her own biases, in the second interview she also talked about gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences that her students have beyond just recognizing that their experiences are different than hers.

> Definitely changed my thought process, especially with how 2020 has gone with things in the news and certain groups of people, like I would have looked at that maybe a little differently or not as... Just differently, and not in a bad way necessarily, but I do feel like it helped me in a good way to see that, and know that my students are impacted by a lot of these things, and so I feel like the overall thought process, the way that I approach my

students now, especially with relationships and trying to get to know things about them, and I think that was the biggest impact that I felt.

During the third interview Wynn engaged in any more moments of reflecting on herself than in her prior interviews. Though, she admitted to continuing to struggle with being able to understand and articulate features of her identity.

> Maybe a little. I don't think I really took time to learn too much about myself with this, more just about my students and my colleagues and what this means for us going forward, when I'm trying to learn about my students. So, I guess the short answer is not really, even though it's probably important to the process. I can't really think of anything that changed on my end, anyway.

Despite admitting to not having gained a greater understanding of her own identity, she continued to make comparisons between herself and her students that undoubtedly provided her a foundation to continue to reveal more information about who she is to herself. When reflecting on her students, she stated:

> I have students of different racial backgrounds, or I have students of different language backgrounds. I mean, it could be something as simple as every student's personality is a part of who they are, and how they learn, and taking that into account. And understanding what culture really... and I'm still struggling with that, and I'm still learning so much about it, but just what that really means, and how that impacts the learning environment, isn't just the demographics. It's not just what you would see on paper, the physical makeup of the class. It's so much more than that, and I think that has really opened my eyes to why some students maybe interact the way they do, or why they learn the way they do.

Although she did not actively engage in thinking about and interrogating her own identity she reflected often on who her students were and the ways in which who they are impacted the learning environment. Her reflection on her students could have potentially served to widen the aperture through which she was then able to assess her own identity with more structured prompting to do so.

Critical Reflection

Classroom Level Reflection. In her first interview, Wynn reflected on the importance of maintaining good relationships with her students and investing her time in getting to know and understand them for who they are as well as gaining an understanding of their background that they are bringing into the classroom. She said:

So I think caring enough to see around the, "Okay, we have to get this done because we have the SOL test." I look at it more like, "Yes, we have to do those things, but there are a million steps before we can ever even get you to do the material and understand it. You need to know me; I need to know you; and we need to find a way to mesh, I guess, so that you will want to learn from me.

Wynn was invested in having good relationships with her students as a means to enrich their learning experience in her class. but did not always seem to deeply reflect on the ways in which she could be perceived by her students as a highly privileged white woman.

> Yeah, especially when they asked me about teaching at a different high school that's like, "Oh, the white school." Or when I said my sister went to Midlothian High School, it's like, "Oh, okay, yeah, that school's super rich." You know, it's always interesting. So no, I guess it's not specifically about race, but it always feels like that divide because of how I

> think, in particular, in the county, the way the lines are drawn, who goes to what school. So where you live kind of indicates.

She also went on to describe an interaction between herself and her students.

> Yesterday my students were asking me where I live, and I just said, "Oh, I live over near Cosby." And they were like, "Oh, you think Cosby's better." It's like that area is super nice. And I was like, "Yeah, we just built a house over there." And then they were like, "So why do you teach here if you could teach there?" And I was like, "Well, I already had this job, A," so just the basic answer is I already worked here so why would I move just because I moved houses? And then I like it here. But it was also why would I necessarily want to teach there versus here? Like what does that question even mean? And they couldn't really answer it, but it was basically like, "Well, if you live over there, you look like the people who live over there." So they asked me how many cars my garage holds, which I don't know how many people ask that question regularly. And they were like, "Is it one or two?" And I said three because we just built the house, and they just couldn't believe it. And in my mind, I thought I don't really see why this is relevant to [subject] class right now. But in their minds, it was immediately a divide because there's not a lot of new communities in this area.

After describing these interactions that highlighted the differences between her lived experiences and those of her students, she went on to talk about her discomfort with discussing aspects of herself in the classroom for fear of making her students uncomfortable. Although it is clear she was thinking about how her students felt when they were in her class, it is less clear whether she reflected on the systemic underpinnings for the dynamic between her and her students that they were pointing to.

In line with her goal of making her students feel comfortable in her class, she expressed the importance of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into the course content as a strategy to help them succeed. Although well intended, she described in detail one instance in which she tried to make the material in her course relatable by talking about gun violence.

> I feel like sometimes it makes certain topics a little bit more relevant. We just did the project that I think that I talked to you about when I was going to do my survey, and we had the gun control project coming up. We had two students in our group who said that they...One said, "Please don't make me talk about this openly. I'll give you my opinion on paper, but I'm not going to speak in front of the class." And her father had been murdered through gun violence. And then we had another student who said, "Yeah, I absolutely have an opinion," and his father is serving a very long sentence for a gun charge. We don't know anything else about it, but it's just looking at those things. It's really relevant in different ways for each student.

She continued her reflection by acknowledging that incorporating relevant material in the curriculum can sometimes make painful connections with students' backgrounds. It is unclear, however, if she understood the connection between the content she was bringing into the curriculum and the pervasiveness of gun violence as an issue for the students she serves. In addition it is not clear how she was trying to connect to the assets of students' cultural backgrounds to further learning.

During the second interview she was able to describe more positive opportunities of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum. In one reflection she talked about the importance of bringing diverse cultural representation into the curriculum to provide students with a positive learning environment. “I still think when we try to incorporate things and

talk more about culture and background, and not just throw the material at them, I do think it was a really positive atmosphere. Created more room for discussion, I think."

She also stated:

> ...when we were still in school, I did notice that as they came to class more, and we talked more about things, like trying to show them that there were people in [subject] who do look like them, or that people in [subject] are trying to represent different and more diverse groups, once they really started to connect well with that, I think overall I felt like they were participating more and more engaged

It is clear that she sees the importance of diversifying her course content and feels that there is merit to the efficacy of that strategy in engaging her students. This reflection is a divergence from the perception that mainstream curriculum is universally suited for all students. Instead, it is clear that she sees that curricula often leaves out the important ways of connecting with and engaging with students like hers.

In the second interview, it remained evident that Wynn's orientation toward bringing students' cultural backgrounds into the classroom was well intended for the purpose of fostering an engaging learning environment. In addition to thinking about diversifying the curriculum, she also considered the ways students' cultural backgrounds could influence how they showed up and participated in school. She said:

> We had kids who would come to class, and I may not understand, because this is what [their] hair does, but for some people, [they] actually had to put in effort. [They] didn't get a chance to get [their] hair done, because we're in a pandemic. [They] don't feel safe, [they] don't feel comfortable. [They] don't want to be made fun of. For me, I may not understand, but that may be a huge part of someone's culture at home, that that's what

they do, and that's a huge part of their identity. I think that's really helped just on a base level there too, with the relationships, that they might feel a little bit less stressed out, because they don't have to worry about those types of things.

In this reflection she highlighted an understanding that students bring their full selves with them to the classroom. The general norms and expectations for classroom behavior may clash with the values of students from particular backgrounds. Further, she acknowledged the importance of affording students space to feel accepted in her class and the ways in which having an understanding of their values can strengthen student-teacher relationships.

During the third interview she continued to grow in ways she reflected on how students' racial and cultural backgrounds impact students' learning experience and the learning environment. She noted that her participation in the program was particularly beneficial to her understanding of the important aspects of who her students are. She said:

> But I think my project helped me understand that culture isn't just... I have students of different racial backgrounds, or I have students of different language backgrounds. I mean, it could be something as simple as every student's personality is a part of who they are, and how they learn, and taking that into account.

Along those lines, Wynn referenced students who come from more conservative parents and families and the implications that has for how she is able to bring culturally affirming material into the classroom.

> There are students coming in who are being told things by their parents, and they're spouting it as fact.... but there are counties that are having big school board meetings on whether or not CRT, as in critical race theory, is going to be taught in schools. So that immediately tells that group of students, whose parents are going with these times and

showing up to meetings, and saying, “I don't want my kid to worry about those. Those kids are coming into school believing that that's bad, and that that perspective and that idea is somehow wrong, when they really probably don't know much about it.”

Despite the potential social and political constraints on her being able to bring culturally affirming material into the classroom She reflected on the importance of continuing to do so while also acknowledging the discomfort. She believed in remaining open to allowing students to discuss topics that are of interest to them in her class while refraining from asserting her own opinions.

So, I mean, it's hard to be able to do these things and not know who's sitting on the other end of the screen too. Because parents sometimes are sitting there when there's no camera on. They're taking notes, calling the school like, “How dare you talk about this and this.” I heard from multiple teachers and the [subject] department say, “Well, I tried to have this conversation and I got told by parents that I was indoctrinating their kids.” It seems uncomfortable. It's tough, but we do try to leave that door open. I don't think we throw it open in their faces and shove things down their throats. But I think if they want to talk about it, we are not going to shut that down.

In alignment with her belief in continuing to carry out culturally responsive teaching Wynn reflected on feedback that she received from a student about how she could make improvements to her equitable teaching practices.

...we sat down with our kids after particularly Black History Month, we asked them, "What are ways that you wish your teachers taught this differently," because I think they were getting tired of hearing about the same five people. And it's not those people aren't important, but we didn't realize that until they really said, "There are people here in

> Richmond, there are people here in Virginia that are important to recent Black History, even just a year ago, that we'd like to talk about and learn about and tell you about." And so, that was really good feedback.

Across her interviews Wynn continually reflected on the importance of bringing her students to the center in her classes even when there were tensions between her and her students as well as social and political constraints from parents and families.

School and District Level Reflection. Wynn teaches a co-curricular class in which she provides academic support to students. She acknowledged that many of her students are African-American and do not reflect the true diversity of the school. She said, “in this building, in particular, there is a big divide, in my opinion. And I sometimes feel like that can be frustrating for some of the kids when they feel like there's a whole different school within a school.”

In addition to noticing the difference in investment in the African American students in her class in comparison to those in another program at her school, she also acknowledged the ways that the students in her class were less celebrated across the school in comparison to others. In her reflection she discussed the ways that students in other classes are celebrated by administrators for their academic achievements while the students in her class never receive any recognition for their hard work. She says:

> But we joke about why couldn't there be something about just we got our whole class here today; we had 100% attendance. We should get that recognized because that's a big deal sometimes just to even have the kids in the room as opposed to some huge, exciting project that was done. I'm not downplaying the work these classes do because these kids work hard, but so do these kids. So it's just a different level of working hard.

Her statement highlighted her understanding that there is a need for different definitions of success that should be grounded whatever goal post is affirming for each student. In her reflection, Wynn drew a connection between the standards for success and the marginalization of her students. She continued on to say:

> It's crazy how often I hear like, "Oh, I should just drop out." And the ones that the administration does know is sometimes not in a positive light because they're always in the hallway or they're in fights. I wish that our kids were all treated like...And they are; I know they try really hard, but with as much goes on in the building, the kids you get to see are the ones that are in trouble. And then when you sit in on a class that's doing something exciting, that's probably a highlight of your day as an administrator, as opposed to how many other things you had to deal with.

While she did not engage in this level of reflection in her second interview, in the third interview she continued to contend with the fact that the minoritized students in her school are treated with less care and dignity than other students. When asked if she came to a new understanding of structural racism she gave an in-depth response about how she believed in the validity of structural racism and concluded by saying, “yeah, I think I've seen some of it in my own school.”

Wynn reflected on the differences in amounts of discipline referrals that are given out to students by race. Specifically, she described initially being oblivious to how this occurred on an aggregate level, but came to a better understanding once she thought about how it plays out on an interpersonal level. She said, “But then if I look at the same behaviors, and then the same punishments, not being doled out for those same behaviors, it starts to feel like maybe there's something happening here that people aren't even realizing they're doing.”

In the third interview she also continued to reflect on the political tensions that were beginning to have an effect on policies and practices at her school. During that time, her district's school board was contemplating a vote to ban critical race theory. She reflected on the changes by saying:

> But I know when a lot of these political things have come out, we've heard from administrators, saying, "You are the adult in the room. You handle the way the conversation goes. You can guide this in a positive light, without spouting off your beliefs." It's basically what they're telling us. And I get that 100%. They don't want us to come into the classroom and be like, "Here is what you all have to believe. This is the only way to think. This is the truth. This is the way. This is the light. And that's that." Because as much as you want to hear from the perspective that you do agree with and think, "Well, why is it wrong to say this is how you should think?"

Despite the outside noise that stood in stark contrast to her beliefs as a culturally responsive educator, Wynn continued to believe in the importance of providing students a well-rounded education which included a diversity of perspective.

Societal and Education System Level Reflection. Across her interviews, Wynn had one reflection on the education system as a whole. In this reflection she continued to talk about the political tensions related to the banning of critical race theory that was happening in schools across the nation at that point. She said, "I know there's a big push in schools today, where school boards are having to make a decision on the other CRT, whether they want to talk about critical race theory or if they want to avoid it, and I think talking about all this in classes is important." Although there continued to be resistance to making education relevant and

accessible to students who have historically been marginalized in education, Wynn still believed that it was important for students to be able to have a well-rounded education.

Critical Motivation and Efficacy

In the first interview, Wynn was motivated to make her students feel comfortable and provide them opportunities for success in her classroom so that they would develop a desire to learn. She said:

> But I really want to spend the time with the kids each year getting to know them and understanding their backgrounds and then bettering myself as an educator going forward in incorporating that into the material in a way that they feel comfortable because I do believe if they can feel like there's more of a connection here and they have a place here, they will want to come to school. They will want to learn.

Although that was her desire, she also struggled with knowing that her lived experiences were very different from her students and she did not feel efficacious in her ability to incorporate their cultural backgrounds into the curriculum.

> "But I think just being knowledgeable is a big one because then when I have new students, it's like I really have to take the time to learn about what their life looks like, what their culture looks like. And then if it's something that I'm never...Because when we were talking about some of the people in Henrico, they were bringing up languages that are spoken that I've never even heard of, which is crazy. And so if I had a student who is going to be in my class and I've never even heard of their language, it starts to feel like this is really intimidating because I have this extreme lack of knowledge and understanding where to even begin. So that's probably the biggest challenge."

In alignment with her general principles about wanting students to be treated fairly, in the second interview she described her motivation to confront those that perpetuate inequality in education and her increased sense of confidence in doing so.

> "If I'm going to be part of the solution, if someone says something that I don't think is okay, especially in the education world, maybe talking about a student or something, it's important that I have to speak up. It's given me that level of confidence, too, to do that.

Wynn also described the ways her project has had an impact on the school community when she and her colleagues in the program were able to share their learnings with colleagues. She went on to say, "It gave me the confidence to be like, 'I have to put this material together, because nobody else is coming to teach it.'" For Wynn, one source of her motivation and confidence came from her colleagues' interest in her work on culturally responsive teaching.

Although she was confident that she could design culturally responsive lessons, she still talked about some of the challenges related to trying to implement culturally responsive material into the curriculum. She stated:

> It's hard sometimes to incorporate more of a culturally-responsive teaching model when you already have taught the class, and you have your lessons, or you have specific activities you do. Sometimes it was hard to take a step back and be like, "All right, I have to replan this whole activity," which is a lot of work, but when we really sat down and did that, my co-teacher and I were able to put together activities where it actually turned out that sometimes we just changed one or two small things, and it revamped the entire lesson, but in a really positive way.

Although she acknowledged that it was, at times, time consuming to change lessons she used in prior instruction, she seemed confident in her ability to make small changes to lessons that would lead to positive results.

At the time of her third interview, Wynn was especially motivated to engage in her own self-development to be a more culturally aware and equity-minded teacher. She actively sought out books and other resources that helped her in her journey of discovery. She said, “the biggest thing is just continuing my own learning and growth, things I know if I'm learning more, and I'm doing more than I can change the way I access those things in the classroom.”

Similar to her critical reflections about the politics that intersected with schooling at that time, she was also grappling with constraints to her ability to teach equitably.

> And I just want that leeway. I want that ability to speak truthfully with my students, without feeling like my job is in jeopardy, or without feeling like someone's going to call and complain about me and put me in on a list somewhere that I said and did these things, when in reality, I'm just trying to educate students. I'm just trying to open the door to perspectives. I'm just trying to get them to understand, “This is what the world looks like.”

While Wynn wants to be able to teach her students in a way that reflects the diversity of the world, the politics surrounding her school board’s decision to ban critical race theory inhibited her sense of efficacy.

Critical Action

In general, Wynn did not reflect on many instances in which she engaged in critical action until her third interview. Her actions in the classroom primarily centered on building relationships with her students and celebrating them in ways they were not likely to experience within the broader school community. She described the ways that her and her co-teacher would strive to praise students for their soft skills, such as coming to class on time, that weren’t celebrated as demonstrations of success. In describing her response to students' positive

behaviors she said, “so when they do, we try to celebrate that, but I don't think it's really celebrated anywhere else because it's kind of sad that they don't want to come to school and they don't feel successful or whatever it is about school.” Her celebration of students who normally do not receive recognition is a demonstration of action that counters the status quo.

In addition to celebrating students and fostering positive relationships, she also talked about a time in which she encouraged students to research a person they could identify with that contributed to the subject they were studying. She said:

> And I felt like when we did the [professionals in the subject area] activity, and they found [professionals in the subject area] that they really connected with, I felt like our students were more open in talking to us about who they are. And some of the questions they answered, I didn't really expect them to be as open like why I chose this person, and I really liked learning about this individual because he or she is transgender and so am I.

This assignment gave students a chance to see themselves represented in the subject Wynn teaches in and served to foster her relationships with her students as they openly shared who they were. Though, the onus for bringing the culturally diverse content into the assignment seemed to fall on the students which may have reflected her feelings of lower efficacy about knowing the relevant information to supply.

At the time of the second interview Wynn continued to reflect on her action of tasking students to research prominent figures in the field that they could identify with. To help her gain a better understanding of her students and how they would've liked to feel seen in the content of the curriculum, Wynn surveyed her students:

> We did a couple of surveys where I took data on their connection to the material, their interest in how things were going, whether they felt like they had been represented

> culturally, and in other ways through their previous history classes, because I wanted to compare their previous experiences into, they feel like they were respected or that the material was more directed towards them, not just thrown at them.

She took the time to ensure that the material she was providing her students was meeting their needs. In the context of an education system that so often overlooks the needs of ethnic-racial minority students, Wynn's action was an act of resistance to business as usual.

At the time of her third interview, Wynn reflected on her actions to cultivate discussions with her students about relevant social issues. She said:

> But I think having the students take the time to really understand, and my co-teacher is really big on a lot of these things, we talked about systemic racism in our class, and we talked about how these things really do exist. And we have students connect to material and learn about, like there are people in [subject] that are people of color, people of different gender identities, people of all different backgrounds, religions, you can find someone to connect with if you're looking, but unfortunately, it's not always the face of [subject].

Wynn's action of having engaging and empowering discussions with her students was an act of social justice in itself. She was able to talk about a system of oppression that impacts many of her students directly, while also dispelling a myth about who belongs or does not belong in the subject she teaches in.

In the final interview she also talked about taking more direct action to incorporate her students' backgrounds into her teaching. While she still described students as doing the work of bringing diversity in the content, it seemed to be grounded in student voice.

> For the most part of my project, trying to present the material using terms relevant to the students, using their own vocabulary, things they could relate to, tactics like that. I had a

> co-teacher, so we also did some storytelling as a way to bring culture in, and had the students use their stories and maybe relate the material to something in their own lives that way. We used a lot of student voice, student choice, allow the students to have a lot of control over the material. That way, they felt like they could bring their own selves into it and connect to it a little bit better.

In contrast to her first interview in which she discussed diversifying her content by allowing students to explore people in the subject she teaches, her assignment in the third interview was more less exploratory and more interwoven with the objectives of the course.

School and District Level Action. Despite her keen awareness of the differences in the ways that her students are treated versus the students in the broader school community, at the time of the first interview Wynn did not mention any particular critical action at the school or district level. In the second interview, however, she talked about sharing resources with other faculty members and the need for continued professional development for others in the school. She elaborated on this in the third interview and described how it had an effect on the other teachers in the school.

> And then I think just with the way that our team at [school name] would talk about our project and would tell everybody what we were working on, I think people started to realize this big idea of CRT, which I know now is an acronym for multiple things, but in this context of this idea, is not really that complicated. It's not really that overwhelming. So, we broke it down, and I think people were more willing to try even just really small tactics to open that door, get their foot in the door of trying out something different. So, yeah, I do think there was an impact.

Societal and Education System Level Action. Although her reflections indicated that she was aware of the stratification in schooling experiences of her students and other students across the education system, she did not mention system-wide action.

Opportunity Structure Influences

During her first interview, Wynn's discussion of opportunity structure influences centered on her racially homogenous upbringing. She reflected on the difference ethnic-racial diversity at her school compared to her prior experiences by stating, "But then coming here, yeah, I remember when I first started feeling like, 'Well, this is wildly different.' Especially because I went to Trinity Episcopal for high school, which is also majority white." The comparisons she made between her high school and the school she worked at helped her gain an understanding of racial differences as they are embedded in context.

In addition to reflecting on her prior experiences, she also reflected on her participation in the professional development program as a springboard for her learning about inequity in education and how she could engage in equitable practice. In reflecting on her learning in the program she said:

> But then, going to the workshop that you guys did for us over the summer was huge because I remember taking that home to my family and to my husband and just being like, "I never thought about it this way. I'm so different from my students, and no wonder they look at me like I'm crazy sometimes when I say we listen to the same type of music."

During her second and third interviews she reiterated the impact of the learning materials she engaged with as a result of her participation in the professional development program. In addition, she talked about the support of her colleagues that were also in the program and

described how they formulated an informal professional learning community to engage with this kind of material.

Across her interviews she often reflected on learning from the experiences of her students. As previously described, she noticed the ways they were treated differently than other students and also learned about their cultural and racial background experiences throughout the two years.

Summary

Across her interviews, Wynn grew in her understanding and reflection of oppression with a particular emphasis on systemic racism. Although she did not demonstrate a deeper understanding of her own identity, she often gave reflective responses that showed she was making social comparisons between her and her students. Her reflections demonstrated a critical analysis most often when she discussed school level issues and by the third interview she explicitly connected her noticing of the racial stratification in her school to systemic racism. In the beginning of her interview series, she talked about engaging in action that required her students to do the work of diversifying the curriculum, however in her final interview she seemed to move toward a more objective based approach that wove students' cultural backgrounds in with the standard curriculum she was required to teach. This may be in part because of her increased sense of motivation and efficacy across her time in the program. Although she started off with a desire to connect her students' home lives to the content of her course, she did not initially feel efficacious in doing so. By the third interview however, she was both motivated and confident that the work she was doing was equitable and necessary.

Parker: Motivation and Efficacy as Catalysts

Self-Analysis

Parker is a mid-career teacher who enjoys being relatable and sharing in the interests of his students. In the first interview, Parker emphasized the importance of remaining open and objective when engaging with his students. He described himself as someone who tries to "approach anything and everything with an open mind." He talked about being able to relate to students because of his upbringing in which he had some of the same kinds of blue collar jobs his students had.

> ...economically speaking or socioeconomically speaking, you know, I was working when I was in middle school. So, I have that to relate with the kids, lot of them. I worked at Pizza Hut, I was a soccer ref, I delivered pizzas, I worked at Jimmy John's. I've done all the...raked leaves, mowed lawns, done all that stuff growing up. And so, that's a connection that I like to think that I have with them as well and helps in me teaching them.

He believed that his mindset of being open to his students as well as his shared background experiences helped him to connect with his students and made him a better teacher.

As part of his quest to remain open to his students and objective in his teaching practices he also questioned his views of students and whether or not his biases impacted his lens.

> So, I think a big part of this, has been me stepping back and saying, yeah, I think I don't talk to kids differently, males and females or black and white. But do I? Do I? Do I actually treat them differently or speak to them differently, or look at them differently? I like to think I don't, but I think I do, big time. And I think that's the first step in making changes is understanding where you're coming from.

Despite his reflection on the biases he was bringing to his teaching, he did not feel he had an in-depth understanding of his own identity. When asked if he had thought about his identity and

how it affects his teaching prior to beginning the professional development program he replied, “As far as race, I don't know or have not thought about how my race plays a factor in me teaching these kids.”

In the second interview he engaged in less reflection on himself, but highlighted the fact that his role as a [subject] teacher traditionally follows a linear understanding of student readiness for grade progression. In a departure from that traditional view he began to understand that students have a variety of experiences that intersect with learning.

> As a [subject] teacher, we generally think, "Oh, a student did well in [course 1], they'll be fine in [course 2]I." It's a very linear progression, generally speaking, in the [subject] subject. But there are so many different other things that affect these kids. And is earning an A in a [subject] class the most important thing, and does that prove that they're the best learner and they're ready for society? No. No, it doesn't at all. I mean, it has an effect, but that... I used to look at how well did the kids do in their previous class, but now I know that that's a piece of the puzzle, but there's a lot more to it that needs to be understood, for sure.

In his second interview it is clear that he noticed a shift in his own beliefs about how students attain academic achievement within his field.

By his third interview, it was clear that Parker had become more aware of his identity as a White man and how that had an influence on his role in the classroom. Though he did not give a detailed explanation of the way his identity impacts his teaching.

> But I think, again, yeah, basically me being a white male [subject] teacher, the impact that that has in the way kids take what I say could be very, very different than a black

male [subject] teacher. And so, yeah, there's been a lot of self-reflecting that I've done with myself into..

Additionally, he continued to maintain his belief in the importance of maintaining an open objective and empathic perspective towards his students. He stated:

> "I thought this before starting all this," and now I'm like, "Oh my God, I was so wrong. It's not my way or the highway." It's, "This is my way. If it's very, very different from the way you do it, please let me know, and I'll start adjusting my way to make your way a little bit more accepting and comfortable."

His reflection demonstrates his commitment to being open to hearing the perspectives of his students and his belief in making his teaching more amenable to their needs and reflective of their experiences.

Critical Reflection

Although he was less reflective on his own identity and the experiences he had related to his social position, in the first interview Parker expressed an understanding that students come to his classroom with varying experiences that constrain what they are able to produce in the classroom.

> Other instances of me getting on kids for not doing their homework, "Oh, you didn't do your homework. I can't believe you didn't do your homework. My class is the best class ever. Why didn't you do your homework?" Well, maybe at home, homework's not a thing. Maybe there's a lot of other stuff going on that I don't necessarily know about. Since coming back to [school name], I've tried to kind of decrease my getting on kids for not doing homework and more so asking them either why and how come, or just letting it

> slide by, assuming that there's stuff going outside the classroom that's more important than my homework.

In his reflection, he recognized that not all of his students are coming from the same starting point. This reflection demonstrated his orientation toward leveling the playing field for students for whom common practices in education are misaligned with the reality of their lived experience.

Additionally, he reflected on his desire to make his teaching relatable to his students while also affirming students of historically marginalized backgrounds. He sees his role as a teacher as an opportunity to disrupt dominant narratives that his students may have internalized.

> I'll go off on tangents about the importance of women and society and why women supposedly can't do things that men can do. And I went off on a big rant. I remember one specific rant last year. Some male student said something about girls or females not being able to do something. I went off on this huge rant as to why, why can't they, what's wrong? And by the end of the class, one girl student, a girl Hispanic student came to me and said, "Mr. [last name], you need to run for president. You need to be our next president."

His reflection demonstrated his understanding that as a teacher he has a responsibility to disrupt any bigotry that may be espoused in his class and make sure his students feel validated. In doing so, he is able to uplift his students who have historically been underrepresented in his subject area.

In the third interview, Parker's reflection on his classroom environment highlighted his understanding that students come to his classroom from a variety of backgrounds. In a school system particularly suited for one type of learner, students like his are often left out therefore,

they need to feel warmth and comfort in their learning environment. In order to foster that classroom sense of community and positive relationships, he believed it was important to bring students' cultural backgrounds into the classroom. He elaborated:

> I mean, you want kids to feel safe and comfortable while in your classroom, so that they're in the right mindset to learn. And so, I'd never really stepped back and thought about how important it is to bring their cultures into the classroom and to acknowledge that all these kids in the classroom might have different cultures, and so they might be coming at this from a very different angle than I am.

As evidenced in this reflection, he continued to value remaining open to the possibility that his students may have different perspectives than he had which might require altering his classroom practice.

In particular he believed it was important for students to feel connected to his subject and for them to be able to identify people that look like them within the subject he taught.

> And I was really getting the ball rolling before school let out. But my warm-up each day was essentially just a, "Who am I?" And then I would have listed anywhere from 5 to 15 facts about this person and the students would get on their Chromebooks and then they would research, you know...they saw that the type of people that I was having them research or figure out was no one like they'd ever seen in a [subject] classroom before. In [subject] we generally talk about the [White and western contributors]. We talk about these essentially old white [professionals in the field] oftentimes.

His reflection highlights his understanding of how his teaching materials have been whitewashed and recognizes the importance of bringing students' cultural backgrounds into coursework so

that students have opportunities to make connections with the material in ways they were not previously afforded.

By the third interview, Parker's reflection on classroom level impacts of systemic inequity and the value of equity-based practice were much more robust. For example, he continued to emphasize the importance of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into the classroom, but took a nuanced perspective of the need to incorporate all of the intersections of students' identities into the classroom content.

> But then, I believe March was Women's History Month, and I only sprinkled in one or two specific women to talk about Women's History Month. And so, I got some kids that said, "Hey, Mr. [last name], Women's History Month, why haven't we been talking about more women [professionals in the field]?" And I wasn't because I wanted to degrade women [professionals in the field]. After doing it every single day, I was getting worn out. I felt like the kids were getting worn out. And then even June was LGBTQ+ month, and I didn't extend this into June. And so, I hope to continue adding to those [professionals in the field], that library that I have, and making sure that in each of those months, the kids know, if you're in LGBTQ+ community, you know that June is the month…

In Parker's reflection he recognized that students have many identities and the full spectrum of those identities should be affirmed in the classroom. As a teacher, he sees this as his responsibility. His commitment to bringing diversity into his course content highlights his resistance to the status quo of a traditionally White curriculum that is purported to be universally applicable.

Finally, in his third interview, Parker also reflected on the social positioning of his students and how that influenced their understanding of diversity and equity. In particular, he called attention to the possibility that his more privileged students may have a need for more diversity in the curriculum given their lack of exposure to diversity.

> But in the same sense, it's not a barrier because maybe those diverse kids aren't the ones that need to be hearing this. Maybe it's this other group of kids that are the ones my classes are mostly consist of. They might be the ones that really need to hear.

His recognition that his more privileged students need to see diversity in the course content demonstrated his understanding of the need for social justice in the classroom.

School and District Level Reflection. At the school level, in the first interview Parker was able to reflect on the diversity of the student body and called attention to the inequitable experiences that African-American students, in particular, have at his school. He describes his engagement in his own form of research by saying:

> ...every day once the first period bell rings, I walk and I step into the hallway, and I look at just straight down my one hallway. I can see almost all the way to the upper commons, and I look at the race of the kids that are late to first period. And without collecting any data, I've been doing this for probably over a month now, every single day, and it's 90% African American students. And even though there's a smaller proportion of them, that's the proportion that are being late to first period that I see in the five second observation outside my room. And I ask why, why is that the case. There's less black kids. Why are 90% of them late the first period? Why are they black? Why is that the case? I looked at the other teachers. I talked about myself treating students differently. I listen to the way

> other teachers talk to kids and hear them talking to students differently based on various things. And they don't see that at all. And I think there's a big problem with that.

His observations of how his peers teach Black students and the ways that Black students then respond with disengagement highlighted his critical social analysis of differential treatment of students by race. He showed an emergent understanding that access to positive schooling environments is racially stratified.

Although he did not engage in critical reflection about school level factors in the second interview, in the third interview he seemed to be much more aware of the limited opportunities for the Black and Latinx students in his school by pointing to a disparity in enrollment in advanced courses.

> ...this black student in my first period AP stats class had told me how hard it was for her to get into AP statistics, not because of grades, not because of content, but because every guidance counselor she's ever had told her that she shouldn't and couldn't take those higher-level classes. Why are we telling kids that? Why is that even a thing?

He also stated:

> Do my AP [subject] students with demographics of them look like the demographics of the school? No. The AP [subject] teacher who is this teacher that I had this race discussion with, do her students represent the demographics of our school? No. And so, I slightly spoken to some of the guidance counselors like, “Why is that? Where's the downfall?” I speak Spanish. I work with a number of ELL students. And last year I taught an all ELL [subject] one class. This year, I had a couple of ELL students in my lower-level class. But they're always in the lower-level classes.

In both reflections, he clearly identified a need for equity and firmly rejected the status quo that limits the educational opportunities of students of color in his school.

Societal and Education System Level Reflection. In the first interview Parker called attention to a flawed U.S. education system that narrowly defines what a good student is.

> I think assessing assessments need to differ. I don't know whether to generalize this, but the kids, the test-taking kids, I mean, if you're good at taking tests, your track on this path, you're considered a good student or not so good student just based off how you're testing. And we all know that that's not the only way kids can express what they know. Their knowledge of a topic is just through a two-page paper test.

Although he did not name any of the ways that traditional forms of assessment in school disadvantage students from historically marginalized backgrounds, his reflection demonstrates an understanding that students have differentiated needs based on particular characteristics about themselves.

In the second interview Parker's macro-level critique revolved around the Whiteness of the subject he teaches in and the difficulty this posed for his students who are not White to be able to see and connect themselves with the content.

> I also heard from a student, an African American female, about how difficult it was for her to find a person that uses [subject] that was like her. So, then that opens up the discussion [of] why? I'm sure it is, but why is that the case? Why is it more difficult for you than a white female, or a white male?

His reflection demonstrated his recognition that African American students face barriers to being able to see themselves in the course content given the lack of diversity in the subject area.

Finally, in the third interview he shared his critique of the pipeline to in-service teaching. He reflected by noting that preservice teacher training was not reflective of the diversity of the student body both in relevant training materials and the racial demographics of teachers being recruited.

> But I've talked within my cohort that in college, I think I remember having one lesson, if even one class on culturally responsive teaching. And the fact that I can't remember anything that I've talked about in college just goes to show, what are we teaching educators when they're training to become an educator? This needs to be at the forefront. It really, really does.

He goes on to say:

And when I look at it, I forget the exact statistics, but if 80% of students' teachers are white females, how is a Black male supposed to feel that they are valued and they're worth something in these classes? I mean, if 2% of educators are black males, this Black male in my class could have gone his entire educational career without seeing an educator like him. That's not right. That's not right at all.

In his reflection, he explicitly challenged the structural issues with teacher training such as teachers not being prepared to teach the increasingly diverse population of students they serve. Teacher education programs primarily focus on technical teaching skills while limiting opportunities for learning equitable practices such as CRT. Additionally, he highlighted the fact that White educators are overrepresented in the field which has an effect on how often students of color are able to see themselves represented in their teachers.

Lastly, in his reflections about school level issues, Parker eloquently made the connection between the happenings of the school and what is reflected in broader society. He stated:

> But really, through this program, we've really been focused on education, and how all these things going on in the world, it's all relevant right here in our schools. We can see all these things in our classroom, in our schools, and we need to do a better job of improving that because a lot of kids aren't getting a good education. And then that in itself progresses right back to society.

This statement demonstrated his understanding that there is a throughline between what happens in the classroom, schools, and society. He recognized that inequities of the broader society permeate more proximal contexts.

Motivation and Efficacy

In the first interview, Parker's motivation seemed to largely come from his hope for all students to have a good experience in the subject he teaches. He recognized that the subject was commonly unappealing to students and wanted them to find connection to the material. Although, he questioned his efficacy in being able to engage in broader equitable practices that were inclusive of his students of color. He reflected on that by talking about a specific incident with a student that ultimately resulted in disciplinary action. He said:

> I don't know exactly how that could have been changed or dealt with differently. In recognizing, hey, this is how she speaks when she's with her friends and when she's at home, and this is what she hears. I guess maybe speaking with her, "Why do think it's okay for you to do that in this setting? And why do you think it's not okay for you to do that in this setting?" So, maybe kind of asking her that why, could have been a different way to approach that rather than building up this huge conflict. So, there have been instances like that.

By the second interview, and in light of his training on CRT, his motivation seemed to shift to focus specifically on making the content of his course subject more inclusive. He said, “My goal is trying to get students connected to [subject], students of all backgrounds.” For Parker, his motivation and his efficacy were often intertwined. Specifically, he often reflected on his efficacy by taking in the feedback of his students and then demonstrated motivation to make the changes going forward. In one example he said:

> I had one student in particular, a freshman African American male, who called me out in the month of February because I hadn't been discussing African Americans during Black History Month, and he's like, "I thought you were doing all this cultural stuff and you haven't really." And so, from that day forward I started doing it every single class period and the smile that came across this kid's face was great, after, like, the third or fourth day. He then started to come in one of the first to my class. He was the first getting on his Chromebook, looking up "Who am I?" and trying to figure it out. It was really, really cool to see. But I needed him to call me out on it before I really got the kick in the butt to realize, "Oh, this is actually having an effect on kids."

Across his interviews, he gave several examples of his willingness to allow his students to critique his practice. He described himself reflecting on his student feedback and using it for his own professional development of his practices.

In the third interview, Parker expressed his source of motivation as continuing to be his want for his students to feel connected to the material that they were learning. Additionally, he also pointed to the structural flaws of the education system and the need for system change as a motivator:

> See, there's been a lot of learning and, again, the structural racism in education. It's funny because any time we've talked, we've spoken about these things, and we've read articles about this, it hasn't been, “Hey, we need to change the entire system.” But we've talked about it in a way where the underlying message is, “We need to change the entire system.”

Parker reflected on how much he learned about the various issues in the education system that impacted his students which was in contrast to his motivation for all students to have positive educational experiences. Thus, he drew motivation from the need to make systemic change for the betterment of students’ schooling experiences.

He described the ways in which he continually assessed his efficacy by allowing students to give him feedback on the effectiveness of his lessons.

> I think addressing that and acknowledging that, and really listening to the kids and their thoughts and opinions on that, that's what really culturally responsive teaching is all about is listening to those kids, because they'll tell you straight up, "Yeah, you're right Mr. [last name], this is crap." I'm like, "Okay, maybe it is," and I'll listen to you, and I do what I can, as this kids’ [subject] teacher, to address the wrongs in education.

In his reflection it is apparent that Parker’s desire to be a good teacher to his students was an asset to his teaching practice. He saw his work of creating positive learning experiences for his students as a direct act of resistance to the structural issues in the education system that hindered his students' journey in school.

Critical Action.

In the first interview Parker's actions in the classroom reflected an understanding that students come from a variety of backgrounds that can make navigating school difficult. In his

teaching, he tried to be understanding by, for example, not punishing students when they were not able to complete their homework. In addition, he sought to make the content more relevant "for students for whom it largely seems irrelevant to their lives." One of the ways that he did this was by clarifying for his students what their purpose was for learning the content. He wanted them to understand that his class was going to be a different experience than their prior courses in the subject area. When reflecting on this action, he said:

> Just because I'm a [subject] teacher, and I'm going to do like every other [subject] teacher they ever had and said, "Hey, you need to learn this." I like to try to answer that question of why. I think it's a really important question to be able to answer. Why is it important for lower socioeconomic kids to understand [subject-related concept] or [subject-related concept]. They're like, "I'm never going to use this. My parents don't use this. Who cares?"

His action of clarifying the "why" for the course content his students were learning was a direct effort to be able to bring students closer to the material. He felt that by making it relevant, he could help students see that there is a purpose to learning complex concepts that may not be used in everyday life. He actively sought to provide those students, for whom education has underrepresented, an opportunity to see the material as important to their lived experience.

As noted in his critical reflections, during his second interview, Parker reflected on a time when an African American student revealed to him that they were having a difficult time finding prominent figures in the subject area that they could identify with. In response to that student's concern he validated their experience and then facilitated a class discussion to talk about why. He asked, "Why is it more difficult for you than a white female, or a white male?"

He also reflected on being able to spread the knowledge that he gained about diverse contributors to his subject area from his students in one course with his other students. He stated:

> In my two senior [subject] classes all my students performed a project where they had to give a presentation, write a paper, or make a poster about a [professional in the field] or a person that does [subject] that is like them. So, at the conclusion, once the students presented or they put up their posters—their posters are now all around my classroom—I then used those posters to discuss those different types of people with my other classes. I had three mainly freshman courses of [subject 1] and [subject 2] and I would use the work that my seniors did to help discuss these different types of [professionals in the field] with my other courses.

His actions to diversify the course content for students beyond the focal students for his professional development project reflected his understanding that the marginalization of many of his students was a system-wide issue that he could contribute to solving through his teaching practices.

By the third interview, he had several examples of the ways that he incorporated cultural representation into the course curriculum. In the examples provided in his third interview it was clear that he was simultaneously thinking about teaching the course content while making the material relatable to his students and also incorporating elements of social justice into his lessons.

> And so, we talked about breast cancer, the number of women it affects. We talked about some of the [subject] behind breast cancer. And so, we talked about breast cancer, the number of women it affects. We talked about some of the [subject] behind breast cancer.

> I asked kids, “How many of you all have pink things in recognition of breast cancer?” And so, we had that discussion. And then I said, “Well, when someone walks around with a pink t-shirt that says that they support breast cancer, have you ever heard anybody go up to them and say, ‘Well, all cancer matters’?” Why? Like, “This isn't right. You shouldn't just be wearing breast cancer, like to say their cancer matters, lung cancer, and all cancer matters.” I was like, “How would you all feel if someone ever said that to you?” Because I had every kid raise their hand and say that they support breast cancer. [Laughter] And so, I was like, “Have you ever heard anybody say that? How would that make you feel?” And people were like, “Yeah, that's rude. That's just ignorant.” And I was like, “Yeah, and so when the Black Lives Matter movement really came to fruition last summer, and the argument about all lives matter came up, what are those people really saying when they say, ‘All lives matter’?” And so, we talked about why is it okay to say that all lives matter compared to all cancer matters? Or why is it not? What are the differences? The kids came to the conclusion that there isn't a difference. There really isn't.

In one small lesson Parker was able to do the work of bringing his students' lived experiences into the classroom and make the content more relatable while also encouraging them to think about and resist the lure of common narratives that maintain the status quo of oppression against black people.

Opportunity Structures Influences

Throughout his reflections, it was clear that Parker gained a great deal of his understanding of systemic oppression from his students. Although, across his interviews, Parker primarily credited his participation in the professional development program with providing him

the resources to think more deeply about systemic issues. In one example from his second interview, he said, “The resources that [researcher] has been sending out, those are still continuing to be great supports in helping me learn what is it like and what do I need to do to encompass all my students in teaching [subject], and respecting their cultures in doing so.”

In addition, the cultural diversity of his colleagues that were part of the professional development program played a role in helping him to be able to access anecdotal information that shaped his perspective

> One of our first cycle meetings, we had a lady...who was a Black female teacher...and something started coming up about inequity in schools and segregation in schools. And I was like, “What do you mean like segregation in schools? Schools have been integrated for 50, 60 years.” And she was pointing out, “Well, 50, 60 years, that's one generation. That's only one. My grandparents went to segregated schools. And this is how, actually, segregated schools hurt the black community. Look around and how many Black teachers do you see nowadays, it's because they were all wiped out, essentially, when schools were integrated.” So, listening to that, I was like, “Oh, my god, I had no idea.” And then, that's just step one.

In his third interview he also credited elements in his social life and prior teaching experiences that have helped shape his perspective today. He talked about teaching abroad and said, “I think experiencing that, the different culture, has really made me open my eyes to all cultures and all these different ways of doing things.”

Summary

As a teacher, Parker's willingness to be open and hear his students out set the tone for his critical consciousness development. By listening to his students, he was able to gain a better

conceptual understanding of systemic issues and also improve his teaching practice to resist those tissues. It was apparent that between the first and third interviews, his reflections on systems of oppression and how they impacted his students became more sophisticated. By the third interview, he was able to specifically name systemic racism and socioeconomic oppression as drivers for the ways that his students experienced school. It was less clear that his efficacy and motivation changed as drastically as his reflections; however, it was clear that his agency (i.e. efficacy and motivation) was a catalyst for him to engage in more targeted actions that included elements of considering student sense of belonging as well as teaching social justice concepts within his content. Across his interviews he increasingly saw his work as being in response to and in resistance of the structural inequities of the education system.

Valen: Critical Reflection and Immobilized Action

Self-Analysis

At the time of her first interview, Valen expressed an awareness of the apparent cultural and racial differences between her and her students. Although she believed she had not taken on the racial beliefs and attitudes of her family, she recognized that she came from a family that espoused racism and; therefore, contemplated the possibility that those early experiences may have shaped her own beliefs and behaviors in ways she was not aware of. Valen suggested that perhaps her lack of cultural diversity and affirmation in her upbringing may have been a source of contention in her relationships to students. Specifically, she described her inability to connect with them and wanted to know more about how race impacted teaching and learning. She described having a hard time connecting with students and formulating positive supportive relationships by saying:

> And part of it was just their values were so different than mine. And I was just having a really hard time relating to what they felt was important and what they valued in life, like doing strange for change that type of thing. They'd bring that up in the classroom. And so, I really did start thinking about how can I relate to these kids more, which is part of the reason for joining this group because I was already starting to think about that I'm not relating. I'm not connecting with these kids the way I used to.

In addition she described her openness to being to having the way as her racial identity impacted her teaching illuminated to her by saying:

> Because like I said, consciously, I don't think it is all that much. But I bet you subconsciously it is, and I'm just not aware of it. So, I would love someone else to come in and just observe and say, "Well, I kind of saw it right here that maybe this was an issue of race. How could we address that same situation in a more culturally-responsive way?"

At the time of her second interview Valen started connecting her white racial identity to privilege and contrasting that with the oppression that people of color experience. She acknowledged having never known anything about the oppression of people of color until recently reading about it in the professional development program as well as in her own pleasure reading. She said:

> So, I have done a lot of growing since March. I think that's the biggest impact on me. I was just thinking about this, I was talking to a friend from high school the other day. And our high school was 95% white. My friends were 100% white, went to college about 95% white, sorority, 100% white. And I didn't really get to know anybody of color until I came to Virginia, which has been 30 some years now. But I truly never understood the oppression that they do have.

In addition to reflecting on her own racial identity and the experiences of those further away from the power structure, in the third interview she described a shift in her political views from conservative to liberal-leaning. She contrasted that with the views of her family and also expressed regret that she would have previously sided with conservative assessment of the murders of extrajudicial murders of Black people. Specifically, she said, “it's kind of frightening that two years ago, or three years ago, I would have been on that conservative side.”

She reflected on her own identity and the privilege of her racial group and acknowledged that prior to the professional development program she had not thought about her culture. In reference to how the professional development program prompted her to think about her culture, she said, “I would say that was the first time I ever even really thought about culture. We looked at some of our cultural experiences, and it was definitely a head start. I think we all felt a little overwhelmed. I know I did…”. In describing how her thinking shifted as she thought about her privilege in relation to others she said:

> I started reading The New Jim Crow, which was a slow-reading book, because it really made you think, but I think that was the one book that kind of made me realize that there is some systemic racism out there. Before that, I wasn't so sure. I probably would have agreed with a lot of my friends I had grown up with, I guess, whatever, that pull yourself up by your bootstraps, you get what you get, you got to work hard for it, and if you're living in poverty that's because you're not working for it.

In talking about an interaction with a colleague, she also stated:

> I said, “Well, I don't really understand,” and I said, “You've got a person of color and a white person. They both go to [an] Elementary School. They have the same teacher. They have the same middle school, have the same teacher. They come to the same high school.

> How is that being oppressive or racially biased or anything?" And they're like, "What's the experience that they bring to the classroom?" And again, I didn't get that until I started doing some of this reading. I've been oblivious to my white privilege and now I'm not, so that's a good thing.

At the same time that Valen was thinking about her own racial and political identities, she also took the time to consider the racial and cultural experiences of her students and how those identities influenced learning and their perceptions of her teaching.

> I think that's what distinguishes it, though, is the understanding of the culture, of both your culture, and others' cultures, and the realization that they are different, but not bad. Like I said before, I expected, for years, all my students to be like me, to want to do the work, to do the work, to be quiet doing it, not to be talking to their peers and not calling out answers and all this stuff. And because of that expectation, it's impossible to meet that expectation. So I think I have created a lot of stress in my own life, and a lot of classroom management issues in my own life, because I never realized that.

Across her interviews, Valen became more aware of her social position and the privilege that she garnered being a white woman. In addition to having a better understanding of her racial identity she also explored her political identity. Her exploration of self helped her to locate her areas of privilege and make social comparisons between herself and people of color.

Critical Reflection

Classroom Level Reflection. Valen was aware that the students in her focal class for the action research project were disproportionately black. She expressed a sincere difficulty relating to students and establishing positive relationships and cited cultural differences as the main

reason. She contemplated whether or not she was treating students unfairly on the basis of race, but remained open to understanding how to improve those interactions.

> And so, you could have two kids doing the same thing in the classroom, and they're both doing something wrong. But this one's very quiet about it. This one's very loud about it. Your first instinct is to go after the one that is being loud about it. Those students, more times than not, maybe African American. And I don't feel like I'm targeting them because of that. But on the other hand, I'm targeting them because their culture, their lifestyle, is to be loud. So, in a way, I guess I am targeting them because of race, even though it's more behavior of the race.

Her primary reflections that painted a picture of her critical consciousness at the time of her first interview revolved around the behavioral offenses she perceived her students to commit. While she recognized that she might have been unfairly targeting her Black students, she also felt that their disruptive behaviors were part of their cultural background. In her assessment of the situation, she did not connect what she identified as her student's cultural way of being to a cultural mismatch between her student and the cultural platform of schooling.

In contrast to her first interview, in the second interview Valen reflected with a greater awareness of the experiences of her students that may have shaped some of the behaviors that she was seeing in her classroom.

> Mm-hmm. It was probably back in February. I was talking to a student. I told him to put his phone away. And he got really nasty with me, when a couple other people asked him to put his phone away too. And later he left the room and he was talking to one of the teachers, and he said, "Well, what do you think about the teacher who comes up to you and pushes up her sleeves?" I didn't even do it. Now I did it... I'm assuming he was

> probably abused at some point. And the person who beat him used to push up their sleeves before they wailed into him. So, I'm starting to see those types of things, the little nuances that could trigger somebody that I've just never really knew before. Now that I know that, I think it's going to change my relationships with the students.

Valen recognized that she could not hold every student to the same standard for behavior based on her own personal lens. This reflection demonstrated her commitment to understanding her students and recognizing the importance of aligning her teaching practices with their needs.

When reflecting on the students in her class, Valen seemed to recognize the ways students have been treated throughout their time in the education system had implications for how they may act in her class.

> So, I think that is one of the barriers, is trying to get them past that, becoming more independent learner, to set the goals, which I was working with them on setting goals. And some listened and some like, “I don’t care.” [Laughter] And it was such a new system for them, too, because they've never been in that situation where they had to master something, or they couldn't go on. They’re used to, “Okay, I failed the test. Now we're going to learn something new.” I think the barrier was the mindset. They hadn't quite grasped that. Again, the learned helplessness that they've had for 9 years now, 10 years trying to get them past that. Yeah, I would say those are my biggest barriers.

In recognition of a flaw in the norms and practices in the education system, Valen did not blame her students for what she described as a sense of learned helplessness that inhibited their ability to be independent learners. Instead, she attributed their disposition toward learning to a byproduct of the education system that does not center mastery. In addition, she recognized that

the structure of the education system created barriers to her ability to effectively be able to engage in more equitable practices with her students.

In the third and final interview, Valen expressed a deeper understanding of the opportunity gap between students of color and white students. She assessed the behaviors of parents and students in her class from a more empathic perspective without making a value judgment. For example, she said:

> Also, I think this whole experience has given me more insight into the family. Oftentimes you would call home and you don't get an answer and the kid's not doing what they need to do in school and you send emails and you don't get a response, and your initial thought is, "Well, I guess the parents either don't care or they're tired of the situation because it's been going on for years." Whereas in reality, this person might be working three jobs they. May not have the time to call me back, but that doesn't mean that they're ignoring their child at home. They may still be supporting their education, but just because they're not responding doesn't mean they don't care.

Her reflection on the ways that students' lived experiences intersect with how they are able to receive support for their education demonstrated her critical analysis of the variation in student schooling experiences. In a school system that primarily privileges middle-class and wealthier students, Valens rejection of a deficit framing of her students from lower socio-economic backgrounds enabled her to assess their behavior from a more equitable perspective.

One of the ways that Valen thinks about engaging in equitable practice is by incorporating students' authentic selves into the classroom. During the third interview she expressed doing this by allowing for behaviors that she deemed to be culturally different than her own and recognizing that diversity did not equate to a deficit.

> Like I said before, I expected, for years, all my students to be like me, to want to do the work, to do the work, to be quiet doing it, not to be talking to their peers and not calling out answers and all this stuff. And because of that expectation, it's impossible to meet that expectation. So I think I have created a lot of stress in my own life, and a lot of classroom management issues in my own life, because I never realized that.

Her reflection shows that she started to think about the fact that students' cultural backgrounds vary. Their ways of being and doing were different than her own and although she may have been more comfortable with her own cultural ways of going about schooling, she began to understand the ways that perspective promoted conflict in her class.

School and District Level Reflection. Similar to her classroom level reflections, during the first interview when she reflected on her school level Valen described the diversity of the school that she works at which she has seen change in the time that she has been there. Related to the diversity, she talked about recent changes to her school's disciplinary policy. The recent change was in an attempt to avoid suspending students to prevent the disproportionate suspension of students of color. Valen suggested that this policy may have allowed for poor behavior, particularly from Black students.

> I mean, right now we are at the place that you could have a white student and a black student do the same thing. The white student gets suspended. The black student doesn't because they don't want that mark that's going to come back and say that we are disproportionately suspending black students. And the kids see that. They see that they can get away with certain things that other people may not have gotten away with.

During her interview, she also reflected on the fact that most of the teachers in the school were white middle-class people with a tendency to expect white middle-class cultural values and

behaviors from their students. She understood that this may have posed a problem given the diversity of the school.

> I think because most of the teachers here are basically white middle class, we tend to teach the way we were taught. Okay? And I don't think that is meeting the needs of a lot of the students. And it's not just the African Americans, but it's just students in general. The engagement that they're used to out there in the real world and the video games and all that type of thing, I think we're not tapping into enough of that creativity and things to really make this a good diverse school where we're meeting all their needs, if that makes sense. [Laughs]

During her second interview, Valen made one reflection about the school that questioned the status quo. She pointed to the schools' subjective standards for dress policy that limited students opportunities to bring their authentic selves to school.

> Well, one is as simple as a dress code. I understand that the principal is very big about hats. Don't have hats on in the building. And I can kind of understand that in the hallway because they want to be able to see people's faces. So, when they're on the camera, if they do something wrong, they want to know who it is. But in the classroom, I think we should let them wear their baseball hat or their do-rag or whatever. It's not hurting the learning environment in any way, shape, or form. And if having that hoodie on makes them feel safe, then they're going to be more likely to learn because they're not going to be in that fight-or-flight frame of mind. And that's something little that could easily be changed. I guess you could say the same thing about the pants down below their...[Laughter] I can't stand it. But realistically, that's not hurting anybody and either.

They can't run if they have to because they've got to hold up their pants, but I think maybe we should just chill on that a little bit. It's not that big of a deal.

In her reflection, she recognized that there are a variety of reasons that students may want to express themselves through their attire. Importantly though, she problematized the schools standards for dress and thereby demonstrated her critical analysis of the school. Students of color commonly face disproportionate disciplinary action based on subjective offenses such as violations of dress code. Valen's questioning of the validity of those rules is a direct rejection of the dominant perspective that schools should be able to dictate how students dress at the expense of their sense of belonging.

During the third interview, Valen's reflections continued to build on her understanding that schools may constrain students' abilities to show up as their full authentic selves to school. In relation to that, she talked about how the beliefs of her colleagues may have been misaligned with the realities of students' lived experience by saying, "...and these are the teachers that are, pull yourself up by your bootstraps type teachers. If they work hard, they're going to get what they deserve. And I don't know that they understand some of the historical background that has caused these students to be in the situation that they're in." She understood that the ignorance of her colleagues may have prohibited them from accurately making assessments of how their students engage with schooling.

In reference to the lack of diversity in the school, Valen demonstrated an understanding that given the diversity of her school, it was important for students to be able to identify with their teachers. She said, "I think it's important that the teacher population at least somewhat represent the student population, and so I'm hoping when they replace some of these teachers,

they're going to consider that." Several teachers at her school were due to retire and she had a sincere hope that those retirees would create room for more diversity in the teaching staff.

Societal and Education System Level Reflection. At the time of her first interview, Valen's only reflection that spoke to the education system was one in which she talked about the need for culturally responsive education so that students would be inclined to continue participating in education and avoid the school-to-prison pipeline. She said:

> Because we need to meet the students wherever they are, academically, culturally, based on their backgrounds, that type of thing. And if we just continue to go in and teach one way, the Madeline Hunter approach or whatever, we're not meeting their needs and that's turning them off, the education. And then those kids, if they're not successful in school, a lot of times they may not be successful in life. Or if they're getting in trouble all the time at school, we know the pipeline to the prisons is there.

Her reflection demonstrated that she understood that there is a widespread need for changes to curricular and instructional practices to meet the needs of the diversity of students. In addition, she made a connection between what happens in school and the life trajectories of students broadly.

During the second interview Valen reflected on the role of the school system in mitigating the systemic racism that exists in the world. She reflected by saying, "It's very unfortunate that it had to come about this way, but I think this is really getting people to open up their eyes and look at the situation differently and see some of the systematic racism that is out there in the world. That we have to do something different in the schools."

Like her first interview, Valen also continued reflecting on the lack of relevance of her subject's curriculum to students today. Though, she did not specifically mention any elements of

race or culture as being the means of connecting to content which leaves ambiguous whether her reflection was equity-based.

> If I had to tell county people or state people, we need to change the [subject] curriculum. Big time. There is so much you could do with geometry as far as construction and all this other stuff, but we're teaching stupid stuff that they don't care about. They're not going to be [doing the subject skills] in their lifetime. Let's focus on what they might actually be able to do. Let's make learning relevant.

In contrast, in the third interview she clarified that she valued bringing students cultural backgrounds into the classroom, but did not necessarily see them as connected to the existing content. She believed that the curriculum needed to be addressed in order for teachers in her subject area to shift toward teaching that includes elements of social justice. She described this shift as being important for all students.

> But they won't give up on that same curriculum that's been there since the 1900s. Whereas, if we let them use [tools relevant to the subject area], then we can build in some social justice lessons. We can build in mindfulness lessons. We can do the practical stuff, the hands-on things, the [subject-related concept], the [subject-related concept]. That's what we need to be teaching...That's not just for people of color or Latinx or anybody. I mean, that's everybody. School is so irrelevant. If you can Google something, we shouldn't be teaching it and testing on it.

Although Valen developed a more nuanced understanding of the cultural and racial identities and lived experiences of others, it was not clear that she understood that there were diverse contributors to her subject area that she could rely on to teach her content while affirming her students.

Critical Motivation and Efficacy

During the first interview, Valen was highly motivated by being able to connect and share better relationships with her students. In addition she was also interested in gaining a better understanding of how her identity played a role in her professional practice. She said her goals were:

> One, be able to relate to the students better. Two, I wanted to explore more of that white culture background and how it influences my interactions with the kids. And I wanted to learn more about other cultures and ethnicities and how I can bring those positive aspects into the classroom. So, I'd say those are my three main goals.

Although she set goals that were based in equity, she described herself as feeling less efficacious about being able to engage in equity-based practice when it came to discipline. Despite this area in need of support, she described her strength as her willingness to learn and try new teaching practices.

> I think my strength is, one, my desire to want to do this because that leads to me wanting reading of additional things at home and seeing what other things I can try. And I'm willing to be a risk-taker. So, I think those are my strengths. My weaknesses still is... I mean, the discipline still playing into that. Because specifically in that third period, I'm so busy putting out fires that I can't just sit and talk to somebody and get to know them.

By the second interview, Valen seemed to have found motivation in her new learnings about the role of race and education and felt that it was the job of schools to affect social change.

> It's very unfortunate that it had to come about this way, but I think this is really getting people to open up their eyes and look at the situation differently and see some of the

> systematic racism that is out there in the world. That we have to do something different in the schools.

In her third interview her motivation transformed into being embedded in equity-based principles, though she also mentioned feeling less than efficacious given the district's policies around critical race theory.

> A lot of people out there say, right now, "Well, you just treat everybody the same. If they're kind to you, you be kind to them." I think that's true, but I think it's important to understand the background and understand where they are coming from, and making sure that they have the exact same opportunities available to them as everybody else in that classroom.

She went on to say, “So I am, I guess, fearful of saying any of that, in any way, shape, or form, because that kind of falls under the critical race theory, and I don't want that pushback.”

At the time of her third interview, Valen previously tried to incorporate social justice lessons in her curriculum by talking about implicit bias and received sharp pushback from parents. This experience deeply impacted her advocacy and engagement with social justice in her teaching. When reflecting on her sense of efficacy around teaching for social justice, she said. “So I had three different administrators coming to me because of parents. That was day one, so day two I took a lot of that stuff out, and I didn't have any complaints on day two. But it just made me really fearful.” She continued on by saying, “So this is where and when I have a problem talking about racial or cultural issues in the classroom, because there is such a divide, and no matter which philosophy you are addressing, somebody's going to be against it, and somebody's going to be strongly against it.” That experience diminished her sense of agency in being able to carry out teaching in ways that were more equity-based.

Critical Action

Classroom Level Action. In the first interview, Valen contemplated bringing students' cultures into the classroom by having them do an assignment in which they researched a bridge in another country. Though, it is unclear if she actually assigned this to students. She tended to focus her actions on building better relationships with students and allowing them to have voice and choice in the classroom as a way of making content more relevant. She said:

> Trying to involve them in some of the decision making in the classroom. What do they think would be successful? What do they think would work? Trying to include more projects to meet them where they needs are. Try to make it more relevant to something that they would be interested in maybe doing in the future or something that they can relate to at this point in time.

By the second interview, Valen moved toward a focus on having students engage with the content by allowing them to have a voice in the classroom rules and changing the mode of instructional delivery.

> And we started doing more of a competency-based and doing more projects with them. That wasn't my original question that I was researching, but we did do it to try to be more culturally responsive to those students because they weren't doing the work. They didn't care about the geometry. They felt no relevance to it. So that was kind of my plan for my third-period group.

She continued on by saying:

> But it helped to some extent, and they would look at me if I forgot to do something that they suggested. And they would repeat some of the things we talked about at the meeting like the good behaviors, but some of them still wouldn't do them. Like, “Don't get up out

> of your seat," yet he's up out of his seat. [Laughs] So, the one that's trying to rein in some of the others were doing the same behaviors. And then I asked them about trying to get more community. Did they want a class handshake? Or do they want to come up with a cool class name or a call and response, instead of me just saying, "Give me five"? They don't seem to want to buy into any of that. That wasn't interesting to them. But that's okay because I at least got their feedback, and we went from there.

Valen clearly took the time to hear her students' wants and concerns in her class and made adjustments in her practices. She previously described her class as being primarily African-American. In the context of an education system that often does not afford students of color agency and ownership in their own learning process, Valen's action was a demonstration toward equity.

By the third interview, Valen sought to engage students in conversations about implicit bias and systemic racism and how that influenced their experiences as learners. She did not offer many details about the content of her lesson, but instead described bringing these topics up in her classroom to forge discussion.

School and District Level Action. At the school level, during the first interview Valen described a need for teachers in her school to receive training on how to teach to culturally diverse students. She believed that when teachers received professional development that expanded their understanding of effectively teaching students from diverse populations, those students would be better served. Specifically, she said, "So, we need some instruction on, 'Okay. Well, this is the way culture is right now. How are we going to earn that respect and kind of keep that respect without just assuming we're going to be granted respect?'"

During the second interview, Valen reflected on the school's lack of cultural representation in course offerings and curricular content for racially and culturally diverse students and the implications for students' sense of inclusion at school. Her call to action was for her school to bring back horses that represented the cultural diversity of the students.

> We used to have African American lit at [school name] years ago, but I think it'd be good to bring that back. Bring a history of African Americans to school. Let them read something like the new Jim Crow and see exactly what the experience of those people were, but we also definitely need the Hispanic stuff. It's probably harder to do that because they are probably more spread out, because this one's from Haiti and this one's from Honduras and whatever. But I think you could still come up with a class, a history of it, a literature of it, to make the school more inclusive. And maybe the history of LGBT also.

In the final interview, Valen discussed the increase in attention to culturally responsive teaching in her school community. She said:

> With Parker and I both going through this together, that has helped us both with each other, but also interacting with other faculty members. I think there has definitely been a lot more discussion about culturally responsive teaching that I'm hoping he's going to expand other teachers and other people in the school, which is then going to impact the community.

Across her interviews, Valen made calls to action and directly engaged in actions based in equity and improving the educational experiences of historically marginalized students. Her actions were direct attempts to redress the school-wide inequalities she noticed.

Societal and Education System Level Action. First and second interviews pointed out a need for restructuring curriculum in her subject area, broadly. Though, she did not offer specific suggestions for how the content could be made more relevant for students who have been historically marginalized in education.

Opportunity Structure Influences

Across each interview, Valen credited the professional development program and, in particular, discussions and engagement with her colleagues in the program as the primary influences to her opportunity structure for learning. She described the impact those interactions had on her beliefs by saying, “So, I think that was the biggest impact of this whole thing on me, because I don't know that I would have done all that reading if we weren't involved in this project. But I do see their oppression now, and I realized the privilege I had growing up.”

During the second interview continued to emphasize the learning that she gained from her participation in the professional development program. She said, “That is what's so wonderful about this program, is it gave us a chance to grow in our own understanding of the world, and then in understanding others, and then trying to build the action research to create positive outcomes.” She also went on to say:

> I was extremely interested in hearing about the [subject] teachers' projects... I thought their projects were phenomenal. The way they were getting the kids to think about their reality and other people's reality, and the fact that they weren't getting any pushback from parents, I thought was incredible. I'm still very hesitant about bringing up race issues in the classroom.

In the last interview she continued to emphasize the role of her participation in the professional development program, but also discussed the sociopolitical climate and specifically the extrajudicial murders of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery. She said:

> The George Floyd incident was terrible. It was just terrible. But what impacted me even more was the Aubrey incident, where the guy was accused...perceived to be a thread, perceived to be a robber, and that two white men would just kill him in the middle of the street because of his color really impacted me. I think that had a bigger impact than the George Floyd thing.

In addition to earning from her students, engaging in readings, and talking with her colleagues in the professional development program the ongoing political and social events surrounding her time in the PD contributed to her understanding of inequity in society.

Summary

Throughout her time in the program and across her interviews, Valen became much more aware of her own racialized identity. As she learned about the experiences of oppression for people of color, she was able to locate her own social position in contrast. Although she became increasingly more sophisticated in her reflections on inequity, the actions that she engaged in over time became more equity-based, but still treated students' cultural backgrounds as something extra to bring into the classroom. Although she tried to incorporate elements of social justice in her teaching, the feedback that she received immobilized her. As a result of the pushback from parents, her efficacy was diminished, and her actions reflected her lower sense of efficacy.

Discussion: Cross Case Comparison

The purpose of this study was to explore how five teachers' critical consciousness developed across a professional development program on culturally responsive teaching practices. Scholarship has previously outlined the relevant dimensions of critical consciousness; however, that work has been critiqued for its gap in consideration of self-perceptions/identity, contextual factors, and the process of development. To understand the participating teachers' critical consciousness development as a process, the model of a conceptually similar construct, sociopolitical development, was used as a guiding framework. Critical consciousness is considered the cornerstone of sociopolitical development; however, the sociopolitical development model expands upon the critical consciousness scholarship by incorporating context and outlining the process of change. This model provided a framing of potentially relevant elements of critical consciousness development over time.

As previously described, critical consciousness is conceptualized as three dimensions that include reflection, motivation and/or efficacy, and action. The relevant elements of the *process* of critical consciousness development that can be gleaned from the sociopolitical development model are worldview and social analysis, agency, opportunity structures, and societal involvement (see figure 1). As described in the introduction, worldview and social analysis is most conceptually likened to critical reflection, agency is most similar to motivation/efficacy, and societal involvement maps onto the critical action dimension of critical consciousness. The sociopolitical development model also prompts scholars to consider contextual factors that make up the opportunity structure for critical consciousness development. Based on the model of sociopolitical development, worldview and social analysis (critical reflection) and societal involvement (critical action) are bidirectionally related. In addition, agency and opportunity structures each moderate that bidirectional relationship (see figure 1).

The critical consciousness and sociopolitical development scholarship have primarily focused on the developmental processes and relevant outcomes of people of color. Though, scholars have recently moved toward thinking about and exploring the ways that critical consciousness might be relevant for White people and other groups higher in the power structure (Diemer et al., 2019). For those who are more privileged, understanding the dynamics of privilege and oppression that frame everyday living in the U.S., taking action to mitigate those systems, and feeling agentic in doing so are vitally important to affecting social change and removing the onus for countering oppression from those who are less privileged.

Given the increasing diversity of the student body, persistent marginalization of students along race, socioeconomic status, and gender in a myriad of ways (Hussar et al., 2020) and the overwhelming overrepresentation of middle-class White teachers in the U.S. (82%; Fallis, 2013), this study explored White teachers' critical consciousness development. Critically conscious teachers have the potential to protect students from further harm in education, while bolstering their potential for achievement through equitable practices such as culturally responsive teaching. Though, without critical consciousness, culturally responsive teaching becomes a prescriptive set of practices that teachers do not have the capacity to apply reflexively and effectively with fidelity based on the everchanging social dynamics in which their teaching is embedded. Thus, critical consciousness is a core teaching competency needed to meet the needs of students historically marginalized in education (particularly for White teachers); therefore, the concept of critical consciousness and the model of sociopolitical development were used in this study with White teachers.

Each teacher developed in their own unique paths as explicated in the prior section. They shared overlap in many ways and diverged in others. The following sections describe similarities

and differences between teachers in their journeys to critical consciousness development, followed by a discussion of how their processes of development contribute to our understanding of critical consciousness development within the context of teacher professional development. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of limitations and implications. For the sake of brevity, I will focus on a few key similarities and differences.

Similarities and Differences Across Cases

Across each case, and likely as a factor of their voluntary participation in the CRT PD, each teacher had a general starting disposition of being open to the possibility that culture and race are relevant factors to students' educational experiences. Additionally, as part of their starting point, all of the teachers had a shallow understanding of their racialized identity. Although they were all able to identify themselves as White, none of them described the social power that came with being White teachers when asked about their racial identity. By the end of the PD, all of them talked about their White privilege in their interviews.

In addition to the commonalities in their starting dispositions, all of the teachers discussed similar opportunity structure influences that aided them in their critical consciousness journey. Specifically, they most often talked about their upbringing, their students, and the PD. For example, Reese, Wynn and Valen all discussed their upbringing as being racially homogenous and thereby constraining their intercultural knowledge as well as their understanding of privilege and oppression. All of the participants described learning from listening to their students. This sometimes happened on a one-to-one basis such as Reese and Parker's experiences with students confiding in them about experiences of discrimination in access to AP courses or being targeted with racial epithets at a basketball tournament. In addition, teachers also learned from their students when they had class discussions such as when

Wynn and Terry's students talked about systemic racism. Finally, all of the teachers referenced the readings, the discussions, and the meetings with their colleagues in the PD as being transformative to their understanding of inequity in education. Across their interviews, teachers drew upon these different factors that aided or constrained their critical consciousness.

All five of the teachers in this study exemplified each dimension of critical consciousness in their interviews. Each teacher engaged in critical reflection, discussed their motivation and efficacy, and described actions related to a range of topics. Specifically, the topics primarily coalesced around the importance of understanding their students' background experiences, the value of diversifying their course content, the need to affirm their minoritized students, and understanding student-teacher relational dynamics. These reflections were discussed across the nested contexts of the classroom, school and district, as well as society and the education system. Their discussion of these topics across contexts varied in relevant factors described but shared the throughline of the same core topic. For example, Reese and Parker reflected on the value of incorporating their student's cultural backgrounds into their classroom teaching while also pointing out the lack of diversity in teacher training and the teaching force itself as a factor in why equitable teaching does not happen on a system-wide basis.

Teachers' engagement in reflection and action from a systems perspective is one notable contribution of this study. In the above example described, Parker and Reese were able to connect a common issue that they saw at the classroom level to a macro level issue they saw within the education system as a whole. This critical analysis is a foundational component to thinking about inequity as systemic and deeply rooted with many levers that operate in concert. They all recognized that the inequality they noticed in their classrooms permeated multiple contexts in ways that were interconnected.

As they gained a greater understanding of systemic oppression and the related educational experiences of their students, their critical reflection became more sophisticated. They subsequently described engaging in more critical action; however, what differentiated them was the quality of their critical action. Initially, all of the teachers started off by engaging in critical action that relied on students to diversify the content. More specifically, they allowed students the agency to make deviations from the course curriculum wherever they felt they could make a connection to their own culture. Terry, Valen, and Wynn continued to engage in this kind of critical action across their interviews by having students drive class discussions or present ways the course content connected to their cultures. On the other hand, Parker and Reese grew into taking responsibility for researching the diversity in their subject area and bringing that material into the course content.

Reese and Parker both discussed taking the time to research diverse contributors to their field. For example, Reese talked about going to the library and finding information on a variety of Black, Brown, and LGBTQIA+ contributors to her subject area. Parker discussed researching prominent diverse contributors to his subject area and having students research those contributors as well. In contrast to Valen who struggled to diversify her course content, Reese and Parker also masterfully incorporated diversity into their course content while still addressing the required learning standards. Thus, they brought diversity into their course curriculum without treating those contributions as add-ons to the traditional learning standards. Reese's unit that incorporated lessons on code switching and Parker's discussions of his subject area related to breast cancer and the relevance of a minoritized contributor to that area are excellent examples of this. In addition, within each of those lessons, Parker and Reese empowered their students with counternarratives. Reese discussed the validity of informal language and the ways standards for

English marginalize groups of students unnecessarily. Relatedly, Parker discussed the value of his subject in the study of breast cancer to the denigrating of Black Lives Matter by asking his students to think about false equivalencies and tying it back to the subject. These teachers brought students' backgrounds into the curriculum and engaged in social justice teaching.

One common factor between Reese and Parker is the way that they related to their students. Both made a point to mitigate power dynamics between teacher and student by actively making themselves relatable through language, music, and personal interests. In contrast, Wynn and Valen maintained a level of distance from their students by emphasizing their differences in life experiences, values, and identity across their interviews. Terry described being able to understand students who were socioeconomically disadvantaged given his own upbringing; however, he engaged in action that saved students from the effects of poverty as opposed to empowering them with the capacity to mitigate the effects of poverty themselves. Not surprisingly, Parker and Reese were the only teachers to describe their work as being in service of the betterment of society.

Both the critical consciousness and sociopolitical development literature bases describe agency as mediating and moderating factors to critical action. Another key differentiating feature of Parker and Reese that set them apart from their peers in their critical action is their motivation and efficacy. They both often talked about their motivation and contemplated their efficacy. This was particularly heightened in the third interview. On the other hand, Valen also reflected on her motivation and efficacy in a comparable amount, but her critical action did not weave students' backgrounds into the course content. Furthermore, after receiving pushback for critical action she engaged in, her efficacy was diminished, and her classroom critical action ceased.

A Critical Consciousness Development Model

Building from the sociopolitical development model as well as the findings from the current study, I have proposed a critical consciousness development model for the teachers in this professional development program. This model can be seen in figure 2.

First, in alignment with the nested contexts in which participants discussed critical reflection and critical action, those two elements of the critical consciousness developmental model are represented with concentric circles that display an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The arrows between the circles highlight participants' reflections that connected nested contexts such as Parker and Reese's reflection on the link between the teacher pipeline and the need for cultural diversity in curricular and instructional practices.

Second, another contribution of this study is the addition of self-analysis to the model. Over time, as the participants in this study thought about their beliefs about others and others' experiences of oppression, they also began to locate their own social positioning in the social hierarchy. More recently, scholars of critical consciousness have begun to think about the role of identity (Matthews et al., 2020). Prior literature describes White racial socialization experiences in racially and ethnically homogenous communities (Bonilla-Silva et al., 2006), lack of interracial contact (Charles, 2003), and teacher training that focuses more on teachers' technical knowledge than preparing teachers to effectively lead classrooms of diverse students (Gay & Kirkland, 2003) as being key factors in teachers lack of awareness of their social positioning. Previous research with Black boys included identity as part of the opportunity structure; however, for the teachers in this study who never thought about their identity prior to this PD, their self-analysis was a key component of how they viewed the world around them. This study highlights the importance of attending to teachers' ability to reflect on their own identity as they develop their critical consciousness.

Teachers are acculturated within the same whitewashed education system that their minoritized students are trying to navigate. In order for teachers to approach their practice with an equity-based mental model for engaging with students, they have to come to understand who they are in relation to their students and the world around them. As noted by the teachers' emphasis on White privilege, it is particularly important for teachers to understand their racialized selves in this work. When teachers are able to make sense of their own racial privilege, they are able to engage in more quality critical action as was the case for Parker and Reese. Understanding their own identity gives teachers an opportunity to build capacity to continue the dynamic and contextualized activity of teaching equitably. In addition, as noted by the bidirectional arrow from critical reflection and self-analysis to critical action, as teachers engage in critical action, they continually gain insight that allows them to reappraise their conceptions of self.

Another addition is the bidirectional arrow between critical reflection and self-analysis and motivation and efficacy. As teachers were able to reflect critically on inequity and examine their self, their motivation and efficacy was impacted. For example, as Terry gained a deeper understanding of his White racial identity and the oppression of others, he became more motivated to redress oppression within education and gained the confidence to facilitate class discussions.

Finally, a bidirectional arrow was added between opportunity structure and the rest of the elements in the model. This was included to show that each element in the model impacted the opportunity structure influences that teachers drew upon to develop their critical consciousness. For example, Valen, Wynn and Reese described their upbringing as an opportunity structure influence that affected their efficacy in engaging in equitable practice. Conversely, as they

gained more efficacy and engaged in more equitable practice, they reappraised aspects of their upbringing. This model depicts the process of critical consciousness development for the five focal teachers and demonstrates the bidirectional impacts that are apparent over time.

Implications

This study has implications for practitioners, scholars and other education system stakeholders. First, this study highlights the importance of White teachers' ability to locate themselves in the power structure and understand their identity in relation to their students and the world around them as a necessary criterion for engaging in equitable teaching practice, such as culturally responsive teaching. Scholars and teacher educators have previously emphasized the importance of teachers understanding their identity to engage in effective teaching of minoritized students (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). White teachers, in particular, often espouse egalitarian beliefs that are divorced from the criticality to make equitable decisions in teaching (Van den Bergh et al., 2010). Thus, professional training for White teachers should include a critical investigation into the self.

In addition, this study offers key insights for scholars of critical consciousness as well as those particularly interested in the critical consciousness development of educators. Although this study focused on five teachers in a unique teaching and learning context (i.e., CRT PD amidst social and political unrest), it offers a way to think about critical consciousness as a developmental process that includes a conception of self and mutually influencing elements.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study offers contributions to the field, it is not without limitations. First, the interview protocols that were used in this study changed at each interview time. This presents some difficulty in making sense of longitudinal comparisons and tracking teachers' critical

consciousness growth. Even though the study presented a rigorous case analysis, it should be noted that changes in questions across interviews may have elicited responses that evoked more or less demonstrations of critical consciousness. Second, while critical consciousness is a necessary element of effective culturally responsive teaching, the larger study these data are from was not grounded in theorizing about critical consciousness development. Thus, interviews were not designed to invoke responses that would demonstrate critical consciousness. Finally, the scholarship that relied on to elucidate the conceptual elements of both critical consciousness and sociopolitical development have primarily been applied to work with people of color; therefore, more work is needed to validate the use of these constructs and models with White adults.

Future work should address the gaps of this study while also continuing to explore critical consciousness development across contexts. The teachers in this study had a unique sense of camaraderie among one another, administrative support for their engagement in the PD, and a diverse group of students to work with. While critical consciousness development is particularly useful for teachers of systematically marginalized students and their capacity to teach effectively and equitably, as alluded to by Reese and Parker in this study, students who are more privileged also need critically conscious teachers. One way to engage in equity-based teaching is to also diversify the curriculum and learning strategies that more privileged and White students are exposed to as well. Future work should explore what this looks like and the related effects.

Conclusion

Over the course of a two-year professional development program for culturally responsive teaching, the teachers in this study expanded their critical consciousness. They each had their own unique key features to their growth but shared many similarities as well. Their

cases highlight the dynamic way that critical consciousness develops in a transactional and nonlinear fashion. Further, their ability to analyze the self was key to each teacher's journey into critical consciousness and should be considered in future professional teacher training. In alignment with prior scholarship, this study demonstrated that teachers' critical consciousness development is a necessary component of equitable practice.

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Appendix A

Table 1

Guiding Criteria Used for Identifying Evidence of Critical Consciousness

Awareness
Statements that question or critique a singular or dominant narrative
Awareness of/challenge of narratives or mechanisms that maintain inequity in the U.S.
Direct references to inequality, injustice, social justice, power and/or various axes oppression
Reference to critique of or challenge to what is normative/ taken for granted/ status quo
Challenge or critique of curriculum/content/school as neutral or apolitical OR framing of curriculum/content/school as political or not neutral
Explicit reference to critical consciousness, critical pedagogy or related concept
Challenging or critiquing elements that undergird oppression in the US, including, meritocracy, individualism and universalism.
Challenging or critiquing explicitly the status quo.

Note. Quotations were selected if they met one or more of the above criteria.

Appendix B

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes for Thematic Analysis

Theme	Subtheme	Description
Self-Analysis		Active reflection on own identity, beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, biases; evidence of thinking about how their identity affects their role as a teacher, how students see them, how they interact with students OR a desire to learn more and reflect on the above.
Critical Reflection	Micro	Statements that demonstrate acknowledgment of the validity of plurality and/or accepting difference **within the classroom/class**; discussing/mentioning/alluding to some sort of asymmetry, inequality, unfair/unearned treatment (in resources, life outcomes etc.) with or without clear and direct connection to systemic privilege and oppression; reflecting on events (e.g. class discussions) or interactions (e.g. student teacher interactions, peer to peer interactions or whole class) in which systemic oppression/privilege is playing a role; **teachers may or may not directly acknowledge the role of privilege/oppression**
	Meso	Statements that demonstrate acknowledgment of the validity of plurality and/or accepting difference **within the whole school/district**; discussing/mentioning/alluding to some sort of asymmetry, inequality/inequity, unfair/unearned treatment (in resources, life outcomes etc.) across the whole school or district (as opposed to the classroom) with or without clear and direct connection to systemic privilege and oppression; reflecting on events (e.g. disagreement between groups of students, professional development, academic tracking) or interactions (e.g. students' racialized interactions with other teachers) in which systemic oppression/privilege is playing a role; teachers may or may not directly acknowledge the role of privilege/oppression. These statements may show understanding (or lack thereof) of how systems of privilege impact groups of students across the whole school or district; how the school/district demographics impact schooling experiences for students; any reflection about how the school or district is supporting equitable schooling experiences.
	Macro	Statements that demonstrate acknowledgment of the validity of plurality and/or accepting difference within the whole education system, state, broader sociopolitical context; discussing/mentioning/alluding to some sort of asymmetry, inequity, unfair/unearned treatment (in resources, life outcomes etc.) across the whole education system, state, several districts with or without clear and direct connection to systemic privilege and oppression; reflecting on events (e.g. disagreement between groups of students, professional development) or interactions (e.g. students' racialized interactions with other teachers) in which systemic oppression/privilege is playing a role - teachers may or may not directly acknowledge the role of privilege/oppression. These statements may show understanding (or lack thereof) of how systems of privilege and/or oppression impact groups of students across the whole school or district; how the school/district demographics impact schooling experiences for students; any reflection about how the school or district is supporting equitable schooling

		experiences. Mention of elements of the overall education system or society generally. These are usually things beyond participants' control.
Critical Motivation and Efficacy	Efficacy	Feeling that one has the ability to effectively engage in critical action (i.e. equity-based teaching practices, within-school equity-based actions/behaviors/initiatives, policy work).
	Motivation	Feeling motivated or passionate about engaging in critical action (i.e. equity-based teaching practices, within-school equity-based actions/behaviors/initiatives, policy work).
Critical Action	Micro	Equity-based action **they** performed or were part of, **include** reflection on potential actions; things they mention doing in the classroom or directly for their students for the purpose of mitigating inequity; these actions do not extend beyond their classroom.
	Meso	Equity-based action **they** performed or were part of, **include** reflection on potential actions; things they mention doing in the school or school district for the purpose of mitigating inequity; these actions do not extend beyond their school or district.
	Macro	Equity-based action **they** performed or were part of, **include** reflection on potential specific actions; things they mention doing for the purpose of mitigating inequity in education more broadly at the state or federal level; these actions target policy or widespread changes to practice.
Opportunity Structures	Admin	Any mention of things that helped participants develop their critical consciousness that are part of learning from admin or being pushed to learn from admin interest or behaviors or backgrounds. Admin encouraging them to join the PD. This can be a specific experience or what they THINK would be helpful for them to understand sociopolitical issues and inequity.
	Colleagues	Any mention of things that helped participants develop their critical consciousness as a result of interactions with their colleagues.
	Students	Any mention of things that helped participants develop their critical consciousness as a result of interactions with their students.
	PD	Any mention of things that helped participants develop their critical consciousness that are part of the events or interactions of the action research professional development on culturally responsive teaching.
	Social Life	Any mention of things that helped participants develop their critical consciousness that are part of adult home life, personal life and relationships, friendships, attending events.
	Upbringing	Any mention of things that helped participants develop their critical consciousness that are part of participants' childhood or past, parents, home life as youth, etc.; sphere of influence; include racial socialization.

Appendix C

Table 1

Frequencies of Code Occurrences for Participants in Interview 1

	Participants				
Code	Terry	Reese	Wynn	Parker	Valen
1 Critical Reflection (n = 153)					
1a. *Self*	5	18	10	6	15
1b. Micro	7	13	11	4	11
1c. Meso	3	6	16	4	7
1d. Macro	1	11	1	3	1
Total Responses:	16	48	38	17	34
2. Critical Motivation and Efficacy (n = 32)					
2a. Efficacy	0	8	3	1	3
2b. Motivation	4	6	1	1	5
Total Responses:	4	14	4	2	8
3. Critical Action (n = 31)					
3a. Micro	9	4	5	4	3
3b. Meso	1	2	0	0	3
3c. Macro	0	1	0	0	1
Total Responses:	10	9	5	4	3
4. Opportunity Structure (n = 33)					

4a. Students	0	1	1	0	1
4b. Administrators	1	1	0	2	0
4c. PD	0	0	5	7	2
4d. Upbringing	1	6	2	0	1
4e. Social life	1	0	0	1	1
Total Responses:	3	7	8	10	5

Appendix D

Table 2

Frequencies of Code Occurrences for Participants in Interview 2

	Participants				
Code	Terry	Reese	Wynn	Parker	Valen
1 Critical Reflection (n = 74)					
1a. *Self*	2	7	5	1	8
1b. Micro	3	12	4	5	5
1c. Meso	3	2	0	0	1
1d. Macro	2	5	2	2	5
Total Responses:	10	26	11	8	19
2. Critical Motivation and Efficacy (n = 27)					
2a. Efficacy	0	0	5	7	0
2b. Motivation	1	1	1	11	1
Total Responses:	1	1	6	18	1
3. Critical Action (n = 27)					
3a. Micro	2	4	3	4	4
3b. Meso	0	0	4	0	2
3c. Macro	0	1	1	1	1
Total Responses:	2	5	8	5	7
4. Opportunity Structure (n = 36)					

4a. Students	0	1	0	0	0
4b. Administrators	0	1	0	0	0
4c. PD	5	0	7	5	3
4d. Upbringing	0	6	0	0	0
4e. Social life	0	0	2	1	5
Total Responses:	5	8	9	6	8

Appendix E

Table 3

Frequencies of Code Occurrences for Participants in Interview 3

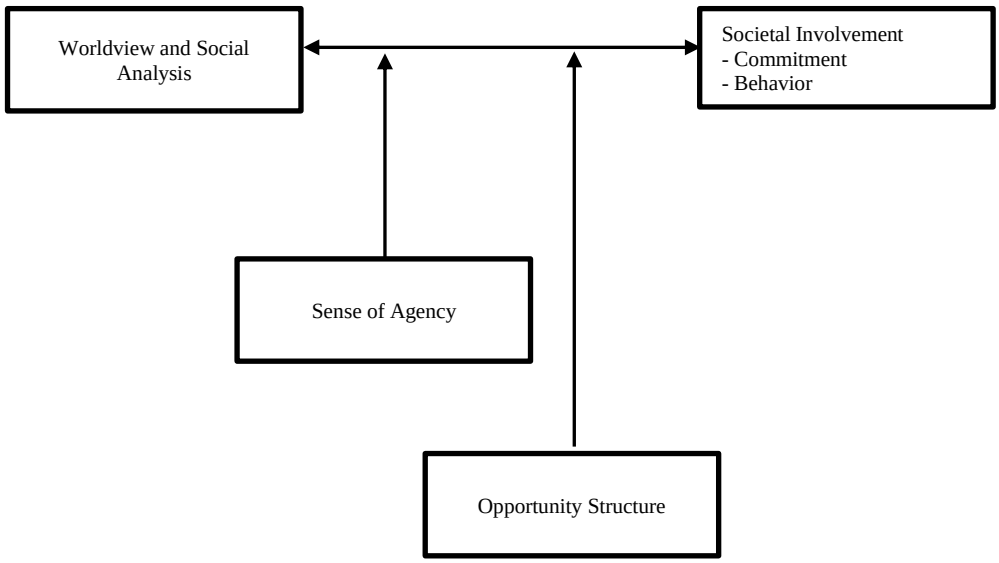
	Participants				
Code	Terry	Reese	Wynn	Parker	Valen
1 Critical Reflection (n = 217)					
1a. *Self*	8	19	20	9	12
1b. Micro	4	14	11	15	14
1c. Meso	6	3	8	10	6
1d. Macro	13	18	7	10	10
Total Responses:	31	54	46	44	42
2. Critical Motivation and Efficacy (n = 86)					
2a. Efficacy	1	14	3	22	13
2b. Motivation	5	3	3	18	4
Total Responses:	6	17	6	40	17
3. Critical Action (n = 79)					
3a. Micro	10	26	7	13	6
3b. Meso	2	0	1	8	1
3c. Macro	1	1	0	3	0
Total Responses:	13	27	8	24	7
4. Opportunity Structure (n = 87)					

4a. Students	4	13	1	1	1
4b. Administrators	3	2	0	0	0
4c. PD	9	9	7	7	7
4d. Upbringing	1	1	1	0	1
4e. Social life	4	4	6	3	2
Total Responses:	21	29	15	11	11

Appendix F

Figure 1

Sociopolitical Development Theory



Appendix G

Figure 2

Model of Teachers Critical Consciousness Development