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Relationships, Relevance, and Reflection: How White Teachers Are Working to Dismantle White Supremacy in Their Classrooms Through Culturally Responsive Education

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Relationships, Relevance, and Reflection: How White Teachers Are Working to Dismantle White Supremacy in Their Classrooms Through Culturally Responsive Education

Abstract

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How White Teachers Are Working to Dismantle White Supremacy in Their Classrooms

Through Culturally Responsive Education

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Zion W. Gezaw

June 2022

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Title: Relationships, Relevance, and Reflection: How White Teachers are Working to
Dismantle White Supremacy in Their Classrooms Through Culturally Responsive
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Keywords: White supremacy, culturally responsive education, White teachers, accountability

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Significance of Study

The concept of White supremacy is one that has been shied away from for far too long. White supremacy explains the continued pattern of oppression that our society continues to perpetuate on Black communities each and every day. Whiteness is centered through all systems and structures, as it has become the norm for as long as we can all remember. This ideal has been seeped into our education systems for years and has continued to harm Black students, specifically, for quite some time. Through the years, White teachers have been continuing to perpetuate the White supremacist ideals and systems in their classrooms, as they had not yet reckoned with their implicit biases or privilege.

Through the implementation of culturally responsive practices, White teachers have been able to confront their biases to work to create a positive, transformative learning experience for Black students. This study works to provide concrete examples for all White teachers to use, in their classrooms, to dismantle White supremacy in their everyday work with students. Through this study, teachers are able to understand how to build and cultivate strong, authentic relationships with their Black students, comprehend

the different critical paradigms needed to confront their implicit biases and recognize their own White privilege through deep reflection, along with working to de-center Whiteness in their curriculum, to make lessons more engaging and relevant for their Black students.

Persistent Problem of Practice

Personal Context

My battle facing inequitable practices in the classroom began at an early age. Starting in 4th grade, I constantly faced inequitable behavior from my teacher. It seemed no matter how hard I tried to be the "good" student, I was always met with harsh criticism and bias. Her actions of sending me to the principal's office every day, blaming me for everything that went wrong in the classroom and her overall lack of support arose from a bias she had never discussed. Because my teacher's bias was not confronted and addressed, I had an extremely negative school experience, which caused my lack of trust for teachers, for the majority of my educational career. If bias is denied and ignored, it can be detrimental to best practices in the classroom.

Within my own experience as a Black student in education, I have experienced a lack of culturally responsive curriculum, disciplinary actions that perpetuated the school to prison pipeline, along with deeply inauthentic relationships with my teachers, specifically with my White teachers. They were unable to relate to my lived experiences, especially as a daughter of two Ethiopian immigrant parents, who often worked multiple jobs to provide for the family. Expectations for me, as a Black female student in education, were often lowered due to teachers' lack of trust in my abilities, due to their deep bias and prejudice that were never discussed or interrupted throughout their careers.

Through my experience as a Black student, many White teachers did not take the time to build an authentic relationship with me. I did not feel a connection with my teachers and felt as if I held a space within the classroom, which made me unwilling to participate in class. My teachers did not encourage me to bring my authentic individuality to the classroom, which felt extremely dismissive.

Throughout my entire educational career, I was taught about the White perspective - all about White history, books written by White authors, and other ideas that perpetuated White supremacist practices in the educational system. I went through the majority of my educational career without ever reading a book written by a Black author, the lessons that were being taught to me were never relatable to my lived experiences and real-world connections were not made during our lessons. I started to truly realize how racist the curriculum was. The curriculum that I was being taught in school was all White-centered and did not resemble any of my lived experiences or history of my people. Because "I saw firsthand the systemic racism inherent in the educational system," (Salazar & Lerner, 2019, p. 33) I often did not read the books assigned to me in high school because I was protesting the fact that our teachers continued to have us read and learn about the White narrative, rather than creating a more culturally responsive curriculum. In order to best support Black students, our teachers must be "utilizing students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161). In order to create strong relationships with students, especially students of color, teachers must learn about the students' home lives, cultures, lived experiences and backgrounds, in order to make the curriculum and lessons more engaging, meaningful and culturally relevant.

As a Black student, I wanted to learn about my culture in the classroom and wanted to learn about the cultures of my classmates as well. As Milner (2011) suggests, "educators who create culturally relevant learning contexts are those who see students' cultures as an asset, not a detriment to their success" (p. 69). When students are able to be a part of a culturally responsive classroom, they are able to see themselves in their classroom, along with feeling a sense of belonging. They're able to see their culture in the daily lessons, which in turn, makes them understand the material better and engage more throughout the lesson. Encouraging students to learn about other perspectives, cultures and lived experiences could create a positive impact upon their learning and set them up for success to be competent humans in society, once they are out in the real world.

Professional Context

My educational experience helped me realize the change I wanted to create within our current educational system, which led me to study at the University of Denver. During my undergraduate degree, I unleashed my passion to learn more about our unjust society and how to create changes within the system to best serve BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color). Throughout my time in the Teacher Education Program at DU, I was able to learn about what a 'good teacher' should look like and how they should best support their students. I learned that my true calling is to serve as a Black teacher who will disrupt and dismantle the deeply embedded supremacist systems in place. It is my goal to continue to be "the rose that grew from concrete" (Salazar & Lerner, 2018, p. 28) who thrives through this work to best serve BIPOC learners.

In many urban districts, White teachers may think they are being 'good teachers,' when the reality of many schools is that teachers are typically holding lower expectations for their students and often saw themselves as victims, working in their school districts (Hyland, 2015, p. 436). Black students can be harmed in these classrooms with teachers who are unable to best support them, due to the teacher's own biases that have yet to be unearthed. Hyland (2015) argues that White teachers may unintentionally "perpetuate a racist status quo" (p. 430) as they claim that they are 'good teachers,' especially as they teach Black/African - American students. Hyland (2015) also examines how "Whiteness is intimately linked to the subordination and oppression of people of color," (p. 431) which in this case, as a White teacher who teaches Black students, it is critical to acknowledge your White privilege and power both in and outside of the classroom.

Relationships between Black students and White teachers could also be improved dramatically if students felt as if they are a part of the central space and classroom culture, activities and curriculum; they want to feel a sense of belonging each day, which could be achieved by implementing a strong, culturally responsive classroom environment (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In a culturally responsive classroom environment, power is shared between teachers and students. White teachers, who typically hold the power and privilege in the classroom, emphasize the importance of sharing the power in the classroom and work daily to "discourage the hierarchy" in the classroom (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017, p. 63). When a teacher works to continually understand their power and privilege within in a White supremacist society that impacts their relationships with their students, they will be able to share their power with the students and empower them to claim their education and be in charge of their own learning. Black students are often

marginalized and unheard in society, especially within the educational realm, which means White teachers must work hard to ensure their Black students are being heard, empowered, and valued each day.

Teachers must work to build authentic, strong partnerships with students by inviting them to "bring their full identities and life experiences into the learning community" which "lays the foundation for a co-learning community in which students know, respect, and learn from each other" (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017, p. 63). For example, by providing spaces for students to lead classroom discussions, select and assign readings to peers, co - create and construct lessons and content for the classroom, not only will student engagement grow, but students will feel a true sense of belonging and a truthful, authentic relationship between teacher to student will begin to form (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017). Not only is the student experience enhanced within a culturally responsive classroom, but the teaching experience is improved as there is a strong trust built between teacher and student, after the co-creation of the culturally responsive culture in the classroom (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995). In my experience as an educator and student, without true, authentic relationships, there is a severe lack of trust between teacher and student, which then may get misinterpreted as disrespect, for both parties.

In urban schools, there are high discrepancies between the disciplinary data for Black students compared to their White counterparts, which in turn, continues to perpetuate the school to prison pipeline epidemic, an issue perpetuated by White supremacy (Dancy, 2014). The school to prison pipeline refers to the "disturbing national trend in which children are funneled out of public schools and into juvenile and criminal

justice systems" (2014, p. 476). The suspension rates of African American young males have gone up significantly over the past few years, which in turn makes the dropout rates rise as well because these students feel as if they should not continue with school if they continuously get suspended. Gregory et al. (2011) examine how

> Black students are two to three times more likely to be suspended than White students and the differential rates of suspension are important because of the correlational research that shows suspended students are more likely to be truant, miss instructional time, and drop out of high school. (p. 909)

There are other variables influencing the high suspension rates of Black students other than misbehavior, and these suspension and dropout rates are correlated with the disconnect between the teachers and students (Dancy, 2014; Gregory et al., 2011). As Dancy (2014) argues, "the emergence of the rhetoric of colorblindness obscures the workings of institutional power and challenges the notions of Black disadvantage due to racial barriers" (p. 180). Black students are being criminalized and have so many stereotypes against them before they even enter the classrooms. It seems as though once they make a mistake or misbehave, they get the harshest punishment available. Black students have a myriad of stereotypes against them but the worst part about this is that many educators tend to use that to incriminate them, which becomes a disadvantage in the classroom for these young, Black students. No matter what the teachers have heard about the student, whether it be from other teachers, or their own negative assumptions, the student should not suffer the consequences of their preconceived notions.

As a Black educator myself, I have noticed these same trends happening within Denver Public Schools. I have observed our BIPOC students being given lower-level work, having negative relationships with their teachers, and receiving harsher

consequences than their White counterparts. This study is necessary to show how White teachers are working to dismantle the White supremacist practices and ideals in their classrooms. A possible finding of this study could show how White teachers must reflect upon these practices, along with their own identities in order to become culturally responsive educators which would help dismantle the current White supremacist educational system that currently exists.

Societal Context

In history, White supremacy has exposed itself through "groups like the Ku Klux Klan, who proudly parade their overt belief in the supremacy of whiteness, and the racial hatred and prejudice that accompanies this belief" (Applebaum, 2016, p. 3-4). However, as the years have progressed, White supremacy has started to reveal itself in a less explicit manner (Applebaum). White supremacy is manifested through a slew of characteristics that continue to be perpetuated daily, especially within the school systems (Jones & Okun, 2001). Both in school and at work, people continue to idolize perfectionism, a continued sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, among many other systems of supremacy (Jones & Okun).

Community Partner

The community partner for this project is Dr. Franita Ware, Program Manager for Equity Initiatives on the CELT team in Denver Public Schools. She supported my work as the researcher through monthly check-ins with updates around the study and data collection. I conducted the study at an urban middle school in the Denver Metro area, throughout the 2021-2022 school year. Dr. Christian Sawyer, the principal of the middle school, has also agreed to support me through this study. This study would benefit DPS

and the field of education as it would analyze the work White teachers are doing to actively dismantle White supremacy in education and would allow teachers to critically reflect upon their practices around teaching and lesson planning to best support Black students. In accordance with the DPS initiative of the Black Excellence Resolution, the data collected would support evidence as to how teachers are following their school's Black Excellence Plan to close the opportunity gap for Black students (Rowe & Olson, 2019). The study will also show where teachers are struggling to close gaps as well, which could inform future studies and research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine how White middle school teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, through their implementation of culturally responsive practices. This study will work to provide concrete examples of how teachers can work to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms through culturally responsive education. This study works to prove how to build strong relationships, how to create relevant curriculum, and what type of self-reflection teachers need to engage in to unpack their own implicit biases.

Research Questions

The research question and sub questions were developed based on the persistent problem of practice. The central research question for this study is *How do White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in middle school classrooms, through their implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices?* Sub questions are included below:

1. *How are White teachers implementing a culturally responsive classroom environment for Black students?*

2. *How do White educators plan and enact a culturally responsive curriculum for Black students?*

3. *How do White teachers' identities influence their perceptions of and interactions with Black students?*

4. *What supports and barriers do White educators experience when attempting to dismantle White supremacy in education, through their use of culturally responsive practices?*

Definition of Terms

Terms used throughout this work may have many varied meanings. For the purpose of this body of work, terms will have the following agreed upon definitions:

AAVE

AAVE refers to "African American Vernacular English" (Saad, 2020, p. 226).

Ally Cookies

Ally cookies are considered praise for people who believe that they are not racist. (Saad, 2020, p. 226).

Antiblackness

Antiblackness refers to someone who is hostile to Black people and can be found all over the world. Through antiblackness, Black bodies are seen as inhumane, disposable and inherently problematic (Saad, 2020, p. 236; Warren & Coles, 2020, p. 382).

Anti-Racist

Someone who is anti-racist works to express the idea that racial groups are equal and support the idea of racial inequality. (Kendi, 2019, pp. 13 & 24).

BIPOC

BIPOC is a term that is used to express demographics of "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color" (Saad, 2020, p. 226).

Culturally Competent

Being culturally competent works to create awareness of different cultures, worldviews and perspectives. Culturally competent humans work to create a positive narrative towards cultural diversity and others' differences among diverse groups of people. (Ukpokodu, 2011, p. 438).

Digital Blackface

Digital Blackface refers to "the digital world, the use of emojis, GIFs, and memes featuring Black people by people who hold white privilege" (Saad, 2020, p. 228).

Optical Allyship

Optical allyship refers to someone who believes they are an ally, without doing any of the work of allyship, also known as performative allyship. (Saad, 2020, p. 228).

Race

This is considered to be a social construct that allows for power to be held by the dominant culture of people. (Kendi, 2019, p. 35).

Racist

Racist is the idea that someone is supporting oppressive ideals and norms within society (Kendi, 2019, p. 13).

Self - Efficacy

This is seen as one who cares for oneself and sees themselves as being worthy, beautiful, smart, and capable. It can be recognized within the community as Black freedom and requires all to have a positive self-concept of themselves (Warren & Coles, 2020, p. 390).

Tokenism

This is seen as the recruitment of people of color and using them as the example of diversity and equality in your workforce, classroom, etc. (Saad, 2020, p. 228).

White Apathy

This is the feeling of detachment about racism, typically felt by people with White privilege (Saad, 2020, p. 229).

White Centering

This is known as centering of Whiteness in everyday norms, ideas, and societal constructs. It is seen as the idea that Whiteness is the norm (Saad, 2020, p. 229).

White Exceptionalism

This is the belief that people with White privilege are not to blame for White supremacy, instead, they are exempt from it altogether (Saad, 2020, p. 229).

White Fragility

White teachers who become triggered or defense when discussing race or racial issues, have a sense of White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018).

Whiteness

The idea of Whiteness stems from the fact that White people are able to ignore systems of privilege and oppression, as they go through life, without having to acknowledge any societal issues at hand (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995).

White Privilege

White privilege is seen as an invisible package of unearned privileges that are used each day to gain access to specific tools to everyday privileges of life (McIntosh, 1988).

White Saviorism

White saviorism is seen as the idea that White people must save BIPOC and without White people, BIPOC would be left helpless (Saad, 2020, p. 230).

White Silence

This idea explains how White people often stay silent, when it comes to issues of race, racism, oppression, etc. (Saad, 2020, p. 230).

White Supremacy

This idea explains the continued pattern of oppression that our society continues to live through, each day. The idea that Whiteness is centered and it is considered the norm for all systems and structures has been engrained in our everyday ideals and norms (Applebaum, 2016, pp. 3-4).

Overview of Research Methodology

This research study will use an educational criticism and connoisseurship method to critique the current educational system and bring to light how schools are continuing to perpetuate White supremacist policies, systems and structures (Annamma, 2016). I utilized multiple interviews, classroom and planning observations, along with collecting artifacts, such as lesson planning documents, classroom decor and student facing materials, to decipher how White teachers are working to dismantle White supremacy and become culturally responsive teachers (Eisner, 2003; Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Participant Selection

During the recruitment process, participants were chosen through particular criteria (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 1990; Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Teachers filled out a Google form in which they stated their racial identity, age, years of teaching experience, grade level and specific subject taught, gender, and class (See Appendix B). When selecting participants, the teachers had to fit the criteria of identifying as a White teacher

of any gender, be of a diverse range of social class, grade level and subject taught, with an age ranging between 21 - 66, and having a range of 1-50 years of teaching experience when applying to be a participant (Leonardo, 2002). The community partner sent emails to the participant pool, asking them to complete the Google form survey.

Data Collection

Due to my connoisseurship and experience, I decided that 30-60 minutes per observation would be sufficient. As the researcher, I have experiential knowledge in supervision and evaluation of teachers; with this in mind, I used my experiential knowledge to observe teachers within this time frame. I also observed teachers in different class periods, to get a sense of how the teachers are making connections and teaching culturally responsively to a myriad of students. The first observation was completed with an emergent foci, the second with a prefigured foci - in terms of theories and curriculum ideologies and the third observation will utilize a prefigured foci through the use of the FEET rubric to ensure that teachers were being observed through a culturally responsive teaching and coaching approach (Uhrmacher et al. 2017).

After I chose the four participants, I emailed each participant, asking what name they would like for their pseudonym for this study. Due to COVID-19, teachers' schedules have been in such disarray, which created some complications, when it came to trying to create a schedule for data collection. Often, there were days and times where I scheduled interviews and observations, but due to the current state of the school, most things had to be rescheduled, which delayed the timeline for completion of the study.

Because of the constant changes to the schedule, interviews and observations for each teacher were not done in order, as I had originally planned. The research sequence ranged from October 2021 to January 2022. Each teacher completed all parts of the research sequence at different times; some teachers were able to complete their data within a month, while others completed theirs within a couple of months.

Data Analysis

Through the Delve research tool, I read through every interview transcription, along with all observation fieldnotes and coded each piece of data through words that reflect how teachers were acting and saying through each observation and interview. The codes with the most snippets of data ended up being the most protruding themes in the data. Some codes were similar to others, which allowed me to consolidate the themes, based on the similarity of the codes.

Conclusion of Chapter

In urban education, Black students continue to be oppressed and marginalized in their classrooms, as their White teachers maintain the White supremacist ideals that the educational system was built upon (Picower, 2009). As White educators continue to perpetuate racial inequalities and injustices in schools, Black students continue to fall behind and are pushed into the criminal justice system (Dancy, 2014). White teachers must be held accountable for their actions and their continued lack of acknowledgement around their White privilege and fragility, which allow them to ignore the oppression that falls on Black students (Accapadi, 2007). White teachers must work to dismantle supremacist ideals in their classrooms, to best support their Black students (Arneback &

Jämte, 2021). Additional research is needed to provide support and examples to other teachers about how to dismantle White supremacy as a White teacher, who holds the power and privilege in society.

In my experience, these systems continue to oppress people of color, as this way of thinking is not necessarily the norm in other cultures, which makes it difficult to adapt to, when living within our current society. The research examines how imperative it is for White teachers to develop awareness and critical consciousness around race and issues of power and privilege in this oppressive society (Ayers et al., 1998; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Irvine, 1990; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). White teachers must acknowledge their privilege and power by "challenging stereotypical constructions," in order to "develop greater capacity to identify and empathize with their students" (Picower, 2009, p. 199). Society continues to oppress people of color through their continued perpetuation of supremacist practices and beliefs, which needs to be dismantled early, especially in schools, which have a huge impact on a students' lived experience and confidence, as they grow up.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the research studies regarding White supremacist ideals and the impacts they have on Black students in education. While there is a plethora of information on how Black students have been oppressed in education, there is a gap in research as to how White teachers are being held accountable in their work to dismantle the oppressive ideals in schools. This literature review is not meant to summarize every piece of literature pertaining to these different topics. Instead, it focuses on providing information and prior research pertaining to White supremacy, anti-blackness, colorblindness, the school to prison pipeline, accountability, critical care and trauma informed practices, humanizing pedagogy, transformative education, warm demander pedagogy, culturally responsive education and anti-racist teaching.

Review of the Literature

While many studies have focused on the problem of the criminalization of Black students in schools, few researchers have taken into consideration the reason why Black students continue to be marginalized in schools (Allen & White-Smith, 2014; Barnes &

Motz, 2018; Dancy, 2014; Skiba et al., 2002; Wun, 2018). The following review of literature explores how White supremacy continues to be perpetuated in schools. The research describes how White teachers often teach Black students, without critically reflecting upon their identity or their biases, in relation to their students, along with describing some long-term effects of this issue.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Framework

This section summarizes the theoretical framework that will be used to guide the observations and analyze the data to answer the research questions noted in Chapter 1.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1980) began in the 1970s and 1980s as a radical movement initiated by people of minoritized backgrounds to critically examine the law and how it intersects with race, while challenging the racial inequities in society. CRT was later introduced into educational studies in the mid-1990s (Gillborn, 2009, p. 126; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Critical Race Theory works to expose how various laws, systems, policies and practices continue to reinforce the standards of Whiteness; the norming of these systems problematizes bodies that are different from the White supremacist ideals (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Goodwin, 2003). Gillborn (2009) explains that there have been central themes that have emerged throughout the literature to help characterize the CRT movement. As CRT suggests, racism is something that is permanent and must be challenged (Bell, 1992; Bernal 2002; Crenshaw et al., 1995;

Delgado & Stefancic 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995; Lynn, et al., 2002; Tate 1997).

Wellman (1977) posits, in relation to CRT, racism is seen as a set of beliefs that defend

the advantages White people have, while those same ideals oppress people of color. Lynn

et al. (2013) argue that racism is normal and it is not a random, isolated act by individuals

in society (p. 37). Instead, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) argue that it is seen as the usual

way society operates through their everyday occurrences and is the everyday experience

of people of color in this country. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that race is a

continued factor in determining inequality in society (p. 48).

Gillborn (2009) posits that CRT offers a different perspective on White

supremacy than the limited understandings that are usually indicated in everyday

language. Gillborn (2009) argues that the term 'White supremacy' is typically used for

individuals and organizations that are overtly racist in obvious ways, which is not the

entire narrative, as there are more subtle forms of supremacy that apply a more powerful

influence. Lander (2011) suggests that while society is naturally racist, it is an

unrecognized idea within society due to White privilege, as White people do not

recognize their power and privilege in society.

Gillborn (2008) and Warmington (2014) found that CRT in education is a

framework "for approaching issues of education and social justice" that continues to

confront the persistence of racism, along with highlighting the educational inequalities in

public education. Boler (2004), Polluck (2004), Schultz (2003) and Thompson (2005)

argue that though race is such a crucial factor to discuss, conversations around race in

schools are too often silenced, rather than discussed. Lander (2011) explains that in

public education, in relation to CRT, the issue is the idea that White teachers do not see

themselves as racialized beings and are unaware of their privilege, which continues to perpetuate the racism happening in schools, due to their anger, guilt and denial when examining race issues in society (p. 353). As Lander (2011) explains, in a White supremacist society, teachers are not encouraged or asked to confront their own biases or work to teach critical race theory in their classes; in fact, CRT is often frowned upon, as it is a part of our educational background that the supremacist ideals do not align with. CRT makes people of the dominant culture, White people, quite uncomfortable, but discomfort allows for growth.

As Lynne, Jennings, and Hughes (2013) explain, scholars are no longer satisfied with the current work that is being done in education in terms of race, as people of color are feeling unheard, silenced and extremely disempowered because White fragility continues to get in the way of dismantling White supremacist systems that continue to pervade the structures of society, especially within education. Bell (1995), Delgado (1995), and Taylor (2009) suggest that by continuing to follow along with current ideologies in America, society continues to support ideas of White supremacy, as they are ingrained in the educational structures. Lander (2011) suggests there needs to be an anti-racist CRT based framework that would work to challenge students' 'everyday' understandings about power, racism, diversity and equality through this perspective. White teachers would also need to understand their own identities and how they are linked to power and continue to perpetuate White power structures in society. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) found that this CRT based framework would promote the 'voice' component of Critical Race Theory, as it "provides a way to communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed" (p. 58) in order to create change in society.

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Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), Lander (2011) and Tate (1997) explain that people of color often internalize the stereotypes that they are identified with, the CRT based framework would help them heal wounds caused by racial discrimination, as they are able to share their stories of their experiences, through this framework.

Conceptual Framework

This section summarizes the conceptual framework that will be used to guide the observations and analyze the data to answer the research questions noted in Chapter 1.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1995) explains 'culturally responsive pedagogy' as a framework that "addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (p. 469). Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that culturally responsive pedagogy works to produce students who can achieve academically, culturally competent students, as well as students who can critique the existing social order. Ladson-Billings (1995) explains that in a culturally responsive classroom, teachers must first be culturally competent, in order to support students in understanding, recognizing and critiquing social inequities happening in the world (p. 476). Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that as a culturally competent teacher, one must work to thoughtfully understand how they show up in this world, along with work to understand other's cultures, backgrounds and identities. Ladson-Billings (1995) posits that throughout their work in becoming culturally responsive and competent, teachers must be

honest about their own shortcomings and limitations in regards to ensuring student success.

Ladson-Billings (2014) dared to ask the question "what was right with these African American learners and what happened in the classrooms of teachers who experience pedagogical success with them" as the question that is constantly being asked is "what is wrong with the African American learners" (p. 74). Ladson-Billings (2014) argues that in order for teachers to have success in culturally responsive work, they must follow these three domains: academic success, sociopolitical consciousness and cultural competence (p. 75). Ladson-Billings (2014) explains that there is no clear language of success pertaining to African American students but rather deficit-based thinking around what Black students can achieve (p. 76). Ladson-Billings (2014) concludes that by focusing on student learning rather than solely on classroom behavior and management, along with cultural competence instead of cultural assimilation, students take more responsibility and interest in their education (p. 77). Ladson-Billings (2014) determines that "this is the secret behind culturally relevant pedagogy: the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of and appreciation for culture" (p. 77).

Structural Racism

This section summarizes the various aspects of structural racism that are used to marginalize and oppress BIPOC, both throughout society and within the education system.

White Supremacy

Matias and DiAngelo (2013) argue that while "White supremacy is rendered invisible" (p. 5), its power comes from the fact that it is a system that is not explicitly named, yet society follows it in all policies, systems and structures each day. Applebaum (2016) explains that there has been an abundance of research about "how White norms are systemically enforced in schools" through issues of whiteness and curriculum, whiteness and equity, educational policy, among other "forms of institutional racism" (p. 5).

According to Applebaum (2016), the term White supremacy has now become a practice that is not seen as being deliberately racist and may even stem from 'good' intentions; however, all aspects of White supremacy, no matter how overt, are forms of oppression. Jones and Okun (2001) explain that when one works to ignore the White centered norms and regulations that our systems and structures typically work to perpetuate, this could lead to ignoring the experiences and identities of BIPOC, which continues to create negative experiences for communities and students of color. Jones and Okun (2001) share that White supremacy is manifested through the following characteristics that continue to be perpetuated daily, especially within the school systems. Jones and Okun (2011) posit that these characteristics are damaging as they continue to promote White supremacy, while negatively impacting the lives of people of color. Jones & Okun (2011) concluded that both in school and at work, people continue to idolize perfectionism, a continued sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship over the written word, the belief that there is only one right way to do things, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, prioritizing individualism, the idea of 'more and bigger' progress, objectivity, and the right to

comfort. Jones and Okun (2001) explain, for example, the idea of fear of open conflict is one that can be seen in classrooms, quite often; the idea of diving into difficult conversations is one many people might shy away from, in order to avoid open conflict altogether. Jones and Okun (2001) found that these supremacist characteristics have become the norm and have been named as the standard for which people must live up to, each day, which can be truly exhausting and damaging, especially to people of color.

Applebaum (2016) explains how Critical Whiteness Studies "examines the meaning of white privilege and white pedagogy" through the lens of critically thinking through how crucial it is for White people to learn and acknowledge how they show up in society, "rather than deny how whites are complicit in racism" (p. 1). Applebaum (2016) argues that White privilege allows the "'good whites" to disregard the ways in which their seemingly good practices may be contributing to the maintenance of systemic injustice" (p. 9). Applebaum (2016) explains that it also gives White teachers the opportunity to "be comfortable with their Whiteness," while they continue to perpetuate the oppressive status quo (p. 9). Applebaum (2016) clarifies that consequently, the continued pattern seen in schools is that White fragility inhibits teachers to have conversations that highlight "how people who benefit from privilege are accountable for the reproduction of racial injustice" (p. 10). Picower (2009) defends that White teachers must acknowledge their privilege and power by working to challenge the current stereotypes, narratives and norms, in order to cultivate a stronger capacity to empathize with their students, especially students of color (p. 199). As Valenzuela (1999) and Noddings (1992) posit, empathizing with students allows for teachers to build stronger

relationships with their students and show their students how much they care for them, which allows students to develop critical care for themselves.

Cultural Disconnect

Solomona (2005) explicates that a great deal of White teachers enter the profession and start teaching at urban school districts without the prior knowledge regarding race and oppression in these areas. Solomona (2005) expresses that the research suggests that because of the communities in which these White teachers were raised, they were often unaware of issues of race and racism, which partially explains their continued perpetuation of the racist systems in place that further oppress people of color. Matias (2016) shares that White teachers working in urban schools have had no previous interactions with people of color, which allowed them to grow up in an all White state, which they considered to be the norm. Matias (2016) argues that White teachers can attribute their lack of understanding of race and oppression to their White privilege, which can be problematic when teaching in urban settings with students of color, whose lived experiences are drastically different than theirs.

As the years have progressed, there has been limited research in how White supremacy shows up in schools, however, there has been some new research regarding Whiteness. Moore (2021) argues that even after years have passed, Whiteness is still upheld in society. Moore (2021) explains that in America, 80% of the teacher workforce is filled with White teachers, who are still unequipped to disrupt racism and bias that run rampant in schools. Moore (2021) argues that "even though racism and xenophobia have always been present in global society, Whites (in the U.S., in particular) have felt particularly emboldened since the 2016 Presidential election to be more overt in their

displays of racism and prejudice" (p. 2). Moore (2021) posits that Whiteness continues to be perceived as the status quo by Whites in America and many "White teachers have had a difficult time describing what being White actually means" (p. 3). Moore (2021) concludes that while Whiteness is powerful, as it is the norm in society, it is extremely power-evasive as people are able to avoid responsibility through claiming ignorance or neutrality, through their Whiteness.

Antiblackness

Grimes (2020) explains that antiblackness first originated from Africanized slavery. Sharpe (2016) suggests that while the beginning of antiblackness has been cultivated from slavery, its ideals show up in the everyday norms. Grimes (2020) theorizes that though White supremacy and antiblackness have similar ideals that oppress Black people, there needs to be a clear distinction of antiblackness supremacy, as it is another form of racial evil that promotes the ability to speak about both, without competing between the two terms. Dumas (2016) argues that in society, antiblackness presents itself heavily within the educational system as it can be seen through educators' belief that Black people are always the problem - they are always seen as the problem and unworthy of an education (p. 16).

Warren and Coles (2020) argue that Black children need the support of Black educators to facilitate their critical thinking about the world (p. 389). As Warren and Coles (2020) argue, "self-efficacy is a necessary component of black freedom" as young children do not achieve self-efficacy without their own positivity (p. 390). Dumas (2016) argues that it is the job of school leaders to cultivate open conversations around Blackness in the school community in order to create awareness on how to speak about

Black children and how to work hard to support, honor and empower them each and every day (p. 17).

Marcucci (2019) explains that because of the huge presence of antiblackness in the United States, many Americans, including teachers, hold antiblack implicit biases. Marcucci (2019) suggests that as antiblackness is a cultural force in schools, there are many teachers who unconsciously hold lower expectations for Black students. Marcucci (2019) argues that though teachers should be working on critical self-reflection, they struggle to do so because of time constraints and the high stress environment they are in each day. Marcucci (2019) postulates that teachers' implicit bias continues to shine through, which prompts researchers' recommendations to reconstruct the school systems to effectively mitigate and disrupt teacher bias, along with creating policy changes to move towards a more restorative approach to discipline.

Colorblindness

Bonilla-Silva (2003) introduced the four tenets of colorblind ideology: cultural racism, naturalization, minimization of racism, and abstract liberalism. Jayakumar and Adamian (2017) describe the four frames of colorblind ideology as enabling White people to continue to object racism, while ignoring actions policies and behaviors that could work to dismantle systemic racial inequalities (p. 4). Ryan et al. (2007) explains that there have been efforts to promote colorblind ideology, in the hopes to destroy racism and discrimination but in order to do so, society would need to ignore race and treat people in an identical manner (p. 618). Modica (2015) argues that this "colorblind ideology is a powerful political tool because it allows whites to ignore present inequity while maintaining their status of privilege" (p. 397).

Neville et al. (2016) argues that as there continues to be racial disparities in the educational system, there continues to be growing research that shows how color-blind racial beliefs create and maintain these disparities. Ladson-Billings (2016) and Gay (2010) explain that Critical Race Theory explores the inequity that people of color experience and it closely aligns with the fact that most teachers are White, though they work closely with students of color. Modica (2015) posits that "many white teachers believe they should be colorblind, race has become a taboo subject in many US classrooms, with serious implications for students and teachers" (p. 398). Neville et al. (2016) argues that teachers' indifference or biases could lead students to dismiss their own experiences with racial injustice and discrimination.

Modica (2015) posits that as White teachers continue to follow the colorblind ideology, their "silence about race denies students the skills they need to talk about race openly and honestly" (p. 398). As Modica (2015) argues, "teachers who believe it is best to be colorblind lose the opportunity to address racial inequity in their classrooms and in their overall school programs" (p. 398). Neville et al. (2016) explains that while there are issues with silencing race discussions, there is also "hopeful news that teachers can and do provide counternarratives and practices that promote a color- or race-conscious school climate" (p. 16). Neville et al. (2016) concludes that schools can encourage these narratives through including more cultural pedagogy into classrooms and including more professional development and training for teachers, surrounding these topics.

Gordon (2005) explains that colorblindness is not the idea that people do not see color, rather, it is the idea that people refuse to see color. Gordon argues that colorblindness continues to provide White people with privilege and allows them to

ignore the realities of racial injustices in society. Gordon argues that "colorblindness enables White people to be complicit in perpetuating racism without any acknowledgment or responsibility and re-inscribes the very inequities that the infusion approach to diversity is designed to eliminate" (p. 146). Gordon posits that "in discussions of race, education programs need to examine racial oppression at both the individual and systemic levels" (p. 150).

School Inequalities

This section summarizes the various aspects of school inequalities that are used to marginalize and oppress BIPOC, both throughout society and within the education system.

School to Prison Pipeline

Skiba et al. (2002) explains that the school to prison pipeline was first studied by the Children's Defense Fund in 1975, as they studied rates of school suspension and found that Black students were suspended at a higher rate than their White counterparts. Dancy (2014) clarifies that a part of the educational system that maintains supremacist practices is the school to prison pipeline, which refers to the "disturbing national trend in which children are funneled out of public schools and into juvenile and criminal justice systems" (p. 476). As Skiba et al. (2014) argues

> the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) is a construct used to describe policies and practices in the public schools and juvenile justice system that decrease the probability of school success for children and youth, and increase the probability of negative life outcomes, particularly through the juvenile justice system. (p. 546)

Skiba et al. (2014) and Barnes & Motz (2018) suggest that the discipline practices in schools increase the risk of students interacting with the juvenile justice system, at an early age, which could further increase the likelihood of Black students facing trouble in the criminal justice system later on in their lives.

Allen and White-Smith (2014) explains that the research suggests that school policies play an important role in the systemic failure of Black students, especially as they continue to be placed into the school to prison pipeline. Skiba et al. (2014) argues that the STPP has a negative effect on students' educational opportunity, along with their school engagement, as Black students have more negative perceptions of school climate than their White counterparts. Wun (2018) explains that many schools have zero tolerance policies that mandate for immediate suspension or expulsion of students for various infractions. Infractions often include behaviors such as disruption, profanity, defiance and fighting. Wun argues that quite a few of these infractions are subjective and the violation is determined by the opinions of teachers and administrators. Morris (2007) explains that the literature suggests that students of color, specifically Black children, are more likely to get into trouble for subjective offensives. Wun argues that Black students are often receiving harsh consequences for disrespecting authority or for being too loud, both of which are subjective. Wun explains that Black students are perpetually policed for challenging authority or for speaking their thoughts, that may not completely align with the person in authority. Rocque and Paternoster (2011) and Barnes and Motz (2018) posit that Black students feel the disproportionality in discipline, especially as they are often over characterized as being the 'troublemaker' in their classrooms and that label carries on with them for their entire educational career. Barnes and Motz (2018) conclude

that the label of 'troublemaker' can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy where students accept the role of 'troublemaker' and it becomes a part of their identities, which could increase their likelihood in arrests later on in life.

Annamma (2016) argues that the research indicates that Black students are punished largely for perceptions of threat, non - compliance and harm, which stem from teachers' racial bias and implicit norms that maintain White supremacy in schools. Roque and Paternoster (2011) explains that teachers may hold stereotypes for their Black students, which could lead them to punish them at significantly higher rates than their White counterparts. Allen and White-Smith (2014) posit that this could be due to a lack of cultural familiarity with students of color, as teachers rely on inaccurate, negative, and stereotypical assumptions about their students' behaviors and abilities. Wun (2018) theorize that Black students feel like if their teachers understood their realities, they may be more forgiving, as an empathetic approach would be more effective than the punitive ones that are often used in schools. Allen and White-Smith (2014) explain that

> when teacher candidates and other educators finally enter into the
> professional ranks, their cultural and racial incongruences and deficit views
> of students of color, converge with existing school policies and practices in
> ways that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. (p. 448)

Allen and White-Smith (2014) postulate that the intersections of teacher bias, school disciplinary practices and deficit-based thinking of Black students continues to perpetuate the school to prison pipeline.

Skiba et al. (2014) argue that researchers have contemplated some recommendations on how to stop the continuation of the school to prison pipeline. Skiba et al. (2014) explains that in terms of school-based intervention, schools could create an

intervention program that approaches disciplinary issues with a lens of equity, rather than coming at it from a punitive perspective. Skiba et al. (2014) posits that teachers should work on developing authentic, supportive student - teacher relationships by improving the cultural responsiveness of their daily lessons and work to create a bias-free classroom culture. Skiba et al. (2014) suggests that when conflict does arise, schools should already have a plan to respond by using problem solving approaches, recognizing voices from various stakeholders and working to reintegrate students back into the classroom after a conflict occurs. Skiba et al. (2014) clarifies that in regards to school policy, school districts should publicly report and analyze disaggregated discipline data to guide future disciplinary practices. Skiba et al. (2014) concludes that school districts should work to provide effective disciplinary alternatives to schools, along with provided support through professional development aimed at promoting higher levels of student engagement and stronger student-teacher relationships.

Bryan (2017) argues that in order to protect Black children in education, schools must put an intentional focus on White teachers in their preservice education programs to interrupt biases and stereotypes that White teachers constantly have about Black students. Bryan (2017) explains that Black students are still being criminalized in the classroom, which will continue to lead into their adult lives, as they will be targeted towards the criminal justice system. As Bryan (2017) explains, "if and when White children decide to pursue teaching as a professional option, they take deficit perspectives they inherit from society, K-12 schools, media, and popular press into their preservice teacher education programs" (p. 336) which is extremely dangerous as the school to prison pipeline epidemic will continue for years to come.

Bryan (2017) explains that for over two decades, researchers have been dedicated to providing preservice teacher education programs with successful ways to support Black students and yet, there are still issues with prejudice and bias in schools that deeply affect Black students and other students of color. Bryan (2017) and Ladson-Billings (1994) suggest that in order to better prepare White teachers for urban education, preservice programs must work intentionally to prepare teachers to be culturally responsive educators. Bryan (2017) concludes that there should also be a course in preservice programs that support White teachers in understanding best practices in teaching Black students, as to help disrupt their biases and prejudices.

Accountability

Boler (2004), Polluck (2004), Schultz (2003), and Thompson (2005) explains that due to White privilege, White fragility, and White supremacy, White people continue to fall silent upon issues in society that further oppress people of color, as they do not directly impact them in any way. Leonardo (2002) posits that White female teachers center themselves as the victims, rather than focusing on the students, who are the marginalized group. As Leonardo (2002) argues, White people often shift the focus to themselves to highlight their own feelings of discomfort, rather than sitting in the discomfort of their impact or having the difficult conversations around the issue.

Accapadi (2007) argues that, "recognizing privilege means acknowledging that our societal norms allow White women to toggle their identities, meaning they can choose to be a woman and choose to be White," (pp. 210 - 212) which further supports their crying when met with difficulty in confronting their biases, as they 'feel attacked.' Accapadi (2007) argues that as White women start to be confronted about their actions,

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they start to rationalize and defend their actions, though their actions continue to maintain racist systems, along with the weaponizing of their tears. Accapadi (2007) explains that because "White norms become universal norms," (p. 213) White people continue to perpetuate the racist systems in place and are not held accountable for the actions that deeply impact BIPOC.

Accapadi (2007) has shared some insights as to having difficult conversations without centering your Whiteness. Accapadi (2007) argues that while having difficult conversations, it is crucial to "remember the goal of the conversation" to ensure that your privilege does not allow you "to shift the conversation" to "you and your feelings" (p. 214). Accapadi (2007) explain that in order to dismantle White supremacist practices, White teachers must ensure they "recognize how certain preferred behaviors are associated with Whiteness," (p. 214) especially when engaging in conversations about race and racism.

Ladson-Billings (1998) argues that as race is always present in every social situation, it is crucial for people to critically reflect upon their racial identities and how they show up in society. Milner (2006) suggests that White teachers in schools, especially when teaching Black students, should work to reflect upon their racial identities and understand their ability to teach in ways that reflect their students lived. Modica (2015) explains that understanding that White teachers will have White fragility when critically reflecting upon their identities, schools should provide support to help them engage in that self-reflection. Bonilla-Silva (2003) and Modica (2015) argue that due to the colorblindness ideology, White teachers tend to believe that there are no races and that

the only race is the human race, which is truly so detrimental to BIPOC students' lived experiences.

Epstein (2019) explains that many teachers believe that race is invisible and continue the narrative that sameness is the best; all systems, rules, curriculum, and approaches fit all people, which continues to perpetuate the power of Whiteness. Epstein (2019) argues that the issue that results is that White teachers want their students to move past the difficult conversations of race and want to avoid these types of conversations altogether, especially while in the classroom. Epstein (2019) suggests that by not discussing race and racism, they are staying positive and not introducing their students to inequities; however, the truth is that their students, especially their students of color, have these conversations often with family and often experience injustices due to racism. Modica (2015) suggest that instead of avoiding these conversations, teachers should "model their process of racial identity construction by talking with their students about their experiences as racialized people and by openly describing how their own ideas and feelings regarding race continue to develop and be refined throughout life" (p. 414). Modica (2015) argues that if teachers avoid the critical reflection needed to scaffold race related conversations with students, young children are left to learn about them on their own or will refuse to learn about how to engage in these conversations, which could be truly detrimental as they grow up into adults in this racialized society.

Fuller and Meiners (2019) argue "transforming the roots of abuse and violence, requires naming and transforming the underlying power relations and systems of oppression" in order to actually create change in society (p. 265). As stated in the article, "every engagement with others is a place to work against oppression." Fuller and Meiners

(2019) explain that in community "we build our capacity to support each other, to intervene collectively when we witness white supremacy, and to imagine life where making mistakes, taking accountability and rejecting white fragility are welcomed and practiced" (p. 266). Fuller and Meiners (2019) argue that though it is difficult to stand up to injustices, White people must work on collectively dismantling systems of oppression through building on the work done by activists in anti-violence movements and drawing on research to resist White supremacy.

Fuller and Meiners (2019) argue that in order to create change, White people must work to check their privilege and White fragility, unlearn White superiority, along with educating themselves on the ways Whiteness is invisible to them. Fuller and Meiners (2019) explain that the first step White people must take in holding themselves accountable is to first name the ways in which they continue to uphold White supremacist ideals and practices, as stepping back from confronting and recognizing White supremacy allows it to continue. Fuller and Meiners (2019) suggest that a crucial thing to understand is that "it is a privilege to be too tired, too uncomfortable or to just not engage and these choices contribute to the racism and microaggressions people of color experience" p. 267). Fuller and Meiners (2019) conclude that in order to keep moving forward, White people must continue to admit when they are wrong, even though it may be challenging, to ensure they continue to learn and grow, as they resist White supremacy and their White fragility.

Classroom Practices

This section summarizes the different ways teachers can work to shift their practice to become culturally responsive educators. The literature below also describes

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how these practices could help teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms.

Critical Care and Trauma Informed Practices

Howard (2003) and Warren and Coles (2020) argue that schools should be safe spaces for students, as students expect that when they go into their school, they will be taken care of and uplifted. Roque and Paternoster (2011) suggest that students of color, especially Black students, have a different school experience than their White counterparts, as White teachers often hold bias against their Black students. Howard (2003) explains that the way teachers interact with their students, especially their Black students who have been historically oppressed, is so crucial to their learning. Noddings (1992) suggests that it is important for teachers to create trusting relationships built on mutual respect with their students. Noddings (1992) suggests how important it is for teachers to be authentic when creating relationships with their students, as students can tell when their teachers are being inauthentic and continue to feel unheard and uncared for.

Rolón-Dow (2005) argues that a great strategy when creating authentic, caring relationships with students is to practice critical care. Rolón-Dow (2005) explains that when practicing critical care, teachers should work to understand student's lived experiences, especially through first understanding their racial identities and the narratives that have been written about them throughout history. As Rolón-Dow (2005) posits, "building relationships of authentic care must move beyond making assumptions about who students are and what their lives are like within their particular communities" (p. 106).

Howard (2003) argues that Black students have been historically marginalized and oppressed throughout their lives, due to their racial identities. Roque and Paternoster (2011) and Allen and White-Smith (2011) suggest that the racial trauma that they continue to experience is something not many White teachers take into consideration when teaching Black students. Ladson-Billings (1994), Roque and Paternoster (2011) and Allen and White-Smith (2014) explain that if teachers do not take students' lived experiences into consideration, they will not be able to create authentic relationships with them or become culturally responsive educators. Poole and Greaves (2012) argue that when working with students of color who have experienced trauma, teachers should be practicing trauma informed practices to best support their students.

Morris (2007) and Wun (2018) argue that Black students are more likely to be expelled or suspended for minor infractions than their White counterparts. Morris (2007) and Wun (2018) explain that more often than not, the reasons for disciplinary actions are due to increases in voice volume, attitude, and lack of respect, which are all very subjective. Noddings (1992) clarifies that if students have had a bad experience with their teachers, they are more likely to have distrust for them, which can create challenges in the classroom and cause teachers to discipline their students more often. Annamma (2016) explains that students' trauma could be the reasons for their outbursts in the classroom, which can be seen as acts of aggression by some. Annamma (2016) argues that White educators and administrators must learn about their students' trauma and take that into consideration when working with them on a daily basis. Ladson-Billings (1994), Modica (2015) and Applebaum (2016) conclude that interactions between Black students and White teachers could be so much more authentic and meaningful if teachers worked

to understand students' lived experiences, rather than ignoring them altogether, due to their White fragility.

As Wilson (2015) explains, "critical care involves embracing and exhibiting values, dispositions and behaviours related to empathy, compassion, advocacy, systemic critique, perseverance and calculated risk-taking for the sake of justly serving students and improving schools" (p. 557). Wilson (2015) argues that teachers must learn how to exude transformative leadership in their classrooms to build strong relationships with their students, by having empathy for their lived experiences and their everyday needs, while advocating for their welfare, both in and out of the classroom.

Culturally Responsive Education

Ladson-Billings (1994) defines culturally responsive pedagogy as "an approach to teaching and learning that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 18). Ladson-Billings (1995) explains that culturally responsive teachers work to create and maintain strong student - teacher relationships. Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that they develop a community of learners and support students in learning collaboratively, along with holding each other accountable. Ladson-Billings (1995) clarifies that culturally relevant teaching is seen as teachers encouraging "a community of learners rather than competitive, individual achievement" (p. 480). Ladson-Billings (1995) explains that in a culturally responsive classroom, knowledge is shared and is not static, teachers and students are passionate about learning and growing. Ladson-Billings (1995) suggests that teachers who are working to be culturally responsive ensure that they are critically

analyzing their district curriculum and working to engage their students "in a variety of forms of critical analyses" (p. 482).

Bondy et al. (2007) share that

supportive classroom environments encompass all the critical school factors that foster resilience. Teachers who create non-supportive environments are authoritarian, stress both teacher power and teacher control, convey low expectations, and rely on extrinsic motivation to get students to work. (p. 331)

Bondy et al. (2007) argue that teachers who create a culturally responsive classroom work to build "a caring learning community where connections with and among students created a safe place to learn and an emotional climate where students could take risks, laugh, and trust one another and their teacher" (p. 328). Bondy et al. (2007) explained that teachers who taught with assertiveness and made their expectations clear to students immediately dealt with inappropriate behavior. Bondy et al. (2007) clarifies that by assertiveness, the teachers "meant that they set limits, demanded obedience, and showed they meant business; however, the teachers avoided power struggles and did not humiliate students" (p. 328). Bondy et al. (2007) concludes that while working to be a culturally responsive teacher, one must understand that they must focus on "earning respect rather than demanding it, setting standards and pushing students to meet them, and believing all students can learn.

Bondy et al. (2007) explain the importance of not putting on a façade and working on just being yourself, while showing your genuineness to your students (p. 335). Bondy et al. (2007) express the importance of allowing students to see who you are, rather than just having them see you as a teacher (p. 335). Bondy et al. (2007) explain that by allowing students to see the 'real you,' understand your interests, likes, dislikes, etc. you

will be able to build a stronger, more authentic relationship with them (p. 335). Bondy et al. (2007) suggest that building a safe learning environment and space is essential and can be done by "building relationships and being kind to one another during the first day" (p. 336). Bondy et al. (2007) argue that when working with Black students, creating relationships through "endearment and humor" is a great starting point (p. 342). Bondy et al. (2007) concludes that students want to hear terms of endearment and a "tone of sincerity and affection behind them" as teachers speak with them each day (p. 243).

Bondy et al. (2007) argues that along with creating relationships with endearment and humor, teachers should also be using popular culture references, in everyday interactions and lessons, to show their students they are listening to their interests, along with working to ensure that their daily lessons are engaging and relevant (p. 245). Farinde-Wu and Williams (2017) explain that in a culturally responsive curriculum, teachers "identify ideologies in which students' values, beliefs, traditions, and languages are integrated into the curriculum in an effort to promote achievement" (p. 282). Farinde-Wu and Williams (2017) explain that "ideally, this information extends beyond foods, flags, and holiday celebrations and provides teachers with information that assists them in modifying their classroom curriculum and instruction in order to be more inclusive of varying perspectives" (p. 283). As Farinde-Wu and Williams (2017) explain, "student interests drive the curriculum" (p. 283). Farinde-Wu and Williams (2017) conclude that teachers must include curriculum to challenge knowledge construction, and help students make connections between their cultural, community, and national identities. Farinde-Wu & Williams (2017) explain that "teachers should develop and utilize cooperative learning strategies to engage students in the learning process" (p. 295).

Farinde-Wu and Williams (2017) explain that

> in order for teachers to become culturally responsive, they "must develop a critical awareness of their roles as change agents. As the demands of teaching in a fast-paced, results-driven society become reality for teachers of culturally & linguistically diverse children, educators must define their roles as facilitators of knowledge. (p. 294)

Farinde-Wu and Williams (2017) argue that teachers should foster classroom environments that celebrate and incorporate cultural and linguistic differences, promote resiliency, and facilitate high intellectual standards" (p. 295).

Humanizing Pedagogy

Freire (1970) first established the term humanizing pedagogy in 1970. Freire (1970) and Salazar (2013) express the state of dehumanization in education and "assert that the only effective instrument in the process of re-humanization is humanizing pedagogy" (p. 55; p. 124). Freire (1970) proposes that the process of humanization fosters transformation and authentic liberation of the oppressed; thus, "to transform the world is to humanize it" (p. 70). As Salazar (2013) posits, "Freire encourages educators to listen to their students and build on their knowledge and experiences in order to engage in contextualized, dynamic, and personalized educational approaches that further the goals of humanization and social transformation" (p. 127). Huerta (2011) argues that "teachers who embrace a humanizing pedagogy recognize the sociohistorical and political context of their own lives and their students' lives, including the influence of societal power, racial and ethnic identities, and cultural values" (p. 39). Huerta (2011) explains that teachers who practice a humanizing pedagogy in the classroom respect the

cultural diversity of their students and work to critically reflect upon their own identities, along with how they show up in this society.

Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) expresses that critical theory is all-encompassing social justice work (p. 2). Freire (1970) and Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) explain that in terms of critical perspectives, the goal is to understand how your identity plays a role in the specific injustices happening within each theory and use that understanding to then create systemic change for those inequalities. As Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) argues, "critical perspective requires constant mindfulness concerning one's practice. Critical theory seeks to understand how extant power imbalances are created, reified, and reproduced across time" (p. 3). Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) explains that critical theory "promotes consciousness and understanding of where and how one is located within a given social system, and ultimately how individuals of various positions in that system might create change" (p. 3).

Freire (1970) and Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) explain that White teachers must reflect upon their privileged identities and work to understand how they show up in society, as people who continue to center Whiteness and perpetuate the oppressive ideals in America. As Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) contests, "there must also be practical changes instituted that interrupt the process of social reproduction, or the recreation of existing inequalities across time... The work must be normative" (p. 2). Freire (1970) and Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) conclude that not only do White teachers need to reflect upon their privileged identities, but they must also work to disrupt and dismantle the inequities they see in society; they must work towards normalizing these conversations and

normalizing creating change as an everyday occurrence, rather than just acknowledging the injustices and inequalities in society.

Jones and Okun (2011) believe that the current educational system is rooted in White supremacist beliefs and practices. Dell'Angelo et al. (2014), Allen and White-Smith (2014), and Barnes and Motz (2018) argue that these inequities are seen in what is being taught in classrooms, what curriculum teachers are asked to teach and adhere to, and among the disciplinary practices that they are asked to follow, as well. Ladson-Billings (1998), Milner (2006), Dell'Angelo et al. (2014), Modica (2015), and Howard (2003) argue that it is critical for educators to start understanding their identities, power and privilege in this world, in order to actually create change within the system, as the majority of educators are White and are able to create change using their voices, without any major repercussions. Dell' Angelo et al. (2014) explains that while

> curricular design is hugely significant in its impact—it not only declares what facts, perspectives, and skills are important enough to address in the classroom, but also what educational methods and pedagogical designs are the most effective and appropriate for teaching those skills and information. (p. 10)

Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) argues that Anyon's work (1980) on social class and the hidden curriculum provides a sobering reminder of the little progress that has been made throughout the years (p. 3). Salazar (2008) and Huerta (2011) argue that teachers need to remember that a humanizing pedagogy includes content that is relevant to students' lived experiences. Dell'Angelo et al. (2014) concludes that in order to dismantle these White supremacist ideals and continue to make progress, teachers must fight to be able to stray away from the normed curriculum that only discusses White experiences and move into

supplementing and adding in multiple perspectives to start to disrupt White supremacy in action.

Younge (2021) argues that "there is an untold amount of irreparable damage that White imperialism has made against the confidence of people of color," which can be seen through the success of students of color and how that academic success comes "at the expense of their cultural and psychological well-being" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 475; Salazar, 2013). Jones and Okun (2001) explain that the White supremacist ideologies of "perfectionism" and ensuring you "act, speak and behave as much as possible like the White middle class" are aspects of dehumanization in education and within society, that many Black students have experienced throughout their educational careers (Salazar, 2013; Warikoo & Carter, 2009, p. 374). Salazar (2013) and Warren and Coles (2020) explain that society and the educational system maintain the idea that you must be "White" to be "worthy" (p. 122), which continues to perpetuate the ideas of the White supremacist society that validates the idea that non-White bodies do not matter.

Giesler (2021) examines how in order for society to humanize oppression, we must actively have discussions about the impacts oppressive ideologies have on people of color (p. 5). Giesler (2021) explains that people must work to understand each other's lived experiences, in order to counteract the narrative that is constantly being written about people of color.

Warm Demander Pedagogy

Kleinfeld (1975) coined the term warm demander, as she described the type of teacher who was effective in teaching through communicating personal warmth and high expectations. Ware (2006) describes warm demanders as those who teach to the whole

child. Ware (2006) argues that teaching to the whole child refers to the idea that teachers will not only focus on quality instruction, but will also focus on relationship building, as it is just as important as teaching the subject matter. Ware (2006) describes warm demander pedagogy as teachers being authority figures, caregivers, and having belief in students' abilities in the classroom. Ware (2006) explains that warm demanders are teachers who will ensure you succeed in their classrooms but will also support you through providing necessities to ensure you are healthy and safe each day.

Bondy and Ross (2008) emphasize the impact teachers will have when they develop relationships with students through asking questions, using students' names and showing them that teachers care each and every day. Bondy and Ross (2008) argue that if there are conflicts in the classroom or teachers see misbehavior from their students, they will reach out to their students for help to understand their change of behavior and work with them to communicate on action steps to best support them, which will strengthen their relationship. Bondy and Ross (2008) clarify that along with learning about students' cultures and lived experiences, warm demanders must also recognize their own cultural backgrounds and how that may guide their beliefs, values and behaviors. Bondy and Ross (2008) explain that without critically reflecting upon your biases and beliefs, teachers may have implicit biases that make it challenging to develop an authentic relationship with their students and may also inadvertently communicate to their students that they don't care about them.

Bondy and Ross (2008) suggest that being a warm demander includes having high expectations for all students and ensuring that your expectations are always clear and consistent. Bondy and Ross (2008) explain that teachers must be insistent that their

students will follow and live up to their high expectations through establishing supports to ensure their students will learn and succeed in their classrooms. As Ross et al. (2008) believes, "insistence begins from the first moment of the first day of school. The teacher is neither authoritarian nor heavy-handed. She simply conveys through actions and words that students will meet her expectations" (p. 143).

Transformative Education

Tharp et al. (2000) explains that in a transformative classroom, both the teacher and student have growth mindsets, open dialogue, transparency and co-collaborative teaching. Tharp et al. (2000) argues that in order to create a transformative classroom, one must create a culturally relevant classroom culture that encompasses the following ideologies: fairness, excellence, inclusion and harmony. Tharp et al. (2000) clarifies that the classroom should feel inviting to students and become a place where they can be courageous and vulnerable. Tharp et al. (2000) suggests that the lessons should be created in fairness by making sure they are equitable and accessible to students. Tharp et al. (2000) proposes that teachers create an inclusive space in order for students to reach their full potential and be excellent with all of their work. Tharp et al. (2000) recommends that by creating a space that is inclusive and equitable, students are able to build a strong community and create agreed upon foundations of common values to succeed throughout the year.

Howard (2003) describes culturally relevant pedagogy as an effective way to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners, as it has been proven that "socially and emotionally, African American students have struggled to adjust in U.S. schools" (p. 3). Ladson-Billings (1994) and Fitzmaurice and Reitenauer (2017) explain that because

Black students have been neglected in the public education system, it is imperative to create culturally responsive classrooms to ensure students are successful and included, both in curriculum and in the classroom culture. Howard (2003) argues that "teachers need to understand that racially diverse students frequently bring cultural capital to the classroom that is oftentimes drastically different from mainstream norms and worldviews" (p. 4). Ladson-Billings (1994) suggests that knowing that students are all diverse and come from different lived experiences, teachers must work to create a curriculum that is encompassing all perspectives and lived experiences. Applebaum (2016) and Epstein (2019) conclude that curriculum focuses on the White dominant standard, which leaves out various identities and opinions, which can be damaging to Black students, who already feel as if they do not belong in society.

Roque and Paternoster (2011) and Allen and White-Smith (2014) argue that in public education, teachers and administrators believe that culturally diverse learners are not capable of learning and they give the students lower-level work because they think they are helping them succeed. Allen and White-Smith (2014) explain that this deficit - based thinking is detrimental for culturally diverse learners and continues to maintain the stereotypes and narratives written about Black learners, in education. Ladson-Billings (1994) argues that culturally relevant pedagogy is the belief that CLD (Culturally & Linguistically Diverse) learners from low-income backgrounds are extremely capable learners. Allen and White-Smith (2014) explain that by having a deficit - based mindset, teachers are putting students at risk of not believing in themselves and soon, they will also believe that they can only complete lower-level work. Howard (2003) explains that through the practice of critical care and culturally relevant curriculum, students are able

to do amazing things and "will ultimately demonstrate high degrees of competence," (p. 4) which will help with their self - efficacy (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Rolón-Dow, 2005).

Howard (2003) suggests that "to become culturally relevant, teachers need to engage in honest, critical reflection that challenges them to see how their positionality influences their students in either positive or negative ways" (p. 4). Howard (2003) argues that while reflecting on one's biases and positionality, educators must ask themselves the difficult questions to help them reflect upon their identities, in relation to society and their students. Howard (2003) and Modica (2015) argue that in order to disrupt their biases and work to dismantle the supremacist ideals that have been ingrained in them, White teachers must question their biases, prejudices, and stereotypes that often surface when they work with Black students and families.

Murdoch et al. (2020) argues that though there has not been too much new research in terms of transformative education, there is one article that discusses the importance of productive struggles, in a transformative classroom. Murdoch et al. (2020) explains that student-teacher relationships are necessary for fostering environments that provide high quality education, while allowing students to productively struggle in their rigorous assignments. Murdoch et al. (2020) suggests that in order for students to thrive as they productively struggle, they must be heard and supported in the classroom. Murdoch et al. (2020) proposes that in a transformative classroom, students are able to take risks and ask questions, along with feeling comfortable in making mistakes as they productively struggle through their work.

Anti-Racist Teaching

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Raby (2004) explains that anti-racism education begins with the idea that racism absolutely exists and includes a strong emphasis on systemic racism (p. 379). As Walcott (1990) posits, "anti-racist education recognizes intersecting forms of inequality, assumes the role of power in the perpetuation of racism, criticizes racialized inequalities and addresses white supremacy" (p. 379). Richer (1995) and Raby (2004) explain that teachers who aim to be anti-racist, work to integrate anti-racist curricula and ideologies into their current lessons, rather than separating the two and keeping them siloed. Howard (2003) believes that "an antiracist pedagogy requires teachers to adopt a commitment to thinking, feeling and acting in ways that combats racial discrimination in schools" (p. 6).

Arneback and Jämte (2021) explain anti-racist teaching as becoming more prominent and widely recognized throughout the last couple of years. Arneback and Jämte (2021) argue that, as the years progress, there is still "widespread uncertainty among teachers concerning their responsibilities, how to understand and identify racism in educational settings, and how to respond" (p. 2). Arneback and Jämte (2021) suggest that there needs to be a strong focus on "systemic racism and the power imbalance between different racial identities in order to take action on inequity and achieve social justice" (p. 5).

Gaps in Literature

While there is relevant literature around Whiteness and how colorblindness and antiblackness impact and perpetuate the school to prison pipeline, there are gaps in the literature with how to change the system and hold educators accountable for changing the supremacist systems in place. Currently, there are gaps in the literature regarding White supremacy and how it manifests specifically in schools, along with how society holds

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White teachers accountable in dismantling White supremacist ideals and practices, in education. Furthermore, there is a lack of research in how to provide trauma informed critical care in schools, to students of color, specifically. Additionally, there is a gap in the research in regards to anti-racist education and how it looks in practice. As proven through the gaps in research, there must be some examples and ideas on how White teachers are working to hold themselves accountable to create a positive transformative learning experience for Black students, while dismantling White supremacy in their classrooms. The purpose of this research study is to show concrete examples of how White teachers are working to dismantle the supremacist systems and ideas in place through culturally responsive practices in their classrooms.

Chapter Summary

The literature review encompassed the impacts that White supremacy has on education, along with examples of how White educators can better themselves to best support Black students in urban classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research study used an educational criticism and connoisseurship lens to critique the current educational system in how White teachers are actively working to dismantle the White supremacist systems in society through their culturally responsive teaching. This chapter explores how interviews, observations, and artifacts were used to collect data and how data were analyzed to determine the ways White teachers are working to dismantle White supremacy and become culturally responsive teachers in their classrooms.

Teachers were interviewed about their experiences with difficult conversations about race to identify how they are engaging with critical conversations (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). In these interviews, the teachers reflected upon the ways they are working to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, along with the ways they are critically reflecting upon their own identities, especially in relation to their Black students (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Meanwhile, White teachers from an urban middle school were observed as they worked in their weekly planning sessions to plan culturally responsive lessons, and they were observed teaching to document their interactions with Black

students (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). As the researcher, I examined lesson artifacts, such as lesson plans, classroom materials and resources, classroom décor, school norms and expectations, among other artifacts to get a better understanding of how teachers were working to become culturally responsive educators, as they work to dismantle White supremacy (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). These artifacts show actual examples of how teachers are creating culturally responsive lessons and a culturally responsive physical classroom environment that creates a transformative, positive classroom environment for their students.

Qualitative Research and Methodology

Qualitative research is widely used to collect data around human lived experiences to "describe and clarify experience as it is lived and constituted in awareness" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138). Qualitative methodologies are used to seek understanding of the human experience through data, to answer a specific question (Glesne, 1999; Polkinghorne, 2005).

Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship

Educational criticism and connoisseurship, first coined by Elliot Eisner in the early 1980s, is a term used in the field of curriculum evaluation and research to highlight awareness of subtleties in education, in order to make the familiar strange and work to create change within the educational system (Barone, 2010; Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Educational criticism and connoisseurship often "involves fieldwork and seeks to contextualize data by attending to the particulars of what educational critics observe, through 'thick, detailed description'" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 3). This study called

attention and brought focus to what typically goes unnoticed in education in regards to white supremacy, in order to create change to support students of color within a system that is colorblind (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 3-5).

Eisner (2003) argues that, in this educational context, criticism is not the act of making negative comments about something, but instead, an educational critic is working to reveal the norms of a classroom, the quality of teaching instruction, and behaviors and interactions among others. The terms critic and researcher are often used interchangeably, as educational critics work to collect and analyze data about aspects in education that should be shared and thoughtfully discussed to make changes accordingly (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Connoisseurship, on the other hand, explains the researcher's knowledge and skill in a known subject (Eisner, 2003). A connoisseur is someone who knows a great deal about a particular domain and can use their experience and expertise to guide their perceptions about a particular phenomenon (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Connoisseurship can address a variety of different aspects and is used to generate awareness of a particular experience or issue in society, while criticism is used to create change about the issue (Eisner, 2003; Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Five Dimensions of Schooling

Eisner (1991) outlines the five dimensions of schooling that researchers observe when collecting data and conducting research: the structural, intentional, curricular, pedagogical and the evaluative. In this research study, I have focused on the first four dimensions of schooling because the evaluative dimension does not relate to my research.

While the evaluative dimension discusses leadership evaluating teacher behavior and achievement, my study focuses on teachers and what they are doing in their classrooms, in relation to White supremacy and culturally responsive education, to best support student learning.

Eisner (1998) describes dimensions as the organizational framework where intentions are pursued (Eisner, 1998). For example, it is true that students typically have limited contact with caring adults in their everyday lives and they must be offered a safe, brave, caring physical environment with adults who know them well and can foster their ever-growing knowledge each day (Eisner, 1998). The structural dimension is investigated through observations of the school site, the classroom physical space of the classroom environment, and the schedule/ organization of the day such as the subjects taught and offered. The curricular dimension, as described by Eisner (1998) considers how teachers plan lessons that engage students each day, in relation to the curriculum's content and goals. Through data analysis, teacher's planning observations were shared and investigated to illustrate how teachers are working to create meaningful lessons that engage their students, each day. The pedagogical dimension refers to each teachers' approach, style, personality, and signature, as seen through classroom and planning observations (Eisner, 1998).

Elements of Educational Criticism

Educational critics relate their experiences through these four interrelated elements: description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Description is used to help the reader imagine the situation the researcher is describing and uses vivid details to describe the situation through a narrative format (Eisner, 2003;

Uhrmacher et al., 2017). The reader must be able to grasp the sense of the place they are describing, by using language aesthetically, to artistically say what is happening, where it is happening and what the researcher is seeing (Eisner, 2003). Though educational critics often describe the situation in a literary form, the description section of an educational criticism could take many forms, such as a visual form, photographs of a classroom, an auditory description through the use of a tape recording of the lesson, among other descriptive forms of representation (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Uhrmacher et al. (2017) describes the interpretation aspect in educational criticism as "the meanings and consequences of educational events" (p. 3). This study used descriptions and utilized theories and ideas, rooted in social sciences, to support the reader in understanding what has been described (Eisner, 2003; Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Evaluation, the third element of educational criticism, is used to "assess the educational significance of events described and interpreted" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 3). As Eisner (2003) explains, children come to school to strengthen their cognitive abilities and learn valuable things that support them in living socially constructive lives. Therefore, educational evaluators cannot engage in evaluation without making assessments of the educational value of what students have learned or have experienced in the classroom.

Thematics, the last element of educational criticism, is "related to generalizing in social science research" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 3). Thematics can be used to create general conclusions of research to identify a common or important thread about themes rather than predictions, as to what can be found in contexts, such as a school and classroom (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

The five dimensions of schooling supported my analysis of the themes in the research and helped to organize each theme into its respective category within the five dimensions.

Validity of Educational Criticism

Eisner (2003) questions whether or not the concept of 'validity' has a role in assessing the utility or credibility of educational criticism. Structural corroboration, referential adequacy and consensual validation are the three types of validation processes for educational criticism. Structural corroboration "is a process in which data sources relevant to a conclusion in an educational criticism are brought together to provide credibility to that conclusion" (Eisner, 2003). Circumstantial evidence, also known as structural corroboration, is a way of pulling together multiple sources to create a credible conclusion to a study (Eisner, 2003). In order to create a conclusion based on the observations in a classroom setting, this study needed to collect a great deal of data, from multiple data sources, that all supported and justified the idea of that of the research (Eisner, 2003). Possible data sources include: interviews, observations and learning artifacts, all of which supported the conclusion of the researcher (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Referential adequacy is a process through which the reader should be able to understand the critics' claims about the educational setting (Eisner, 2003). With referential adequacy, the educational critic describes the specifics of the particular setting, in order to highlight the previously unseen elements; therefore, the reader can understand the observations and evaluate the critic's observations after having read the criticism (Eisner, 2003).

Consensual validation, the third type of validation, is the closest to typical methods employed by other researchers in social sciences (Eisner, 2003). Consensual validation works to include multiple sources of feedback, from other researchers, to support accuracy of the data (Eisner, 2003). As Eisner (2003) suggests, "through a combination of perspectives, we secure a more comprehensive view" of the research and secure different interpretations of the data that no one single criticism could provide.

Rationale

In sum, the educational criticism and connoisseurship method was the best for this particular research study, as the aim of this study was to highlight the ways White teachers are working to dismantle White supremacy, through their thoughtful and intentional implementation of culturally responsive teaching. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I used a connoisseurship lens of expertise to unpack the ways that White supremacy still manifests itself in classrooms for future research.

Study Design

Problem Statement

The persistent problem of practice is the constant lack of accountability from White teachers in their work to dismantle White supremacy (Applebaum, 2016; Jones & Okun, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Matias, 2016). Many White teachers are not taking the initiative to learn more about White supremacy and what it means to dismantle it in the classroom through culturally responsive practices. They are continuing to perpetuate the inequitable systemic values and norms that continue to be idolized throughout this educational realm, which shows a lack of accountability from the White teachers in this

field. As the literature identifies, White supremacy is deeply ingrained in various aspects of the educational system and is truly negatively affecting Black students' learning experience (Jones & Okun, 2001). White teachers must work to create change in the system by dismantling all White supremacist aspects to best serve Black students in education, through their thoughtful and intentional implementation of culturally responsive daily practices and their reflections and development of their own critical consciousness about their identities in relation to systemic inequities (Applebaum, 2016; Jones & Okun, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Matias, 2016).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine how White middle school teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms through their implementation of culturally responsive practices.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this inquiry are informed by Eisner's school ecology, which has been modified to fit the needs of the research (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Eisner's school ecology is a framework "used to guide observations and interviews, based upon the classroom ecology, which includes curriculum, pedagogy, intention and interactions (Eisner, 1998; Uhrmacher, 2017, p. 23). Eisner refers to the curriculum as content, pedagogy, or the ways we teach (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Following are explanations of each research question, in alignment with the educational criticism and connoisseurship method.

Central Research Question

How do White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in middle school classrooms, through their implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices?

This central research question works to analyze an area of education that is typically unheard of or ignored in order to take action and create change within the system (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). To fully understand how White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy, the teachers must first understand how White supremacy shows up throughout education, which will be discussed throughout interviews with selected participants. This research study utilized interviews with White middle school teachers to examine how these teachers see how supremacy manifests itself in education, especially in regards to their own educational background, along with in their current school. As Uhrmacher et al. (2017) argues, "research questions that are designed to elicit emergent themes are open ended and exploratory but still provide a guide for the researcher's imagination" (p. 26). This specific research question stands as the basis for this study to collect data around the actions White teachers are taking to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms. The following sub questions align with Eisner's school ecology and will be used through various descriptive forms with data collected through observations, interviews, and lesson artifacts (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Sub Questions

1. *How are White teachers implementing a culturally responsive classroom environment for Black students?*

2. *How do White educators plan for and enact a culturally responsive curriculum for Black students?*

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These first and second sub questions relate to curriculum, pedagogy, and interactions in the classroom (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). In order for White teachers to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, they must work to build authentic relationships with their Black students, which starts with building a culturally responsive classroom environment and humanizing interactions with students (Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008). These questions work to reveal how White teachers are creating a culturally responsive classroom environment, along with culturally responsive lessons that engage students through discussing their lived experiences during each lesson (Ladson-Billings, 1995). They also reveal how teachers are working to change and supplement the White-centered curriculum to move towards a more equitable classroom (Dell'Angelo, 2014). In order to dismantle White supremacy, teachers must work to achieve critical consciousness, dismantle the current curricula that focuses on White history and experience and move towards creating a more inclusive, culturally responsive classroom curriculum (Dell'Angelo, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995;).

3. *How do White teachers' identities influence their perceptions of and interactions with Black students?*

The third sub question relates to interactions between Black students and White teachers (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Teachers were asked to identify themselves (race, class, gender, etc.) in relation to their Black students, in the initial recruitment survey. Through interviews, teachers were also asked to reflect upon how their identities play a role in how they interact and teach their Black students (Accapadi, 2007; Huerta, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015).

4. *What supports and barriers do White educators experience when attempting to dismantle White supremacy in education, through their use of culturally responsive practices?*

The last sub question relates to the experiences White teachers are having when they are working to dismantle the supremacist systems in their classrooms (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Participants were interviewed to understand their experiences in which they feel supported by the school to dismantle supremacy and the interviews also worked to highlight the barriers they continue to face as they work to change the school system and create a more culturally responsive classroom to best serve Black students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Data Collection

Site Selection

The research was conducted at an urban middle school, School of Excellence, in Denver, Colorado. The middle school serves approximately 913 students, from grades 6-8, with approximately 49 teachers and staff members who serve the student population (Waldman & Groeger, 2018). In terms of demographics at this particular school, 16% of the students identify as Black or African-American, 37% of students identify as Hispanic, 37% of students identify as White, 4% of students identify as Asian and 5% of students identify as two or more races (Waldman & Groeger, 2018). At the School of Excellence, Black students are 5x more likely to be suspended than their White counterparts, which shows the inequitable history of the school, in relation to disciplinary issues.

In terms of educational opportunities, Black students make up only 9% of the gifted and talented education program at this urban school, while White students are 2.5

times as likely to be enrolled in the gifted and talented (GT) program than Black students (Waldman & Groeger, 2018). These demographics display how Black students are not as supported as their White counterparts due to the increase of school discipline, along with the lack of students in the GT program (Skiba et al., 2002; Waldman & Groeger, 2018). The research questions aligned to this study were used to find conclusions as to how White teachers are working to best serve their Black students through their use of culturally responsive practices in order to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms.

Community Partner Role

Dr. Franita Ware, Program Manager for Equity Initiatives on the CELT team at Denver Public Schools, is the DPS sponsor and community partner (See Appendix J). Due to ethical reasons, the current principal of the middle school was unable to provide support in the recruitment process, as "educational criticism requires a level of trust and respect between the researcher and the participants" and as they are the principal, they hold a level of power in the situation, which reveals "ethical problems" as the research begins (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 27).

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Within this educational criticism study, it was important to follow a utilitarian framework throughout the qualitative inquiry; a framework that is used to think about informed consent, recruitment, avoidance of harm and confidentiality when writing the final report (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). This particular study utilized four participants, however, I ensured there were a total of six possible participants, so that participants

could decide to back out of the research study altogether, if needed. Additional participants ensured there are enough participants for valid data collection (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). In total, the research study had 4 participants, as all participants decided to stay in the study, throughout the entire process.

The study utilized purposive sampling (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 1990) which means specific participants were selected who can share their experiences in ways that relate to the ideas in this study (Polkinghorne, 2005). During the recruitment process, participants were chosen through particular criteria (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 1990; Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Teachers filled out a Google form in which they stated their racial identity, age, years of teaching experience, grade level and specific subject taught, gender, and class (See Appendix B). When selecting participants, the teachers had to fit the criteria of identifying as a White teacher of any gender, be of a diverse range of social class, grade level and subject taught, with an age ranging between 21 - 66, and having a range of 1-50 years of teaching experience when applying to be a participant (Leonardo, 2002). In terms of recruitment, Dr. Franita Ware sent out a recruitment letter, via email, on my behalf, asking teachers to complete the Google form, if they wish to participate in the study (See Appendix A). Dr. Ware sent out the recruitment letter twice, as during the times of COVID, it was difficult for teachers to keep up with their emails, as they were covering classes, among other teaching roles (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). After the second email, I had all six teachers needed for the study, however, I only picked four teachers, based on the participant demographic information, in order to get a variety of teachers in the study. Teachers that were chosen had a variety of years of experience, diverse range of social class, along with variety of age range. The majority of teachers identified as

male and there was only one female teacher, which was a surprise, as the majority of teachers at this school, identify as female. The participants also taught a variety of subjects including, English Language Development, Math, Social Studies and Science. Teachers in this study have been teaching from 3 to 19 years, with many interesting steps to get to their current school. The participants' ages ranged from 25-40, all with diverse stories with their path to teaching. The teachers' social class ranged from lower to upper class, which they also shared about in their interviews.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Department /Grade Level Taught	Race	Age	Gender	Years of Teaching Experience	Social Class
Jeff	8th grade Math	White	30	Male	8	Middle
Finn	6th and 7th grade Social Studies	White	25	Male	3	Middle
Kaylee	7th and 8th grade Science	White	40	Female	19	Upper
Wallace	6th, 7th and 8th grade ELD	White	35	Male	8	Lower/ Middle

Note. This table demonstrates participants' demographic information.

Critical Prologue

I have worked at the school where I will be conducting the research for the past five years, serving as a Language Arts teacher, the Senior Team Lead for Culturally Responsive Education and Academic Equity, and now as the Senior Team Lead for Language Arts. Throughout this study, I was highly aware of my position within the school building. I did not select participants that I consistently work with or evaluate, such as teachers on the Language Arts team. Teachers and staff within the building understand my position as a researcher and a teacher leader and while this helps with the ethics of this situation, I also had to work to avoid any type of ethical problem as I completed my research within the building that I currently work in (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 27).

As I am a Black female teacher leader in this school, I believed there may be some possible fabricated or hyperbolized implication statements that could arise as I interviewed White teachers. Based on my race and beliefs, White teachers may have felt the need to impress me or shift their answers to align with what they perceive is important. Cross-racial interviewing is the idea that the interviewer's skin is likely to influence the way a person responds to a question and the responses may vary with the context and topics that are discussed (Rhodes, 1994). There were some issues with cross-racial interviewing as I inquired about teacher's knowledge with understanding how White supremacy is manifested dismantled in education (Rhodes, 1994). For example, with this ethical conundrum, observations were the more accurate source of data, rather than interviews. The observations showed me an accurate representation of how teachers

authentically act in the classroom with their students specifically revealing if these teachers are culturally responsive educators through their interactions with students.

During the interviews, I observed the ways teachers reacted to the questions. I looked for shifts in body language and long pauses, when answering the questions. I kept intentional memos of my observations, given the fact that I am a Black female leader in the building, and I believed that White teachers may shift their body language or become uncomfortable when answering these difficult questions around me. During my data analysis in chapter 4, I will utilize these memos as a point of analysis, as I evaluate if participants were, in fact, worried about trying to impress me with the answers they shared or how they acted during the interviews, as they could have felt uncomfortable answering these questions, as I am a Black woman who is asking them.

Interviews

I conducted interviews with the selected participants to "gain a full and detailed account from an informant of the experience under study" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 142). Potter (1996) defined interviewing as a "technique of gathering data from humans by asking them questions and getting them to react verbally" (p. 96). The aim of the interviews was to gain concrete information from each participant to better understand their experience, in relation to the issue being researched (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Uhrmacher et al. (2017) describes how "many educational critics begin with an interview and then schedule a series of observations over a number of weeks" (p. 33). This particular research study employed formal, semi-structured interview questions that were open ended, prewritten, and chronological, however, I also added follow-up questions and adapted questions while still following through with the intention of the

interview (Bernard, 1998). Because researchers need to obtain concrete, specific examples of their participant's experience, I aimed to conduct a series of three interviews, to learn more of the participants (Polkinghorne, 2005; Seidman, 1991;). The first interview focused on building rapport with the interviewee, while the second interview focuses on exploring the experience in depth and the last interview asked follow-up questions and action steps for ways to change the systems in place (Seidman, 1991; Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

As the researcher, I began each interview by asking participants to describe their lived experiences and background, especially in relation to White supremacy in education, throughout their educational career, to build a trusting relationship with the interviewee (Polkinghorne, 2005). When focused on specific aspects of Eisner's school ecology elements: curriculum, pedagogy and interactions, I asked questions like, "I wondered about" or "I noticed that" or "I am curious about...could you tell me more?" and "Is that how you intended the lesson to go?" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 33). The last interview asked the participants how they intended to dismantle White supremacy and what they have been doing to become culturally responsive educators (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). Each interview lasted between 45-90 minutes long, to ensure participants had ample time to explain their experiences and there was sufficient data to answer the research questions.

Polkinghorne (2005) explains that "the conversation consists of a give-and-take dialectic in which the interviewer follows the conversational threads opened up by the interviewee and guides the conversation toward producing a full account of the experience under investigation" (p. 141). The interviews were recorded via Google Meets

with informed consent from each participant (see Appendix F). All interviews were transcribed within a week with interview memos about key ideas (Polkinghorne, 2005).

I worked with the interviewees to choose the venue and time for the interview, as the interview need to be "free of interruptions and should provide a space in which the participant feels able to speak openly," (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 33). Participants did not receive interview guides in advance, to ensure for more authentic responses for the study. As the interview questions were challenging, I was prepared to listen patiently as the interviewee may muddle through an answer (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Observations

Observations were used to gather data and I watched and documented the behaviors seen throughout each observation (Polkinghorne, 2005). As the quality of observational data is highly dependent on the skill and training of the researcher, the role of an educational critic is to "see and interpret subtleties… and it is important for him/her to hone important perceptive abilities to aid with that task" (Polkinghorne, 2005; Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 30). In the field, observers should write down phrases, words and notes during the course of a day's events, then move into writing expanded field notes through a narrative, descriptive format (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). After observations, researchers must focus on writing narrative fieldnotes with "thick descriptions based on attending to as much detail as possible in the setting - write down everything that you see and hear going on" (Warren & Karner, 2010, p. 110).

Through classroom and planning observations, I utilized "several types of observational activities" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 31) such as: wide - angle lens, where I absorbed and recorded the particulars of the setting and described everything they saw

and heard, along with single and multi-sensory experience that further deepens the perception of the environment one is observing. Once grounded in the observational space, I was able to utilize episodic vignettes to transcribe particular conversations, unplanned disruptions, among other moments that would benefit to be transcribed to best support the research (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Throughout classroom observations, it was best to conceal my role as the researcher, as to not get the students distracted during classroom observations. Before the beginning of each observation, I read aloud a script to the students outlining the purpose of the observation and the process of the observation (See Appendix G). I did not engage in any conversations with students or staff, throughout my observation to avoid any conversations or interactions with teachers and students.

One of the classrooms and teacher planning observations was guided by the FEET rubric created by Dr. Maria Salazar and Dr. Jessica Lerner (Salazar & Lerner, 2019). The FEET rubric reflects a higher percentage of culturally responsive practices, along with the inclusion of equity-based words and competencies, when looking to evaluate and supervise teachers (Salazar & Lerner, 2019). The FEET engage classroom observation tool and the FEET planning observation tool was used to observe culturally responsive curriculum and teaching, along with observing how teachers are working to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, all completed through a prefigured foci (Salazar & Lerner, 2019; Uhrmacher et al., 2017;). The other classroom and planning observations were seen through either a prefigured or emergent foci, the former being looking for specific observations and these, whereas the latter involves observing everything in relation to the study (Uhrmacher et al. 2017). Classroom observations happened three

times, for each teacher, each of which were frequent, short, and unexpected, in order to gather best evidence (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). (See Appendix G).

Artifacts

In addition to classroom observations and formal interviews, artifacts such as lesson plans and photographs of the classroom were used to show visuals of the story that the researcher is telling (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 33). For this particular study, I collected lesson plan materials, such as student facing slides, materials, classroom decorations, etc. as this information was used to create meaningful evaluations and interpretations, used to answer the research questions for this particular study (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). After collecting these artifacts, I categorized them using Eisner's school ecology model or categorized them by emergent themes (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). The artifacts were used to relate the materials to observations and interviews, along with figuring out what the categories reveal and conceal (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

Process

In order to analyze data collected, I needed to review all data collected. I used a digital application, Trint, which allowed me to first transcribe all interviews collected from participants. After transcribing interviews, I used the digital application, Delve, which allowed me to categorize all of my data into different themes. After re-reading all interview transcriptions and observations, I was able to delineate which quotes and examples belonged in which theme. I found that after creating 30 themes, there were

three most emerging, overall themes from the research, which included: relationships, relevance, and reflection.

Description and Interpretation

Descriptions and interpretations are the best way to analyze the data from observations, interviews and artifacts. As Uhrmacher et al. (2017) describes, researchers begin with description because

> it represents a foundation for interpretation, evaluation and the development of themes. The aim of description is to help readers see and hear what the critic has experienced. Interpretation explores the meanings of what the critic has described and typically involves the critic's antecedent knowledge in order to extend descriptive data and link them to other work in the field. Interpretation overlaps with description. (p. 37).

There must be a balance between 'showing' and 'telling' as descriptive writing attempts to explain the meaning of what has been observed or shown (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

For this particular study, I focused on an etic perspective ('seeing about'), which "represents the researcher's perspective, which is often the point of view of disciplined-based knowledge. Etic perspectives "are forms of applied connoisseurship realized through interpretation" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 38). It includes theories, concepts, language and explanatory models often drawn from the critic-researchers training in the arts, humanities or social sciences" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 38). In terms of description, "chronologies and narratives are common ways to organize descriptive material, allowing the critic to involve readers into a particular setting, develop characters (participants) and use their actions to develop the story's plot" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 41).

As Uhrmacher et al. (2017) argue, "in a well-crafted educational criticism, description and interpretation fit hand in glove" and you need the description for the interpretation (p. 41). Interpretation, the appreciation of concepts, "seeks to explicate the meanings of descriptive data by providing some type of conceptual order of structure" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 41). The overall goal of interpretation is to make sense of the data and make meaning of the experiences (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). For this research study, I utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as interpretative frames, for which to analyze data (Gillborn 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Warmington, 2014). These two frames supported me in answering the research questions to see how White teachers are working to reflect upon their own identities, in relation to their students and how they are working to dismantle supremacy through being culturally responsive educators.

Evaluation and Thematics

Themes can be found after coding and annotating the data (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). As the goal of an educational critic is to improve the educational process, Dewey's (1938) criteria for an educative experience can be used as an evaluative measure to improve the educational lives of students (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). For this study, the use of Dewey's (1938) "miseducative experience" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 51) could be used to see if White supremacist practices hinder the growth of Black students, both in the present and possibly through future contexts as well.

Because the educational critic's evaluation "is informed by her own beliefs and values, it may be useful to clearly articulate such beliefs in a critical prologue" (Eisner, 2002, p. 232), which is analogous to writing about one's 'positionality' or 'researcher

bias' in other qualitative approaches (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). This section of the write up will "contextualize the criticism in terms of the critic's belief system" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 53). Evaluation, in terms of in the research process, was seen through the prefigured foci in this research study, as I already had ideas in mind as to what to look for during observations and interviews, through the interview questions, theories and curriculum types, as well as the FEET rubric, which can all be utilized as prefigured (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). The research was analyzed through coding of various themes, throughout the research. I read through the research multiple times, first for clarity and then for analyzing for themes within the data. Though some parts of the research process utilized the prefigured foci, I utilized the emergent foci, to remain open, "in terms of how to interpret and evaluate the setting" (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 54) during some observations, to see how the emergent forms the prefigured foci.

Coding

The practice of coding data is seen as naming and organizing data based on emergent patterns and themes (Uhrmacher et al., 2017, p. 56). The themes were all in relation to Eisner's school ecology elements that relate to research questions (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Data Sources

Due to my connoisseurship and experience, I decided that 30-60 minutes per observation would be sufficient. As I have experiential knowledge in supervision and evaluation of teachers; I used my experiential knowledge to observe teachers within this time frame. I also observed teachers in different class periods, to get a sense of how the

teachers are making connections and teaching culturally responsive to a myriad of students. The first observation was completed with an emergent foci, the second with a prefigured and the third observation will utilize a prefigured foci through the use of the FEET rubric to ensure that teachers were being observed through a culturally responsive teaching and coaching approach (Uhrmacher et al. 2017).

Because the 2021-2022 school year occurred throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers' schedules were overwhelming and packed to the brim with teaching, planning, grading, contacting families, along with covering classes. Understanding the needs of a teacher's demanding schedule has been immensely important in completing this particular research study, as the research setting is a middle school, in Denver. Dr. Ware, the community partner, sent out the recruitment letter twice to participants, so that they were able to have the recruitment information at the top of their email, which helped with recruitment. The first recruitment letter was sent on October 4th, while the second recruitment email was sent on October 11th. There was a total of eight teachers and staff who signed up for the study. After reviewing each possible participant's backgrounds, I decided to choose four specific participants. The participants chosen were those who fit the criteria and added diversity to the study.

After I chose the four participants, I emailed each participant, asking what name they would like for their pseudonym for this study. The research sequence ranged from October 2021 to January 2022. Each teacher completed all parts of the research sequence at different times; some teachers were able to complete their data within a month, while others completed theirs within a couple of months.

Analytic Procedure

I chose Educational Criticism and Connoisseurship as the methodology for this study, as I knew its basis was to create action based off of an issue within education. Because of my own experience, knowledge and connoisseurship, EdCrit seemed like the best method to move forward with, as it allowed me, as the researcher, to ground my findings and analysis of this study, through my own lived experiences and background. Of course, this study used a variety of data sources to help answer the research questions. The interviews, observations and artifacts were all crucial to the whole picture aspect of this research study.

As a Black female student, educator and teacher leader within an urban middle school, my knowledge and experience helped to assess the issue at hand within our current educational system, determine what action needed to be taken to begin to resolve the issue at hand, along with design a study that would critically analyze the issue and possible solutions for the action that needs to be taken. My knowledge, experience and connoisseurship helped to influence the design of this study and the overall data analysis of the research. For example, the interview questions that I created for this study brought light to different teachers' lived experiences, both in and out of the classroom. Because culturally responsive teaching is culturally nuanced, teachers who have not yet done work on themselves, in terms of unpacking their own biases, would not be able to truly gain the level of intuitiveness needed for the analysis of this research. My background and experience are crucial to the design and analysis of this study; another researcher wanting to replicate this study would get different results, as they do not hold the same connoisseurship, as I do myself for this particular work.

Before diving into the coding and analysis of the research, I anticipated which themes might emerge, based on my conceptual framework, research questions and overall collection of data sources. As I was collecting data throughout the study, I predicted I would see themes surrounding student/teacher relationships, high expectations and relevant curriculum due to my expertise in the field. Eventually, the three emergent themes that emerged from the data were: relationships, relevance and reflection. As the connoisseur of this research, my experience in knowing what a culturally responsive classroom looks like was extremely helpful, when analyzing the data. Observations and interview analysis came easier as the connoisseur, as I have done this work myself, within my own classroom. I understand what it looks like to cultivate strong student/teacher relationships, create engaging and relevant curriculum, as well as it what it means to reflect upon my identity in the classroom, in relation to my students.

Throughout the data collection process, I would keep a notebook of memos, to write down any observations I had when conducting interviews, specifically. The interview questions that were crafted were done so, in looking for teachers to reflect about themselves, which can cause them to pause and take time to truly think critically about what is being asked. During each interview, I would take notes around how teachers would act, in terms of body language shifts, long pauses, etc. when being asked a difficult question. Each teachers' movement would allow me to understand their feelings about the question, as I would see teachers who would take their time answering the question, which shows their thoughtfulness when answering each question. Along with this, some teachers body language would show they were uncomfortable when asked a difficult question about White supremacy, which shows me that they are still

early on in their self-reflection and work in becoming a culturally responsive teacher. My experience and positionality as a Black female educator and researcher allowed me to understand and delineate through each teachers' movement during our interviews, which also provided me with more insight into what follow up questions to ask, in order to get a better understanding of each teachers' lived experiences.

In terms of coding the data, themes emerged through consecutive rereadings of the data. Throughout data collection, I utilized a digital transcription tool, Trint, to transcribe all interviews, to ensure each participant's words were stated accurately. After transcribing the interviews, I used another digital application tool, Delve, to upload all of my data sources into one digital arena in order to help me organize my data better. I reviewed the data sources in the Delve application tool three separate times. The first time was to review the data as a whole, as I read through each teachers' observations and interview transcriptions. The second time was to formulate codes, based on specific patterns I was seeing between each teacher and data source. The third time, I was able to organize the different patterns across participants and arrange data points into specific codes. There was a total of 30 codes that I created, based on the research. The codes were created based on ideas and patterns I saw emerge, after reviewing all data. My positionality and experience as a Black female educator supported me in my reading of the data, as I used my knowledge and expertise to organize the data based on specific codes that best fit within each data source.

In order to work through all pieces of data and organize them into all 30 codes, I needed to review the data and see which quotes from observations and interviews would best fit into each code. Some pieces of data fit in multiple codes and were added

accordingly to each possible theme. For example, I noticed that Jeff was working to allow

for students to engage in effective collaboration throughout multiple observations, so I

added this data piece to the "Collaboration" code. Evidence around effective

collaboration from Jeff's classroom was also good evidence for the "Student Needs"

code, as Jeff was listening to what his students need to best succeed in his classroom and

in his planning observations, he shared that collaboration was what students were asking

for, in class. The evidence fit well into both "Collaboration" and "Student Needs" codes,

in the Delve application. There were other pieces of data that fit beautifully within one

code. For example, Wallace worked hard to create student/teacher relationships through a

thoughtful and intentional lens. There are multiple data points that show how Wallace

was cultivating strong relationships with students and those examples were put into the

"Student/Teacher Relationships" code in the application tool. While some teachers had

evidence that fit into specific codes, such as relationships, other teachers did not. I did not

force any data points to fit into specific codes, as I wanted to ensure the data was reliable

and valid throughout the entire process. I followed this process and format of coding until

all data sources were organized into the 30 codes. While there were 30 codes, some codes

were similar and had data sources that fit into each code. For example, "Curriculum,"

"Relevance" and "Application" were all similar and allowed for multiple data sources to

fit each code. Along with that, "Relationships," "Student/Teacher Interactions,"

"Empowering Students" and "Honoring Student Voice" all had similar data pieces that

went into their categories. Because some codes were comparable, I reviewed which codes

had the most data sources and utilized my expertise to choose which of them were the

most prominent themes, based on data, after the coding process.

Throughout this process, I worked to delineate through all pieces of data and eventually saw that relationships, relevance and reflection had sufficient data to support them in being the three most prominent, emergent themes that came from the 30 codes. Through my connoisseurship and expertise, it is clear to me that these three emergent themes needed to work together in order to start the process of dismantling White supremacy through culturally responsive education. Each of these themes cannot be done alone, but rather, intentionally completed together, as teachers must use them to create the action needed to begin to dismantle White supremacy in classrooms through culturally responsive education. Of course, there were other codes with sufficient data and though they did not fit within the three major themes, they were included in the findings chapter. For example, in chapter five, other emergent codes and themes were included, as evidence to answer the research questions for the study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided information on how this study was conducted. It discussed how educational criticism facilitates the communication and identification of the subtleties in this educational system. The use of educational criticism is also addressed. Furthermore, this chapter included information on the interview process, observation protocols and process, as well as artifact collection. The closing section of this chapter explained the data analysis of this study design, along with a tentative timeline on the projected times for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

This research focused on how teachers are working to recognize the White supremacist ideals, systems and structures that are embedded within our educational system and works to address how they are beginning to address these issues. While the teachers in this study are not completely succeeding in their quest for action, they are doing the work to begin to dismantle White supremacy in classrooms, through culturally responsive education. Because culturally responsive education is a vehicle for dismantling White supremacy in education, the data shows how teachers have begun creating change in their classrooms, to best support their Black students in their classrooms.

This study addresses how White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in middle school classrooms through their implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices. In this study, teachers reflected upon their lived experiences and identities in relation to culturally responsive pedagogy. This study worked to answer the following research question:

How do White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in middle school classrooms and implement culturally responsive teaching practices?

This study also addressed four sub-questions:

1. *How are White teachers implementing a culturally responsive classroom environment for Black students?*

2. *How do White educators plan and enact a culturally responsive curriculum for Black students?*

3. *How do White teachers' identities influence their perceptions of and interactions with Black students?*

4. *What supports and barriers do White educators experience when attempting to dismantle White supremacy in education through their use of culturally responsive practices?*

This research study utilized an educational criticism and connoisseurship method (Eisner, 2017; Uhrmacher et al., 2017) to critique the current educational system and to illuminate how schools perpetuate White supremacist ideals and policies (Annamma, 2016). I collected data through three interviews, three planning observations, three classroom observations, and a collection of artifacts from the observations to understand the ways in which four middle school teacher participants create and sustain culturally responsive lessons, classroom environments, and interactions with the intention of dismantling White supremacy in their classrooms (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

This chapter presents descriptions of the four educators organized into four sections: The Structural Dimension, The Curricular Dimension, The Pedagogical Dimension and the Intentional Dimension, which were selected from Eisner's (1998) five Dimensions of

Schooling. Four teachers were selected to participate in this research study from an urban middle school in Denver, Colorado. I spent approximately four months conducting interviews, observations, and collecting artifacts with each teacher. This chapter will introduce the four classroom teachers through detailed vignettes guided by Eisner's (1998) dimensions of schooling. These descriptions are structured by my interpretation and evaluation of the conceptual framework being used—culturally responsive pedagogy—along with my own expertise and knowledge around classroom learning environments, curriculum, and pedagogy.

The School Setting

School of Excellence

As I enter the double doors at this urban middle school in Denver, Colorado, I am warmly greeted by two staff members in the main office. Working diligently on their computers and phones to get all questions answered for students and families, I notice how they speak kindly and genuinely with each person, asking them how their day is and how they can support them. As I walk into the main lobby of the school, I see it is lined with purple and green chairs, student artwork, along with multicultural memorabilia that immediately shows the school's interests. There are flags from each country, along with welcome signs written in a variety of languages, that reflect the student, staff, and community population. Along the walls of the main lobby, by the double doors, I see not only clocks that show the time in different zones around the world, but I am also greeted with welcome signs in various languages that reflect the school's demographics. As I continue to walk down the halls of this school, I saw many informational bulletin boards

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with different types of displays. All displays had Arabic and Spanish print, along with English, to ensure that all student populations in the school are able to access the material and information at hand. The hallways are lined with posters encouraging students to join a club, a sports team, or an after-school tutoring club with different grade levels for all subjects.

As I walk, I also notice that each teacher's classroom has a picture of the teacher, along with some quick facts about the teacher's education, likes, dislikes, favorites and hobbies, that allows students, families, and community members to know more about each educator in the building—a stepping stone to creating strong relationships with each of these stakeholders. The hallways are packed with students from multiple backgrounds and lived experiences, as they walk or run to meet their friends, check in with teachers, and get to their classes before their first class begins. I see students that identify with a variety of races, students whose families are from different countries and immigrated to this country, and students who identify with specific affinity groups.

Teacher 1: Jeff

Personal Background: Dyslexic Math Teacher

Jeff, a 30-year-old White male teacher from a middle-class family in Dallas, Texas, towers over staff and students at 6 feet tall. As a young boy with dyslexia, he moved to Colorado when he was 10 years old and attended Cherry Creek Schools. He graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in mathematics and a concentration in education. Jeff, currently in his eighth year of teaching, is continuing his education by pursuing his master's degree in curriculum and instruction.

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Experience with White Supremacy: Action Through Allyship

Jeff has always noticed that as a While male in society, the world revolves around him. He understands the privilege that he is granted and works to use that privilege to give back to his school community. For example, during our first interview he shared:

I feel like the world kind of revolved a little bit around me, like especially with like my dyslexia. The school I was at in Dallas was not going to do a whole lot to support me, and I had a family that was able to move from Texas to Denver and find a better school that would support me through my learning. I know that is a privilege. I do know that, like in society as a male, there are certain like criteria, like it needs to be a man, right? I never would really classify myself as wanting to have those stigmas growing up, but I do feel like a lot of them did stick with me and now. I have a hard time with teaching middle school. I do understand the privilege that comes with being a White male in this society.

Through his reflection, he was able to understand how his privilege has helped him in this society. As a White male teacher serving in a school, Jeff realizes how students may perceive him and works to leave his ego at the door. He mentioned that sometimes it can be hard to brush his ego aside when students are angry with him due to what he said and how he said it, because he is a White male. Nevertheless, through his reflection and continued learning, he recognizes he needs to continue to be aware of who he is, his power in the classroom, and remember why he is doing the work for the students.

In our first interview, he shared that "his views and understanding of White supremacy have changed quite dramatically since then." In our first interview, he shared:

Right now, White Supremacy is essentially upholding some of those lived values. All of those cultures are those extremes. To be honest, the big thing I know I'm working on is being a little bit more confrontational. In essence, what that means is like, if I see a friend demonstrating something that makes me uncomfortable or is in one form or another showing bias or racism, even if it is not implied, it would be essentially considered White Supremacy. If I just continue to let that go, I have to think about how can I approach these very difficult conversations with friends who I've been friends with for years about this. That's a pretty challenging thing, and it's something that I know I'm currently working on. I would say that's how it manifests itself. As like, what are we doing about it? Or are we just we just saying, Hey, I'm not racist, so we're OK? Or are we trying to confront other people about it? But it can feel confrontational because like you can't just go up to somebody and say, Hey, you're a racist, right? Like, we're all working on our biases, we kind of grew up in this culture and I would not consider myself a racist, but I would want somebody to correct me if I were to say something that was out of line.

In this instance, Jeff professes the need to take action through allyship and acknowledges a desire to learn from his mistakes. Jeff understands that everyone is working on their biases and in order to make change, you must reckon with considering yourself to be a racist, move past it, and learn how to create action from it.

For instance, when a student called Jeff racist, he was shocked, as it is not a word that he hears very often. Though taken aback, hurt, and confused, he still wanted to take time to reflect upon and address what had been shared with him. After reflecting, he

realized that sometimes students would call him racist when they were given a consequence. Knowing that information, he continued to think and reflect deeper. The students who would accuse him of being racist were most often Black male students and it occurred when he would assign them a consequence that was not fair or aligned to the issue at hand in comparison to their White peers. He realized that the students who would be given consequences are those who were louder, or using different language or tones that would seem offensive to him. After more reflection, he realized that the root of the issue was that even after a few reminders, he would give out consequences that were inconsistent for students, as some students were talking but in lower tones, whereas others would still be completing work but were collaborating at a louder tone, which would incur a consequence. Jeff learned that the consequences he gave needed to be consistent for all learners.

Literature emphasizes the ways Black children are more likely to get into trouble for subjective offensives (Morris, 2007). Black students often receive harsh consequences for disrespecting authority or for being too loud, both of which are subjective behaviors (Wun, 2018). Given deficit discourses about Black male behavior in the classroom, it was imperative for Jeff to take a step back and reflect upon his actions and his identity as a White man who teaches Black students. His reflection and realization were a huge step in learning how to become a culturally responsive educator who works to disrupt White supremacy in the classroom.

Jeff is working to dismantle White supremacy in his classes by reflecting upon his relationships with his Black students, his overall consistency with rules and implementation of such rules, and his overall classroom environment. He is constantly

reflecting upon if he is reverting to his old ways where he wants his room to look and sound a specific way, rather than being inclusive to all students, cultures, and abilities. While White supremacy was never at the forefront of Jeff's life, he is working hard to continue to educate himself on what supremacy looks like, both in and out of the classroom. He understands that there is not one clear way to dismantle White supremacy in education, but that action can "come down to a lot of uncomfortable conversations and confrontations. We just have to be willing to be open. We have to be open to listening to conversations and perspectives and be open to learning more about how to call people out. We can't say nothing about people's White supremacist mindsets, but instead need to be reflective on what we do as teachers."

Root of Inspiration: What Are Teachers Doing for Black Students?

Fresh out of high school, Jeff knew he wanted the rest of his life to be around anything math related and after working one summer at a camp, he knew he must be working with kids. Jeff believes that as a teacher, one must work to not only create a safe, loving, and caring environment for students, but also to ensure that you are honest and transparent with your students. This, Jeff believes, will allow you to build strong relationships and enable your students to feel more comfortable taking risks and being themselves. As a White man in an urban school district, Jeff is always asking himself the following question: what am I doing for my Black students? He questions the relationships he is building with them and how is he remaining consistent. He works to meet students where they are, just as his teachers did with him when he was in school.

The Structural Dimension: Collaboration in Nerd Nation

When you enter Jeff's classroom, you're greeted with loud music with a daily varying genre. Students pick the song of the day quite often, allowing them to help enhance the classroom environment for that day. You will always see Jeff ready to greet you at the door with a high five. During my first observation, I see students hustling and moving through the hallway to ensure they get to their first period on time. You see students, as tall as they come, greeting one another with hugs and fist bumps. As the first warning bell rings, you see Jeff waiting at the front door, welcoming students in with their choice of high fives or fist bumps. As a student walks up to him, you hear Jeff say, "Oh hey my man, how are you doing this morning?" Jeff gestures to give the student a high five and you can see the student look up at Jeff, as he is the tallest in the hallway. The student says, "Oh no, you are doing too much" but still gives Jeff a high five, as they enter the room. The room is now filled with students, as the last bell for the morning rings, allowing teachers to start their class. The room is filled with students, some with their heads down, some are walking around the room conversing with friends, while others are focused on their breakfast.

Jeff was very intentional about setting up the physical space in his classroom to be inviting and conducive to learning. His cozy, well-lit classroom has tables that allow for two students to sit at each table, which allows for more effective collaboration throughout the day. Co-created norms from the beginning of the year are hung around the room as a reminder of the commitment that the students and teacher have made with each other for the entire year. Jeff and his students have created multiple classroom posters titled, "We don't play with COVID," "Nerd Nation," and "Teamwork, communication and helping each other," to show themselves as well as others the priorities of their classroom. Co-

created brave and supportive classroom space is something Jeff strives to do with his students to ensure that they are collaborating within a strong, authentic, safe classroom environment.

Figure 1. Co-created classroom norms
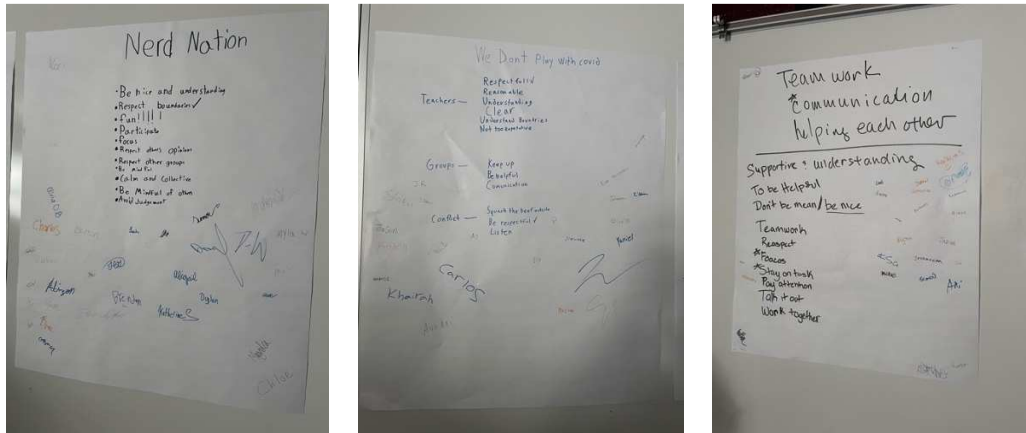
Providing students with materials and resources to support their success will allow them to understand that their teacher is truly there to support them rather than judge them. Not only does Jeff have informational posters around the room to support student learning, but he also has displayed student exemplars of what effective collaboration with peers looks like. On his "student collaboration" wall, there are pictures of them collaborating with each other, student examples of math related work where collaboration was a key component, as well as a picture of heroines from *Hidden Figures* to intentionally show examples of women of color who are models of effective collaboration for the greater good.

Figure 2. Effective collaboration model

Figure 3. Math learning resources
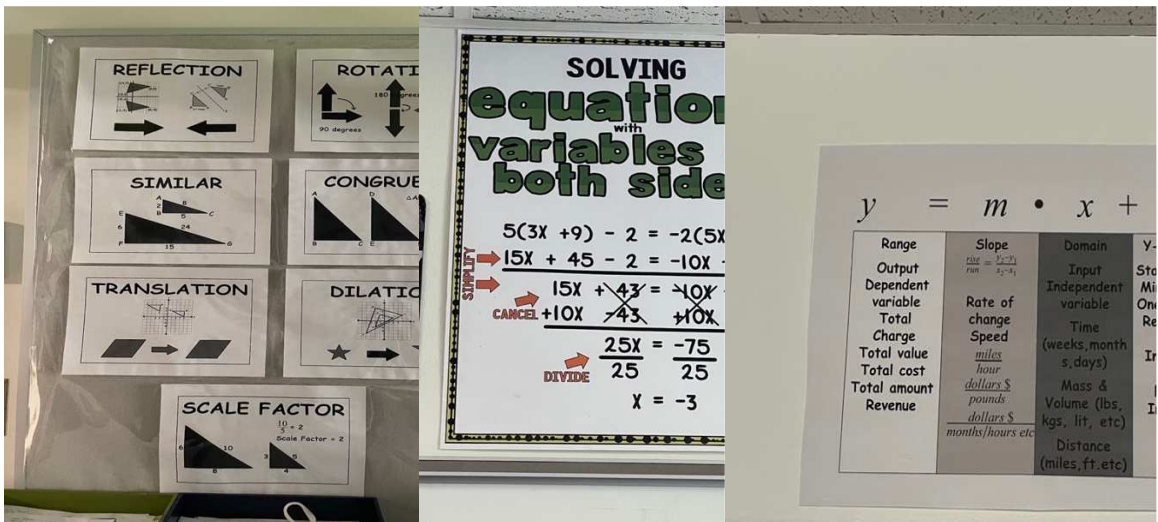
Jeff works to create engaging lessons for students each day and strives to make his classroom learning space engaging and fun. During the first classroom observation on the week of Halloween, he created a lesson surrounding zombies and decorated his classroom with green webbing. Jeff started the class off with creepy Halloween music and created an environment that made students excited about learning. The morning of

his lesson, Jeff had painted dark red and black circles around his eyes and walked into the building with torn clothing and expressive zombie makeup, all to take the lesson to its fullest potential. He greeted students as they came in the door, but instead of his normal high five greeting, he groaned at them like a zombie would, as he uttered the words, "Brains, I need brains!!!" Students were shocked, enthralled, and ready to learn as soon as they saw their teacher going above and beyond to capture their attention for their math lesson. The students' objective for that lesson was to capture all of the zombies and once they completed their work, they were able to sign their name on the teacher's shirt to commemorate their great work for the day which was hung up on the wall of collaboration in the classroom. Through the action of signing their name on the teacher's shirt, the students were able to build community through hard work and fun.

Figure 4. Zombie t-shirt day
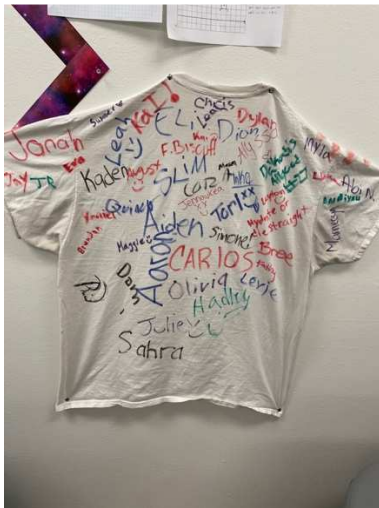
Figure 5. Zombie classroom decorations

As students walk in, Jeff says, "I know it is our first time practicing this, but I encourage you all to try it, talk with each other, and share what you know!" Jeff walks around the room, engaging with students by checking in with them, asking how they are and allowing them to gain interest in his Halloween zombie costume, which is increasingly gaining student interest. As the warm-up concludes, Jeff invites students to share out their answers through more encouragement and reminding them that it is okay to make mistakes in this classroom. The music for the room is blasting and allows for students to get more energized as the morning begins. The music was loud, creepy, fear-inducing and yet, the students loved it. As students complete their warm-up assignment for the day, Jeff expresses, "We are going to use what we learned with our warm-up to kill zombies." Students were so excited and shocked that they were going to talk about zombies and Halloween-themed work in math class. A student excitingly exclaimed, "Oh, so we killing zombies today huh?" The joy in this student's face was evident and they were clearly excited to have some fun in class.

The class settles into their seats, eager to learn today's lesson goal from their zombie teacher. As Jeff explains the lesson in detail, students understand their expectations and begin to dive into their work for the day. It was evident throughout this observation how excited students were to dive into their work and how thoughtful Jeff was in making it engaging and ensuring that they were ready to learn. In speaking with Jeff, it was quite clear that his main goal for this particular lesson was not only to create a space to make math learning fun for students, but to create opportunities for students to be engaged and to have fun in the classroom with one another as part of a community. As the lesson continued, Jeff actively monitored student progress, showering each student with positive praise and narration, along with providing additional support for students who were seeking extra encouragement. As I observed Jeff, even while sitting in the back of the room, I could hear him express to his students so much positive praise and encouragement. I could hear him saying, "You are doing such a great job with checking your work and asking for help. So proud of you." You could also see him getting down on each student's level, to have a chat with them, as he was monitoring the class's progress. He would often say, "Hey, I am so glad you are here. I see that you are doing a great job with showing your work. Nice job." Such acts of praise and encouragement left each student with a huge smile on their face, as they were so proud of themselves and the fact that their teacher noticed their hard work.

Through each interaction, you could feel Jeff's honest and intentional positivity that he exuded to each and every student. You could hear him saying, "We are going to be making lots of mistakes and that is okay; when you are killing zombies, you might make mistakes, but you will learn from them, so it is okay." If students made mistakes on

their current copies, Jeff allowed them to grab new papers from the front of the room in case they wanted a fresh start to begin their work. The physical space of Jeff's classroom was not only inviting, but also filled with encouragement and resources to promote student learning and collaboration. Jeff values risk taking and shows his belief in his students by encouraging them to achieve at high standards through his constant encouragement and support.

Jeff also consistently encourages students to collaborate with peers. Students meaningfully collaborate and work as a team to problem solve through their lesson, creating a meaningful space for effective collaboration. This practice provides a counter to the White supremacist ideal of individualistic work (Jones & Okun, 2011). Both at school and at work, the idea of perfectionism continues to be idolized and prioritized, (Jones & Okun, 2001), an idea that Jeff is intentionally working hard to eliminate. As you walk around Jeff's classroom, you can hear him saying, "loving the conversation, nice job" and "wow, I love that I see and hear you all catching your mistakes; love to see it," This positive narration encourages the students to continue to collaborate with one another and builds their self-confidence and self-esteem. Relationships, effective student collaboration, and positive student and teacher interactions are a huge part of Jeff's overall physical classroom environment. This directly translates into his practice through thoughtful and intentional implementation of culturally responsive education to dismantle White supremacy in his classroom.

Jeff's second classroom observation was conducted through a prefigured focus of student and teacher interactions and relationships (Uhrmacher et al., 2017). It was a snowy winter day when students walked in the door on Monday morning. Jeff greeted

them as usual and then handed out warm-ups and candy to wake them up. Students walked into their assigned seats and began completing their warm-ups. As they were working, Jeff's students felt comfortable sharing with him about their weekends and what they did each day. Jeff seemed very excited and eager to learn more about his students, asking questions and sharing comments about his students' weekend stories. Throughout the morning, as students are completing their warm ups, they also share with Jeff how their weekends went. A student shared, "I went to my cousin's house and we spent the entire weekend together. It was great because I love being around my cousin and her family." Jeff is so excited to learn more about his students; he is wearing a bright, expressive smile on his face, as he is grinning ear to ear. He went on to ask the student more about her weekend as he asked, "That sounds so fun. I love spending time with my family too. What did you all do together that made it so fun?" The student replied enthusiastically and shared that they "went to the mall together." The student seemed excited and open to sharing more of their life with their teacher, which showed how much they trusted him, as it was evident how happy Jeff was to learn more about his students.

During the second observation, there was another interaction with a Black female student and Jeff, where the student tried to get up and leave. Instead of calling the student out in front of her peers, Jeff asked the student to talk in the hallway and worked with her to create a plan for her to visit the bathroom after she completes the work at hand. By calling the student out in the hallway to have a private conversation, he respected her privacy and was compassionate and understanding of the student's needs. I observed Jeff pulling this student aside, into the hallway, where no one else could hear their conversation. Before moving into having a conversation about classwork, he checked in

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with her personally, attending to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Jeff asked, "Hey, I just wanted to check in with you to make sure you are all good for today. Did you eat breakfast? What do you need to succeed for the day?" Jeff's look of concern and thoughtfulness was a bit surprising to the student, as she looked up at him with a confused daze. She responded with, "Honestly, I'm okay, I just need to take a break." Jeff responded with grace, calm and understanding, as he said, "Sure. That is completely reasonable. How about this. Why don't you finish the problems you need to complete, then you can take the pass and have a quick walking or restroom break. How does that sound to you? Does that sound reasonable?" The student nodded and went back to her desk to complete her work. By honoring student voice and creating high expectations, Jeff was able to show respect for the student's social-emotional needs while maintaining high academic standards.

Also, during the second classroom observation, I noticed Jeff with a student who was loud and boisterous with a lot of energy, joking around with the teacher. Jeff matched that same energy, not only to create a strong relationship with the student, but also to allow the student to feel comfortable and seen. By matching the student's energy, Jeff was able to support the student's needs in that moment and encourage them listen more intently to what he was saying.

In conclusion, during each classroom observation, I saw Jeff speaking with students in a respectful and positive manner. Since Jeff is a very tall man, you see him work to get on the student's level, to have a conversation with them, to ensure there is no hierarchy of power in the relationship. White teachers, who typically hold the power and privilege in the classroom, should emphasize the importance of sharing the power in the

classroom and work daily to "discourage the hierarchy" (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017, p. 63). When a teacher has fully accepted their power and privilege, while understanding how they show up in the White supremacist society that we live in, they will be able to transfer power to their students and empower them to claim autonomy over their learning. Jeff works effortlessly to ensure he is sharing the power with his students through every interaction. When working with a student, Jeff always engages in a conversation with that student, rather than a lecture or a punitive conversation. He asks questions and allows the student to stop and reflect on the situation and determine what they need to succeed and move forward. Jeff works to match the students' energy during a conversation, especially when it is positive energy.

Through positive student/teacher interactions, productive struggle and high expectations, Jeff is able to create a classroom space that allows students to feel comfortable making mistakes, especially when completing assignments. In a transformative, culturally responsive classroom, students take risks, ask questions, and feel comfortable in making mistakes as they productively struggle through their work (Murdoch et al., 2020). Jeff's students feel comfortable letting him know when they have made a mistake, when they have questions, and when they need a concept re-taught. During classroom observation two, Jeff stated, "It is okay if you struggle through this for ten minutes, so that you can work through it before working with a neighbor. I want you to understand the question and struggle through understanding the question before moving into working with a neighbor or group. You will work quietly for the next ten minutes—go!" This gave students encouragement and permission to struggle on their own before being able to work with others. Later, a student in Jeff's class shared that they

needed help and Jeff got down on their level, by their desk, and started to ask the student

questions, to help them engage in critical thinking. As he was walking around, actively

monitoring student progress, he encouraged students to get up and look around the room

to use their resources as they completed their individual work. Once the individual work

time was over, Jeff asked students to share aloud their thoughts, progress, and answers.

The same Black female student who had a talk with Jeff earlier about needing a break, is

the same student who volunteered to share her answers. She walked up to the front of the

room and wanted to command attention as she did so. She walked to the front with

confidence and a smile that you could easily see through her mask. She gave a quick,

"Ahem!!" to ensure all students were paying attention to her, at the front of the room.

Students began to quiet down their side conversations and look up at the student, who

was obviously waiting for their full, undivided attention. The student begins to share their

answer but starts to get caught up and begins stumbling on her words. She starts to get

frustrated, takes a deep breath, as she is realizing that she is having difficulty with

verbally processing through her answer. She confidently pauses and says, "Oh, wait wait,

rewind, start over." Jeff, so excited that a student asked for what they needed and caught

their mistake, decided to act like a robot, doing robot dance moves, that show he is

backing up, as the student requested. I heard Jeff motion, "Ooooo, rewind, rewind,

rewind." This motion caused some laughter and re-engagement from students, as they

realized how willing their teacher was to re-teach and allow for mistakes in their

classroom.

The third class that I observed allowed for more examples of positive

student/teacher interactions combined with a positive and fun classroom environment.

The class began with fun, upbeat music from DJ Unk, a song picked by one of Jeff's students. The music got the class ready to dive into their work, as it was upbeat, happy, and allowed students to get up and dance in the early morning. Jeff began class engaging students in the goal for the next two weeks, which was to solve a specific equation: 3-2z—5(x+1). While students moaned and groaned that the question was too difficult, Jeff encouraged them and assured them that through their daily practice and collaboration, they would be able to answer this question in no time. As students completed their warm-up for the day, Jeff initiated a discussion with a Black female student who had completed her work. Jeff walked up to the student, got down to her level and asked, "How do you feel about this work so far?" As checked over her answers and said, "Omg yes! You did so great with this assignment." He shared with the class, "If you have any questions or want to check your answers, please come over here to check in with this student, since she has all of the answers correct!" The excitement you could hear from Jeff was astounding, along with the smile on the student's face, that you could see even through their mask, as per COVID guidelines. This student was ecstatic to get such positive praise and a leadership opportunity in this class.

Throughout the lesson, Jeff is modeling learning new material along with allowing students to take breaks and collaborate with their partners of choice. You can hear Jeff saying, "Thank you for using your notes to complete your work," or "loving the collaboration," or "great job using a calculator, that is such a good tool to use on this question." The specific, positive narration and feedback not only helped to build the confidence of the learners, but also assisted others in knowing what they should be doing if they were off task.

As Jeff described in my first interview with him, "my role at my current school is, first and foremost, to provide a safe environment for my students to learn in" and through these high expectations, clear boundaries and positive relationships with his students, he is able to create a safe classroom space conducive to student learning. Jeff also shared that he "really wants to make sure that when students come here, they feel comfortable, they feel safe to take risks and be themselves," which is evidenced by his constant reminders that students are allowed to make mistakes, students are able to share their needs and know they will be met, along with allowing them to work and learn how they learn best. Whether through collaborative work, small groups, individual work, listening to music, sitting or standing up, etc., Jeff wants his students to know that he will do what he can to create a safe, comfortable learning environment for them each and every day.

The Curricular Dimension: Students First Approach

The middle school that I observed in Denver is a school that takes pride in learning how to build culturally responsive lessons for their students. I observed Jeff and his team on three different occasions as they planned the lessons for the upcoming week. During these planning observations, I witnessed the team's tactical and intentional approach to making math more meaningful, applicable, and fun for their students. The first observation, seen through an emergent focus, centered on determining how they can make their lessons simultaneously applicable and engaging (Uhrmacher et al., 2017

In another attempt to ensure students' needs are prioritized, the team mentioned that while the current curriculum suggests they work on slopes, they needed to find another way to teach it, as the current curriculum does not do so in a way that supports students learning and is not best suited for students. This team understands where their

students currently are and they are working to challenge them and help them move forward, by providing meaningful lessons and proper scaffolds that best support their learning, which is a relevant culturally responsive tool. Jeff and his teacher team scrutinized the questions that the curriculum provided and after much reflection, concluded that the questions do not align with their students' lived experiences.

All three teachers were in Jeff's classroom, during fifth period, after they had taught all day long. Teachers were eating their lunches, as they were working to plan for the following week. I observed Jeff and his team scrolling on their computers to look through different questions in the curriculum, to see if there was anything salvageable. As they were looking, it was so quiet, you could hear a pin drop; their focus was unmatched. As they continued to comb through the material, Jeff spoke up and shared, "There is not much here to work with. Our students don't drive cars or know anything about buying gas. They need a more meaningful example to them, moving forward." Jeff continued to share that, "To make this more applicable, we should have something meaningful by using an example that makes sense to them." Both teachers nodded their heads in agreement, with what Jeff had expressed.

The teachers on this team are working collectively to look at the interim assessment and create lessons that are meaningful to student learning in order to set them up for success, all the while making sure that the material that they are creating is culturally responsive and relevant to students' lived experiences. Through discussion and questioning, Jeff is asking his team "the why" behind curricular choices, including: who is making up the curriculum, who are they creating the curriculum for, and why does

nothing they create pertain to students lived experiences? As a culturally responsive

teacher, one must look at the current curriculum and work to enhance it by creating

questions that are relatable and interesting to students while still ensuring that students

master the standard at hand.

The second planning observation, seen through a prefigured focus, focused on

students' needs and the accessibility of lessons being created (Uhrmacher et al., 2017).

Jeff and his team work hard to collaborate and create meaningful lessons that best support

students. As the team enjoys their lunch, they begin with a conversation led by Jeff, the

Math Senior Team Lead, to debrief on the day's lesson, what students struggled with and

what needs to be changed or adjusted, moving forward. After reflection, all teachers

agreed that there were some changes that needed to be made, based on student feedback

in order to meet them where they are and make the lesson most beneficial for them. The

team discussed how unfortunate it is that there is no consistency in how math is taught;

each year, there is a new approach that seems to confuse students more and does not

provide consistency, which is what students are looking for. Jeff gave a demonstration to

the team, to describe how there were two methods to teaching the same material and

allowed the teachers to figure out which method is best for their students and which

would be more helpful to their students moving forward. As Jeff and his team were

sitting around their respective tables, they were discussing how to best support students

moving forward, as the interim test was quickly approaching. I observed Jeff leading the

team, as he said, "We probably should pause on planning for our new unit and focus our

time and energy on figuring out how to best prepare students for the exam, so we do not

overwhelm them." I saw the other two teachers nodding in agreement. The team began

discussing their students' strengths and their areas of growth for each standard. I could hear Jeff saying, "The students need more support with computer-based problems, since the Interim is all computer based, however, I will also print off the questions to ensure we are making the lessons accessible for all learners." They brainstormed which questions they should ask and how they can make the questions rigorous, while still ensuring they are engaging and relevant. Jeff also was heard discussing, "We should also probably split the test up into a few days, as to not overwhelm the students who have test anxiety." Both teachers nodded in agreement of this idea as well.

In order to prepare their students, they worked through using past materials to create future lessons and learning, since it worked so well for students and allowed them to practice the standards, again. They also worked on creating new, useful review questions that were relevant and interesting, as to best prepare the students for their assessment.

In Denver Public Schools, LEAP is the evaluation tool, in which teachers are critiqued and given feedback to teachers to improve their craft. As the researcher of this study, I thought it to be crucial to observe and evaluate teachers using the FEET framework, as it is a culturally responsive approach to evaluating and critiquing teacher work (Salazar & Lerner, 2019). This FEET tool allows for a more practical approach to a more sincere effort to support in cultivating culturally responsive practices in our teachers, in the district.

Planning observation three was guided by the FEET rubric created by Dr. Maria Salazar and Dr. Jessica Lerner (Salazar & Lerner, 2019). The FEET engage classroom observation tool and the FEET planning observation tool were used to observe culturally

responsive curriculum and teaching, along with observing how teachers are working to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, all completed through a prefigured foci (Salazar & Lerner, 2019; Uhrmacher et al., 2017). In this third planning observation, I utilized the FEET rubric planning tool to observe for culturally responsive backwards design curriculum planning to develop units, design engaging, challenging and culturally responsive lessons, integrate culturally responsive assessment practices and apply knowledge of culturally responsive content and pedagogy, and student development. All four of these competencies are seen through four indicators: unsatisfactory, developing, proficient, and advanced. As the researcher who is the expert and connoisseur in this field, I will be using my knowledge and experience to categorize and evaluate this third observation into each indicator of this rubric.

In the category of "use culturally responsive backward design curriculum planning to develop units," it is evident that Jeff and his team are proficient, consistently identifying unit goals and standards that are relevant to students' lives. They also engage in designing challenging, relevant, and engaging unit performance assessments that mirror the state interim assessment. This practice allows students to gain experience and show mastery of standards through a more relevant and interesting assessment. Jeff and his team have also worked to supplement and adapt the district created curriculum, as they know it does not reflect their students' lived experiences, nor does it promote culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2014) approaches. These teachers consistently strive to include questions and resources in their lessons that reflect student diversity and allow for a scope and sequence of lessons that are aligned to standards, assessments, and culturally relevant themes and ideas. In this third planning observation, Jeff and his team

were observed discussing their intention to backward plan their lessons to support students in mastering the state assessment. While they looked through the district-created curriculum, they knew there were areas that needed improvement and did not align with their students' lived experiences. In knowing that the interim assessment focused heavily on puzzles, the teachers created lessons surrounding the idea of "magic math," which focus on magic tricks using math. I observed Jeff and his team, each person sitting at their own desk, computer in hand, ready to take on planning, after a long day of teaching. Jeff and his team started to discuss the interim assessment. I heard Jeff exclaim, "The interim assessment has a lot of puzzles in it. I feel like our students need some support with math puzzles. We might need to add more opportunities for them to practice in our lesson for next week." I saw Jeff's team enthusiastically nodding in agreement. The team started to look through the interim assessment and Jeff shared, "The math standard focuses on math puzzles but I have heard them be referenced as math tricks, too." I saw the other two teachers learn instinctually lean in to learn more from Jeff. He went on to say, "The number lines or equations are used to make the number puzzles. Students complete a number puzzle and they are able to create their own. They can even exchange their puzzles to see if families or friends can figure out their number puzzle. For example, think of a number, add 3, divide 2, subtract 4, now what would the answer be?" Before the other two teachers were able to complete the math to figure out the number puzzle, Jeff jumped in and said, "It is so fun. They get to come up with their own magic trick and they have to figure out how to approach the puzzle and find a way to solve it." After considering the fun that could happen with this activity, the other two teachers shared how they need to ensure their students understand the distributive property to make sure

they know this 8ᵗʰ grade standard before moving onto high school. I observed all three teachers work to differentiate what they will need to do in their own respective classrooms, since "some students need support with integers" and others "need to review it before moving into distributive property learning."

As they discussed this innovative approach to number lines and equations, they also discussed the possible misconceptions students may have when diving into this work. By understanding the misconceptions before beginning the lesson, Jeff and his team were able to create scaffolds, exemplars, and modeling strategies to determine how to best support students in understanding the material. As Jeff and his team plan for the next unit and plan for the interim assessment, they focus on what standards students will need to know in high school to prepare them for success. They know that students will need understand the distributive property prior to high school, and they also understand and recognize that some students will need support with integers before moving onto learning the distributive property. This illuminates how they are meeting their students where they are in order to best support their learning. As Jeff and his team prepare lessons for the following unit, they know that they must use the next interim assessment to best prepare students and support them in mastery of the standards in order to support their growth for the future. The team is backward planning with the next Interim assessment in mind in order to ensure their unit assessments and daily lessons follow the needed sequence to allow for students to master the next assessment. This type of intentional design explicitly sets students up for success as they go into their next unit and teachers know that they have done what they can to plan lessons that best support student learning and achievement.

In the category of "design engaging, challenging, and culturally responsive lessons," it is evident that Jeff and his team are proficient in consistently setting clear, challenging, measurable content language objectives based on unit goals. At each planning meeting, the team creates a logical sequence and connections across all lesson components to best prepare their students for their long-term assessments and learning goals. They work tirelessly to develop a rationale for their lesson that connects to the day's lesson objective, along with ensuring that each aspect of the lesson can be applied to the real world and to students' everyday lives. Through their innovative ideas, Jeff and his team include topics that draw on students' diversity and ensure that their lessons are engaging, including using technology to enhance student learning, differentiate instruction, and foster higher order thinking skills. In the third planning observation, it was evident that Jeff and his team focused on specific topics that students would need to master for the next interim assessment and subsequently created lessons that were fostered critical and higher order thinking skills. For example, students were charged with creating the math "magic" puzzle and collaborating with each other to solve various puzzles. This particular lesson was modeled after the unit goals and specific standards students needed to master on the upcoming assessment and were designed with the penultimate goal of student engagement.

In the category of "integrate culturally responsive assessment practices," it is evident that Jeff and his team are proficient at consistently working to analyze various state and unit assessments to determine their effectiveness and reliability. They recognize that the majority of state and curricular assessment questions are biased towards White experiences and irrelevant to their students' lived experiences. Jeff and his team create

formative assessments to check for student understanding and learn from their students where they need to improve instruction and reteach to best support students' needs. As discussed in the planning observation, Jeff and his team focused on providing students with opportunities to show mastery of a standard in order to move onto another standard and be prepared for the assessment, however, they understand that some students need more differentiated instruction and know that small group instruction or scaffolding the material will help aid students in mastery of the standard. They often collect varied formative assessments and checks for understanding to determine what changes need to be made, along with learning how best to enhance student learning.

In the category of "apply knowledge of culturally responsive content and pedagogy, and student development," it is clear that Jeff and his team are proficient at consistently setting clear, challenging, and measurable content language objectives based on unit goals. Jeff and his team strive to deepen their understanding of current research in regard to their math content and pedagogy, what format it is being shared with student, and how they can appropriately scaffold the content to best support students. Jeff and his team discuss student progress of each lesson during their planning meetings to determine specific areas where students need more support. In the third planning observation, Jeff and his team identified specific students who needed more support with integers as well as specific students who were ready to move on to learning the distributive property. In Jeff's class, students are asked not only to complete math equations, but to also bring in their learning of Language Arts, as they must explain their thinking through writing their thought process after they have completed an equation. This affords students the opportunity to learn through interdisciplinary content. In Jeff's classes and in his

planning observations, he diligently works to uncover how his students learn best in order to best support them. He knows that some students work best through collaborative work, while others work best in small group learning, and still others prefer to work individually. He differentiates his lessons to ensure they are accessible for all of his learners and their various learning styles.

The Pedagogical Dimension: 21ˢᵗ Century Approach

In the pedagogical dimension of schooling, Eisner (1998) argues that educational connoisseurs have the ability to observe and analyze teacher's pedagogical choices, such as their personality, beliefs, approach to teaching, along with their personal touch. Within this pedagogical dimension, I explored the teacher's approach, style, and personality through observations and interviews. During formal interviews, Jeff shared his pedagogical beliefs about his instructional role and how that could differ from his students' roles in the classroom. As I saw through classroom observations, Jeff is a fun loving, thoughtful, caring teacher that works to facilitate his classroom environment through focusing on student relationships, encouragement, high expectations, and collaboration. Each day he comes into class with a positive attitude, ready to take on what the day brings. He works to foster authentic, meaningful relationships with each and every student, through asking thoughtful questions, active listening, and honoring each student's voice and experience.

As the lesson begins, Jeff takes time to learn about how the students are feeling for that specific day. He will change or match student's energy and without taking away his positivity, he works to meet the students where they are and to support them the best

he can. Through his planning sessions, creates lessons that focus on collaboration rather than only focusing on individualized work. In one interview, Jeff shared:

We work in partners, just about every day. It is the 21st century and they have got to be able to collaborate with one another. We are still working on effective collaboration, where it is not necessarily just giving answers, but that collaboration is a good skill that they will use beyond these walls. As part of my philosophy or pedagogy, I want to allow students to collaborate because there are 31 students in this class and only one of me and we are working to student dependency. There's still a lot of students who rely on me and I'm trying to back away from that as much as possible. Collaboration is a good way to go about that, especially with the class where I have essentially 50% students with IEPs (Individualized Education Plan). Though it is important that they get support, they cannot always get it just from me.

Jeff is so thoughtful, especially when reflecting upon what students need and how he can go about supporting them so that they are set up for success beyond middle and high school. Jeff plans to teach and support students through effective collaboration and his daily implementation of partner activities in his lesson plans. He also allows students to productively struggle, as he understands that is how students will learn best and become more independent. Jeff notes the importance of his students "try[ing] to figure out what to do together and that is a very good skill to have, versus if I am telling them exactly what to do every single time." He believes that if teachers allow students to collaborate with one another, even if it may take some time as they struggle through the work, it will empower them to make their own decisions and serve them well in the future. Murdoch et al. (2020) explains that student-teacher relationships are necessary for

fostering environments that provide high quality education, while allowing students to productively struggle with their rigorous assignments. In order for students to thrive as they productively struggle, they must be heard and supported in the classroom (Murdoch et al., 2020). In one classroom observation, I heard Jeff say to his entire class, "It is okay for you to struggle through this for ten minutes, so that you can work through it before working with a neighbor. I want you to understand the question and struggle through understanding it before moving into working with a neighbor or group." As he works with his students and shares this message daily, he allows them to build stamina, motivation, and drive as they work through something they may not understand at first, This teaches his students motivation and independence as it allows them to practice and gain encouragement from their teacher, as he affirms the idea that it is okay to struggle through something first before asking for help.

Jeff understands that he is not here to support just one specific group of students, but rather to support the success of every student by holding them to high expectations paired with support and care. He focuses each day on encouraging students to do their best and work their hardest, in order to learn and be better than when they first came into the classroom. Teachers must be insistent that their students will live up to their high expectations through establishing supports to ensure their students will learn and succeed in their classrooms (Bondy & Ross, 2008). As Ross et al. (2008) states,

> insistence begins from the first moment of the first day of school. Through insistence, the teacher conveys her expectations, her authority, and her intention to be consistent. The teacher is neither authoritarian nor heavy-handed. She simply conveys through actions and words that students will meet her expectations. (p. 143)

Jeff embodies this exact characteristic because he wholeheartedly believes that all of his students can achieve and succeed. He shows this through holding all students to high expectations, each and every day, so that they know what is expected of them and can learn to work towards greatness themselves. In an interview, Jeff noted: when it comes to culturally responsive education, we really need to look and understand what our students are doing, what they enjoy and we must build relationships with them. We need to know who they are first. We also need to look at what we are teaching them, because if what we are teaching them is predominately what is best going to prepare for a test, then that is not what is important for them. That is not culturally responsive. Culturally responsive is how we are making meaning with the math and how are we showing students how to enjoy the math and material. But that being said, that does not mean lowering the standards for students. We should still uphold those high expectations for every single one of our students but just make sure we are giving them the supports and scaffolding that they need to be successful and that looks different for every student. Jeff plans meaningful, fun, and engaging math lessons that can be applied everyday life and works to make his lessons accessible so that all students can learn with rigorous content and the appropriate scaffolds to ensure success.

Jeff's commitment to fostering strong relationships with students is incredible. Each day, you can see Jeff talking with students, learning more about their lives, interests, dislikes, and hobbies. He aims to create authentic, meaningful connections with each student, and he incorporates these connections to design interesting and relevant lessons. If teachers do not take students' lived experiences into consideration, they will not be able to create authentic relationships with them or become culturally responsive

educators (Allen & White-Smith, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Roque & Paternoster, 2011). For White teachers to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, they must work to build authentic relationships with their Black students, which starts with their classroom environment and their interactions with students (Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008). Jeff takes pride in knowing that he works hard to create meaningful relationships with each student. He wants every child to feel heard, cared for, and respected. While middle school hallways can get quite rowdy during passing periods, Jeff ensures students get to their classes on time and conduct themselves in a respectable manner while still recognizing that they are children. He knows that he is working on building meaningful relationships every day by hearing and honoring student voice in the classroom but also translating that to other spaces, such as the hallway or cafeteria. He shared that he has been "very cautious about how I say get to your classrooms." Instead of yelling at the children to "get to class," as they often hear being bellowed at them from every teacher and adult in the area, he works to treat them with respect by saying, "Let's get to class, young scholars. We got to get to our classes to learn." He addressed that he has been working on becoming more reflective on how he addresses the students, especially when they are not following expectations. He also shared that he is open to any suggestions that the students have; if they want to share feedback on how something is or is not working, it is welcomed and those conversations work to create meaningful and strong relationships with each student. When students are not following expectations, it can be difficult to address, however Jeff strives to be transparent with students surrounding expectations and having individual conversations when they are not following expectations. He shared that transparency is a huge ingredient to an authentic,

meaningful relationship with his students. A transformative classroom (Tharp et al., 2000) is a space where both the teacher and student have growth mindsets, open dialogue, transparency, and co-collaborative teaching (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017). In order to create a transformative classroom, one must create a culturally relevant classroom culture that encompasses the following ideologies: fairness, excellence, inclusion, and harmony (Tharp et al., 2000). The classroom should feel inviting to students and become a place where they can be courageous and vulnerable (Tharp et al., 2000). Jeff has done an amazing job of fostering a safe classroom space that exemplifies these standards in a way that has shown how they all work and support a student-centered school experience.

Jeff's focus on student relationships, encouragement, high expectations, and collaboration demonstrates his deep commitment to students and towards becoming a culturally responsive teacher who works to dismantle White supremacy in his classroom. He prioritizes students' voices, needs, feelings and lived experiences. He works to hold them to high expectations and ensures they have supports and scaffolds to succeed. Jeff creates engaging learning materials that decenter Whiteness and allow students to figure out how they learn best and what supports they require for success.

The Intentional Dimension: Environment Conducive to Learning

The intentional dimension in Eisner's five dimensions of schooling (1998) discusses the goals and intentions of each teachers' work related to dismantling White supremacy in their classrooms, through thoughtful and intentional implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy. Eisner (1998) considers the idea of intentionality to be teachers reaffirming their commitment to making teaching and learning more relevant to students, to ensure students are motivated and have a stake in what they are learning. The

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intentional dimension shows how teachers are working to create meaningful learning for their students in relation to becoming culturally competent learners.

In an attempt to understand the intentional aspects of Jeff's classroom, I sought to gather rich data about his intentions through observations and interviews. I also asked him to share his intentions and hopes for his students. In my first interview with Jeff, he shared with me that, "If we are empowering our students, we are empowering them to feel like they can do anything." He went on to ask the question, "How can we get them to be a part of our classrooms and join the discussion? How are we empowering the students who are wandering the hallways?" These questions are so deep and truly took me aback, as they make you reflect as who you are as an educator and what you can do to empower your students, especially those who often have had their power taken from them in society.

After speaking with Jeff in depth, I can affirm that his intentions for his students are to create a space where they are loved and cared for, along with hoping to support them in becoming functioning, empowered humans in society, who are able to be independent, self-sufficient, and successful. He hopes through his reassurance and encouragement, students realize their true potential, believe in themselves, and work to become more confident in their everyday lives, continuing to thrive in all they do. Jeff's emphasis on collaboration and improvement are evident in how he speaks to his students, his curriculum, and in the setup of his classroom. He works to ensure students are motivated, have a chance to productively struggle, which gives them opportunities to improve. He provides multiple spaces for collaboration because knows his students need to learn how to collaborate with one another in the real world. Jeff is intentional in his desire to

include daily effective collaboration into his classroom routine. In Interview two, he stated that, "We work in partners, just about every single day. They have got to be able to collaborate with one another."

In my second classroom observation of Jeff's classroom space, I noticed how often Jeff works to promote a collaborative classroom environment. Students had just completed their warm-up, in which they were working individually. After the timer went off, Jeff said, "At this point, you are allowed to work with other people around you. You can still skip the first problem but you can work together to answer the rest of the problems." I observed the students jump up, both metaphorically and physically, at the chance to work with a friend. Students were walking around and collaborating with each other, moving seats and tables, as they found a comfortable space to work with each other, to complete the warm-up. As Jeff is actively monitoring his students, he exclaims, "Yeah, I love the conversations going on over here." As I am observing the class, I hear students having conversations around their lives, their breakfast, their weekend plans, all along with completing the warm-up together. They would chat about their lives and then start talking about the math problems at hand. This form of collaboration works to show the students what life is like in the real world, after they graduate.

Teachers must work to build authentic, strong partnerships with students by inviting them to "bring their full identities and life experiences into the learning community" which "lays the foundation for a co-learning community in which students know, respect, and learn from each other" (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017, p. 63). It is evident through his classroom rituals and routines, class environment, and relationship building, that Jeff is quite intentional in creating safe and comfortable spaces for students

to ensure they are able to learn in an environment that allows them to grow and have joy. He is also intentional with how he builds strong, authentic relationships with students, as evidenced by his constant awareness of how students are feeling and what they need and working to know them better through questions and active listening. He knows what music they like because he asks them and wants to learn about their specific preferences. He creates a welcoming classroom space by allowing his students to pick out the music for each day, which enables them to enjoy their learning environment. It also affords Jeff the opportunity to understand each students' interests further and include them in the classroom space.

Watching Jeff teach and interact with his students is captivating. Jeff thoughtfully considers his interactions with his students—especially his Black students—knowing that they are often the most traumatized from prior school years. Black students are frequently marginalized and unheard in society, especially within the educational realm, which means White teachers must work diligently to ensure their Black students are being heard, empowered, and valued each day. By providing spaces for students to lead classroom discussions and co-create and construct lessons and content, not only will engagement increase, but students will feel a true sense of belonging and an authentic relationship between teacher to student will develop (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017). Not only is the student experience enhanced within a culturally responsive classroom, but the teacher experience is also improved through trusting the worthiness of the classroom culture you have created with your students and the ability to learn with and from each other (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Jeff creates an environment conducive to learning, all the while making a space where his students can

feel loved, cared for and supported, through all of their endeavors, whether it be through school related work or issues, family problems, or negative interactions with other peers. Jeff is always there to support his students and have a conversation with them to ensure he knows what they need and can support them through whatever challenges they may face.

Not only is Jeff a consistent supportive adult for his students, he is also one who holds them all to high expectations through his intentional and consistent implementation of the school's norms and routines. Jeff speaks with different students, from various backgrounds, reminding them of class and school expectations and ensuring they understand what is to be expected of them as a student in this particular building and classroom. He asks students to "please stop running in the hallway" to ensure they are not late to class. He also is very aware and intentional with how he speaks to students inside the classroom. Jeff is the not the authority in the room, but rather he is a facilitator in the room. He works to share his power with students to ensure that all voices are heard and respected. White teachers, who typically hold the power and privilege in the classroom, should emphasize the importance of sharing the power in the classroom and work daily to "discourage the hierarchy" in the classroom (Fitzmaurice & Reitenauer, 2017, p. 63). When a teacher has fully accepted their power and privilege, including understanding how they show up in the White supremacist society that we live in, they will be able to transfer power to the students and empower them to claim their own learning. Jeff works to intentionally embody these characteristics each day with his students. He will never call a student out in front of the class, as he respects them and understand that calling them out is not the best way to uphold a strong relationship with them. Instead, he pulls

students aside when he notices a conversation that needs to be had. He invites students aside to discuss their outbursts, abnormal behavior, or anything else unusual that he sees students exhibiting in the classroom. Jeff understands the importance of having an open and honest discussion with students, not only to ensure they understand the co-created classroom norms, but also to understand that mutual respect that is shared between the teacher and student.

Summary

Jeff works hard to intentionally reflect and learn how to be a culturally responsive teacher and dismantle White supremacy in his classroom. He understands the importance of continuing to learn more regarding how to best support diverse students and what it looks like to dismantle White supremacy in a culturally responsive classroom. He is very clear that the only way to continue this progress and become a better educator for his students is through his constant work and learning. He recognizes that if he does not continue learning and moving forward, he will regress back to his old self. After much reflection, Jeff shared several barriers hindering improvement and decimation of White supremacy in classrooms: 1) inequitable classroom structures that differ between school districts, and 2) large classroom sizes, which are becoming overwhelming for teachers and students. Moving forward, Jeff hopes that education will be funded to a higher degree so that schools are able to hire more teachers and staff to best support students with small class sizes and to ensure more individualized student support.

Another barrier that Jeff shared that is hindering teachers from becoming more culturally responsive and dismantling supremacy in their classrooms is the lack of school and district approved teacher autonomy. He maintains a belief that teachers know their

students best, while the district curriculum does not. Jeff notes that teachers should have more of a say in how curriculum is being made and instead of creating minor tweaks. He believes that schools must allow teachers to create their own curriculum, or use the district created curriculum as a guide, rather than something they must follow strictly and adhere to fully, in order to ensure students receive a more culturally responsive and engaging curriculum. Jeff also expressed his concern surrounding the amount of attention we give to data collection, in regards to student performance, and the lack of focus we have on the whole child, which he sees as another barrier hindering schools from dismantling White supremacy. Jeff shared that everything will remain the same in schools and classrooms, unless there is training, support, and professional development from experienced teachers who understand and recognize how to be culturally responsive educators working to dismantle supremacy in their classrooms. It cannot be a one-off professional development or school initiative; it needs to be a lifelong commitment to the craft and work to better support our students overall.

Teacher 2: Wallace

Personal Background: Small Town to City Town

Wallace, a 35-year-old White, gay male teacher, stands 5 ft 8 in tall and is from a lower/middle class family in a small town in South Dakota. He is part of a very large family, filled with aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and a lot of extended family. Wallace grew up with an outdoorsy family, as they resided in the mountainous regions of South Dakota. He grew up in a majority White dominated area, with a sprinkle of Indigenous and Black families throughout the town. Wallace shared that growing up in a place that was overwhelmingly White and homogenous was "just the norm." He grew up

around fake attempts at being racially literate and critically conscious. His schools followed the norm of performative actions surrounding displays of cultural awareness, without digging deep into the roots and history of each culture and community. He stated how shocking it was to figure out how overwhelmingly White his surroundings were as he grew up.

Experience with White Supremacy: Social Justice vs. White Saviorism

Wallace stated that after being exposed to more cultures and having first-generation friends in college, he was able to truly explore and learn more about other cultures and lived experiences. Wallace began to realize that he seemed to have much more in common with the BIPOC students on campus, as they were also towards the lower/middle class category, instead of the majority wealthy White students who resided on campus, at their small, private university. As he reflected throughout our first interview, he realized that the social justice work at the college was solely White saviorism based and although it was a great learning experience, he knew it was not right.

Root of Inspiration: Commitment to the Craft

Wallace's journey into the classroom was rather unconventional and off the beaten path. Wallace began his work after college at a mall working with college-aged co-workers. After several years of working in the store, he realized just how different people would treat him versus how they would treat the BIPOC workers. He shared that anyone of color would often get stopped by mall security for doing mundane tasks, while no one would ever question a White man in the store. He shared how obviously unfair it was to see his colleagues being treated this way, especially since they were doing the exact same thing he was doing, but getting ridiculed for it. It was inequitable and unjust.

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Throughout his time at the mall, Wallace created friendships while working with these individuals. He was able to learn about their lived experiences and gain another perspective to the world, as the majority of his colleagues were immigrants and people of color. After much reflection, he decided it was time to go back and earn his teaching license because he liked working with this specific population and wanted to be there to support them. He continued to think, "is this something I am doing to make me feel good or is it because I truly want to help this population of students?" This frame of thought really showcased his reflectiveness and thoughtfulness into why he was becoming a teacher, especially a teacher in an urban school setting. During our interview, Wallace discussed his experience with White teachers who teach in urban school districts:

During our first interview, I asked Wallace to share how he got into the field of education and throughout his story, he shared more of his experience with White teachers in urban schools. He explained that, "I would say I have definitely seen that in this district, over the years, they are making a show about working here but it is not ever really backed up by what their results are. So, I think, how much of this is you trying to be like, 'Oh, look at me, I'm doing such great things for these Black and Brown students. I'm so good at this.' That is one piece that I definitely see in education.

Throughout Wallace's story of how he entered education, it seemed like he was quite thoughtful and reflective throughout the whole decision-making process. He had to truly think and ask himself if he was going into education for the right reasons, instead of making a display of working with marginalized communities. This shows Wallace's commitment to the craft, his genuine character, and his desire to work authentically with communities of color.

The Structural Dimension: Welcoming All Parts of Students' Lives in the Classroom

When you enter Wallace's classroom, you are greeted with a smile and a high five. I first observed Wallace during second period, when students were entering their second elective class. I saw hundreds of students scrambling to get to their classes from the other end of the school before the late bell rang. Wallace had 21 students total in his ELD (English Language Development) classroom, as they walked in before the bell rang. I observed Wallace welcoming all of his students in, as second period began. With a smile on his face, he said, "Hi everyone, good morning. Please come inside and get settled. Your warm-up is on the desk." Students filed into the classroom, sat in their assigned seats, and got situated before beginning their warm-up. Wallace's approach with greeting students at the door allowed them to be welcomed in by their teacher and demonstrated positive student-teacher interaction. Starting the class off strong, on a positive note, allows the students to feel like their teacher is happy to see them and want them in the room with them.

Wallace was intentional about setting up the physical space in his classroom to be inviting and conducive to student learning. His well-lit classroom was arranged so that all students had a partner with them at their desk to ensure effective collaboration, along with a variety of flexible seating options, such as standing desks, active motion stools, and colorful ottomans, so that students are able to choose which seat is right for them each day.

Wallace's classroom is filled with supportive and useful resources that help to support the whole child. As an ELD teacher, Wallace understands the many practical needs that he must keep in mind to support both students and their families. At the front

of his classroom, Wallace has a bulletin board with a variety of resources that encourage students to know their rights, empower themselves, and advocate for themselves, along with folders of relevant information on immigration services, housing assistance, food assistance and medical and mental health assistance in the Denver Metro area. Wallace has created such a safe environment for his students and families of students that know how to support themselves and are comfortable with asking their teacher for support. His dedication to the whole child is remarkable, as it is evident that he does not only come to school to teach, but also to support the various needs of his students. By creating this safe space for his students, he has worked to create a culturally responsive physical classroom environment that allows his students to be brave and empowered as they know their rights. Wallace welcomes every part of his students into his classroom.

Figure 6. Know your rights bulletin board

Wallace's classroom also displays a "Classroom Values" poster that encourages students to value and respect diversity, challenges, growing, optimism, and creativity. This is one example of how Wallace designs an authentic and brave space for students and teachers to work collaboratively. A classroom environment that is conducive to relationship-building and respecting others' differences and lived experiences is an effective way to create a culturally responsive space that allows for other perspectives to be heard and shown each day.

In my third interview with Wallace, we were discussing what he has learned about how to become a culturally responsive teacher and he responded with, "When students share with me about their cultures and traditions in their countries, I must listen and remember what they share so that I can go deeper and educate myself more on what they shared, so that I can be a more responsive teacher to that specific student. Being culturally responsive to my students is not as simple as knowing who is a Spanish speaking student and who is an Arabic speaking student. Within the Spanish speaking group of students, there are multiple cultures and same within an Arabic speaking group of students, there are multiple cultures. One Latino family is not like another and same with an Arabic family. That is something that I have to constantly keep I mind and something I am constantly reminded of. You know, especially with our Muslim families, there is a huge range in how open they are to American things, even like a field trip. The ELD field trip I am taking my students on is to a Christmas themed play. There are Muslim families who had no problem sending their students to this play but there were also families who said their kids were not going to because of religious reasons. There are a lot of differences between each group of

students and families and I need to be very culturally responsive and pay attention to those differences to ensure I understand each families' identity and individuality.

During the interview, Wallace reflected on how to approach learning and understanding about diverse families and cultures. He understands that everyone is different and their differences are what make them who they are. He respects familial boundaries and understands everyone has different lived experiences, even if they come from the same country or speak the same language. This rhetoric and pedagogy is what Wallace lives by and uses in his everyday practices with his students. He respects student diversity and thrives on learning more about it, in order to educate himself and be a more culturally responsive teacher to that specific student. This authenticity helps foster a meaningful relationship with your students, as they know you are listening and paying attention to them as a means of learning more about them.

Figure 7. Classroom values poster

Along with valuing student experiences and differences in his classroom, Wallace also has a "check for understanding" poster in his classroom that enables students to

evaluate where they are for each part of the lesson to ensure they understand the topic or to determine if they need additional support. This allows for a transparent classroom space where students are able to share their true understanding of content and ask for help and support—either from a peer or from their teacher. In a culturally responsive classroom environment that is working to dismantle White supremacy, there needs to be a sense of openness and transparency toward honoring student voice and needs. Teachers must be open to allowing students to share their needs and meet them where they are to ensure a positive classroom experience. Wallace does exactly this through the use of this check for understanding poster that allows students to figure out where they need support and empowers them to do so in his classroom space.

Figure 8. Checks for understanding poster
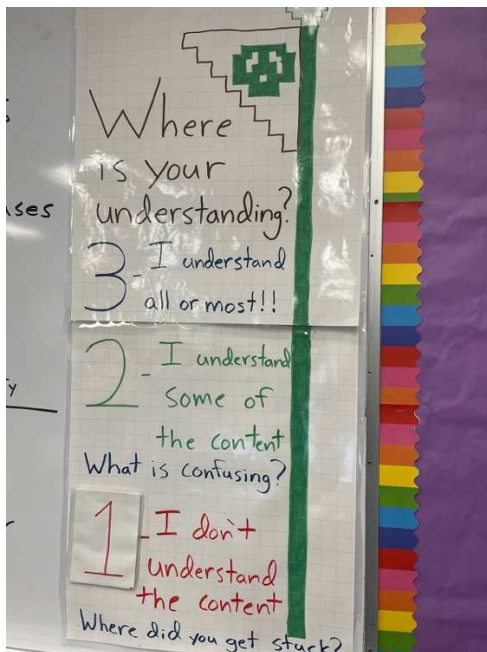
Because Wallace teaches ELD courses, he has gained perspectives on his students' lived experiences of being bilingual in society. It is no secret that in a White

supremacist society, the norm is to speak English and being different is not typically a treasured quality. Through Wallace's critical consciousness, he has gained an understanding of why he needs a "To be Bilingual is my Superpower" poster, so that students recognize that being bilingual is a superpower. This poster is an excellent way to establish that he is working to dismantle White supremacist standards in his classroom and to empower his students to learn to love their cultures and backgrounds in a society that has not yet learned to respect differences. This poster symbolizes that his physical classroom space is a place where students are empowered to be themselves and their differences are celebrated each day.

Figure 9. To be bilingual is my superpower poster

Through positive student/teacher interactions, productive struggle, and high expectations, Wallace creates a brave classroom space that allows his students to feel comfortable making mistakes, especially when completing assignments. While observing Wallace in his classroom, I observed him working with students and encouraging them to share their answers aloud after the warm-up.

During my classroom observation of Wallace, I observed him stating clear instructions for students, along with setting high expectations for students by letting them know who was going to share their answers aloud after the time was up. I heard him say, "Good morning. We are starting our warm- up. You will have 5 minutes to review the vocabulary and complete the following fill in the blank activity." As students were completing the work, Wallace shared aloud the students who would be sharing after the 5 minutes were up. He also checked in with each of them individually, to ensure they understood the question and assignment, before they shared aloud. As the timer went down, I heard him say, "You know have 3 minutes left before the timer goes off." I observed students working vigorously to complete their work in the time allotted, as their teacher was actively walking around the room, monitoring their work. When the timer went off, each student shared aloud their answer. One of the students shared aloud an answer that was somewhat incorrect; Wallace handled this very tactfully. I observed him saying, "Wow, that is such a good idea and something I have not thought of before. I wonder if anyone also has another idea, we could add that could fit maybe better for this particular sentence?" As I observed students pause and look back at their answers, a couple of minutes passed and Wallace encouraged the students to "get up and look around the classroom for clues or support, to help you answer this question." I observed students looking around and checking out the resources available to them to answer the question at hand.

This entire observation and student/teacher interactions were tremendous examples of how students can make mistakes and share answers without feeling a sense of embarrassment from their teacher or peers. The classroom space is conducive to

empowering students to share and learn from their mistakes; it also allows for multiple

perspectives to be shared for a question or situation. Wallace worked to empower

students throughout this entire interaction as he encouraged them to manage their time,

along with working to not dismiss the student's thoughts when he shared an answer. I

observed Wallace validating the student's idea, connecting with it, and asking for more

input on the answer from other students to ensure all voices were being heard and to see

if other students had an answer that fit better for this particular question. Wallace's

classroom had many different resources that allowed students to use the tools around

them to answer the questions at hand.

Figure 10. Classroom resources
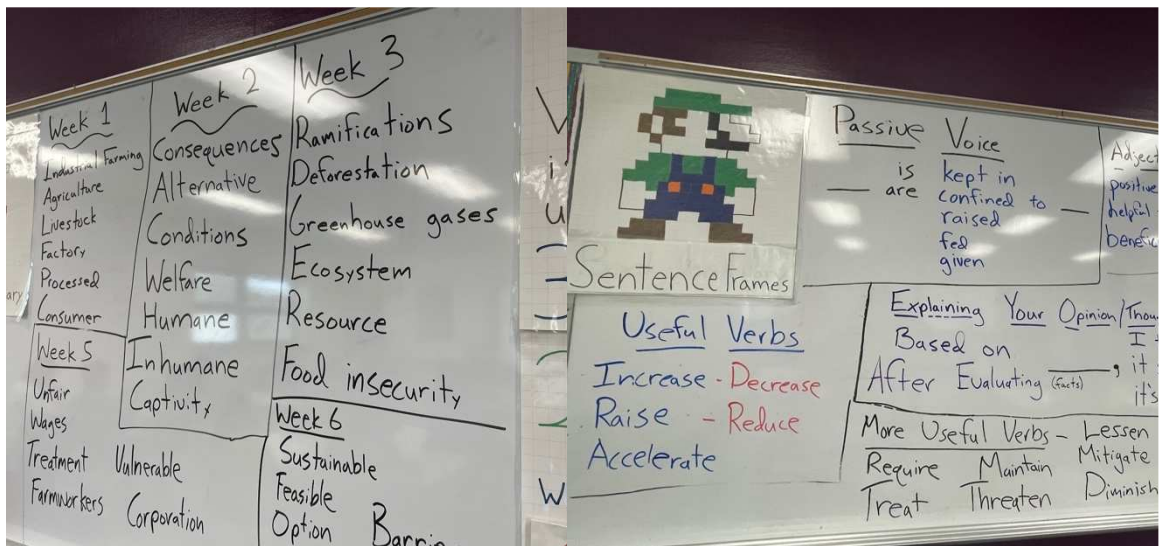
The Curricular Dimension: Real World Experiences and Application

The middle school that I observed in Denver is one that takes a great deal of pride

in its effectiveness at building culturally responsive education. I observed Wallace and

his team three different times, as they planned for the upcoming week's lessons. Within

those three planning observations, I witnessed the team's thoughtful approach to making

their ELD classes more meaningful and practical for their students' everyday lives.

Throughout each planning observation, the team would sit down together, evaluate the

week's lessons, then proceed to discuss what needs to be planned for next week. They

closely examine the district curriculum to determine what is useful and what needs to be

edited or supplemented to make the lessons more engaging and relatable to their students'

lived experiences.

The first planning observation that I witnessed was focused on the goals students

would be working on for Week 5. The team decided that the students' goals were to

describe and explain, aligned with their writing and speaking standards. Wallace and his

partner teacher were sitting around the room, in their desks, working to plan something

meaningful for their students, for the following week. I observed Wallace saying, "Since

this week's topic is about industrial farming and farm workers, I think we should find

some relevant articles on Newsela, so that we can change the lexile levels of each article,

to differentiate for our students." I observed Wallace's partner teacher nodding her head

in agreement to show that she loved his idea and wanted to move forward with it. Before

settling on a Newsela article, I observed the team looking through the curriculum and

seeing if the articles were engaging enough to best support student learning. After a few

minutes, the team decided it was better to move to Newsela to find a better article.

Wallace and his partner took around 5 minutes looking through the Newsela website and

found one with an interesting title, "How Adult Workers Are Treated in Farming Work

Conditions." After they found this article, Wallace shared with the team that, "The

curriculum made by the ELA team in DPS are from Newsela articles and they are mostly

good but they take some personalizing and it is more for middle and high school levels so we need to cut a few things to make it more accessible." After taking some time to read the article that they found, Wallace shared that he thought it would be a good idea to add a background knowledge video about farming. The team continues to read through the article to see what else could be cut and which parts could be useful and interesting to keep. After a few minutes, Wallace shared, "I love this section at the end, where it talks about how high school students were protesting Taco Bell because they used tomatoes from the farm that has bad working conditions for their workers. This is a 940 lexile level; it is kind of longer so we need to choose sections that they can read on their own for Monday."

Wallace and his partner teacher did not just take the district curriculum and implement it without any changes. They looked at what was provided and then made the necessary modifications to best support students' learning by making it more accessible for all types of learners at all levels. By looking at different articles and taking the time to read through the articles to see which ones were interesting and relevant, they were able to take a culturally responsive approach to redesign curriculum that is engaging and relevant to students' lived experiences.

While planning for the week, Wallace and his teammate reviewed vocabulary from an article and determined that students required additional support with six specific words prior to reading the article. This was done to set students up for success by having the requisite background knowledge to comprehend the text, and also because the goals for the week were to describe and explain. I observed the teachers discussing how critical it is to allow for students to be exposed to the vocabulary words multiple times,

especially for students with IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) as part of their accommodations. As the team continued to dig through their article, Wallace shared that, "we need to differentiate the vocab words between easy, medium and hard, just as the lexile levels are differentiated for each article." Since Wallace and his teaching partner both have deep knowledge of their students' needs and abilities, they understand which parts of the task they must scaffold to best support learning. Ensuring you understand and meet your students' levels and needs is a crucial part of being a culturally responsive educator, as differentiating is key to best support students.

As Wallace and his team are working on the end of week task, they begin to read through the district curriculum's prompt to determine how it can be modified to in a meaningful way for their students to master grade level standards. In this planning meeting, I observed the team having an in-depth discussion surrounding the prompt at hand and working to brainstorm how they can make it more accessible to their students. Wallace shared, "The end of week task is to describe working conditions often found on industrial farms and explain why these conditions continue to exist and identify what needs to be done, to fix these conditions on industrial farms." His teaching partner was nodding in agreement as he continued, "We need to rephrase this. Maybe if we remove the part that says, 'why these conditions continue to exist.'" The team re-read the prompt and decided together that the new and improved prompt would be, "Describe the working conditions on industrial farms and explain what is needed to improve the conditions on industrial farms." After the team decided on their new prompt, Wallace exclaimed, "I like this prompt a lot better I think, looking at the article, I don't think there is a lot of information or evidence on why they are bad and there is no evidence directly from the

text. That is an easy two paragraphs that they can write, 1. What are the conditions? 2. What is need to improve the conditions?" After ensuring that this prompt was made successfully, the two teachers were working to backwards plan for the rest of the week, based on the task. I observed Wallace and his teaching partner edit their directions for each day to ensure students are highlighting and annotating the text, in order to help prepare them to find evidence for their writing task. After both teachers edited the week's instructions, they focused on figuring out what misconceptions could occur, to ensure they are able to scaffold and support accordingly, to ensure accessibility to the material for all students.

Wallace and his teaching partner focused on accessibility and student needs throughout the entirety of their planning period. Throughout each interaction, they put students first and provided the necessary scaffolds so students could both access and comprehend the material in order to master grade level standards. I observed them dissecting the district curriculum to see what could be used and what needed to be changed, edited, and supplemented. They worked to find engaging material and an interesting prompt to answer for the end of the week's rigorous writing task. Wallace's focus on a "students first" approach is an effective mindset to becoming a culturally responsive teacher. Using the district curriculum can sometimes be easier than recreating the material, however, culturally responsive teachers who are working to dismantle White supremacy work tirelessly to find more engaging, relevant material that allows for students to understand different perspectives and learn more about the outside world and become culturally competent humans—even if the topics are typically against the norm and often instigate uncomfortable discussions.

The second planning observation I observed was very similar to the first. Both Wallace and his teammate focused on continuing the work they started from the previous planning session. I observed both teachers sitting down to finish their lesson plans for week five; both fully invested in this process and ready to complete their work from prior sessions. This planning session focused more on student needs and accessibility, along with working to curate relevant material for a culturally responsive lesson for their students. They went through the same exact process as the day before. I observed them starting off with diving into the district curriculum, reading through what was given to them, and working to amend it for their students.

During the second planning observation, Wallace and his teaching partner were working to finish up the week's lessons. They read aloud another question from the curriculum, "To what extent can individuals help to mitigate the impact of industrial farms?" They paused, looked at each other and gave each other both a smirk. Wallace shared, "This does not sound like something that would be beneficial to our students. Instead of this question, let's work to come up with something more meaningful and relevant to our students." The teachers were chatting aloud, working to form a question that would be more responsive to students' everyday lives. They came up with another question, "Explain the effects of your food choices on your health and environment." Wallace and his teaching partner were so excited about this prompt and explained that the students would need to write a minimum of two paragraphs: one about themselves and the other paragraph about the environmental effects. Knowing that their students are ELD learners and are working to learn and master the English language, they knew that they would need to do discuss language forms with their students. They decided that they

would focus on verbs for that week: mitigate, lessen, diminish, change and alter were the words they decided upon for this week, as it would help the students formulate their argument for their writing task. The two moved on to figure out what informative article would be best to reach their students and engage them in this conversation. They found a Newsela article about the effects of eating very processed foods, on kids. Wallace exclaimed, "this is such a good choice for us. Our students will be able to connect with their favorite foods, like Takis, Doritos, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, and all the other things they love." The two teachers discussed the point of the article and its stance; it explained the need to mitigate the amount of processed foods you eat, especially as a child." As they looked back to the prompt they have written, they knew that the students needed practice with argumentative writing. They decided together that they would need to reserve Wednesday of the following week to teach and practice with making claims, while Thursday, they will focus on practicing with counterclaims. Friday will be used to complete the final writing for the unit. After the discussion surrounding what the rest of the week's schedule would be, I witnessed the discussion around the misconceptions and what scaffolds need to be put in place for their students to succeed on this lesson. They focused the rest of the planning session on creating scaffolds, such as graphic organizers, word banks and sentence stems to support students in their writing for the week.

Wallace and his team focused heavily on a students' first approach by striving to find an article that was relevant and engaging, creating a prompt that would be engaging to write for, and creating the necessary scaffolds to ensure student success. These intentional and thoughtful acts are such great examples of how to be a culturally responsive teacher that puts students first, all of the time. Working to create meaningful

material relevant to students' lived experiences spurred their engagement, held students to high expectations, and ensured their work with rigorous content designed to ultimately meet grade level standards.

Figure 11: ELD classwork
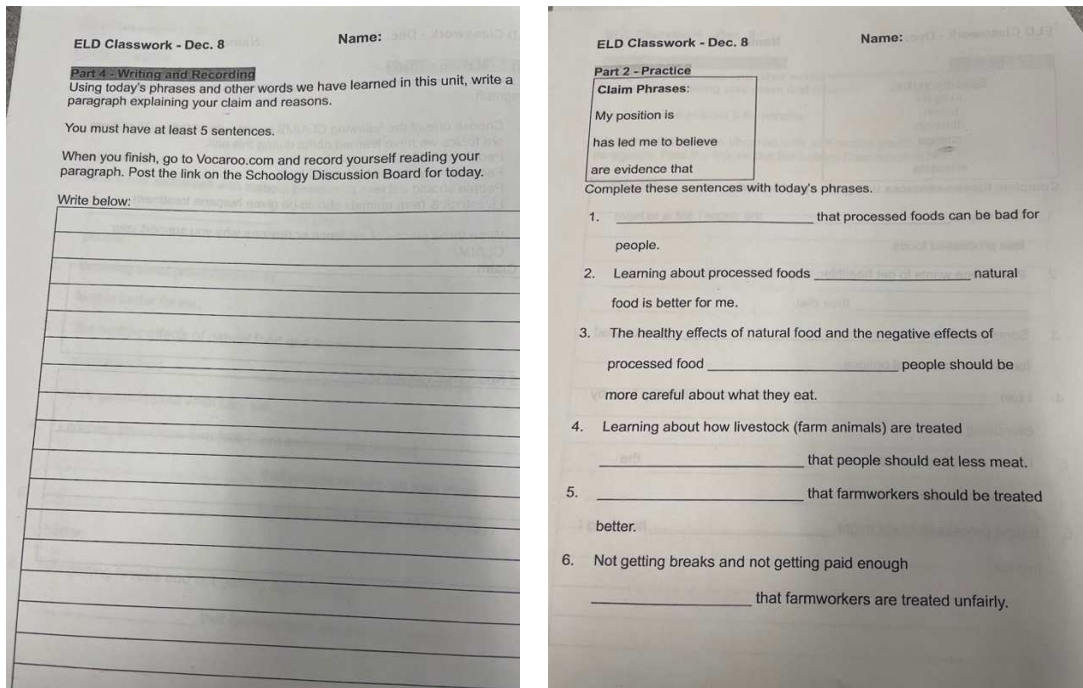
Planning observation three was guided by the FEET (Framework for Equitable and Effective Teaching) evaluation model (Salazar & Lerner, 2019). In the category of "use culturally responsive backward design curriculum planning to develop units," Wallace and his team are proficient at consistently identifying unit goals and standards that are relevant to students' lives. They have also been working to design challenging, relevant and engaging assessments and tasks that mirror the state ACCESS assessment to allow students to gain practice and show mastery of standards through a more relevant format. Wallace and his team have also worked to supplement and edit their district curriculum, as they find it lacking in cultural responsiveness and not scaffolded to a

degree that bests supports student achievement. As an ELD teacher, Wallace is working to support bilingual students in learning and gaining mastery of the English Language Arts grade level standards to ensure they show mastery on the ACCESS test and able to test out of their ELD classes. Wallace's role in the school is to work on building the requisite background knowledge and skills of his students while ensuring the material is engaging, relevant, and correctly scaffolded to make it accessible for all learners. As shown in previous examples, Wallace and his team dissect the district curriculum and work to find the best way to deliver the material in engaging ways. This means they must make frequent and significant modifications to support the most meaningful impact for their students.

During my third planning observation of Wallace and his team, I witnessed their tactful and thoughtful creation of practice assessments, to ensure students were prepared for their ACCESS assessment. Being experts in their field, Wallace and his team already knew what the students would be tested on, in order to test out of their ELD classes and be redesignated. During the planning observation, they quickly had a discussion on what were the most crucial aspects of the assessment that students needed to practice. Wallace shared them aloud, "We need to prepare students for intentional practice with listening, speaking, reading and writing to prepare them for their ACCESS test. They have obviously been practicing with these different standards the entire year, but they need a refresher on how the test will be formatted and need support and practice with how to take the test, in its particular format."

While Wallace and his team were planning the schedule for the week to include ample amounts of student practice, they continued to find interesting articles to allow students to continue to be engaged in learning something relevant to them while still practicing the necessary standards for the assessment. They continued to scaffold the material for their students by changing the reading levels to meet them where they are as they prepared for an assessment. They continued to encourage effective collaboration as they planned to "have students work with a partner to read the article and answer the questions at hand." I observed the two teachers chunking up the article into different sections because the reading in the ACCESS test is only a couple of paragraphs per section. While they were obviously preparing their students for the ACCESS exam, they still had a students' first mindset and approach to their lesson planning. They still prioritized creating relevant lessons while also scaffolding the material accordingly to ensure student access. They focused on misconceptions that students would likely encounter, both on the test and within the day's lesson. They thoughtfully established specific points during the lesson to include a teacher model so students knew how to understand each section of the assessment. Wallace and his team also showed students strategies to answer the questions and different highlighting tools in the sample test in order to use all available resources to succeed on the assessment. Even while focusing on preparing students for an assessment that asks them to show their mastery with those standards, they still focused on making it relevant, engaging, and accessible.

In my third interview with Wallace, he shared his truest thoughts and opinions on the ACCESS test, along with ELD classes as a whole. Wallace explained that, "You know, even with the ACCESS testing preparation stuff that you observed, I don't love doing

this. It is kind of like a necessary evil of the department. How much of that is upholding the White supremacist culture of testing structures? We are forcing them to learn English and to constantly practice English and to take a second English class, that other students do not have to take. With that in mind, I guess what I have learned through conversations, reading and reflection, is that if I need to accomplish something like this in my classroom, it will take planning and a lot more effort, than what people typically do." Wallace's thoughts are truly eye opening. In order to be a culturally responsive teacher working to dismantle the supremacist systems and structures in place, we must first understand what the reality is of this culture. We need to understand it and learn how to work within it in order to take it down altogether. This is exactly what Wallace endeavors to do.

In the category of "design engaging, challenging, and culturally responsive lessons," Wallace and his team are proficient in consistently setting clear, challenging, measurable content language objectives based on unit goals. Through each planning session, they are working to create connections across all lesson components, to best prepare their students for their long-term assessments and learning goals to master all standards. They work tirelessly to develop lessons that can be applied to the real world and to students' everyday lives. Through their innovative ideas, they include topics that draw on students' diversity and ensure that their lessons are engaging and interesting. Of course, through their planning, Wallace and his team use technology to engage students, enhance their learning, differentiate their instruction, along with foster their students' higher order thinking skills. In terms of working to support students in preparing for their ACCESS test, which is a practical skill that they will need, in order to redesignate out of

the ELD course, they needed to include aspects of technology to practice for the assessment. I observed Wallace stating, "We need to make sure that the majority of next week is online, as the practice assessments online allow students to practice using the various tools and practice going through the assessment, to ensure they understand how to access it all."

Not only does Wallace focus on supporting students on the assessments, but he also works to make everyday lessons accessible through the use of technology. Both in his room and in other classrooms, he encourages all teachers to allow students to use their computers to translate materials so that they can better access the material. There are some teachers who translate things on their own and give them to students, however, Wallace desires to empower students to also learn how to use the translation tools on their own. Through the act of changing up their lessons to make them more engaging and interesting, along with ensuring they are still accessible and rigorous, Wallace and his team go above and beyond to ensure that their lessons are culturally responsive and best serve their students, even if that means going out of their way to create the material on their own.

In the category of "integrate culturally responsive assessment practices," Wallace and his team are proficient at consistently working to analyze various state and unit assessments to determine their effectiveness and reliability. Wallace and his team create formative assessments to check for student understanding and learn from their students where they need to improve in their instruction and create reteaches to best support students' needs. They frequently discuss potential and actual student misconceptions during their planning sessions, while using a backward planning approach, to ensure they

are setting their students up for success in both formative and summative assessments. In regard to end-of-unit tasks, they prepare the task first then work backward to create materials and scaffolds to best prepare students for the assessment of the week. For the ACCESS state assessment for ELD students, Wallace and his team ensure students understand the questions, standards, and practicality of completing the online test, to assist students in overcoming barriers so they can demonstrate their brilliance to master the standard, rather than getting confused on the readability of the exam.

In the category of "apply knowledge of culturally responsive content and pedagogy, and student development," Wallace and his team are proficient at consistently setting clear, challenging, measurable content language objectives based on unit goals. Wallace and his team assess student knowledge and skills, determine areas in which they need additional support, and then work to create the necessary scaffolds to make their lessons accessible to all learners. They know where they can challenge their students and where they need extra support and what specific accommodations to provide to meet them where they are.

The Pedagogical Dimension: Seeing It All from Different Angles

In the pedagogical dimension of schooling, Eisner (1998) argues that educational connoisseurs have the ability to observe and analyze teacher's pedagogical choices, such as their personality, beliefs, approach to teaching, along with their personal touch. Within this pedagogical dimension, I explored the teacher's approach, style, and personality through observations and interviews.

During formal interviews, Wallace shared his pedagogical beliefs about his instructional role and what that role looks like, both in and out of the classroom. As I saw

through classroom observations, Wallace is a thoughtful, practical, and caring teacher that works to facilitate his classroom environment through focusing on student relationships, encouragement, high expectations, and collaboration. Each day, he comes into the classroom with a positive attitude, ready to support his students with anything they need. He works to ensure his students know that he is there for them no matter what. He seeks to understand the realities of their lives and provides daily supports for his students and their families.

I had the opportunity to observe Wallace three different times in his classroom. With each observation, I was able to witness his encouragement to his students; he works effortlessly to show students how much he cares for them and believes in them. When students are sharing their answers aloud, they may not always answer correctly, but they feel encouraged to make mistakes and learn from them, as learning is an ever-growing process in Wallace's classroom.

I observed Wallace's second period, at around 10:05, in the morning. He is greeting his students and you can see his big smile, even underneath his mask. Students are walking and running up and down the hallways but as the last warning bell rings, they start piling into Wallace's ELD classroom. With each student, Wallace greets them and welcomes them into the room, with firm directions on what to do once they get situated inside. "Please go inside, sit in your assigned seat and make sure to grab the packet at the front and complete your warm up." As the final bell rings, I see students are all sitting at their desks, writing away, as they answer their warm up questions. As the timer is slowly dwindling down to the final buzzer, Wallace walks around and lets students know that he will be asking some of them to share their answers aloud. He quietly walks over to four

different students and lets them know that they will be sharing their answers aloud and provides each of them with the question they will need to answer. As the timer rings, "ding, ding, ding…" Wallace gets to the front of the class and shares the names of the students who will be sharing their answer to each question. The first two students share, without a hitch. The third student is observed to be nervous and has an issue, as he shares question three. He shares an answer that is not necessarily the very best answer, but Wallace is observed walking the student through to help him find the correct answer.

Wallace often allows his students to productively struggle to complete their assignments. He has materials and supportive resources posted all over the classroom to ensure students are able to access the material. Instead of rushing over to walk them through the question right away, he asks students to use their resources, ask a partner and see if they can find the answers on their own, prior to asking for his help. This is an effective technique to build students' resilience and empowerment. By teaching this skill, students learn how to problem solve on their own and gain critical practice in advocating for themselves when they know they need help. In general education classrooms, I have observed, both in my own classroom and in others, multilingual students who may be confused on the content and fear asking for help. Wallace teaches them about the practicality of a collaborative world by empowering them to self-advocate.

Along with allowing students to productively struggle through their work, Wallace is also intentional about supporting students with productive feedback throughout the learning process to ensure they are on the right track. With each classroom observation, I perceived Wallace actively monitoring students as they completed their assignments. He engages with each student as he provides feedback and provided

necessary next steps and positive encouragement to support students in finding their way to the correct answer if they were struggling with a question. Through his positive student and teacher interactions, Wallace upheld high expectations while making sure students were receiving the necessary support.

Throughout my interviews with Wallace, I was able to get an in-depth look into how he is working to become a culturally responsive teacher whose mission it is to dismantle White supremacy in the classroom. Wallace was always extremely clear and thoughtful with his answers, as he shared his approach to disrupting supremacy in his classroom. In my third and final interview with Wallace, I asked him to share what he has learned with working to dismantle White supremacy in his classroom. This question, was quite a loaded one. Wallace, though not surprised by this type of question, did take some time to pause and reflect upon what I had just asked. After a few moments, he began to share this thought process around this question. He explained that, "The main thing I learned is that it is not just going to happen in the classroom. It takes planning, considering your lessons, your curriculum and seeing it from different angles, in order to make it happen in the classroom. This is just a starting point; it is not going to dismantle anything on its own. It takes a lot more thoughtfulness to get there.

Wallace has shown his dedication to learning and growing as a more culturally responsive teacher, through his reflection, planning, and pedagogical practices foster strong relationships with students, create a more culturally responsive curriculum, and prepare his students for the real world.

A culturally responsive teacher works diligently to build authentic relationships with their students. This often does not come easily, especially for White teachers who

teach Black students, since there needs to be serious trust built into the relationship before a true bond can form. In our third interview, Wallace shared a relationship that took great effort to develop but was so worth it in the end.

Wallace shared with me the evolution of a friendship that formed with one of his Black male students, that started off a bit rocky. Wallace shared that, "Back when I was teaching Language Arts, it was the first couple years of my teaching career, and I did not know how to really work with some of my Black students and I needed to learn, to be better for them. Now, I teach ELD and the Black students I work with here are a little different than the population I used to serve in Language Arts. I have a student in my second period, whose mother is Ecuadorian and whose father is Black; he certainly identifies more with his Black side but also has no problem talking about his Latino side, as well. It took us awhile to really connect, for sure. I knew his brother a little bit from last year, but that was through a remote setting, so obviously I did not have much of a connection beyond remote stuff. His brother was able to get redesignated and moved out of the ELD field. I always saw my student in the hallways and saw him running around and goofing off with friends, which makes sense because he is a kid but he would always be late to my class. When I saw him in class though, it was like he was a different person. I put the effort in, within the first month of school, so that when he did walk into my class, we had a connection where he would get his stuff done and he would be on task. We had a respectful relationship with each other. That has really been rewarding; he started to come into my class before first period and would give me a hug, which made me reflect on other relationships. With him being in my classroom, I was able to build a relationship, due to one-on-one conversations with him. On the larger scale, when I am in

the hallways and communicating and interacting with Black students, who I do not really know, it's not the same. My interactions with them are limited in the hallways. A lot of the time, I am yelling at kids to get to class. That made me think and reflect on how I am perceived by the group of Black students who are in the hallway. They only experience me saying you need to be in class or class started four minutes ago. This is something I have been reflecting more on since Thanksgiving break, since there were some really negative interactions that I have had, prior to Thanksgiving. I noticed that the students would start poking fun of me, as they knew that I was the one always yelling at them to go to class. Their perception of me was completely accurate, based on what I have presented in the hallway, since that is all that they know of me, so I could not really get upset or angry about it. They were teasing me about always being that teacher who is waiting in the hallways and showing people off to class. In the last few weeks, I have tried to reflect on it and change my demeanor a little bit, instead of all at once. Once the hallways have cleared out and there is like five to ten students still hanging out, I will go up to them quietly and instead of yelling at them or be in their face about it, I will be friendly with them and say 'Hey, you know, let's help you find your way to class.' Also just trying to talk to them, when they are walking past my classroom, even say, 'Good morning,' has shifted my relationship with a few students. There are now a handful of Black students who I don't really know too well but they will now walk by me in the hallway and say hello. They are no longer dismissive of me and that is something that I continue to reflect on. I don't think I'd claim that I have solved this issue of how I interact with Black students but that is probably the larger piece that I want to continue to reflect and grow on."

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Wallace's story exemplifies reflection, strong relationships, and authenticity. He noticed how he was speaking to Black students as a White male educator, and reflected upon how the students were receiving his tone and messaging, versus his intention of what he was actually trying to communicate. His reflection between intent vs. impact is significant here. Not once did Wallace say, "I was just trying to make sure they got to class on time. They had no business being rude to me." Instead, he reflected upon how they acted towards him and changed his behavior once he knew it was not being received well and was impacting their relationship in a negative way. Wallace understood that he needed to take a step back, reflect, and change his actions to engage with his students in a positive way, rather than a demeaning and negative way. His change of demeanor and his approach to the students continued to demonstrate the consistently high expectations he has of them. Instead of leaving the students alone after things became difficult, he reflected on the best way to move forward and curated an authentic relationship.

Wallace's focus on meaningful student relationships, student empowerment, productive struggles, high expectations, and reflection demonstrates his deep commitment to his students and to his work towards becoming a culturally responsive teacher working to dismantle White supremacy in his classroom. He places a high priority and focus on real world application, ensuring students are well-supplied with useful resources, along with striving to have high expectations for all students, through positive and encouraging interactions.

The Intentional Dimension: Asset Based Approach

The intentional dimension in Eisner's five dimensions of schooling (1998) refers to the goals and intentions of each teacher's work related to dismantling White

supremacy in their classrooms through thoughtful and intentional implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy. Eisner (1998) considers the idea of intentionality to be teachers reaffirming their commitment to making teaching and learning more relevant to students, to ensure students are motivated and have a stake in what they are learning. The intentional dimension shows how teachers are working to create meaningful learning for their students related to fostering culturally competent learners.

Through my interactions with Wallace, I learned about his intentionality in his interactions with Black students and how it all stems from deep reflection and thoughtfulness. In his ELD class, he has learned about the multiple identities that his students occupy each day. Wallace noted that "the identities that we all have in this room are more complex than our initial assumptions." He shared that he has tried to model this with his students and that it typically works well. He explained that when opportunities arise to share about his lived experiences with his students, he is always ready to share to create and sustain more authentic relationships with them. In an interview I had with Wallace, he shared with me how he intentionally works to open up more to his students, to ensure they are working on a collaborative authentic relationship. He shared that, "My dad's a mechanic who works in a rundown little car shop and he didn't go to college or anything. When I share that with my students, I see how they instantly shift in how they perceive me. Their assumptions of myself were not that I lived in a working-class family that is similar to theirs. They kind of get surprised and I say, 'Oh yeah, my dad's a mechanic and fixes stuff.' When I have the opportunity to share, I do, so that they understand there is more complexity than what meets the eye. I don't only share about

me; I share with them about other cultures and perspectives, so that they can understand it all better."

Wallace stated that this is a strategy he is intentionally working to more frequently implement so that students can learn more about him as their teacher and of the larger world. By letting students into your own life and allowing them to get to know you more, you are able to foster a strong, meaningful relationship between you and your students. They are able to trust you more when you share more about yourself; it helps to build a more authentic bond with your students—especially if they are having trouble trusting you initially.

Wallace's student-teacher interactions are executed extremely thoughtfully and with great intention. Obviously, no one has a perfect relationship, either with family, colleagues, partners, or with students. All relationships take effort, active listening, and compromise. Relationships with your students is no different. In my third interview with Wallace, he shared, "One of the Black male students in sixth grade had a baseball and was tossing it on the hallway. It landed on the floor, over by my room and just sat there for a couple minutes. I went over to pick it up and one of his friends had pointed out that I grabbed it and started acting very poorly. I tried to stay very calm and let the student know that he can have his baseball back at the end of the day; now mind you, it was advisory so the end of the day was coming very soon. After this very negative interaction, he said a lot of bad words and got escalated and upset very quickly. He walked away and I knew his special education case manager, so I quickly found her to discuss what happened. I knew she had a very good relationship with him and I wanted to ensure we were able to resolve this before the end of the day. By the end of the day, we had a

restorative conversation. He apologized and I had the opportunity to tell him that I was not trying to get you into trouble and I am not angry with you for how you reacted. I just picked up this baseball that should not have been thrown in the hallway and didn't want it to become a big situation or anything. I told the student that I am not going to hold a grudge over him or anything. I wouldn't say that after this conversation that I have a great relationship with him or anything, but now in the hallway, we don't ever have any negative interactions, anymore. We are neutral, which is a starting point, at least. What I learned throughout that entire interaction is that we should not escalate with a student. It does not do any good. Instead, when you realize you are not in a space to resolve the issue on your own, find the student's trusted adult and work to build a relationship through an honest restorative conversation. You will need to repair things before you try to move forward, once a student has escalated."

When a relationship has its issues and bumps in the road, Wallace does what he can to pause, give space, and then intentionally come back to have a meaningful conversation with the student. This technique ensures that all sides are heard and appropriate next steps are taken so the relationship is not broken. Students will escalate; that is just the nature of our jobs and their realities. Black students seem to escalate, especially when they are not feeling safe, with their teachers. Wallace's thought process and reflection of not escalating alongside Black students, especially when a negative interaction happens, represents a tremendously effective mindset. We must remember that we are adults working with students—students who have not yet had the opportunity to learn how to regulate and work through their emotions appropriately. Wallace shared that, "oftentimes, people treat their Black students like they are at an older age than they

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truly are. We need to be mindful of their age and try to treat them that way." Wallace explained that he is working to be mindful around students every time they escalate and work to focus on deescalating strategies. He needs to continue to remember that they are just kids and still learning how to handle their emotions. He continued to share that, "because some of our Black students have responsibilities at home that do not match their current age, such as: taking care of their siblings, cleaning, doing laundry, having a job to help support their families, I sometimes mistake them as being older than they really are. I have to remember that I must allow them to be 11, 12 and 13 years old and remember that how they react is just how kids typically react at that age." Because our students of color are typically seen as older due to their at-home responsibilities, they are often treated as they are older in schools. In reality, they are still just children, learning to navigate through their everyday emotions. Wallace explained: It's a pretty common thing for White teachers to allow White students to be goofy, immature, and act in a way that is age appropriate but they do that way less with Latino students and very much less so with Black students. That is definitely something I work to keep in mind and adjust my mindset with, each day. If I reflect upon the baseball incident, the student did not know me and I don't know what assumptions he had about what I was going to do with the baseball. How he reacted, I can't say anything about, but it is not a weird reaction for someone who is maybe worried about not getting something that belongs to them back, especially for a middle schooler. It is very much something that students worry about, especially in a school as big as this. I try to keep piece in mind; that baseball was important to him. The way he reacted was not out of line, especially keeping in mind his age. As I work to ensure my actions align with my words, I have to keep remembering

that these are just kids. Let them be 11-year-olds and 12 and 13. They may not always get to have the opportunity to act their age outside of the school building.

Wallace shared a crucial piece of information that assists teachers to sincerely reflect on their interactions with Black students and work to have positive relationships and interactions. He understands that the students are just kids. They are young and still working through how to navigate their emotions and feelings. He treats them like kids and allows them to feel their emotions, give them space, and then works to understand their perspective as kids.

Wallace understands how necessary it is to build authentic relationships with students as well as their families. Families of color are often traumatized by their interactions with teachers in schools. They often only receive negative phone calls; never phone calls that introduce their child's teacher. Families of color also tend not to have interactions with teachers where they are intentionally striving to get to know them and their communities. If a family is only receiving negative phone calls from teachers, how can we expect students or families to trust the school? Wallace works to intentionally create meaningful relationships with families so a strong bond of trust can be built between them. Wallace shared an interaction he had with a mother of one of his students: What started out as just an innocent text to see if a student could go on a field trip, turned into a meaningful interaction between mother and teacher. Wallace shared, "I was thinking of my student a couple days ago, who I was texting with their mom to make sure she could go on a field trip but after the initial text, the mom had more and more questions after that. She asked, 'How is she doing? What is going on in the classroom?' I started off with sharing that her student does a great job in class and she is a really smart

kid. I wanted to ensure that the parent heard positive things about her daughter first, before I shared concerns, I had to ensure this was not a negative interaction. I continued on, 'sometimes she gets distracted by her friends but when she is paying attention, she always has the correct answer. Whenever she raises her hand, she always has something useful for the class to hear.' I turned a conversation that could be really negative and demeaning to the student and family, into a more of a constructive conversation, where I invited the mom to problem solve with me to see how we can help her daughter do all of these positive things more often. I asked the mom, 'how can I help your daughter be that student as often as possible?' Whenever I have the opportunity to have these types of conversations, I absolutely do. By the end of the conversation, the family typically says 'thank you so much and please reach out with anything else.' Those conversations are always so much more fulfilling for the family, student and myself, instead of conversations that leave the family thinking that their student is horrible and awful at school. That is something I always try to avoid. When it comes to parent conversations, I am trying to make sure that the conversations are not based on myself and how I was as a student or what my family's expectations were of me, back then. If I am making it all about myself and judging students on how well they stand up to seventh grade me or seventh grade expectations of where I'm from, then nothing is going to be accomplished because that was a very long time ago, in a different place.

Wallace is very intentional in how he talks with families. He understands his own upbringing and expectations as a seventh-grade student is different than how students act today and works to align his expectations with this generation's values and approach to life. He does not have conversations with families that fixate on how the student is

misbehaving; instead, Wallace focuses on an asset-based approach to the conversation. He works to collaborate with the family to have a discussion about how to best support the student moving forward, which allows the family to be involved in the student's progress.

Summary

Wallace worked to create meaningful, authentic relationships with students and families, build curriculum that focused on real world application, and reflect upon his own reality and identity throughout each move along his journey of becoming a culturally responsive teacher. As Wallace is such a reflective spirit, at the end of our last formal interview together, he shared a few barriers that are still hindering the decimation of White supremacy in classrooms. He shared that "the people are the barriers and challenges left on this journey. The adults that are still stuck in their ways are hindering improvement." He explained that "people who continue to lean into enforcing specific laws, rules and systems are the ones hindering our growth and our way forward. Because so many things are deeply rooted in White supremacy, people are so inclined to stay put where they are and are afraid to make changes, so their lack of growth is hindering our moving forward."

Teacher 3: Kaylee

Personal Background: Educational Enthusiast

Kaylee, a 40-year-old White female teacher, comes to us from an upper-class family, living in a single-family home in Nebraska. Standing at around 5ft 8 in tall, Kaylee identifies as an only child, coming from a family of two teachers. She shared that

her parents, "really valued education" and her mom "always taught in lower socioeconomic areas." She shared that she spent a lot of time in schools, growing up, as she would spend quite a lot of time with her mother. Her experience growing up was that her family would do everything they could to "deny themselves" to ensure she had everything she wanted and needed, growing up. Growing up as a White person in this society was the norm to Kaylee, as she never felt out of place.

Experience with White Supremacy: Unpacking and Unlearning

In my first interview with Kaylee, I asked her to share her experiences with White supremacy. As she sat, I saw her face ruminating on the question. She was figuring out how to answer such a question. After asking the question, "How would you describe your overall understanding of White supremacy," I expected Kaylee to pause and reflect before answering, as this is not something people often get asked or often have to think about. She paused, thought about the question, then responded with, "This is something that I have been trying to unpack for the last couple of years. I understand that this is not something that has heavily impacted me, because of how I looked growing up. I understand that because I am the norm, I have gotten advantages for being the norm. I am going to get advantages for being in the majority and that happens to be White people, who are in the majority. This is something that I have had to unpack. I had not heard the term White supremacy until about probably three years ago. I think it was my first year at this school or the other school I worked at, from different professional development opportunities. It was not something that I learned about in society.

Kaylee understands that her experience is not unique and is one of many. Being a White person in society allows for many advantages and perks, that may not always be

deserved. Instead, the majority of the population receives the rest and privilege, just because of how they look. She shared that the term, White supremacy, is one that she had not heard of, as she grew up. Instead, she learned of it recently, at a school she worked at, in Denver. She is continued to bear the weight of unpacking the idea of White supremacy and working to understand its truest impact.

Root of Inspiration: All a Part of the Journey

Kaylee's journey into education was an accident, as she puts it. She graduated college with a microbiology degree, thinking she was going to go to vet school, but after marriage, she worked as a lifeguard and thought about what the rest of her life was going to look like. Since her parents are teachers, they suggested she become a substitute teacher, in order to get an income, while looking at how she was going to use her microbiology degree. After being a long-term sub at a middle school in Denver, she was hired to become a full time Science teacher, since the students truly bonded with her and enjoyed her presence in the classroom. Five years later, she went back to school to get her master's degree in Principal leadership and get her license. Her principal called to let her know that she was moving her out of the classroom to be a student advisor; without a second thought, she jumped into that role for two years, before the middle school shut down. As she continued her path into education, she became a peer observer for about three and a half years before moving into an assistant principal role at her school prior to where she works now. She was the assistant principal at that school for about five years before finding her permanent home her current school. It was quite the journey but she found her way to her Science teacher role, where she is able to make quite the impact on students' lived experience and school experience, in middle school.

The Structural Dimension: Respect, Acceptance and Safety

When you enter Kaylee's classroom, you are greeted with a smile and high five, right outside of the door. She is always in the hallway, supervising students and encouraging them to get to class on time. As I observed her, I heard her say, "Come on guys, let's get to class on time. You have one minute left before the late bell rings." Her voice is calm, relaxed and yet distinguished, as she is working to hold high expectations for all students, to ensure they are getting to class on time. As students walked in one by one into Kaylee's classroom, she ensured they got a "Good morning and welcome in" before asking them to go to their assigned seat and complete their check in question for the day, at the front of the room.

As students enter the classroom, there is a song playing, that is positive, encouraging and interestingly enough, relates to the day's lesson in some way. For example, in my first classroom observation, I walked into Kaylee's classroom playing a song with the lyrics, "heat up the moment" to set the mood and tone of the class period, since they will be focusing on completing a matching activity for the warm-up, which has them matching the picture with the type of heat transfer it represents. This simple act allows for students to get amped up about their lesson and go into a room filled with positive energy, right off the bat.

Kaylee's classroom space is set up very intentionally, as it allows students to focus on collaboration and group work, with tables, as each student is paired with another, at their desks. Students in this classroom also had flexible seating options to allow for their preferred type of seating. Students had the option to sit in a regular seat or use a standing desk, active motion stools and colorful ottomans, as well.

As I looked around Kaylee's classroom, there were materials and resources posted all over the classroom. There were vocabulary words posted around the room, with definitions in both English and Spanish, with visuals. Along the walls of her classroom, I saw Science and Engineering practices posted with visuals, as well. At the very front of the room, decorated with a black bulletin board and colorful borders, was a resource wall with classroom expectations written down, classroom and school reminders, along with other practical and useful tools, to help students get through their day, such as a counseling request form, hallway pass procedures and a safe to tell poster that showed students how to contact adults for support with mental health matters. Throughout her classroom, students had their "get to know me" beaker posters hung up inside the see-through cabinets, for all to see. This ensured that the classroom space was also theirs and it was a collaborative space, that included all identities. To ensure that students had motivation and encouragement each day, Kaylee also had motivational posters hung around the classroom, to make it a more positive space, for students each day.

Figure 12. Classroom Resources

Kaylee's classroom environment is one that promotes student respect, acceptance, and safety. She ensures that students are nice and respectful to one another. As I observed

the classroom, I noticed how thoughtful students were being about how they were

addressing other students and how there was no negative talk in the classroom. Students

were addressing others by their preferred names and pronouns, along with ensuring they

did not speak negatively about one another. In a middle school classroom, it can

sometimes be tough to regulate student talk, as they say things, often without thinking

them through, as they shoot out of their mouths. It is evident that Kaylee's classroom

created rules together to ensure that each class period understands how they want their

classroom to appear and what kind of energy and environment they want to learn in. The

rules that students came up with together include: be safe, respectful, ready, be open to

ideas, participate and work appropriately, have fun, pick up after yourself, respect your

teammates body and things, respect everyone and everything, listen and speak

respectfully and be kind. It is clear that students thought about what a safe classroom

environment looks like and wanted to create that exact space, in Kaylee's class.

Figure 13. Classroom co-created norms

The Curricular Dimension: Exploration and Determination

The middle school that I observed in Denver is a school that takes so much pride in creating culturally responsive education. I observed Kaylee and her team three different times, as they planned for the upcoming week's lessons. With those three planning observations, I witnessed the team's thoughtful approach to creating brand new Science curriculum, for seventh graders. They worked tirelessly to come up with creative and explorative lessons, that include various labs and hands on approaches to learning. The entire Science team at this school chose to move away from the district curriculum and create their own work, to ensure that students would be able to take a hands-on approach to learning and do it all with culturally responsive lessons, that could be applied to the real world.

The first planning observation that I witnessed was focused on student needs and accessibility. Kaylee and her team were working tirelessly to ensure that their students could access the material and ensure that the material was engaging, as well. During a planning observation that I witnessed, Kaylee and her team were working to get all of the materials ready for the day's lab. They wanted to ensure that students had everything they needed to dive into their lab for the day. They wanted to make sure all materials were printed, because they did not want students on computers for the lab; they wanted to ensure that all students were engaged with the lab, for the entire period and they know that computers can be distracting for seventh grade students. The team begins by thinking through the week and creating a schedule to help students understand where they are in this specific unit. In order to make the lesson accessible, Kaylee and her teammate were working to include some background knowledge in the lesson, prior to the lab for the

next week. They "wanted to ensure that students had background knowledge on insulators and conductors" to ensure they knew how to approach the lab that they would be engaging in. Kaylee and her teammate began to discuss the assessment for the week. She shared "I think we need to put the assessment online, so that students can access it through their different accommodations and if we do it in Schoology, there are tools for them to access the material as well." Kaylee's teammate agreed and began uploading the assessment into the online platform.

Kaylee and her teammate want to ensure that their material is accessible to all learners. They also want to ensure that their material is engaging and interesting to their students. Knowing that seventh grade students love to play video games and love screen time, they decided to have part of their lesson be on the computer. During a planning observation, Kaylee shared, "We need to make this activity fun so that they can get excited about thermal energy, before moving into their lab." Kaylee and her teammate spent some time looking at some online platforms that had engaging activities for students of their same age group, around 11 to 13-year-olds. Kaylee found an activity that mimics a video game to support students with learning thermal energy. She shared, "Students will be able to do this activity on their own or with a partner, if they choose to. It is so cool, they are able to actually play video games, while learning Science!" Both Kaylee and her partner were so excited about this activity and added it to their lesson plans right away. Through exploration and determination, Kaylee was able to shift the idea of learning thermal energy through mundane activities, into a truly transformative learning experience for her students. Because she understands her students interests and

likes, she was able to find an engaging activity that allows students to play video games, while still learning and practicing to master the standard at hand.

The second planning observation that I witnessed was truly remarkable. Instead of the day-to-day basics that most teachers focus on during lesson planning, Kaylee and her teammate took it a step further by digging deep into explorative options for their students, outside of the classroom. I was able to observe a planning meeting with multiple Science teachers who teach different grade levels within the school and see how they work to create immersive, educational experiences for their students. Kaylee and her team were discussing the idea of research and application, as that was part of the upcoming unit's standards that they needed to focus on. While they still plan to hold labs in the classroom, they also wanted to try to create a field trip experience for their students, so that they could use what they learn, outside of the classroom. In a planning observation, I was able to witness the Kaylee's Science team's approach to creating learning outside of the classroom. I heard Kaylee share with her team, "our students need to learn the soft skills, instead of just regurgitation of material. They need to apply the material to show their understanding and unpack what they do not know, through the act of research."

The first half of that planning observation was completely focused on where they could take their students, outside of the classroom, to practice their soft skills of application and research. They started to brainstorm places in Colorado that would be a good field trip to take, to allow students to practice their new skills. They discussed the question, "What part of Colorado can we include in this unit? How can we make this new unit project based?" As they worked on their backwards planning for their upcoming unit, they shared ideas of what kind of projects students could create to show their mastery of

the standards. Kaylee shared, "Maybe students could research what makes Colorado so special? They could research national parks, skiing, or other activities and build a brochure as to why you should visit Colorado. They would need to include evidence from what they have learned throughout the unit and through their research, to ensure they showed mastery for the standard." Their thoughtful implementation of learning outside of the typical classroom setting was truly miraculous to see, as it is something does not get to happen very often. Learning is often confined to a classroom and these teachers were able to take it outside and allow students to explore other options. They discussed the idea of taking a field trip to different parts of Colorado, to allow students to explore what they would be discussing in their brochures, which allows students the opportunity to not only get to understand their own state and habitat a bit more, but also allows them to cultivate upon their creativity, through outside, informative experiences.

The second half of the second planning observation was targeted towards student engagement with their new upcoming unit. Now that the teachers understood what a possible final assessment or project could look like for their other upcoming unit, they needed to start back at the beginning. The question they kept asking themselves was, "How can we get them interested in wave sizes and radiation? Do they know anything about waves and radiation? We need to make sure we excite them and give them background knowledge of it." Kaylee shared with her team how excited she was to "close the blinds in the classroom and black out the classroom to make it super dark. Students would be introduced to sound and light and energy waves through this." Her planning partners loved that idea and knew that it would allow for a creative beginning to their new unit.

Planning observation three was guided by the FEET rubric created by Dr. Maria Salazar and Dr. Jessica Lerner (Salazar & Lerner, 2019). In the category of "use culturally responsive backwards design curriculum planning to develop units," it is evident that Kaylee and his team are in the proficient indicator, as they are consistently identifying unit goals and standards that are relevant to students lives. They work to design challenging, engaging and real-world tasks and assessments, that allows students to apply the skills they learned, rather than a mundane regurgitation of information.

In the third planning observation that I witnessed, Kaylee and her team were working to design the upcoming unit and planning the entirety of the waves unit, through a backwards planning design lens. They discussed the idea of a project-based assessment for the end of the unit, as that would be a way to allow students to show mastery through an application approach. After discussing what possible project-based ideas could look like, they moved into planning for the following week. Again, they used the backwards planning method to figure out which standards they were to focus on for the next week. I heard Kaylee share, "We need to focus on light waves, amplitude and frequency, reflection and absorption and transmission absorption." After Kaylee's teammate agreed, they went on to create a schedule with the day's activities, labs and assessments for the week. They focused on creating labs that would engage students, ensure they would be hands on, and of course they focused on misconceptions that they knew would occur and created background knowledge materials, to combat that issue.

By using the backward planning design, Kaylee and her team were able to figure out the standards that need to be taught and focus on addressing misconceptions, to

ensure their students would have access to the engaging material that they were creating for the week.

In the category of "design engaging, challenging, and culturally responsive lessons," it is evident that Kaylee and her team are in the proficient indicator, as they are consistently setting clear, challenging, measurable content language objectives, based on unit goals, for each and every lesson. In the third planning session, Kaylee and her team focused on how to make each day's lesson fun and culturally responsive, through creating hands on labs that students would enjoy engaging in throughout the class period. In planning observation three, I saw the team's process to create a gummy bear lab, where their students would focus on learning and practicing with absorption and reflection, through light. In the planning observation, Kaylee and her team focused on identifying misconceptions for the standard and focused on creating a mini lesson to support student learning and make the content accessible, so that they could succeed on their rigorous task for the day, which was the gummy bear lab. Kaylee and her team created a mini lesson for the vocabulary, a transmission review, an absorption review, created visuals to show waves with reflection, transmission and absorption and ensured to create a checks for understanding slide, so that they could assess student's understanding of the material.

Through this thoughtful creation of the gummy bear lab, students were able to participate in a hands-on activity, where they could focus on mastering the standard, through a truly engaging and thought-provoking lab activity. When I observed the class during the lab, they were so excited to get to play with gummy bears, flashlights and work with partners to learn more about transmission and absorption. I could hear the students saying, "Oh my gosh, no way! We get to play with gummy bears? This is so

cool!" They were obviously excited to work with a friend and see their learning come into action, right before their very eyes.

In the category of "integrate culturally responsive assessment practices," it is evident that Kaylee and her team are in the proficient indicator, as they are consistently working to analyze different state and unit assessments to determine the effectiveness and reliability of these assessments. Kaylee and her team focused on moving away from the district curriculum, as they found the activities and assessments to be uninteresting, lower level and not culturally responsive. Instead of moving forward with the district curriculum, they decided to create their own daily lessons, units and assessments. The team's assessments are not just essays or multiple-choice questions. They allow students to show their mastery of the content and standards through various options. Some assessments will of course allow students to practice their writing with essays or work on their problem-solving skills through answering multiple choice questions, but they also have students completing labs and other activities to show mastery of their grade level standards.

In the category of "apply knowledge of culturally responsive content and pedagogy, and student development," it is evident that Kaylee and her team are in the proficient indicator, as they are consistently setting clear, challenging, measurable content language objectives, based on unit goals, for each and every lesson. Kaylee and her team continue to identify where students are and figure out areas in which they need support, then work to create the necessary scaffolds to make their lessons accessible to all learners, by creating interesting and relevant mini lessons for each part of their unit.

Figure 14: Background knowledge packet and slides
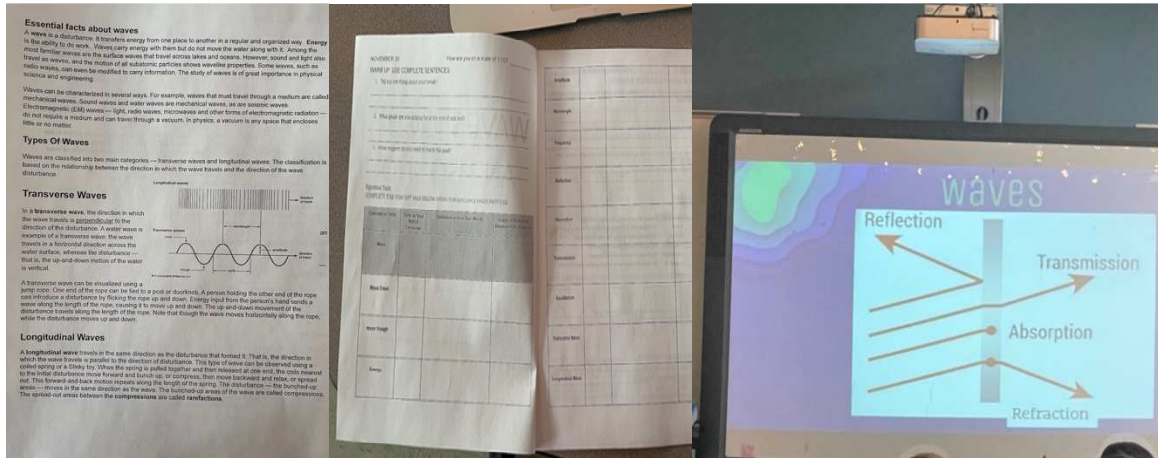
Figure 15. Gummy bear lab

The Pedagogical Dimension: Student Accountability and Ownership

In the pedagogical dimension of schooling, Eisner (1998) argues that educational

connoisseurs have the ability to observe and analyze teacher's pedagogical choices, such

as their personality, beliefs, approach to teaching, along with their personal touch. Within

this pedagogical dimension, I explored the teacher's approach, style, and personality

through observations and interviews.

Through multiple classroom and planning observations, I have had the

opportunity to see how Kaylee prioritizes student engagement as she intentionally plans

for students first, culturally responsive lessons. She works to create lessons that are not only engaging, but also students to apply the material in the real world.

In one of our formal interviews, Kaylee shared her approach to making learning applicable to student's lived experiences and everyday lives. She shared with me that, "in my third period, we started talking about what type of stove and oven they had in their houses and they got really into this discussion. We started talking about what type of appliances they have in their homes. They discussed the idea of if appliances would radiate or it was due to conduction, which is why they could not touch that specific object, in their homes. Being able to ask the students, 'where do you see idea in your lives or in your homes?' was something truly amazing to do, because it got students interested in the material and lesson, along with supporting them in seeing how the idea or phenomenon shows up in their lives." Kaylee works hard to find spaces in each lesson where students can easily reflect and relate it back to their lives. She wants students to be able to relate to the material, so that it is something they can use in their everyday lives, rather than just regurgitating information on an assessment.

Kaylee also highlights student talk, in each one of her lessons. She explained in an interview that students do not often get the chance to talk or collaborate in their day-to-day lessons, in other classes, and she wanted to ensure that their Science class would be different. In an interview I had with Kaylee, she shared that, "I have been trying to get more opportunities for students to talk in the lessons. One of the studies that I read probably like 10 years ago said that the average student talks academically for seven minutes out of their day, which is horrifying to me. I always think about that while I am planning my lessons and actively looking for opportunities for students to be able to talk

and collaborate. If they are more likely to talk, they are more likely to comprehend and remember the material. Also, I have learned that when they talk, they have more of a tendency to want to talk about it later. In parent conferences, I have had families tell me about specific days and those days are when kids were having specific conversations. When they talk in class, they are more likely to continue talking about it out of class, which helps their learning." Kaylee is extremely intentional about ensuring students have accountable talk and opportunities to have a discourse around the surrounding day's topic. Her approach to learning is to allow students to talk and discuss, rather than just sitting around reading articles and answering questions. She truly believes that accountable student talk and class discussions are one the best ways to allow for students to learn best, in her class.

The Intentional Dimension: Self-Awareness and Thoughtfulness

The intentional dimension in Eisner's five dimensions of schooling (1998) discusses the goals and intentions of each teachers' work, related to dismantling White supremacy in their classrooms, through thoughtful and intentional implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy. Eisner (1998) considers the idea of intentionality to be teachers reaffirming their commitment to making teaching and learning more relevant to students, to ensure students are motivated and have a stake in what they are learning. The intentional dimension shows how teachers are working to create meaningful learning for their students, related to creating culturally competent learners.

Through my interactions with Kaylee, I learned a lot about her intentionality in her interactions with Black students and how it all stems from deep reflection and thoughtfulness. During our third interview, we were able to dig deep into Kaylee's

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interactions and relationships with her Black students and what she is doing to foster stronger relationships with her students. As a reflective White female educator, Kaylee continues to be truly thoughtful about her approach to creating strong relationships with her students. In our third interview, she shared, "I have been reflecting a lot lately because I do not feel like I have really strong relationships with a lot of students right now, because we have had to be so on it with discipline. I have not been able to be the fun, cool teacher that I am used to being. I have been trying to figure out where I want to go with this. I have been trying to be more cognizant of allowing for more social emotional time in our daily lessons and asking more questions that allow students to share about their interests and preferences, especially as it relates to our daily standards and lessons. I have been finding more time for us to talk, as humans, in the classroom, so that I can get to know the students and they can get to know me more. The biggest thing is being intentional about having a forum for their thoughts, ideas, situations and realities so that they can express them and support them in finding solutions for those things or at least provide them with empathy and compassion, as they share. I want to allow us to find trust in one another, which has been hard this year.

Kaylee understands that this year, with COVID regulations and rules, it has been harder to create stronger bonds with students, since the majority of how students see her is as a disciplinarian. She is working intentionally to think about where she can add more time to her lessons where students are able to gain trust with one another and with her, through meaningful conversations and discussions, to get to know each other more, as a whole.

As I have seen Kaylee be a very reflective person, another part of her demeanor is someone who is extremely self-aware and thoughtful. She understands perspectives she

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has had of students in the past and works to change and shift her mindset each day, to learn more about students and change the narrative that she grew up thinking and believing. In an interview that I had with Kaylee, she shared her thought process and mindset around how students typically behave. Throughout this interaction, Kaylee was nervous to share but also self-aware of needing to take breaks, pause and breathe, before continuing on. In the interview, Kaylee began with, "have been much more cognizant of when I do fall into a mindset that this kid is not doing work because they are lazy. I work on my self talk and I am aware that no, this kid is not lazy, they must have something going on. I need to figure out what it is and learn how I can support them. This year, I have done a lot of self-talk, reminding myself that our kids need support and that is why they are doing the things that they are doing. No kid is waking up in the morning and saying, 'I want to be a bad kid today.' I have to support students and encourage them to believe 'you are capable, you are worth it and you are worth my effort and you are worth your own effort. How do we get through this together?' Even when they blow you off, flip you off, ignore you, put their headphones in and all that other fun stuff, I want them to know that I will still come back and tell them that they are worth it. I let them know that it is okay if you are not there yet but we will get there together. It is a lot of growth mindset work, together."

Kaylee is very intentional about letting students know that she is going to be there to support them, when they are ready. She is very intentional with her approach and her words with students and understands that words are quite impactful, along with actions, that need to be supported, with her words.

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In terms of curriculum creation, Kaylee and her team are extremely thoughtful about what materials they should be using and which materials they do not want to include in their lessons. In one of my planning observations, I witnessed Kaylee and her team discuss their frustrations with finding resources for Science. Kaylee shared, "we spend hours upon hours looking for videos. We look for stories and pictures that even include people of color and they just are not out there. I actually call out to my students and say, 'Yes, I know this is a White guy talking about this. He has got a lot of information, so let's go with it. But please, help us do something about this by making videos of what you've learned, so that we can show students videos of people who look like them, so that they can relate to the speakers in the videos. The resources just are not there right now because we are in a White centered educational society.'"

Kaylee has these honest and transparent conversations with her students to allow them to understand the realities of the education field and how she is not able to show inclusive materials, due to the White centered field that they are currently working in. She explained further into the planning meeting that, "this definitely hurts our students of color. I am going to go out on a limb and say that I think it hurts all of our students. It hurts our Black students because they don't see themselves as being a part of what we are teaching. I think that White supremacy is a double-edged sword because it is allowed to stay in place, even though nobody is benefiting from it; nobody grows in their thinking, when this is the norm." Her thoughtful and reflective nature allows her to be honest with the students, which allows them to grasp their current reality and work to become culturally competent humans, that work to dismantle White supremacy in their own lives.

Summary

Kaylee's thoughtful and reflective nature bring out her passion to create culturally responsive material that allows for authentic and meaningful student discourse, each day. Kaylee works tirelessly to create content that is meaningful and relevant to students, in order to allow them to apply the material to their everyday lives. She works to create authentic partnerships with students, through genuine conversations, that stem from the desire to learn more about each other, as a whole, and build relationships through that format.

During our last interview, Kaylee shared some thoughts she had around what is currently hindering the dismantling of White supremacy in education. She shared that the lack of resources is one of the biggest barriers, as it does not allow Black students to see themselves in the materials that we show or teach to them. She explained that, "I know there are Black scientists out there. Do you think I can find any of them to show to my students? No! It is really hard because 90% of what is out there are White people. I want resources and want people who are in these fields to be willing to come in and talk to our students. Honestly, I wish we had more staff of color so that students can learn from people who look like them as well. We need people to share their experiences that are similar to the population of students that we teach. We need equity in education and that is not something that we are getting."

Teacher 4: Finn

Personal Background: Small Town to Urban City

Finn, a 25-year-old male teacher, standing at 5ft 8 in tall, comes to us from a middle-class family, from a Midwest town in Michigan. Finn grew up with his parents, younger brother and sister, in a small town, that his parents were also raised in. He explained that his small town truly impacted his worldview and how narrow it was, before working as a teacher, in an urban school district. His small rural Midwest town did not allow for much exposure to other cultures and perspectives, which has changed with his experience at his current school.

Experience with White Supremacy: Living in the Discomfort

In my first interview with Finn, when asked about his experience with White supremacy, he explained that with living in a rural small town, he did not have much knowledge of supremacy at all. In my first interview with Finn, he shared about his experience with White supremacy and explained, "I had heard of the term before, and I was probably first introduced to it in college, but that did not really give me any formal understanding of what I was actually talking about. It was really the last year during the Book Club, Me and White Supremacy, during the second round of it that they did in the spring, was the first time I had been exposed to a lot of those terms and not really just exposure, but also having them like just in very plain English defined what those terms mean. I would say that my understanding of white supremacy is ongoing. It's definitely better than it was six months ago. Until you kind of have it named and defined for you, it's probably difficult to have any real impact in terms of trying to be anti-racist. One of the ways that I think about often of it showing up in education is the analogy that white supremacy is like a backpack full of all of these advantages that you receive without having to ask for them. I think that was one way that made it really clear for me is that it's

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nothing that anyone necessarily asks to have happen. It's just inherent. It's just there. It doesn't have to be spoken about to be there. It's just already in the room. And so, you know, our expectation a lot of the times is that our students walk in, quietly, sit down, look up at the board and just kind of know what to do. And that's very true. The environment I was raised in was a part of growing up in education. But I think one of the things that I think about now is that for many of our students of color, that's not necessarily what's like normal to them. This idea that you have to come in and be quiet and sit down and not talk at all, and it should just be silent the whole time. You know, that's what makes me comfortable as a white educator. I have to work at being ok with the fact that some of my students are louder than I'm used to, or that they are talking to their friends more than they're used to. I think that those are some of the ways that I see white supremacy coming out in education because while I can recognize those things some of the time and recognize that, you know, that's me being a white person and being like, this is how I think the classroom should be. I don't think that all of the educators in this school necessarily do that all the time, and they don't always think about how, you know, how is the way they were raised and how they're comfortable impact what expectations they have for their students?

Finn's experience with White Supremacy was a bit nonexistent until he was much older. He explained his experience of hearing the term in college but knew that he never truly understood it or its impact until he came to the school, where he is currently teaching now. The school he currently works at was very intentional about leading teachers in understanding what the term, White Supremacy, means and its impacts for both White and people of color. Finn has been very reflective since he understood the

term and the impacts of it all. He explained that his interactions with students have been different, since learning of White supremacy. He understands that his comfort of what is considered the norm, is something that he is learning to do away with and hopes other educators do the same, as well. Your comfort as the White educator is not necessarily the most important component, as students from other cultures and lived experiences may act different, than what you are typically comfortable with.

Root of Inspiration: Family of Educators

Finn's journey to education is not one that is too different from many educators. Both of his parents were also high school Social Studies teachers and as he puts it, "I did not fall very far from the tree on that one." Growing up, he was around educators, all the time. He shared how this aspect allowed him to have "an appreciation for education" and that always seemed to weigh pretty heavily on him, especially in terms of his own educational journey, as a product of two teachers. He explained that, growing up as the son of two teachers, he felt like he needed to be well behaved and interested in his classes, as his life seemed to be scrutinized, as the teachers' son.

Eventually, he made his way to college at Michigan State and that is when he shared that he was presented with ideas and careers, outside of the field of education. He also shared that with such an array of people at the Michigan campus, he was able to truly grow in learning about other perspectives and cultures. In this interview, Finn was super excited and eager to share of his path to education and his journey to learning about other cultures and experiences. He opened up about his experience at Michigan state and how, "that was really the first time I was presented with some ideas that were different than the of my own, that I thought were facts and most of my life learning of how people in

different cultures live and how different people view the world, how different people view the United States. That was probably another big one. That was an eye opener for me. And just kind of learning that, you know, there's a lot more to the world than small towns in the middle of the Midwest. After college, I thought I wanted to be in politics and to become a politician. But after doing that type of work a little bit while I was in college and then shortly after college, I realized that was not a good fit for me. I wanted to change gears and find out what else I could do with my degree. I kind of temporarily felt that I could teach or substitute teach for a while because both my parents know how that works, and I can use their knowledge to help me do that. I can stay with them. And then over time of substituting, I just kind of felt that teaching was becoming a better and better fit. Eventually, that just led to me applying to become a middle school social studies teacher. I did that for one year in Michigan before the pandemic. Then I moved out here in June of 2020 and did my first year at this school, last year and now it is my second year here."

Finn's experience in college allowed him to venture out, learn about other perspectives, meet new people and widen his horizons, as he continued to grow up, as a citizen of this world. Being able to move away from his small rural town, allowed him to explore other people, culture and connections, which afforded for more opportunities to grow, in your cultural competence.

The Structural Dimension: Authenticity in Relationships

When you enter Finn's classroom, you are greeted with a smile and a "Good Morning." Each day, Finn stands in the hallway to help direct students to their classrooms and remind them of school norms, such as walking in the hallway or getting to class on

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time. He gives gentle reminders to ensure students are wearing their masks properly, for their safety and encourages them to be gentle with their peers, as middle school seventh grade students, are a bit rough with each other. As the bell rings, Finn makes his way into the classroom, where his students are sitting down at their desks and logging into the Pear Deck, to begin their class.

Students walk into the room and begin chatting with their friends, discussing what they saw in the hallway, what happened in their last class or sharing their overall feelings of the day. With this in mind, Finn always ensures that he plans to allow students to share how they are feeling for the day, with the class, before any academic work begins. Students have about three minutes to complete their check in activity called, "Thorns and Roses." This activity gives students the space to share a good thing that has happened to them lately, the rose, and something that is not very positive that they are struggling with, which is the thorn. In my observation, I saw how excited students were to share with their teacher and friends about their day. The teacher was actively monitoring the students both as they completed their check in and as they were sharing aloud. As Finn was walking around the room, the timer went off, "beep, beep, beep." It was not too loud or too quiet. Students knew the classroom norm and were ready to stop typing in their Pear Decks and begin sharing what they had written.

Finn walks around and calls on students, who have their hands raised, to share what they have written down. I observed him calling on students who were willing to share aloud, by their preferred names and pronouns. He thoughtfully ensured that he pronounced each student's name correctly, as he called on them to share out. I observed students quickly sharing aloud their thoughts and opinions on their lives, while Finn was

actively listening to them. He would stop at their desk and listen to them as they shared aloud. He would ask follow up questions, with each interaction, such as, "How did that make you feel? That sounds super cool." or "Wow, that sounds intense. How are you feeling now?" He would also ensure to comment thoughtfully and with empathy, as he would share a similar situation from his own lived experience or a thoughtful encouraging remark, to ensure the students knew, he was there to talk after class or support them in any way that he could.

It was clear that Finn's classroom was one where students felt excited to be themselves and comfortable enough to share their own personal lives and experiences, both in and out of the classroom. They were compelled to share their stories and seek feedback from both the teacher and their classmates, with each conversation. A classroom where students are able to be themselves, share openly and honestly about their lived experiences and ask for feedback, is one that takes work to accomplish and it was clear with this observation that Finn was cultivating a culturally responsive classroom, where students did not need to follow through with the White supremacist norms, that typically happen in a classroom, where students are expected to sit down quietly, complete work and leave. This classroom was a community, which is a transformative experience for our students.

As I looked around Finn's classroom, there were materials and resources posted all over the classroom. Finn had both academic materials and motivational resources put up around the room. The great thing about Finn's motivational posters is that students created these posters, as a part of a relationship building day in his classroom; he chose to use the resources that his students created to decorate the classroom. Students were able

to see their own artwork and favorite motivations hung up around the classroom, to

ensure that they know that this is also their classroom. As Social Studies is a course that

is one that has a lot of writing involved, Finn has writing resources hung up around the

room as well, to ensure his students are well supported, as they complete their daily,

rigorous material. Along with materials, Finn also has school rules and expectations listed

up around the room, so that students are aware of the norms of the class, each day.

Figure 16. Classroom norms and expectations
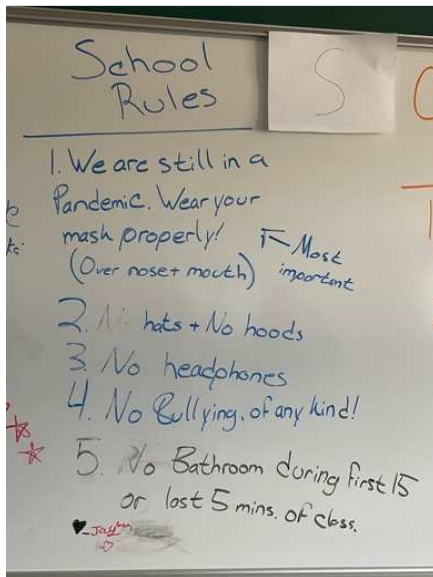
Figure 17. Classroom motivational posters
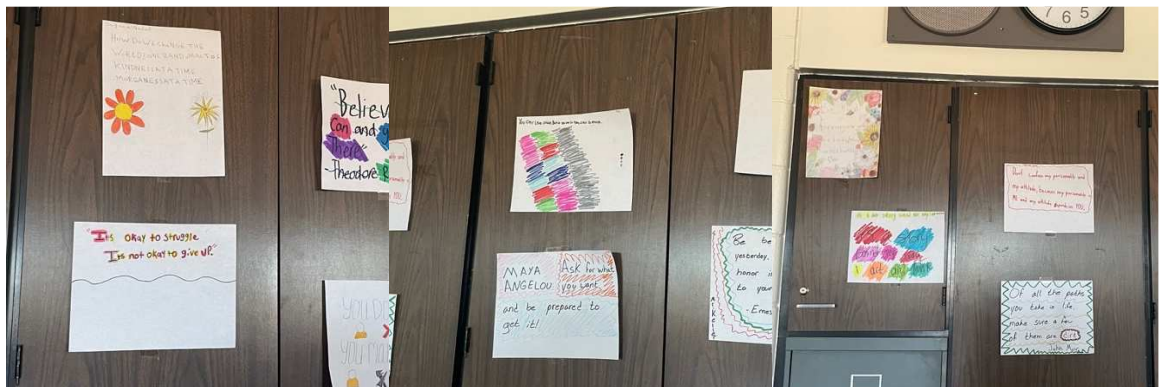
Figure 18. Writing resource
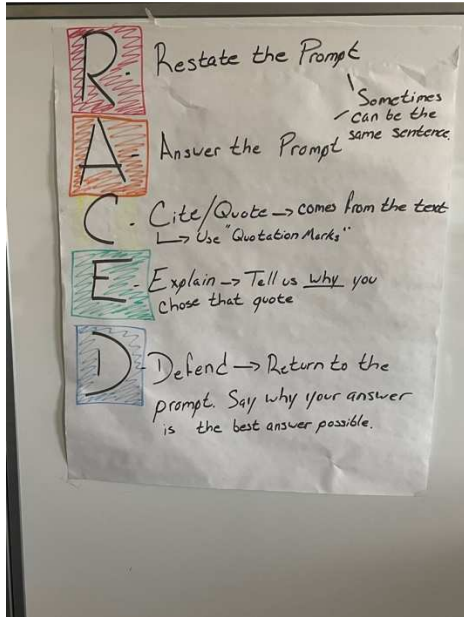
Finn's classroom environment is one that promotes honesty, integrity, and transparency. He is always very honest with his students and expects the same honesty from them, as well. As I observed his classroom, I noticed how Finn always shares how he is feeling with his students, so that they understand where his head is at. For example, I observed him saying, "I just want to let you all know that I am not having the greatest day. It is not your fault but I wanted to let you know so that you are aware." His honesty was so refreshing to hear, as many teachers believe that they need to put on an act for their students, when in reality, students appreciate the forward honesty and will do what they can to make you feel better. If not, they will for sure at least give you some grace as they see you are not having the best day. Along with honesty from him, he expects honesty from his students as well. The classroom's rules are pretty straightforward and he

expects his students to follow them. By creating a space of honesty and transparency, it eliminates the idea of needing to put on an act, from both teacher and student, and move into a more authentic student/teacher relationship. Students are able to share with their teacher how they are truly feeling and ask for what they need and want; the same goes for the teacher as well.

Finn's classroom is also one filled with positivity. He wants to ensure students are praised for their great work in class and he works hard to acknowledge their work. In my classroom observations, I noticed Finn actively monitoring the room and giving positive praise to his students, as he walked past to check their progress on the assignment. I would hear him say, "Wow, you are doing a great job with your answer in your paragraph." That specific feedback was shared aloud and when the rest of the students heard it, they knew what their teacher was looking for when he was walking around and were determined to get that positive feedback as well.

Finn values authentic student and teacher relationships. It was clear from my observations of him that he valued fostering student relationships and was very clear about wanting the relationships to be stemmed from honesty. During my first classroom observation, I heard a rush of students flood the gates of the 7th grade hallway. Their voices carried; they were loud, yelling as they ran past the doors in the hallway. Finn taught a 6th grade class in the 7th grade hallway, so his students seemed eager and curious about what was happening outside of the classroom doors. Students were asking, "Can I please go outside?" Finn knew that if he let them out of the room when the 7th graders were out, nothing good would come of it. Typically, grade levels should not mix at this school, due to a number of reasons. He let the students know, "You all know why I can't

let you outside at this time. It seems like there is always a fight after lunch and I need to keep you all safe." He went on to continue teaching and heard a "bing" from his computer. It was a sharp, loud blast so all students were concentrated on his computer now. He went over to his computer and said, "I just got an email from our principal." Finn reads the email aloud and concluded with, "You see, she does not want us leaving our room, because she wants to ensure all grade levels are safe." Just then, a student darted out the door. Finn followed the proper protocol when a student leaves the room and went on with his lesson. The student came back into the room and once students were completing independent work, Finn got down on the student's level and asked him to talk with him outside of the room. I heard the conversation from right outside of the classroom door. Finn got down on the students' level and had an open and honest conversation around why leaving the area is an unsafe choice. The student explained that they needed to leave because they needed a break from the class. Finn was very understanding but also stayed firm in his reasoning; he explained in a clear and consistent manner than he needed to stay in the room and ask for a break. He shared that he will always get a break if he asks for it and will never be denied but for safety reasons, he must know where the student is at all times, to ensure he is accounted for.

This open and honest conversation was one that allowed for transparency and honesty. Finn held high expectations for the student, all the while ensuring he provided explanations for the rules, so that the student understood the reasoning behind it all. This conversation was with a Black male student and Finn acted rationally, appropriately, and thoughtfully. He let the student know that he will always get a break if he asks for one and it will never be denied. He explained the rules and norms for the classroom and

school, to ensure that the expectations were clear and concise. He empathized with the student and let him know that taking a break is necessary and completely understandable. The entire conversation was an exchange, where both sides were heard and there was a compromise made between the two. This form of honest and clear communication is the best way to create clear boundaries and authentic relationships with students, as they know you have their best interests at heart and trust will be exchanged mutually.

The Curricular Dimension: Intentionality in Creation

Finn is a relatively new teacher at this school and was hired to work on a team that has created their own Social Studies curriculum for the past few years, instead of the district mandated curriculum. While Finn may be new, he still worked to support the team by providing various ideas that would increase the engagement and rigor in the classes. I observed him sharing aloud his thoughts for various lessons and saw his teammates express interest in his ideas and work forward to create meaningful daily lessons, with the new ideas.

The first planning session that I witnessed was focused on student engagement. The 6th grade Social Studies team worked to plan out the rest of the month of December during this planning meeting. They began with the summative assessment that they wanted to work backwards from and shared different ideas, that would work well to prepare students for the assessment. During the planning observation, I heard Finn and his team begin to share ideas for the remainder of their unit. Finn shared, "Because we are focused on the Navajos, we should talk more about the concept of perspectives. Maybe we could have students do a debate to share their perspectives on a specific topic

or write up their own testimonial sharing their perspective." The other teachers on the team agreed with these innovative ideas and decided to move forward with his plans. Finn created lessons that allowed for a more thoughtful approach to culturally responsive teaching. Through his ideas, students were able to learn about perspective and have a chance to share their own perspectives, ideas, and opinions about certain topics.

The second planning session with Finn and his team focused on student accessibility. Finn and his team centered their planning time around preparing students for the upcoming assessment that was quickly approaching. In order to support their students through their summative tasks, they wanted to ensure that students were prepared with practicing the different writing standards that they needed to master, in order to do well on the assessments. The teacher team focused on how they could scaffold certain parts of their lessons to best prepare students for the summative tasks. While focused on student accessibility, the teachers discussed the need of "meeting students where they are" to best support each individual student. They focused on creating intentional small groups, for students of all levels, based on their data scores, along with including mini lessons in their everyday work, to ensure students had background knowledge, before diving into a new task or idea.

Planning observation three was guided by the FEET rubric created by Dr. Maria Salazar and Dr. Jessica Lerner (Salazar & Lerner, 2019). In the category of "use culturally responsive backward design curriculum planning to develop units," it is evident that Finn and his team took time to plan out thoughtful lessons through backwards planning. During the first planning observation that I witnessed, Finn and his team centered the majority of the planning session on creating a backward plan; they worked to

figure out the summative assessment and worked with each other to figure out what standards must be taught and which ones must be reviewed, in order to create a thoughtful approach to preparing for the summative assessment. The lessons that the teachers were creating were very intentional, in how they would refer to and approach different topics, to ensure that different perspectives were being shared and discussed. At this point in their planning process, I believe the team is within the developing indicator, as they work to create culturally responsive lessons through backward design, however, some lessons are not as diverse or reflective of students' lived experiences nor do they allow for students to connect the work to their everyday lives. This is an area of improvement for Finn and his team as they work to dismantle White supremacy in the classroom through culturally responsive education.

In the category of "design engaging, challenging, and culturally responsive lessons," it is evident that Finn and his team are in the developing indicator, as they do work to create culturally responsive and engaging lessons each day, however, some days, the lessons do not include multiple perspectives and do not allow for students to connect the material to their everyday lives. While Finn and his team do work to meet students where they are, while creating challenging lessons each day, they are still in the process of adjusting their daily lessons to incorporate multiple ideas and perspectives that allow student connection.

In the category of "integrate culturally responsive assessment practices," it is evident that Finn and his team are working towards the proficient indicator as they work to create assessments that allow students to show mastery in a variety of standards, including writing, each week. Finn and his team continued to backward plan during the

third observation and were seen creating differentiated assessments for students, based on their current levels. For example, I witnessed Finn share with his team that, "students with IEPs should still be required to complete this writing formative task, however, they would only complete one paragraph, along with including two different sources to help justify their claims." In order to create differentiated assessments that are also culturally responsive, teachers must work to meet students where they are, along with accommodating efficiently for our students with IEPs. By chunking up the material and focusing on quality over quantity, the teachers are still holding high expectations for their students, while focusing on their writing quality, rather than how much they can write. Obviously, throughout the year, the students' writing will improve, and the expectation will be to add on more paragraphs, as time goes on and students have the ability to practice more often.

In the category of "apply knowledge of culturally responsive content and pedagogy, and student development," it is evident that Finn and his team understand how to care and teach for the whole child. In a planning observation, I witnessed multiple times where Finn shared aloud his thoughts on how to make the lesson more engaging, thoughtful and culturally responsive. He wanted the team to allow for more reflective questions in specific lessons, along with areas where he wanted them to allow students to collaborate with one another, along with learn about other perspectives, cultures, etc. While working to engage the students and focus on student development, I also witnessed Finn and his team focused on creating interdisciplinary lessons, so that writing is always included in daily Social Studies lessons, which allows for students to develop their writing practices, in other spaces and classrooms. The team also focused on where

students are and meeting their needs, through creating mini lessons to help build background knowledge and bridge the gap, so all students have an equitable starting place for the lesson. With this in mind, Finn and his team are approaching the proficient indicator, as they work to create lessons that are differentiated and support student development, along with ensuring they are keeping up to date on how to best support students with IEPs and 504s, to ensure their needs are being met.

While Finn and his Social Studies team work to create culturally responsive lessons that work to begin to dismantle White supremacy, curriculum creation is an area of growth for Finn. As a teacher new to the field, Finn will need to continue to grow in this area. As he learns how to remove the White centered curriculum and create more inclusive lessons altogether, to reflect the true history of our world.

The Pedagogical Dimension: Prioritizing the Whole Child

In the pedagogical dimension of schooling, Eisner (1998) argues that educational connoisseurs have the ability to observe and analyze teacher's pedagogical choices, such as their personality, beliefs, approach to teaching, along with their personal touch. Within this pedagogical dimension, I explored the teacher's approach, style, and personality through observations and interviews.

Through multiple classroom and planning observations, I have had the opportunity to see how Finn prioritizes the whole child as he intentionally plans for students first all of the time. He works to truly look at the student as a whole and learn what they need to succeed in the class, all the while working to build strong and authentic relationships, fostered through honesty and integrity. In one of my classroom observations, I witnessed Finn working with a Black male student who was itching to go

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into the hallway. The student interrupted the lesson to ask his teacher if he could get a break and the teacher calmly let the student know that once 7th grade lunch was out of the hallway, he would let him take a break. It is clear that the student and Finn have a strong, authentic relationship, as he was very clear and concise with the student and held his high expectations and boundaries for the break norms and the student was respectful of the rules. It is clear that Finn understands that students need breaks and he works to create strong, authentic relationships by ensuring students' needs are met, along with continuing to hold high expectations that students follow the norms set in place for their safety.

Along with Finn's focus on the whole child, he also expressed the adamant thought that "teachers have to be enthusiastic about the subject that they're teaching, like outside of school and outside of class. They also have to find the material they're talking about interesting because if it's not, you're not really being as authentic as I think teachers should be with students. One of the benefits that students should have from their teachers is that they're talking to somebody who's genuinely enthusiastic about the subject they're talking about. That's something that kind of weighs on me as an educator; making sure that I am also staying interested in that content that I'm talking about and that means kind of like pushing myself to continue to further educate myself about things." Finn explained how his pedagogy in teaching is that you must enjoy your craft and be enthusiastic in your teaching or else students will see right through you and will not interested in your lessons or class.

The Intentional Dimension: Transparency and Genuity

The intentional dimension in Eisner's five dimensions of schooling (1998) discusses the goals and intentions of each teachers' work, related to dismantling White supremacy

in their classrooms, through thoughtful and intentional implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy. Eisner (1998) considers the idea of intentionality to be teachers reaffirming their commitment to making teaching and learning more relevant to students, to ensure students are motivated and have a stake in what they are learning. The intentional dimension shows how teachers are working to create meaningful learning for their students, related to creating culturally competent learners.

Through my interactions with Finn, I learned a lot about how he works to intentionally create relationships with his Black students. After three classroom observations, I was able to see a trend of how Finn was speaking to students, along with how he conducted classroom conversations with his students. Finn is a very transparent teacher and works to tell his students facts, so that they are aware of what is happening, both on bigger scale socially and within a small scare, at the school setting. For example, there was a school rule implemented during a class that I observed; the rule was that there are no longer hall passes for periods 5 and 6, which is the last half of the day. Knowing that his students would ask for breaks and ask to use the restroom, Finn decided to share this information with the students, right away. He read them the exact email that was sent to him from administration, which allowed the students to trust their teacher immensely, as they knew he was telling the truth and was not making up excuses to take away their bathroom and hall privileges. He allowed students to share their feelings and ask questions around the matter, which created a stronger bond between teacher and student, as they were able to have a transparent conversation around the issue at hand. Students seemed to have felt heard, seen and safe, throughout this conversation.

Summary

Finn's reflective nature is great insight into how he works to become a culturally responsive teacher, working to dismantle White supremacy in his classroom. Finn works to be a transparent, thoughtful and caring teacher to his students, which are great tools in building authentic relationships with his students. During our last interview together, Finn explained the multiple supports he has been given, in order to become a culturally responsive teacher dismantling White supremacy in schools. He shared that professional developments and book studies that have been led within the school has supported his understanding of White supremacy, along with understanding both terms and experiences, related to this work. In our third interview, Finn explained that the White Supremacy and Me book club "was probably one of the more transformational ways of thinking that I've encountered, like it really caused me to understand these foundations that our lives are built on from our own lived experiences, and then you get exposed to how other people live and what their experiences are like. You either have to tear down your foundations and start over or you have to push back and not accept that those are lived experiences of others and that maybe they're just making it up. This book allowed me to change my perspective in many ways. Going forward from there, I was able to be a lot more critical of some of the lessons I had been teaching earlier in the year and last year when we were teaching know we were alternating quarters, so we would teach the same lessons twice in a row. I would revisit the lessons when I would read teach them in quarter four, because at the beginning of quarter three, before I had read that book, I was not doing as many things to dismantle White supremacy.

In terms of what barriers Finn believes are inhibiting him from fully dismantling White supremacy in the classroom, he shared his thoughts during our last interview.

During our final interview, Finn shared, "Everything is arguable when it shouldn't be, like certain things that are proven by science should not be open for debate and we can debate on other things, but we have to have a shared basis of what the facts are. I think that that's probably the biggest hurdle in education is that there is no shared base of what the facts are. White teachers treat their Black students differently. Period. If we could name more of that stuff, it would allow people to then make change from there. When we have teachers who say, 'Well, I don't read any of my students differently', well, that's like saying I don't see color. We know that we don't say these things anymore. That doesn't mean you're not a racist just because you don't see color."

CHAPTER FIVE: THEMATICS, EVALUATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how White middle school teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms through their implementation of culturally responsive practices, including classroom environment, classroom management, and relationship-building. While it is not possible for teachers to completely dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, especially in this one research study, this research works to explain how White teachers are beginning to dismantle supremacy in their rooms, through implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy.

As mentioned in chapter 3, I chose the qualitative method of educational connoisseurship and criticism (Eisner, 1998) for my study to describe, interpret, and analyze themes that emerged from the research. I sought to illustrate the intentionality and thoughtful implementation of teachers' work as they dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms through culturally responsive pedagogy. The central research question that guided this study was: *How do White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in middle school classrooms through implementation of culturally responsive practices?*

The sub questions that supported the central question were the following: *1) How are White teachers implementing a culturally responsive classroom environment for Black students?; 2) How do White educators provide culturally responsive curriculum to Black students?; 3) How do White teachers' identities influence their perceptions of and interactions with Black students?; and 4) What supports and barriers do White educators experience when attempting to dismantle White supremacy in education through implementation of culturally responsive practices?*

Four public middle school teachers were selected to participate in this study. I identified the school based on the school's mission and vision in relation to the study. In my analysis, I created a data collection schedule to triangulate emerging themes across data sources, as seen in chapter three.

Themes and Responses to Research Questions

Eisner's (1998) school of ecology framework was applied in chapter four, where I focused on the structural, curricular, pedagogical, and intentional dimensions of schooling. The data analysis process involved coding the interview transcripts and observation fieldnotes that address each research question. As noted earlier, this research study was informed by one central question and four guiding sub-questions. The central research question that guided this study was: How do White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in middle school classrooms, through implementation of culturally responsive practices? The sub-questions that worked to answer the overall central question are the following: 1.) How are White teachers implementing a culturally responsive classroom environment for Black students? 2.) How do White educators provide culturally responsive curriculum to Black students? 3.) How do White teachers'

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identities influence their perceptions of and interactions with Black students? 4.) What supports and barriers do White educators experience when attempting to dismantle White supremacy in education, through implementation of culturally responsive practices? The research questions focused on Eisner's (1998) school of ecology to determine how White teachers are working to dismantle White Supremacy in their classrooms, through culturally responsive education.

Research Question One

How are White teachers implementing a culturally responsive classroom environment for Black students?

Relationships

In a culturally responsive classroom, teachers must work to create a safe environment for their students in order to ensure a safe space for learning (Bondy et al., 2007, p. 336). Building a safe learning environment and space is essential and can be accomplished by "building relationships and being kind to one another during the first day" (Bondy et al., 2007, p. 336). Murdoch et al. (2020) explains that student-teacher relationships are necessary for fostering environments that provide high quality education, while allows students to productively struggle in their rigorous assignments.

In each of the four classrooms, teachers spent time getting to know their students every day. At the beginning of each period, students had time to share about themselves through a variety of ways. For example, in Jeff's classroom, students were comfortable sharing about their weekends as they completed their warm-up assignment. In Kaylee and Wallace's classroom, students were asked about their weekends as they walked around

the room, actively monitoring students completing the warm-up questions. Finn spent the

first five minutes of class dedicated to a "thorns and roses" activity, where students

shared a good thing happening in their lives and a thorn or unfortunate thing happening in

their lives. While all four teachers approached getting to know their students differently,

they all took the time to learn more about their students every day. All four teachers also

consistently shared about themselves and how they were doing with their students in

order to establish an authentic, two-sided relationship between the teacher and the

student. In addition, each of the four teachers worked to create positive student to teacher

interactions with all students, especially their Black students.

Supportive Classroom Environment

The physical environment of every classroom is unique and relies on each

teacher's personality dynamic as well as the content taught. Each classroom I observed

was intentionally and thoughtfully arranged and created by each teacher. As evidenced in

chapter four, teachers were observed creating a classroom dynamic that was caring,

supportive, collaborative, respectful, and fun. While differences existed between each

classroom—the way teachers began classes, how classrooms were set up, and what type

of materials and resources were available—there were nevertheless commonalities that

emerged, including their dedication to creating a positive classroom space through

classroom resources, flexible seating options, and an encouraging environment.

All participating teachers fostered a respectful and caring classroom environment

and worked diligently to create a motivational, supportive, and brave classroom space for

their students. This motivational and safe space manifested through different approaches.

Kaylee focused her time and energy in creating multiple useful classroom resources that

created an environment conducive to learning science. She also encouraged students to try again when making mistakes. In order to continue fostering a supportive classroom environment, she encouraged students to take on the role of helping each other, especially when faced with questions or challenges with assignments, as to ensure they were upholding their brave classroom space expectations. Jeff, Wallace, and Finn displayed practical and useful classroom materials to ensure that students were able to use various resources to continue their growth and learning in the classroom. Jeff encouraged his students to take risks and try new things, as evidenced by his classroom's co-created norms and values. Wallace encouraged his students to also try new things but provided various scaffolds and supports so that students felt supported while taking risks. Finn supported his students in novel learning by providing student and teacher examples to support his students' risk-taking.

High Expectations

During classroom observations, my focus was on how teachers were creating a culturally responsive classroom environment, especially for their Black students. In a culturally responsive classroom environment, "teachers established and communicated clear, high expectations with an attitude of "no excuses." (Bondy et al., 2007, p. 328). All teachers in this study worked to ensure that they had high expectations for their students, as evidenced through clear and concise rules and expectations.

All four teachers explicitly expressed high expectations for their students in similar ways. Teachers must be insistent that their students will follow and live up to their high expectations through establishing supports to ensure their students will learn and succeed in their classrooms (Bondy & Ross, 2008). As Ross et al. (2008) noted,

insistence begins from the first moment of the first day of school. Through insistence, the teacher conveys her expectations, her authority, and her intention to be consistent. The teacher is neither authoritarian nor heavy-handed. She simply conveys through actions and words that students will meet her expectations. (p. 143)

All teachers have norms and classroom expectations displayed in their classrooms, either co-created norms or aligned with the school's values and norms. Teachers refer back to these norms often to ensure students are following through with stated expectations. In terms of high expectations and academics, teachers created scaffolds to make the lesson relatable and accessible, and held their students to high expectations to ensure completeness of their work as well as accountability. Each teacher's slides and/or classroom materials included explicit directions, timers, and supports, that demonstrate high expectations for students for student success.

Collaboration

In a culturally responsive classroom, teachers work to develop a community of learners and support students in learning collaboratively, along with holding each other accountable (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In Kaylee's classes' co-collaborative norms, their promise to each other was to ensure that everyone is supportive and kind to one another, each day. For example, every morning, the class would complete a check in activity, where they were expected to share out how they were doing. As each student shared aloud, their peers provided them with empathetic comments and connections, to ensure they were upholding their classroom norms and supporting each other.

In a culturally responsive classroom, teachers encourage students to work collaboratively, and each of the four teacher participants fostered a collaborative, rather than individualistic, approach to learning. Culturally relevant teaching is seen as teachers

encouraging "a community of learners rather than competitive, individual achievement" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 480), meaning that teachers encouraged effective student collaboration during their lessons to ensure their students were moving away from the individualistic way of learning. In Jeff's class, students were encouraged to try the work on their own first before moving into collaboration with peers. Kaylee's students collaborated frequently, especially when completing weekly labs together in science. Finn's students had the option to collaborate during various parts of the lesson every day. Wallace's students were often collaborating to ensure they understood the material. For example, in both classes, during the vocabulary practice each day, students were able to work together to create meaningful and interesting sentences with a partner of their choice, using the daily vocabulary words.

Summary

While there were many similarities between each classroom, there were also several differences. For example, each teacher approached the start of her or his class differently. Some teachers played music at the beginning of the class to increase energy while others allowed the bell to promptly start the class. In summary, White teachers implemented a culturally responsive classroom environment for their Black students through positive student to teacher interactions, motivational classroom space, high expectations paired with support and scaffolds, and collaborative teaching styles.

Research Question Two

How do White educators provide culturally responsive curriculum to Black students?

Relevance

In order to be a culturally responsive teacher working to dismantle White Supremacy, one must work to modify the district curriculum, as it is almost always White-centered. The district curriculum that educators are asked to teach is rarely culturally responsive and caters predominantly to White students, omitting diverse identities and opinions. This can be especially damaging to Black students who may already feel as if they do not belong in society (Applebaum, 2016; Epstein, 2019).

In a culturally responsive classroom, the curriculum is something that should truly be invested in and intentionally regarded, a space where students of all backgrounds can learn from and connect. Farinde-Wu and Williams (2017) explain that in a culturally responsive classroom, teachers "identify ideologies in which students' values, beliefs, traditions, and languages are integrated into the curriculum in an effort to promote achievement" (p. 282). Culturally responsive teachers

> actively seek out information about cultures represented in their classrooms. Ideally, this information extends beyond foods, flags, and holiday celebrations and provides teachers with information that assists them in modifying their classroom curriculum and instruction in order to be more inclusive of varying perspectives. (Farinde-Wu & Williams, 2017, p. 283)

As Farinde-Wu and Williams (2017) explain, "student interests drive the curriculum" (p. 283).

The four teachers in this study worked tirelessly to create, modify, and supplement curriculum to ensure it was culturally responsive and engaging for their Black students specifically. While some teachers opted to use the district curriculum and supplement what was given to them, others decided to create their curriculum entirely

from scratch, allowing them to incorporate more culturally responsive materials aimed at increasing student engagement.

Jeff and Wallace both worked to modify the district curriculum to make learning more engaging and relatable for students every day. For example, as Jeff taught math, he planned with his teaching partners to decipher which questions are applicable and relatable to their students and which ones are not aligned with students' lived experiences and need to be changed. During the planning observations that I witnessed, Jeff and his team would also identify different approaches to learning math that their curriculum wanted them to teach. They discussed how teaching other approaches to the material would be better, as it would allow for students to learn according to what is best for them, rather than what the district wanted them to do. Wallace also used his district curriculum for his ELD classes, however, worked he with his planning partner to make modifications where needed. In a planning observation I witnessed with Wallace and his teaching partner, they both read through the curriculum for the week and adjusted parts they felt needed to be changed, depending on where their students were at that week and in which areas they needed more practice. They also found more relevant and engaging articles for their students each week to make learning more interesting and fun for each student. Both teachers shared that the district curriculum can be a good starting point but should never be used as is. Teachers must work to learn about their students' interests, wants, hopes, and dreams, then create or adjust curriculum based on what they learn about each students' backgrounds and interests.

Finn and Kaylee both create their own curriculum for their classes, which was quite a laborious task. Because the district curriculum was so uninteresting, they decided

to make their own curriculum for the school year to better serve their students. As a new teacher, Finn works with a team that already has a significant portion of teacher-created curriculum, however, it is not always very responsive as the curriculum was created by two White women many years ago. As he is a newer teacher, I observed Finn listening quite a lot in his planning meetings with his teaching team. However, he did offer different ideas that would make the lessons more engaging and interactive for his students. In Kaylee's experience, she was planning the entire Science curriculum from scratch for the year with her teaching partner. Kaylee and her science team believed that the district curriculum was neither engaging nor interactive for their students and decided to move forward with creating their own curriculum. A barrier that Kaylee and her team faced was the limited options for classroom materials, such as videos or books. While her team worked diligently to identify culturally responsive materials for their students, it was difficult for them to find scientists of color in the materials that they intended to show their students. Similarly, it can be difficult for educators to find videos or materials of women in science, instead of just White men. Kaylee and her team were completely invested and intentional in creating curriculum that reflected the identities of their Black students, however, their difficulty in securing appropriate and culturally responsive materials indicates that there unfortunately remains a lack of available materials designed to showcase this very thing.

Summary

All four teachers were intentional in their creation and modification of curriculum for their Black students in order to facilitate culturally responsive content. They worked to understand their students' backgrounds, interests, and lived experiences, and created

their lessons accordingly. This is not an easy process; it took significant intentionality and time from the participating teachers to do this well. Teachers working to dismantle White supremacy must strive to create thoughtful and intentional culturally responsive content and materials so as not to reinforce the status quo of White curriculum that serves only White students.

Research Question Three

How do White teachers' identities influence their perceptions of and interactions with Black students?

Reflection

In the pedagogical dimension, I sought to uncover the teacher's personality, beliefs, and overall approach to teaching. Individual and pedagogical differences emanate from each teacher that work to distinctly shape classroom dynamics, culture, and curriculum. Each teacher's pedagogical style works to influence students' transformative classroom experiences.

Eisner (1998) explains that the pedagogical dimension is a very important factor for an educational connoisseur because it allows me to understand the unique context of learning as well as differences between each teachers' classroom. The participating teachers demonstrated many similarities throughout the study, however, there were also noticeable differences among the four. Most teachers occupied the role of facilitators of learning, while others actively worked against occupying the authoritarian role in the classroom that they were taught. Each teacher was quite reflective in who they were, how

they grew up, especially in relation to Black students, and how they show up in society and their classrooms. Each of the teacher participants demonstrated a desire to improve their craft for their students and for society. They were all critically reflective around who they were and how their views and experiences with society have been different than the students they are teaching, especially their Black students.

During our first interview, Jeff shared, "I just need to be reflective towards myself, my teaching and just the needs of my Black students." Jeff understands that reflection is an important part of being a great teacher to his students: We have to be willing to be open. We have to be open to listening to conversations and perspectives. We need to be really reflective on what we do as a teacher and what our students of color need, want and deserve. If we do not do this, we are just continuing to live with contributing to White Supremacy and continue down the same path of education that has already existed for years. Jeff is very aware of how the education system has been subservient to White students and he is very open about wanting to change that for our Black students.

In our first interview, Wallace shared that "I know early in my own teaching career, I was probably more of the problem, as I was learning and making mistakes." Wallace explains that in his teaching practice, he wants to be more mindful around remembering more about his students' cultures and lived experiences. He wants to "be more responsive to that specific student." Wallace also explained his experience and learning about Black students, including how they show up in society and in schools. He explained in our first interview that after much reflection and learning, he understands that he should not "escalate alongside Black students and do not start yelling back

because they are yelling at you. We need to be very mindful of remembering Black boys'

ages and not trying to treat them like they are older than they are." Black children are

more likely to get into trouble for subjective offensives (Morris, 2007). Knowing this

piece of information, Wallace understood that Black students often get into trouble

quickly, as teachers escalate with the students, when the most advantageous way to

communicate with students when they are escalated is through de-escalation strategies.

Kaylee and Finn were also reflective of their own backgrounds and how they

show up in society. Kaylee was quite honest in her third interview when she shared her

truest thoughts around her experience with being a culturally responsive teacher. She

explained: I have been struggling with being culturally responsive, as I still get frustrated

with certain situations that I can't tell are because of bad behavior or a cultural situation

or difference. I am trying to become more aware of what culturally acceptable norms are

and what all those norms are. It is clear that Kaylee wants to create a culturally

responsive classroom with boundaries and high expectations while ensuring she is

respectful of cultures and norms in other cultures. Kaylee's pedagogical approach to

thinking about her own experiences and how that affects her students is one that shows

her truth and effort in becoming a more culturally responsive educator.

Finn expressed he is also working to learn more about the ways to become a

culturally responsive educator and understand his unique process. As he is in his second

year of teaching, he is still going through the learning process of becoming more aware of

different cultures, norms, and lived experiences. Being from a conservative small town

from the Midwest, Finn understands that how he grew up and is different from his

students' backgrounds. He shared how the rules he grew up with in school were different

than how they are now and explains how "I have to keep reflecting on the different challenges I am dealing with and reflect on if they are biases that I need to work through and how I can be knowledgeable about them to be a better educator and human." As a White man, Finn understands that there are some parts of his identity that he needs to reflect on in comparison to the Black students with whom he interacts and teaches.

Interactions

All four teachers' identities reflect how they work and interact with Black students. In creating thoughtful interactions and intentional relationships, the teachers had to figure out how to put their own comfort aside and work to truly learn more about each student and their background. Jeff's pedagogy is centered on student relationships, encouragement, and motivation, which is clearly seen through his thoughtful approach to creating student relationships. He often uses motivating statements, both in and out of the classroom, when he addresses them with their preferred names and pronouns. He also works to create and maintain authentic relationships with each individual student. His honest and sincere approach to building relationships is a critically significant example of how to be a culturally responsive teacher.

Wallace's pedagogy is centered around learning, support, and honesty. He works to build strong relationships and interactions with his Black students by learning about their home lives, cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. He does so by authentically and intentionally asking questions, actively listening when students share about themselves, and learning more on his own. This leads him to be more responsive to each student and family. He continues to educate himself on Black student experiences to ensure that he is working to change the narrative that is being shared about them throughout the school.

He strives instead to see them for who they are, which are 12–13-year-old kids. Understanding that his students may not understand his approach initially, or may receive the wrong impression of him as a White man, Wallace intentionally builds relationships to ensure that he can also continue to hold high expectations for each student. In being authentic and caring, students understand that their teacher just wants the best for them, rather than being 'against them.'

Kaylee's interactions and perceptions with her Black students is centered around educating herself and learning more about her own biases. During our first interview, she shared how she lets White students get away with certain behaviors while calling other students out for the same thing. This type of reflection is critical as it is the first-place educators must begin in order to acknowledge their biases and perspectives of Black students. The truth is that Black children are more likely to get into trouble for subjective offensives (Morris, 2007). Black students often receive harsh consequences for disrespecting authority or for being too loud, both of which can be subjectively interpreted (Wun, 2018). Kaylee understands this idea and recognizes that this is an area in which she needs to continue to improve upon, as her interactions with Black students could harm them.

Finn's pedagogy surrounding his interactions with his Black students is focused on honesty and sincerity, paired with a healthy dose of reality. In our first interview, he shared: "Some days are really good and students come in and do the work and are really engaged. Other days, I am getting the cold shoulder. They don't want to be around anyone. For the most part, this has to do with stuff that is happening outside of the school

but this means, many days, students are not getting the lesson done and are not practicing the skills they need to succeed."

Finn recognizes that things happen outside of school that are out of his and his student's control. While students may be missing out on their education, he understands the notion that first you must come to the child looking to understand in order to know how to support them and move forward. Once the student is in a more stable space, you are able to support with building skills they will need to succeed in school and beyond. White teachers' perception of some Black students could very well be centered around the idea or narrative that Black kids are lazy and do not want to do the work, when in reality, the behavior that they are seeing could correspond with something they are dealing with outside of the classroom.

Reckon with Impact

A majority of the teacher participants recalled incidents where students have called them racist. While that is a shocking thing to hear, the teachers took the time to reckon with their impact on that student and used the opportunity to learn and grow from that negative interaction with a Black student. It is dangerous for White teachers to "be comfortable with their Whiteness" (Applebaum, 2016, p. 9) while they continue to perpetuate the oppressive status quo. Consequently, the continued pattern seen in schools is that White fragility inhibits teachers to have conversations that highlight "how people who benefit from privilege are accountable for the reproduction of racial injustice" (Applebaum, 2016, p. 10). In contrast, these teachers leaned into difficult conversations with students, families, administration, and colleagues. They were adamant about

listening and learning in order to understand their personal impact in certain situations. In essence, they were seeking to understand how they could learn to be better for their Black students. In learning about the influence their perceptions had on their interactions with Black students, they learned qualities of a culturally responsive educator as well as the idea that all teachers are still learning and working on becoming better for their students.

Summary

Through a reflective process, each teacher confronted their biases and reckoned with the impact they had on their students. Through this work, each participant internally reflected and worked through unpacking their internalized racism and understanding how it affected their students. Reflection is truly key in the work to dismantle White supremacy because it is necessary to understand how one perpetuates the norm of White supremacy prior to making any significant and lasting change.

Research Question Four

What supports and barriers do White educators experience when attempting to dismantle White supremacy in education, through implementation of culturally responsive practices?

Intentionality

There were several barriers the teacher participants faced when working to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms. They noted specific supports they were receiving from their current school and the district along with key hurdles they needed to jump over in order to succeed in their mission as culturally responsive educators. In terms

of support, the teacher participants were all very clear regarding how they were being supported from their school and district. Finn, Kaylee, and Wallace all shared that their school's constant support of professional development, trainings, and book clubs around culturally responsive education and dismantling White Supremacy were heavily needed and greatly appreciated. Jeff, a new teacher to the school, shared that he believes he has been supported by other teachers and administration regarding how forthcoming everyone has been around answering questions and being willing to share their personal experiences. Along with the openness of the staff, Jeff expressed gratitude in the continued education he has been able to receive with other professional development that the school has provided throughout the year.

Systems and Structures

During the third interview, teachers shared examples of specific barriers that hindered their intentions of dismantling White Supremacy. Jeff shared that one of the biggest barriers in education is the inequitable classroom structures that differ between school districts, including classroom sizes and lack of overall district- and school-approved teacher autonomy. Kaylee had a similar response when she noted that the curriculum the district provides is not culturally responsive and does not allow Black students to see themselves through windows and mirrors in the daily lessons. Wallace and Finn believed that the greatest barriers to dismantling White supremacy in classrooms are the people and teachers who are unable to part ways with their preexisting biases and narratives of Black students.

The rest of the educational system must work with intentionality to dismantle White supremacy in the larger education system. The intentional dimension in Eisner's

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five dimensions of schooling (1998) discusses the goals and intentions of each teacher's work related to dismantling White supremacy in their classrooms through thoughtful and intentional implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy. Eisner (1998) considers the idea of intentionality to be teachers reaffirming their commitment to making teaching and learning more relevant to students and to ensure students are motivated and have a stake in what they are learning. The intentional dimension shows how teachers are working to create meaningful learning for their students related to becoming culturally competent learners. Although the four teachers in this study were explicitly intentional in their work to become culturally responsive educators, there were nevertheless some significant barriers they faced throughout their work. Indeed, they understand that it is just the beginning. It takes more than just one teacher to do this work, it takes a village. The entire school, including teachers and administration must be on the same page around the school's and district's mission and vision for the students. There needs to be more intentionality around dismantling White supremacy in education and it starts with self-reflection and understanding who within society and schools we are currently serving and what can be done to make the systems and structures more equitable for others—especially Black students.

Summary

The primary aim for this research was to illuminate concrete examples of how White teachers are dismantling White Supremacy through their implementation of culturally responsive practices. This study provides examples of how to use culturally responsive practices to dismantle White supremacist ideals, systems, and structures. The three emergent themes from this study were centered around relationships, reflection, and

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curriculum, and the teacher participants in this study centered their everyday work around these three aspects. These teachers provided examples of how educators should be creating strong and authentic relationships with their students. They created relationships from the beginning with their students that were prioritized and intentional as they worked to learn more about each student's family, culture, background, and interests. Not only did each teacher take the time to learn more about their students to build an authentic bond, but they also took the time to share about their own lives and experiences to create a shared bond and experience with their students.

Teachers focused on their personal reflection throughout each phase of this study. It was evident that each teacher recognized they were still growing and learning how to be better educators and people for their students. All four teachers understood the importance of reflection and continued to question their understandings in order to facilitate interactions with Black students. They also work to continuously acknowledge and let go of their various biases in order to forge a new narrative.

Curriculum was a prominent theme in this study as teachers realized just how subservient the district curriculum is to White students. Most curriculum allows for one way of thinking or doing and compels teachers to teach in specific ways. In terms of diverse books, the curriculum does not provide many options to choose from and infrequently provides for various perspectives. The four teachers in this study recognized this as an issue of inequity. They worked tirelessly to either adjust and supplement the district curriculum or create their own curriculum to better serve their Black students. They worked to find more engaging and relevant material to ensure that Black students were able to see themselves in the curriculum and have the opportunity to apply their

learning to the real world. As they built relationships, these teachers used what they learned about their students to create meaningful lessons based on their students' interests, lived experiences, and backgrounds.

Connection Between CRP and White Supremacy

This study works to explain how White teachers are beginning to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, through the implementation of culturally responsive education. These findings provide a starting point for teachers and schools who are looking to begin their work in dismantling White supremacy in education. While the educational system was set in its White supremacist norms and structures, the pandemic has provided a way to move past these practices and move forward into a new era. Ladson-Billings (2021) explains that, "before the COVID-19 pandemic, normal for some students represented failure in academic work, regular disciplinary sanctions, the inability to access honors and enriched curriculum. Why would they want to go back to normal?" (p. 353).

Relationships, relevance and reflection are just starting points in how to begin to create a more equitable educational system, that supports all types of lived experiences and learning styles. Teachers in this study focused on the blending of anti-racism and culturally responsive education, in order to begin the work of dismantling systems of oppression within the educational system. Ladson-Billings (2021) argues that the pandemics provided

> opportunities to reinforce how important it is for educators to develop a coherent pedagogical philosophy and strategy for ensuring that all students reach academic, social, cultural, and civic success. This issue takes up aspects of culturally relevant, culturally sustaining, and culturally revitalizing, and reality pedagogies. (p. 353)

The pandemic provided a way for teachers to begin to truly reflect on their craft and practice, to see how they can cultivate a positive transformative educational experience for their students. While the process of dismantling White supremacy is a great feat, the teachers in this study are providing a starting point of how to move forward on the continuum of this work, as the action of dismantling is one that cannot be completed by four teachers alone, with this new method of teaching and learning, post pandemic. Supremacy is engrained in our systems, structures, and ideals both in and out of education; the work that has been portrayed in this study is a way to show the work that can be done to begin the process of change.

The four teachers in this study are all at different points within their journey in dismantling White supremacy and becoming culturally responsive educators. While they are at different points in their process of learning and change making, they are all following the same protocol of working to cultivate strong relationships with students, creating or supplementing curriculum to make it more relevant and engaging, along with ensuring that they continue to self-reflect upon their own identities, as they interact with Black students, as they continue to unpack their biases during this learning process. This study does not intend to explain all ways in which teachers can dismantle White supremacy, however, it does show the process in which teachers can begin to work through the steps in order to do so.

Implications

The goal for the current study was to reveal examples of how White teachers are dismantling White Supremacy in their classrooms through culturally responsive practices.

The findings in this study are crucial to educators everywhere. As White supremacy is a culture that has been ingrained in our systems and structures, it is not something that can be dismantled right away, nor can it be done through a checklist. Intuitive culturally responsive work cannot be done until people unpack their own biases. As educators, we must work to unpack internalized racism and implicit biases to reflect upon how we show up in this world, especially in relation to our students. We must figure out how we continue to perpetuate White supremacist systems and structures before working to dismantle them all. Culturally responsive education is a way to dismantle White supremacy as teachers strive to create lessons that allow students to interrogate current systems and structures, learn new perspectives and ideas, and discuss critical race theory topics—all of which are too often ignored.

I will be sharing these results with Denver Public Schools, to ensure schools have concrete examples of how to realistically dismantle White Supremacy in their own classrooms. White Supremacy can be a daunting term, however, with continued education, professional development and concrete examples, teachers will feel confident in creating a positive, transformative learning experience for Black students. In my future work as an Assistant Principal, I hope to bring my research findings to my school's professional development to continue to support teachers in their work in becoming culturally responsive educators, who begin to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms every day.

When thinking about educational opportunities for teachers, it begins in teacher education programs. Both from my experience and from what I have learned from this study, teacher education programs do not offer enough classes on teaching with equity in

mind. Along with that, the idea and pedagogy of teaching with equity is one that should be engrained within all courses within the program. As you begin to work in a school setting, teachers should also be receiving continued education from their school buildings. The professional development they receive should be targeted around how to teach with equity and how to become a culturally responsive educator. As critical race theory and culturally responsive pedagogy are both a learning curve, it is necessary that teachers continue to educate themselves, no matter how long they have worked in education. It is detrimental to think that just because one has been teaching for over a certain number of years and is considered a veteran teacher, that they no longer have to learn. It is necessary for teaches to continue to reflect on their practice and craft, along with how to work to be better for their students, overall.

In terms of research design and sampling, there was also an interesting implication that came to light, in the type of teachers who participated in the study. Out of the four participants, there were three males and one female participant. While each participant offered a unique perspective on dismantling White supremacy in their classrooms, it would have been beneficial to have greater representation of female teachers, as female teachers make up the majority of the educational profession. While not a limitation per se, this implication does present an interesting representation of male teachers, who possibly felt more comfortable in participating in this study, as they may have perceived their work to be exemplary in dismantling White supremacy in their classrooms.

Though this study is particular focuses heavily on the Black experience, the work around dismantling White supremacy through culturally responsive education is one that

benefits all learners. All types of learners would benefit from this type of work because it allows for students to gain different perspectives, learn about other cultures and backgrounds, and identify how they learn best.

Along with supporting teachers in Denver Public Schools, this study should find itself in many school districts, both around Colorado and beyond. For schools who are looking to make a change, or are already in the midst of becoming change agents for their communities, this study will support them in making that critical leap with specific examples of how to get started in effectuating necessary change.

In terms of publication, I intend to publish this research in journals such as: *Urban Review, Urban Education, Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, Teaching and Teacher Education,* and *Race Ethnicity and Education,* to ensure the critical findings of the study are being reached by current and future educators.

In summary, White teachers need to understand their own identities and how they are linked to power. They also need to learn how they continue to perpetuate White power structures in society (Lander, 2011). Through their reflective work, questioning, active listening, and thoughtfulness, teachers will be able to think through how they interact with Black students and how their identities and perceptions have shaped each of those interactions.

Limitations

The limitations surrounding this study became quite clear towards the middle of the study. One possible limitation of this study is with Finn, who is a younger teacher, in his second year of teaching. While I did ask for range of experience when seeking out participants, I originally thought that newer teachers would have more openness around

student learning in terms of collaborative and peer work. I made an assumption that newer and younger teachers are more relatable to their students since they are closer to them in age and could relate more to their lived experiences. This assumption was wrong. I did not factor in that some White teachers' lived experiences are very linear and they are surrounded with mostly other White people, rather than diversity, as they grew up. Finn grew up in the Midwest with White Supremacist ideals and norms that are considered 'normal or typical' in our country. After my observations and interviews with Finn, I realized that he was uncomfortable with the way students interacted with one another, as well as with him. Black students specifically were loud, more forward and upfront about their needs, and asked more questions, which could be considered "talking back." During my observations, Finn was unaware of these cultural differences and thought of it as disrespect. Although he explained that he was taking the time to learn about how to work with Black students and what biases he needs to address, it was clear that Finn struggled with his classroom management and some biases he held regarding his Black students. While Finn's lack of experience could be considered a limitation, it is also a rich area in which future research could be studied. While Finn is a new teacher, his lack of experience around creation of culturally responsive lessons could be a possible research question, in learning how teacher education programs are preparing teachers to teach in urban school settings.

Similarly, Kaylee was also aware of her biases and had some lingering perspectives, narratives, and stereotypes of Black students that she needed to work through in order to become a culturally responsive educator working to dismantle White supremacy in her classroom. Her biases stem from her work with Black students and are

focused on student behavior and actions with adults, especially in terms of following rules and respecting adults. In addition, she shared that she still holds Black students to higher expectations and accountability than she does with White students in terms of rules and classroom expectations. In one interview, she shared that when a White student does something that alludes to bad behavior on not following the rules, she ignores it, while she may not do the same for a Black student. While this may sound alarming, this is the exact thing that White teachers are doing to Black students every single day. Kaylee and Finn's experiences are not unique as other teachers feel this exact same way. The only difference here is that these two teachers are actively working towards acknowledging and correcting their biases and perspectives to ensure they can best serve their Black students and become more equitable educators. While Kaylee's experience with unpacking her biases could be considered a limitation, this could also be an area in which future professional developments could be created to help teachers, like Kaylee, work through their preconceived notions of students of color and support them in their thorough reflection with confronting their biases.

Another possible limitation, in regards to EdCrit methodology, is the small sample size for this specific research study. Within this study, there was a limited time frame of four months, which did not provide a complete picture of each teacher's actual representation of their overall teaching craft. The idea of generalizability to other contexts is another possible limitation to this study, as this study may not be as useful to another group or population of students and teachers at a more diverse school setting.

Further Research

While this study was completed at a school with a very diverse population of students and staff, it would be informative to complete a comparative study at a White-majority school to see how and if teachers are working to implement culturally responsive practices within less diverse school settings. Along with aspects of future research, this study opened up a field of wonderings about what is being taught in teacher education programs around culturally responsive education and White Supremacy. It would be beneficial to see how these programs are supporting future teachers in learning to teach with equity in mind, including specific ways teacher education programs are preparing their students to teach culturally diverse students.

As teachers' lived experiences and perspectives have a huge impact on their biases toward Black students, it would be beneficial to conduct a study on teachers' lived experiences of teaching people of color. Researchers could use this data to explore possible correlations with teachers' present biases and how it informs their interactions and pedagogy with students of color. This would allow for teachers to ask themselves deeper questions about why they have specific biases and believe certain stereotypes, especially around the students they teach and interact with on a daily basis. It would also allow for deeper reflection strategies so teachers could continue to learn and grow and, hopefully, begin to change the narratives they have regarding their students.

Closing Comments

Reflection and action together will create meaningful change to our systems and structures. As a researcher, I set out to shed light on the fact that White teachers are doing the work and are creating change in classrooms. This work is being done to show other White educators that it is possible to create a positive, transformative learning

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experiences for Black students; it just comes with a lot of self-reflection, intentional curriculum creation, and authentic relationships. My hope is that this study will start a revolution, working to teach resistance and get into 'good trouble' with igniting a much-needed change in our educational system. Our adherence to rigid rules and outmoded norms and expectations should go out the window and allow for space to create authentic learning and growth from both teachers and students.

Teaching through the intentional and thoughtful implementation of culturally responsive practices is what I hope each teacher will do, regardless of race, background, age, years of experience, or status. Teaching for equity is the exact way to dismantle White supremacist norms and ideals in our schools and classrooms. Teaching for equity, in a culturally responsive manner, will mean taking a step away from using district mandated curriculum. It will require teachers to put a focus and priority on fostering strong relationships, rather than focusing first and foremost on academics. It will ask of teachers to see students as the whole child, rather than just a test score. It will require teachers to start putting themselves under the microscope to see what *they* are doing wrong, rather than what students are doing wrong. It will require teachers to figure out how they are teaching and leading their students and determine if it is equitable, thoughtful, intentional, and supportive to all learners. Doing all of this will require us to put our old ways of teaching and education to the back of our minds and focus on a new way forward. A way that will create a generation of learners and change agents who understand empathy, equity, cultural componence, and critical consciousness. A way forward.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Recruitment Letter -Email

(*Date*)

Re: Voluntary Research Study!!!

Dear Hamilton Teachers:

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a voluntary research study about White supremacy in education and how White teachers are working to dismantle it in their classrooms through culturally responsive education. This study is being conducted by Zion Gezaw at the University of Denver.

Participation includes completing a one-time, 5-minute online survey to be considered eligible for the study. If you meet the criteria, you will be asked to participate in a longer portion of this research study that will include interviews, classroom observations, planning observations, along with artifact collection of lesson materials. For more information, please see below for consent form, along with Google online survey.

Selection criteria: White teachers of any gender, diverse range of class, diverse range of grade level and subject taught, age ranging between 21-66 years old and should have a range of 1-50 years of teaching experience when applying to be a participant.

If you would like additional information about this study, please contact us at zion.gezaw@du.edu.

Thank you for your consideration, and once again, please do not hesitate to contact us if you are interested in learning more about this Institutional Review Board approved project.

Zion Gezaw
Principal Investigator
Doctoral Candidate
University of Denver

Appendix B

Recruitment Google Form

Title of Research Study: White Supremacy in Education and How White Teachers Are Working to Dismantle it in Their Classrooms
Researcher: Zion Gezaw, Doctoral Candidate, University of Denver
Study Site: The state of Colorado
Purpose: You have volunteered to participate in a research study. The purpose of this research is to highlight the ways in which White teachers are working to dismantle White supremacy in their classrooms, through intentional and thoughtful implementation of culturally responsive practices.
Procedures: If you wish to participate in this research study, you will be asked to: complete a one-time, 5-minute online survey to be considered eligible for the study. If you meet the criteria, you will be asked to participate in a longer portion of this research study that will include interviews, classroom observations, planning observations, along with artifact collection of lesson materials.
Voluntary Participation: Participating in this research study (and filling out this survey) is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose not to continue with the survey at any time without penalty or other benefits to which you are entitled.
Risks or Discomforts: There are not believed to be any potential risks of participation in this study.
Benefits: There are no direct benefits to subjects participating in this study. However, participation in the study is an opportunity to share your knowledge, experience, needs and barriers within working to dismantle White supremacy in your classrooms. The audience for this study includes, but is not limited to, district and school leadership, teacher education programs in universities, and teachers in urban school districts.
Confidentiality: This particular recruitment Google Form will take approximately 5 minutes. All surveys will require you to add your email address, in order for the researcher to contact you, if you meet the criteria for participation in the study. Moving forward, if you are selected for this study, your information will be completely anonymous and confidential.
Questions: If you have any questions about this project or your participation, please feel free to ask questions now or contact Zion Gezaw at zion.gezaw@du.edu at any time. Questions or comments can also be made to the faculty advisor, Dr. Kimberly Schmidt, at kimberly.schmidt@du.edu. If you have any questions or concerns about your research participation or rights as a participant, you may contact the DU Human Research Protections Program by emailing IRBAdmin@du.edu or calling (303) 871-2121 to speak to someone other than the researchers.

Google Survey Form for Recruitment Selection:

1. How do you identify racially?
2. How old are you?
3. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
4. What grade level and subject do you teach at Hamilton Middle School?
5. What gender do you identify with?
6. How would you identify in terms of social class? (Lower, middle, or upper class)

Interview Protocol 1
(Interview Protocol #1 & Questions)

Date:
Time:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Pre-Interview Information and Procedures
Introductions: Introduce myself, role, and process for interview
Study purpose and applications: review purpose of study and how findings will be shared
Consent forms: review consent form, confidentiality and disclaimer about recording session
Treatment of data: Explain how data will be secured and disposed of after study
Questions or concerns

Opening the Interview Session

Introductory Question 1: Tell me about your lived experience growing up. Family life, education, tell me more about yourself and what it was like growing up.

Possible follow up question

Introductory Question 2: Tell me what it was like growing up as a White person in this society?
Possible follow up question

Key Interview Questions (broad to specific)

Question 3: How would you describe your overall understanding of White supremacy? When did you first learn about White supremacy and where did you learn about it? Could you share some examples of how White supremacy manifests itself in education?
Possible follow up question

Question 4: Where do you see White supremacy show up in your everyday life?
Possible follow up question

Question 5: What type of books did you read? What type of history did you learn about and from whose perspective was it taught to you from? Did you identify with the curriculum you were being taught? What impact do you think this had on you?
Possible follow up question

Question 6: Tell me briefly about your role within your current school and how you got into education?
Possible follow up question

Question 7: How would you describe the challenges with White supremacy in education?
Possible follow up question

Question 8: Can you describe how White supremacy shows up in curricula?
Possible follow up question

Question 9: How does White supremacy show up at your current school, specifically in terms of disciplinary actions? Think back to past years, not just during the pandemic year.
Possible follow up question

Question 10: Who do you think White supremacy affects or hurts most in our schools?
Possible follow up question

Question 11: What do you think are the long-term effects of White supremacy?
Possible follow up question

Concluding the Interview:

Concluding Question 12: To obtain your final thoughts, is there anything else you would like to tell me or share with me regarding today's topic?
Possible follow up question

Thank you
Thank you for your time and insights on how White supremacy has manifested itself in our education system. If you have any additional thoughts or questions after we conclude, please feel free to contact me at zion.gezaw@du.edu.

Appendix D

Interview Protocol 2

(Interview Protocol #2 & Questions)

Date:
Time:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Pre-Interview Information and Procedures
Introductions: Introduce myself, role, and process for interview
Study purpose and applications: review purpose of study and how findings will be shared
Consent forms: review consent form, confidentiality and disclaimer about recording session
Treatment of data: Explain how data will be secured and disposed of after study
Questions or concerns

Opening the Interview Session

Introductory Question 1: Can you tell me about today's lesson? What was the learning objective and goal of today's lesson?
Possible follow up question

Introductory Question 2: How did you think the lesson went today?
Possible follow up question

Key Interview Questions (broad to specific)

Question 3: Is that how you intended the lesson to go? What would you change about the lesson for next time?
Possible follow up question

Question 4: I wondered about… Could you tell me more?
Possible follow up question

Question 5: I noticed that… Could you tell me more?
Possible follow up question

Question 6: I am curious about… Could you tell me more?
Possible follow up question

Question 7: Whose perspective is the lesson being taught in? What perspectives are missing from today's lesson?
Possible follow up question

Question 8: Can you tell me more about this part of your lesson? What happened here? How did you make this decision?
Possible follow up question

Question 9: How are you making your lesson accessible to all (types of) learners?
Possible follow up question

Question 10: Where can you add in more intentional spaces for student voice, student leadership and student-centered discussions where they can share their lived experiences and make connections to the lesson?
Possible follow up question

Concluding the Interview:

Concluding Question 11: To obtain your final thoughts, is there anything else you would like to tell me or share with me regarding today's topic?
Possible follow up question

Thank you
Thank you for your time and insights on how White supremacy has manifested itself in our education system. If you have any additional thoughts or questions after we conclude, please feel free to contact me at zion.gezaw@du.edu.

Appendix E

Interview Protocol 3

(Interview Protocol #3 & Questions)

Date:
Time:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:

Pre-Interview Information and Procedures
Introductions: Introduce myself, role, and process for interview
Study purpose and applications: review purpose of study and how findings will be shared
Consent forms: review consent form, confidentiality and disclaimer about recording session
Treatment of data: Explain how data will be secured and disposed of after study
Questions or concerns

Opening the Interview Session

Introductory Question 1: What have you learned about how to dismantle White supremacy? If you have not learned how to, how can you learn more about this?
Possible follow up question

Introductory Question 2: What have you learned about how to become a culturally responsive teacher? If you have not learned how to, how can you learn more about this?
Possible follow up question

Introductory Question 3: In what ways have you been reflecting upon your own identity, especially in relation to your Black students?
Possible follow up question

Key Interview Questions (broad to specific)

Question 4: How have you used your learning in the classroom and how have you used your learning with your interactions with Black students?
Possible follow up question

Question 5: How have you changed your actions, beliefs, and mindsets etc. (or how will you) towards our Black students?
Possible follow up question

Question 6: How are you working to actively build trusting, authentic partnerships and relationships with Black students?
Possible follow up question

Question 7: How are you working to decenter Whiteness in your everyday life, especially as a White educator?
Possible follow up question

Question 8: How are you working to create culturally responsive lessons each and every day?
Possible follow up question

Question 9: What benefits and challenges do you see when "calling people in?"
Possible follow up question

Question 10: When witnessing examples of White supremacy in education, how do you address the situation and "call people in" to make changes?
Possible follow up question

Question 11: How do you actively work to dismantle White supremacy in education?
Possible follow up question

Question 12: What supports have been provided to you, to help you in dismantling White supremacy in education? What support do you still need to help you in dismantling White supremacy, in education?
Possible follow up question

Question 13: What barriers or challenges are you experiencing when working to dismantle White supremacy in education?
Possible follow up question

Concluding the Interview:

Concluding Question 14: What improvements could be made in our educational system to decimate White supremacy altogether?
Possible follow up question

Concerning Question 15: At your current school, what do you think could be done to dismantle White supremacy altogether?
Possible follow up question

Concluding Question 16: To obtain your final thoughts, is there anything else you would like to tell me or share with me regarding today's topic?
Possible follow up question

Thank you
Thank you for your time and insights on how White supremacy has manifested itself in our education system. If you have any additional thoughts or questions after we conclude, please feel free to contact me at zion.gezaw@du.edu.

Appendix F

Participant Consent Forms

Exempt Research Information Sheet

Title of Research Study: White Supremacy in Education and How White Teachers Are Working to Dismantle it

Principal Investigator: Zion Gezaw, MA, University of Denver, Morgridge College of Education

IRBNet Protocol #: 1789750-1

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. This document contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate.

The goal of the study is to understand how White supremacy impacts the education system and also understanding where it shows up in education, along with how White teachers work to dismantle it in their classrooms. Your participation is completely voluntary, but it is very important.

Study Purpose:

If you participate in this research study, you will be invited to discuss how White supremacy manifests in our education system and how you are working to dismantle it in your classroom. This form provides you with information about the interviews, recording of interviews, lesson artifact collection, along with information regarding both classroom and planning observations. In order to be eligible to participate in this study, you must meet these selection criteria: White teachers, any gender, diverse range of class, diverse range of grade level and subject taught, age ranging between 21-66 years old and should have a range of 1-50 years of teaching experience when applying to be a participant. Language Arts teachers, specifically, need not apply, as they are all under my caseload for coaching and supervision, which could be considered a conflict of interest. The timeline for this study should take place between September 2021 through December 2021. The selected participants should expect to spend a maximum of 4.5 hours with the researcher, as they will be a part of three different interviews throughout the tentative timeline. The interviews should last approximately 60-90 minutes total. Along with three interviews, I will be observing participants classrooms three times throughout the timeline and observing planning meetings three times, as well, both of which should not take any time away from you, as I will just be taking field notes during my observations, with little to no contact to you or your students. The selected participants will also be consenting to providing lesson artifacts from their lesson plans to fulfill the research study purpose.

The benefits of being involved in this practice study include being able to share your insights into how White supremacy manifests in education and how you work to dismantle it. You are also able to share your experience as a teacher and how you believe supremacy has affected students as well. You may also enjoy the ability to provide information about your own experiences. If you would like a copy of the results of this interview, I will be happy to provide one for you.

Potential risks of being involved include the possibility that discussing certain issues about your experience may be upsetting or there could be minimal risk of feeling guilty, shame or White fragility, when discussing White supremacy. If this occurs, I will arrange for supportive care from an appropriate professional in your area.

You will not receive any payment for being in the study nor will be expected to pay any costs related to the study.

You may choose not to not answer any interview question, continue with the interview, recording, etc. for any reason without penalty.

You will not benefit directly from participating in this study.

As the researcher, I will treat all information gathered for this study as confidential. This means that only I and my academic advisor, Dr. Kimberly Schmidt, will have access to the information you provide. The advisor and I are required to keep your identity confidential. The original recordings will be erased after they have been transcribed. In addition, when I report information, it will be reported for the entire group of research participants, never for any one individual.

There are two exceptions to the promise of confidentiality. Any information you reveal concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect is required by law to be reported to the proper authorities. In addition, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena.

The results from the research will be shared through a doctoral dissertation. Your individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published. The research gathered for this dissertation may be used for future research without additional consent.

Procedures: If you agree to be a part of the research study, you will be asked to complete a survey, asking questions about your identity and teaching background to ensure you meet the selection criteria. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes. If you have been selected for this research study, the principal investigator will reach out to you asking you to read the consent form in its entirety to understand your role and rights as a participant in this study. Once you have signed the consent form, you will then participate in three separate interviews that will be recorded via Google Meets, and by signing this form you consent to me observing your classroom and planning observations (three times each), along with my collecting three lesson artifacts from your lesson plans to help answer the research questions. In terms of the interview recordings, they will be transcribed and destroyed right afterwards. The transcriptions and fieldnotes from the observations will be stored on the principal investigator's personal computer.

Before you begin, please note that the data you provide may be collected and used by Google survey and Google drive as per its privacy agreement. This research is only for U.S. residents over the age of 18. Please be mindful to respond in a private setting and through a secured Internet connection for your privacy. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. Your identity will be kept confidential, as the participants will pick their own pseudonyms for the purposes of their anonymity in the dissertation.

You will be audio/video recorded during the three interviews as well. The interviews will be recorded via Google Meets, where the interview will take place. The recording will be used for transcription purposes and will be deleted as soon as the recording has been transcribed. If you do not want to be audio/video recorded, please inform the researcher, and only hand-written notes will be taken during the interview/focus group.

In terms of the classroom observations, I will come into observe your classroom three different times. I will announce once at the beginning of your class that I am only there to observe and take notes to ensure that the students are able to act naturally and I will not be disrupting their lesson. I will sit in a corner of the classroom and take notes of your interactions with students, specifically Black students, along with your teaching practices and methods. By signing this consent form, you are giving consent to my presence in your classroom to observe three times for the duration of this research study.

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Institutional Review Board (IRB)

In regards to planning observations, I will share with the other teachers that my sole purpose is to sit, observe, listen and take notes. The rest of the planning time is yours to plan with and use as you see fit with your grade level team. I will be observing your planning practices and how you are planning. By signing this consent form, you are giving consent to my presence in your grade level planning sessions three times for the duration of this research study to observe and take notes to collect data for the research project.

For the purpose of this research study, I will also need to collect three lesson artifacts from you, from the day I observed your classroom. The lesson artifact can be your lesson planning document or student facing materials for the day I observed or even student examples. By signing this consent form, you are giving consent to share three different lesson artifacts as data for this research project.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, the information or data you provided will be destroyed.

Questions: If you have any questions about this project or your participation, please feel free to ask questions now or contact Zion Gezaw at 720-287-9922 or zion.gezaw@du.edu at any time. If you have any further questions or need clarification on the process, you may also contact the DU Faculty advisor, Dr. Kimberly Schmidt, at kimberly.schmidt@du.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about your research participation or rights as a participant, you may contact the University of Denver's Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) by emailing IRBAdmin@du.edu or calling (303) 871-2121 to speak to someone other than the researchers.

The University of Denver Institutional Review Board has determined that this study is minimal risk and is exempt from full IRB oversight.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

- o   I consent to being audio/video recorded
- o   I do not consent to being audio/video record

_____   10/20/21
Participant Signature   **Date**

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

X I consent to being audio/video recorded
o I do not consent to being audio/video record

_____   10/20/21
Participant Signature   Date

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

o I consent to being audio/video recorded
o I do not consent to being audio/video record

_____   10/20
Participant Signature   Date

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

o I consent to being audio/video recorded
o I do not consent to being audio/video record

_____   Oct. 20, 21
Participant Signature   Date

Appendix G

Classroom Observation Script

Date:

Hello students!

      My name is Ms. Gezaw and I will be here to observe your teacher. You will see me in the back of the classroom, typing on my computer and working hard to watch and listen as your teacher instructs you today. I will be observing how your teacher instructs you, what your teacher is teaching and how your teacher interacts with you all.

This observation and the notes I will be taking are not a part of your teacher's formal scoring observation (grade for your teacher), but instead it is a part of my research study, as I am currently in school too and observing your teacher is helping me learn! I will be writing down my noticings on my computer. I want to stress that I will not be observing you specifically, but instead your teacher's interactions with you. Your name will not appear in my notes and you will not be mentioned in my research. Please act and behave as you would normally, as this is not affecting your academic performance in this class either. I appreciate you letting me observe you all and allow me into your learning space.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them now or when your teacher believes is an appropriate time to answer them.

Thank you!

Appendix H

Teacher Planning Observation Script

Date:

Hello teachers!

      My name is Zion Gezaw and I will be here to observe your planning session together. You will see me in the back of the room, typing on my computer and working hard to watch and listen as you all work to plan your lessons. I will be observing your lesson planning process.

This observation and the notes I will be taking are not a part of your formal scored observation but instead it is a part of my research study. I will be writing down my noticings on my computer. Your names will not appear in my notes. Please act and behave as you would normally, as this is not affecting your professionalism performance either. I appreciate you letting me observe you all and allow me into your planning space.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them now or as they arise.

Thank you!

Appendix I

Observation Protocol

Planning FEET Rubric:

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FEET 1.2021

Dimension	Planning			
	Plan culturally responsive, standards- and outcomes-based unit and lesson plans.			
Competency	Unsatisfactory Indicators (1)	Developing Indicators (2)	Proficient Indicators (3)	Advanced Indicators (4)
2.1 Use culturally responsive backward design curriculum planning to develop units.	• Develop unclear unit goals. • No alignment of unit goals to standards. • Use standardized unit assessments that are disconnected from students' lives. • Develops curriculum that is disconnected from students' lives, does not reflect student diversity, or develop cultural competence or critical consciousness. • Include materials and resources that ignore or minimize student diversity and/or reinforce stereotypes/bias. • Design a sequence of lessons that are misaligned from unit goals.	• Identify unit goals that are relevant to students' lives. • Unclear how units of student connect to relevant standards. • Design unit performance assessments that are misaligned from unit goal and are disconnected to students' lives. • Use district-approved curriculum to plan learning goals without supplementing the curriculum to reflect student diversity. • Include few materials and resources that reflect students' diversity. • Develop a sequence of lessons that are at loosely connected to unit goals.	• Identify unit goals, social justices themes, and standards that are relevant to students' lives. • Design challenging, relevant, and engaging unit performance assessments. • Supplement or adapt district-approved curriculum to reflect student diversity and promote culturally sustaining approaches. • Include materials and resources that reflect students' diversity and expand their perspectives of diversity. • Develop a sequence of lessons aligned to unit goals, social justice themes, standards, and assessments	Demonstrate Proficient Indicators + • Engage students in determining unit goals. • Engage students in designing unit performance assessments. • Include materials and resources that challenge systemic inequities and promote social justice. • Engage students in developing lessons.
2.2 Design engaging, challenging, and culturally responsive lessons.	• No clear and measurable CLO. • Design sequence of lessons that s are not aligned to lesson objectives. • Develops lessons that exclude or negate student diversity. • Focus on rote memorization and basic skills. • No use of technology to enhance student learning.	• Set CLO that is unclear and/or lacks alignment to unit goals. • Create sequence of lessons that align to unit goals. • Incorporate topics based on standards and district-approved curriculum. • Draw only surface level student diversity (e.g., celebrations, customs, holidays) • Focus on low-level thinking skills. • Incorporate basic technology to enhance student learning.	• Set clear, challenging, measurable content and language objectives (CLOs) based on unit goals. • Create a logical sequence and connections across lesson components. • Develop rationale that connects lesson objective with unit goals, students' lives, and real-world application. • Incorporate topics that draw on students' diversity and include the contributions of diverse populations. • Foster higher-order thinking skills. • Use technology to engage students, enhance their learning experience, and differentiate instruction.	Demonstrate Proficient Indicators +. • Develop rationale based on college and career readiness indicators. • Incorporate topics that foster student voice and leadership. • Allow students to identify higher-order thinking skills they want to develop. • Incorporate media and technology that are central to students' daily lives.
2.3 Integrate culturally responsive assessment practices.	• No analysis of assessments for validity, reliability, and bias. • Use standardized assessments exclusively that do not reflect students' different modes of learning. • Use personal preference to guide planning, set goals, and develop learning experiences. • No use of technology to inform planning decisions.	• Analyze assessments for validity and reliability. • Include summative or formative assessments. • No analysis of assessment data to develop unit goals and learning experiences. • Use technology to make planning decisions.	• Analyze assessments for validity, reliability, and bias, and make adjustments. • Include a variety of formative and summative assessment tools that promote data-driven and student-centered approaches. • Analyze standardized and classroom-based student assessment data to set SMART learning targets that are responsive to students' needs. • Use assessment data to set individual and group learning goals and design differentiated learning experiences. • Use technology to collect and analyze trends in student progress, and make adjustments to enhance student learning.	Demonstrate Proficient Indicators + • Identify patterns of bias that impact issues of equity. • Use challenging and engaging summative and formative assessments. • Use aggregated and disaggregated data points to analyze trends in student progress, set learning targets, and differentiate learning experiences. • Include current technologies to enhance planning.

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2.4 Apply knowledge of culturally responsive content and pedagogy, and student development.	• No exploration of current research on content or generalized pedagogy. • Demonstrate disinterest in student development. • No understanding of student-based factors that impact learning and inform planning. • Demonstrate significant gaps in content knowledge. • No inclusion of literacy and numeracy.	• Explore current research on content pedagogy. • Understand students' cognitive development impacts their learning. • Anticipate students' needs related to content learning. • Some gaps in content knowledge. • Incorporate a focus on literacy and numeracy.	• Analyze current research related to culturally sustaining content and pedagogy, and identify implications for teaching, learning, and equity. • Understand how students' typical and atypical development impacts student learning. • Identify prerequisite content and language knowledge and skills, typical student errors and misconceptions, and students' strengths and needs. • Integrate culturally sustaining and interdisciplinary content that fosters literacy and numeracy through social justice themes.	Demonstrate Proficient Indicators + • Participate in a research study related to pedagogy, instruction, or assessment. • Understand how students' development impacts their learning and full potential. • Use a strength-based and student-centered approach. • Incorporate interdisciplinary content that builds college and career readiness.

Engage FEET Rubric:

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FEET Classroom Observation Tool*

Apprentice Teacher:	Evaluator:	Date:	Grade Level/Content:
Dimension	**Competency and Indicators**	**Feedback and Evidence**	**Score (1-4)**
ENGAGE Engage students in an inclusive and supportive learning community.	**1.1 Develop affirming and caring relationships with students and families.** • Express value and asset perspectives of students' individual strengths, identities, language(s), culture(s), and communities. • Demonstrate positive interactions with students and facilitate positive interactions between students. • Communicate belief in capacity of all students to achieve at high levels • Collaborate with families in culturally appropriate and sustaining ways to support student learning and development.	**Value & asset perspectives** • **Positive interactions** • **Belief in capacity** • **Collaboration with families** •	
	1.2 Facilitate an equitable classroom community. • Implement positive behavior system and collaborate with students to develop classroom norms and routines that foster a safe, supportive, and culturally sustaining learning community. • Guide student behaviors through verbal and non-verbal moves and incentives that promote sense of community and student empowerment. • Use predictable transition strategies to maintain student engagement and learning. • Set up the physical classroom to promote collaboration, access, diversity, and equity.	**Positive behavior system** • **Verbal & non-verbal moves & incentives** • **Transition strategies** • **Physical classroom** •	
	1.3 Actively engage students in learning. • Use a variety of active engagement strategies to ensure each student participates through discussion and movement. • Incorporate multiple modalities. • Provide opportunities for students to experience joyful learning. • Demonstrate student-centered approach by consistently incorporating student voice, choice, and leadership.	**Active engagement strategies** • **Multiple modalities** • **Joyful learning** • **Student-centered** •	

Appendix J

Community Partner Agreement

Zion Gezaw is completing her research and dissertation project for the Doctorate of Education in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Denver under the supervision of Dr. Kimberly Schmidt. The doctorate is part of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). A key component of the requirements is to obtain a community partner. Researchers must disseminate their work to interested community members as defined by the nature of the research. Community partners can attend during the defense of the dissertation, which will occur in spring 2022 for approximately two hours in length, although attendance is not required. Based on the feedback from the community partner, the research project may need revision to meet the practical needs of the community partner.

The partners and advisor will meet once a quarter with the researcher (fall, winter and spring) throughout the 2021-2022 school year, to discuss the research project and dissertation. The purpose of this qualitative, educational criticism and connoisseurship study is to illustrate how White supremacy manifests itself in middle school education through highlighting the methods White teachers are working through to dismantle White supremacy and become culturally responsive educators to best support Black students.

The rationale for the choice in research is that many Black students, including myself, have experienced a lack of culturally responsive curriculum, disciplinary actions that perpetuated the school to prison pipeline, along with deeply inauthentic relationships with my teachers, especially with White teachers, which affected their educational experience. This research will explore how White teachers are perpetuating the White supremacist practices in middle school classrooms and will work to identify how these teachers are working to dismantle White supremacy through becoming culturally responsive teachers.

The research questions for this study are:
Central research question: *How do White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in middle school classrooms, through implementation of culturally responsive practices?*
Sub questions are included below:

1. How are White teachers implementing a culturally responsive classroom environment for Black students?
2. How do White educators provide culturally responsive curriculum to Black students?
3. How do White teachers' identities influence their perceptions of and interactions with Black students?
4. What supports and barriers do White educators experience when attempting to dismantle White supremacy in education, through their intentional and thoughtful implementation of culturally responsive practices?

The following documents are individually signed agreements from the DPS sponsor, Principal of Hamilton Middle School and my advisor stating their support and acknowledgement of the community partner agreement.

I have read and acknowledged the community partner agreement above. I understand my role in the researcher's study and how I will support them throughout their research project and dissertation.

_____   _____5/14/2021_____

University of Denver Researcher   Date

Zion Gezaw

Kimberly M. Schmidt

_____   _____4/13/2021_____

University of Denver Advisor   Date

Dr. Kimberly Schmidt

I have read and acknowledged the community partner agreement above. I understand my role in the researcher's study and how I will support them throughout their research project and dissertation.

_____   _____

University of Denver Researcher   5/14/2021

Zion Gezaw   **Date**

_____   _____

Hamilton Middle School, Principal   5/17/21

Dr. Christian Sawyer   **Date**

Franita Ware, PhD   _June 2, 2021_

_____   _____

DPS Sponsor   **Date**
Dr. Franita Ware- CELT
Program Manager, Equity Initiatives

The proposed study will be finalized and be ready to share with the DPS RRB in the late spring/early summer of 2022. I plan to share the findings beyond DPS through a doctoral submission of my dissertation. I may plan to share my findings with an academic journal or share my findings at different academic conferences throughout the years, however, I will not name DPS or any of the participating teachers in my research. They will all be replaced with pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the school district and of the participants to ensure their safety. The research could support DPS in learning how to support teachers in dismantling White supremacy in their classrooms through the use of intentional implementation of culturally responsive practices.

VI. Agreement (to be completed by Principal)

I, _Ana M Mendoza Intern_, principal of _Hamilton._ school, understand

- the study and what it requires of the staff, students, and/or families in my school,
- the privacy and confidentiality of any staff, family member, or student will be protected,
- I have the right to allow or reject this research study to take place at my school,
- I have the right to terminate the research study at my school at any time,
- I have the right to review all consent forms and research documents at any time during the study, and up to three years after the completion of the study, and
- I understand that I can contact the Research Review Board with questions or concerns about this study at RRB@dpsk12.org.
- Findings from this study will be distributed to me.

☑ I have reviewed the information provided by the Researcher in sections I through V above.

☑ I find the above named research valuable and that its findings will be used to inform programs, policies, or practices at my school.

☑ I understand that data should be released only by the central office departments that own them. My staff and I shall not release data to the Researcher without approval from the RRB.

☑ I grant permission to the Researcher to conduct the above named research in my school as described in the sections I through V above and in the full proposal reviewed and approved by the RRB.

_____   8/12/21
Signature of Principal   Date

Please contact the Research Review Board (RRB@dpsk12.org) with questions or concerns.

Research Questions & Data Collection Tools

Research Question	Data Collection Tool	Literature Sources
Central question: How do White teachers work to dismantle White supremacy in middle school classrooms, through their implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices?	-Interviews -Classroom observations -Planning observations -Lesson artifacts	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
Sub question 1: How are White teachers implementing a culturally responsive classroom environment for Black students?	-Classroom observations with emergent foci and using Engage FEET observation tool and rubric	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
Sub question 2: How do White educators plan for and enact a culturally responsive curriculum for Black	-Planning observations using Plan FEET rubric -Lesson artifacts -Classroom observations -Interviews	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995;

students?		Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
Sub question 3: How do White teachers' identities influence their perceptions of and interactions with Black students?	-Interviews -Classroom observations	Ladson-Billings 1998; Howard, 2003; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Milner, 2006; Accapadi, 2007; Huerta, 2011; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Matias, 2016; Applebaum, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
Sub question 4: What supports and barriers do White educators experience when attempting to dismantle White supremacy in education, through their use of culturally responsive practices?	-Interviews	Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Matias & DiAngelo, 2013; Applebaum, 2016; Neville et al., 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017

Note. This table demonstrates the research questions under study and provides

clarification on how data was collected to answer each research question. This table also

includes the literature sources that informed each research question.

Appendix L

Interview Questions Part 1

#	Interview Question	Purpose of Question	Literature Sources
1	Tell me about your lived experience growing up. Family life, education, tell me more about yourself and what it was like growing up.	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more about their background, along with how they see themselves in society.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
2	Tell me what it was like growing up as a White person in this society?	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more about their background, along with how they see themselves in society.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
3	How would you describe your overall understanding of White supremacy? When did you first learn about White supremacy and where did you learn about it? Could you share some examples of how White supremacy manifests itself in education?	The purpose of this question is to inform the researcher of the teacher's understanding of supremacy and how it shows up, along with their first experience with it.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum,

			2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
4	Where do you see White supremacy in your everyday life?	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more about their background, along with how they see themselves in society.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
5	When you were a student, what type of books did you read? What type of history did you learn about and from whose perspective was it taught to you from? Did you identify with the curriculum you were being taught? What impact do you think this had on you?	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more about their background, along with how they see themselves in society.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
6	Tell me briefly about your role within your current school and how you got into education?	The purpose of this is to understand how this teacher shows up within the school and learn more about their background.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias,

			2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
7	How would you describe the challenges with White supremacy in education?	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more how they understand supremacy.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
8	Can you describe how White supremacy shows up in curricula?	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more how they understand supremacy.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
9	How does White supremacy show up at your current school, specifically in terms of disciplinary actions? Think back to past years, not just during the pandemic year.	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more how they understand supremacy.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher

			et al., 2017
10	Who do you think White supremacy affects or hurts most in our schools?	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more how they understand supremacy.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
11	What do you think are the long-term effects of White supremacy?	The purpose of this question is to build rapport with the teacher and to learn more how they understand supremacy.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017

Note. This table demonstrates the interview questions that will be asked, along with the purpose of each question. This table also includes the literature sources that informed the interview questions.

Appendix M

#	Interview Question	Purpose of Question	Literature Sources
1	Can you tell me about today's lesson? What was the learning objective and goal of today's lesson?	The purpose of this question is to understand the teacher's perspective about the intent behind the lesson and how they intended for it to go.	Polkinghorne, 2005; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Salazar & Lerner, 2019
2	How did you think the lesson went today?	The purpose of this question is to understand the teacher's perspective about the intent behind the lesson and how they intended for it to go.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
3	Is that how you intended the lesson to go? What would you change about the lesson for next time?	The purpose of this question is to understand the teacher's perspective about the intent behind the lesson and how they intended for it to go.	Polkinghorne, 2005; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Salazar & Lerner, 2019
4	I wondered about… Could you tell me more?	The purpose of this question is to examine more and further understand parts of the lesson	Polkinghorne, 2005; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Salazar & Lerner, 2019

		that the researcher observed.	
5	I noticed that… Could you tell me more?	The purpose of this question is to examine more and further understand parts of the lesson that the researcher observed.	Polkinghorne, 2005; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Salazar & Lerner, 2019
6	I am curious about… Could you tell me more?	The purpose of this question is to examine more and further understand parts of the lesson that the researcher observed.	Polkinghorne, 2005; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Salazar & Lerner, 2019
7	Whose perspective is the lesson being taught in? What perspectives are missing from today's lesson?	The purpose of this question is to inform the researcher about how the teacher is working to create culturally responsive lessons, to dismantle White supremacy.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
8	Can you tell me more about this part of your lesson? What happened here? How did you make this decision?	The purpose of this question is to inform the researcher about how the teacher is working to create culturally responsive lessons, to dismantle White supremacy.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum,

| 9 | How are you making your lesson accessible to all (types of) learners? | If teachers are unable to answer this question - follow up questions will be asked to support them in answering the primary question.

The purpose of this question is to inform the researcher about how the teacher is working to create culturally responsive lessons, to dismantle White supremacy. | 2016; Matias, 2016; Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021

Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher |

			et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
10	Where can you add in more intentional spaces for student voice, student leadership and student-centered discussions where they can share their lived experiences and make connections to the lesson?	The purpose of this question is to inform the researcher about how the teacher is working to create culturally responsive lessons, to dismantle White supremacy.	Seidman, 1991; Kvale, 1996; Potter, 1996; Bernard, 1998; Howard, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2005; Solomona, 2005; Milner, 2006; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Applebaum, 2016; Matias, 2016; Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021

Note. This table demonstrates the interview questions that were asked, along with the purpose of each question. This table also includes the literature sources that informed the interview questions.

Interview Questions Part 3

#	Interview Question	Purpose of Question	Literature Sources
1	What have you learned about how to dismantle White supremacy? If you have not learned how to, how can you learn more about this?	The purpose of this question is to understand the teacher's experience with understanding supremacy and gain an understanding of how they know how to learn more about said issue.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
2	What have you learned about how to become a culturally responsive teacher? If you have not learned how to, how can you learn more about this?	The purpose of this question is to understand the teacher's experience with understanding CRE and gain an understanding of how they know how to learn more about this practice.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021

3	In what ways have you been reflecting upon your own identity, especially in relation to your Black students?	The purpose of this question is to understand the teacher's self-reflections and how they see themselves in relation to their Black students, in the hopes of understanding if they see their White privilege and power in society.	Ladson-Billings 1998; Howard, 2003; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Milner, 2006; Accapadi, 2007; Huerta, 2011; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Matias, 2016; Applebaum, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
4	How have you used your learning in the classroom and how have you used your learning with your interactions with Black students?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher has been utilizing their learning in changing their classroom practice to best serve Black students.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
5	How have you changed your actions, beliefs, and mindsets etc. (or how will you) towards our Black students?	The purpose of this question is to understand the teacher's self-reflections and how	Ladson-Billings 1998; Howard, 2003; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock,

		they see themselves in relation to their Black students, along with how teachers are working to disrupt their biases, to best serve Black students.	2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Milner, 2006; Accapadi, 2007; Huerta, 2011; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Matias, 2016; Applebaum, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
6	How are you working to actively build trusting, authentic partnerships and relationships with Black students?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy is to best serve Black students.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
7	How are you working to decenter Whiteness in your everyday life, especially as a White educator?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy is to best serve Black students.	Ladson-Billings 1998; Howard, 2003; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Milner, 2006; Accapadi,

			2007; Huerta, 2011; Lander, 2011; Modica, 2015; Matias, 2016; Applebaum, 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
8	How are you working to create culturally responsive lessons each and every day?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy to best serve Black students.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
9	What benefits and challenges do you see when "calling people in?"	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy to best serve Black students.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy &

			Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
10	When witnessing examples of White supremacy in education, how do you address the situation and "call people in" to make changes?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy to best serve Black students.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
11	How do you actively work to dismantle White supremacy in education?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-

		supremacy to best serve Black students.	Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
12	What supports have been provided to you, to help you in dismantling White supremacy in education? What support do you still need to help you in dismantling White supremacy, in education?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy and what supports their school is offering in dismantling supremacy.	Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Matias & DiAngelo, 2013; Applebaum, 2016; Neville et al., 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017
13	What barriers or challenges are you experiencing when working to dismantle White supremacy in education?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy and what barriers they are facing in their school when doing so.	Ladson-Billings, 1995; Raby, 2004; Matias & DiAngelo, 2013; Applebaum, 2016; Neville et al., 2016; Uhrmacher et al., 2017

14	What improvements could be made in our educational system to decimate White supremacy altogether?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy and critically think and reflect about what changes could be made to best serve students.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008; Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021
15	At your current school, what do you think could be done to dismantle White supremacy altogether?	The purpose of this question is to understand how the teacher is working to dismantle White supremacy and critically think and reflect about what changes could be (and are being) made to best serve students.	Noddings 1992; Valenzuela 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998; Schultz, 2003; Boler, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Raby, 2004; Thompson 2005; Accapadi, 2007; Bondy & Ross, 2008; Ross et al., 2008;

	Picowever, 2009; Dancy, 2014; Dell'Angelo, 2014; Uhrmacher et al., 2017; Arneback & Jämte, 2021

Note. This table demonstrates the interview questions that were asked, along with the purpose of each question. This table also includes the literature sources that informed the interview questions.