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**Researcher as Witness: Effectiveness and Pedagogical and Curricular
Decision Making in Race-Centered Professional Learning**

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**Researcher as Witness Pedagogical and Curricular Decision Making in
Race-Centered Professional Learning**

by

Angela Marie Ward

Dissertation

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Dedication

To the child most marginalized in urban public schools by race: the black boy.

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Abstract

Researcher as Witness: Effectiveness in Pedagogical and Curricular Decision Making in Race-Centered Professional Learning

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Urban School districts search for professional learning endeavors that will assist staff as they adapt to change at a rapid pace and build capacity to become in tune to the needs of the students and families. The facilitator of race-centered professional learning in urban school districts has to be pedagogically, mentally, socially and emotionally prepared for what the learner brings into the space. This research study used semi-structured interviews, observations and a researcher reflective journal to explore the definitions of effectiveness and the pedagogical and curricular decision making of ten participants who design and deliver race-centered professional learning in urban school districts across the U.S. This study employed Critical Race Theory to frame the study and analyze participant definitions of effectiveness and pedagogical and curricular decision making for race-centered professional learning. Black Feminist Thought is used to extend critical race theory centering analysis on the perspective of the researcher as participant observer. While experience of participants varied, each participant was consistent in defining effectiveness as negotiating the emotional nature of race for learners and facilitators and understanding application of learning as a long term process. Findings

showed participants made pedagogical decisions to account for the complex ways race operates in a learning endeavor to establish an affirming, affective learning environment. Participants made curricular decisions drawing from counter storytelling, they chose to study or adopt existing race curricular models, and grounded learning opportunities in sociohistorical content knowledge.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

As a facilitator myself, I did not understand the centrality of the Six Conditions in the structure and development of the container within which to hold participants through the Color Arc exercise. I did not know what I did not know (Singleton, 2015) about the importance of each portion of the protocol, nor did I know the role the facilitator held when conducting professional learning founded on the Six Conditions. The Color Arc activity is just one of many experiences for participants of the trademarked Beyond Diversity professional learning session. As a past participant in The Color Arc I have walked away with varying degrees of understanding and gained new perspectives. This time was different. You see the Color Arc is a visual representation of the social construction of race in society. In this arc, each person's number represents their "place" in the racial hierarchy. My number from the exercise was a zero while my white counterpart's number was one hundred thirty.

In my first experiences my number shifted from nine to six. The Color Arc activity draws its questions from Peggy McIntosh (1988) who uses her lens as a white woman to provide a foundational understanding of race and whiteness in the context of professional learning. She illuminates the impacts of unearned privilege granted to white people through skin color using an Invisible Knapsack to make visible what is invisible in society. Participants were asked to rate twenty-six questions' significance to them based on race or color on a scale of five (often true), three (sometimes true) or zero (seldom

true). In my first encounter with the activity I found that I had less privilege than the black males in my area of the arc. Their numbers were thirteen and nine respectively, yet the more I participated in the Arc, the more varied the numbers became at my end and the center of the Arc. Typically, the Arc will display a white hue to a brown then a darker hue of skin tone from one hundred thirty to zero. Not until I was asked to consider if the threes I identified were indeed false and really not true for me did I arrive at zero as my response to each question in the activity. I was faced with a moral dilemma to place myself or face the fact that I was placed, at the absolute bottom of the Arc, opposite my white counterparts. There was no return from that place of invisibility.

As a facilitator myself, I recognized that transitioning the group into this configuration was particularly difficult. Facilitators asked us to organize ourselves in an “Arc” by number, then stand in silence, with our number displayed as we listened to a seven-minute track of *Teddy Pendergrass’ Wake Up Everybody*. The interesting point here is that over the course of a one and half year span I experienced three different facilitators in three different sessions conduct this same activity, using the same structure. What was different was the way I experienced each facilitator and the slight nuance each gave to the activity and the particular ways they crafted the container to hold us through this activity at the end of day one of the *Beyond Diversity* workshop. Two black male facilitators assigned homework before we stood in the Color Arc and instituted silence as the expectation for the duration of the song. Even when one of the black males conducted a subsequent session alone, he used the same structure, assigned homework and encouraged silence. His way of interacting with and working the room was different and

more effective when he operated alone versus working with a partner facilitator. A black female, another facilitator of a different session using this activity, assigned homework prior to having us stand in the Color Arc. She then gave us a strict directive, “Do not speak as you move about to your location. Do not speak while in that location. Do not speak until you leave the threshold of this meeting space. I will see you tomorrow.”

The facilitators of the Beyond Diversity workshop describe my lack of knowing as unconscious or ignorance/innocence. I would say I was both ignorant of the purpose of each component of the Courageous Conversations Protocol (Singleton, 2015), used by the facilitators to create the conditions for experiencing The Color Arc, and innocent to the structure, process and effectiveness when used. The Protocol consists of The Six Conditions, The Agreements and the Compass. The Six Conditions set up the container for the facilitator to structure the dialogue and to set up the space to receive the truths of all the participants throughout the Beyond Diversity workshop. The Six Conditions (Singleton, 2015) are:

- Focus on personal, local and immediate
- Isolate race
- Normalize social construction and multiple perspectives
- Monitor agreements and conditions and establish parameters
- Use a “working definition” for race
- Examine the presence and role of “whiteness”

The agreements (stay engaged, speak your truth, experience discomfort, expect & accept nonclosure) by themselves are a powerful tool for holding the group accountable to each other, and personally. Yet I found with the compass, (a chart where four quadrants are labeled with the words believing, thinking, feeling, acting) my thinking

shifted, the thinking of the participants shifted as I dabbled with it as a facilitator. Not until I sat through two days of *Beyond Diversity* one, with the two black males at the helm, did I fully understand each piece of the protocol and its purpose. Skillfully the lead facilitator of the session walked us through the protocol, dropping off bits and pieces of information to build the case for structural racism. Restructuring, reframing and rebuilding our understandings of key historical figures like Rosa Parks, rather than repeating the taken for granted story of being old, tired and fed up on one day in history. He used research and historically documented facts for the academic, statistics for the mathematically inclined, stories for those who connect to the plight of others, structures, organization, and protocols for those who need a guide or map.

As a professional learning facilitator, I have led the Color Arc activity with staff and each time the activity is different, the experience is different. As facilitator, I do know that I have to anticipate engagement, disengagement, anger, remorse, and guilt. A myriad of emotions are anticipated as educators experience this activity. The one group that sticks with me is a session with a cohort of staff that I work with. We completed the exercise, found our numbers, stood in the arc, and played Teddy's song. This group was ready, they entered with the understanding of race and racism in society, we did not need to spend all our time there. We did not need to focus strictly on their role in and the complacency with which they accept their place on the arc without question. They volunteered to spend a full school year with me to understand the impacts of institutional racism on them and the students in their care. They shared their desire to build their personal capacity to interrupt issues of inequity in our school district. As Teddy ends and

we return to our seats, all hell breaks loose on my end of the color arc. The darker hues revolted and attacked.

My experience here illuminates the fact that the facilitator of professional learning focused on race has to be pedagogically, mentally, socially and emotionally prepared for what the learner brings into the space. This study brings into focus issues similar to this scenario where facilitators have to attend to the affective realm and design processing protocols to bring the learner back to a state of equilibrium. In this case I stood at the center of the room as all learners took their seats and waited. I used wait time because I could feel the tension in the room and had the feeling that the learners needed to speak. My goal in the moment was to be there for each of the thirty-two participants as individuals because I know the weight of race in society was a factor that brought us together. I did not want anyone to leave the space without first processing with the full group or in a partner or small group. I used the open-ended question, what's coming up for you in this moment? to invite the learners to openly process with me and each other. About six learners spoke about the personal toll of the activity and the raw emotion it brought up before one learner made a connection to the children in our schools and how the Color Arc is also their reality. That learner reached a level of understanding that I aim for each learner to gain and she was able to offer it into the professional learning space and shift the perspective of every adult who was angry with me the facilitator who subjected them to such an emotional activity.

This study sought to understand how effectiveness is achieved, even when the tools and processes are the same and each facilitator puts their own story and their own cultural

lens on the workshop. That's the nuance that I find intriguing and important when it comes to facilitating and designing professional learning focused on race. I thought about the way the black female used music throughout the session, the black males each in their own way worked the room in a different way than she. The black female shared her intersectional identities, yet focused us totally on race. I used inquiry and wait time to provide the learner processing time. Each of us is skilled in our own way. How then does a facilitator in a school or school district determine what will work, what will not work in professional learning focused on race? What nuance, what structures, what considerations might they make based on their intended outcomes for the professional learning?

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the last two decades there has been attention given to professional learning focused on race. Urban schools across the country focus professional learning to address historically high dropout rates, discipline referrals that disproportionately impact males of color and large classes that make relationship building with individual students a challenge. School districts are searching for the professional learning that will help them adapt to change at a rapid pace and become in tune to the needs of the students, families as well as the staff. Changes in society and sociohistorical impacts affect the ability of a school's leader to adequately prepare teachers. Teachers and staff desire professional learning that is meaningful, is tied to job requirements, enhance their practice and ultimately challenges their thinking. Urban schools and school districts are an important site to study how professional learning deals with race and racism.

As a teacher, I returned to school each year after a summer of rejuvenation, teaching summer school and preparing for the next school year. Each year I walked into the school, starting with my first year, I was expected to participate in professional learning designed by the principal, assistant principal and/or the instructional coaches on our campus. The most meaningful professional learning session I engaged in was one designed for a small group of Assistant Principals over the course of the school year. The professional learning took us through a series of activities and discussions to get us to grapple with difference. The two facilitators identified as women and were white and Latino respectively. I recall throughout the semester long professional learning feeling defensive, cautious, curious, and hopeful for my work and the work of my peers to support the learning and development of students of color in our schools. When the professional learning ended I went back to the typical district level professional learning session that took us through the motions of curriculum, discipline management, FERPA and test taking preparation. What was missing from this typical professional learning was the personal connections I made to my colleagues, and the stories we were invited to share that introduced new perspectives on old issues in our schools. The typical professional learning did not provide those spaces for me as a teacher or Assistant Principal.

RELEVANCE & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Schools and school districts are responsible for ensuring each classroom teacher is equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide all students a quality education. Each

school year districts open professional learning opportunities designed to share a new concept, tool or strategy to raise students' test scores and improve student enrollment. Teachers are taught through professional learning sessions how to implement these tools and strategies in an effort to connect with students and make school an exciting place to learn.

Urban school districts are increasingly in competition with private and charter schools for the local population of school age students. To complicate the issue further, standards-based accountability changes rapidly and school districts often lose funding to more attractive private and charter schools. Attractive schools may have a low absence rate among the students, the students discipline is manageable and few referrals are written, also teachers may have small class sizes which aid in relationship building. Urban schools historically have high dropout rates, discipline referrals that disproportionately impact males of color and large classes make relationship building with individual students a challenge. Schools that adapt to change at a rapid pace are in tune to the needs of the students, families as well as the staff. School leaders are charged with preparing teachers and many leaders are unaware of the sociohistorical impacts they are up against. Teachers and staff want to attend meaningful, job embedded professional learning that enhances their practice and ultimately challenges their thinking. Urban schools and school districts provide an important setting in which to study how professional learning deals with race and racism.

EXISTING GAPS IN THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The existing literature on race in professional learning is generally qualitative looking at actual professional learning experiences in schools and school districts. Professional learning (Learning Forward, 2011) in schools is built around a series of experiences to engage teachers and staff in the development of shared understandings and practices. (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Hirsch & Killion, 2007; Killion, 2018; Little, 1987; Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle, Murray, Dubea & Williams, 1987) Those experiences have the potential to assist teachers in the development of safe and supportive professional learning spaces. Multiple models engage participants in open dialogue to surface personal bias, values and beliefs in the learning spaces set up specifically to address racial issues at play in schools. These models push teachers and staff to inquire through structured processes and protocols that highlight a particular level of consciousness or dysconsciousness in their daily pedagogy. Articles and resources found in the literature recycled the notion of student intellectual capacity as scholars addressed deficit notions of students of color in the minds of their teachers, and attempted to develop racial literacy as they introduced counternarratives to assist the teachers in finding evidence to refute the masternarrative. They used terms like common sense and sensemaking, critical stances, but each term was focused on opposing narratives in society, often tied to the racial identity development and knowledge development of the teacher. The literature revealed several implementation challenges to professional learning focused on race

connected to the skill, will and knowledge of the facilitators, as well as practical application and succession planning following the professional learning.

What the existing literature does not tell us is how facilitators make decisions in the midst of all the approaches, models and challenges. We also do not know what defines and more specifically how a facilitator defines or determines effectiveness in professional learning focused on race. Without knowledge of key components for an effective approach to professional learning focused on race in schools and school districts, we potentially miss the mark on supporting the needs of the most marginalized in a white, female, middle class dominated school system. This study speaks to this gap in the literature. The following questions were used to guide my inquiry:

How do facilitators define effectiveness in implementation of professional learning on race?

How do these perspectives on effectiveness in implementation inform the curricula and pedagogical decision-making of facilitators when developing professional learning experiences focused on race?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With an understanding of education as a racial project (Omi & Winant, 1994) this study used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a guiding principle. CRT outlines key propositions for consideration in educational research. Delgado & Stefancic (2012) offer the tenets of CRT as 1) the permanence of race (Solórzano 1997, 1998); 2) interest convergence, (Bell,1976; Bell 1980; Bell 1990; Bell 1992); 3) social construction of race,

and the malleability of the concept; 4) whiteness as property (Harris, 1993; Lipsitz, 2006) 5) intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and the various characteristics individuals embody that interact with and intersect with race; 6) Counterstorytelling, (Solórzano & Yosso 2001; Bell, 1995a, 1995b). CRT has influence on scholarship and has appeal to multiple marginalized groups. As such others have taken up the CRT key tenets and applied their unique lenses through scholarship on community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), LatCrit (Delgado Bernal, 2002) and TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005).

These key tenets of critical race theory framed the interview process and analysis of data gathered. Intersectionality was a key consideration in the study given my decision to include myself as participant observer. In public school education the intersection of identities of teachers as largely white, female, middle class often clash culturally with the identities of students in the majority of school organizations who are black, Latino, poor. The marginalization is greater for boys, but “compounded” when we consider the violence (Crenshaw 1995) that is enacted on black girls.

CRT as a guiding theory provided a lens into the research to consider possible motives for the professional learning but also to look into the rationale provided by the participant. Interest convergence looked to how white interests in the professional learning decision making apply understanding to the language of the organization (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). Looking at the language, the public agreements (Kegan & Lahey, 2001) and the settled social arrangements (Payne, 2010) within which those agreements thrive or falter provided a peak into the window of the integrity of the organizations. CRT guided my thinking highlighting that understandings are socially adhered to and agreed

upon within an organization. It is those agreements that often perpetuate whiteness and silence the counternarratives present in the organization.

Counterstorytelling with particular attention to community cultural wealth was layered in the data gathered from participants. Through the process of interviews and observations of professional learning designers in school districts, the research looked at their lived experiences. Community cultural wealth troubled the notion of how well the study builds on the cultural capital found in marginalized communities. Community cultural wealth framed additional questions to uncover and critique the particularities involved in the decision-making processes of the professional learning designers.

Critical Race Theory is a vehicle for understanding the societal impacts that would pit white against black, brown against black and marginalize black more than brown. For the purposes of this study CRT provided a useful examination tool of the intricacies of professional learning in school districts whose students are defined by race in society, but often their stories are unheard or suppressed against the normalized version of how school should be “done” and how students and staff should go about their learning each day. CRT opened analysis to the background of the facilitator of professional learning on race and racism to open a window into the mind of the facilitator who would develop professional learning and label it effective.

METHODOLOGY – CASE STUDY

I examined how facilitators of professional learning in schools and school districts focus on race, understand, and define effectiveness to add to the knowledge about

preparation and support of professional learning focused on race. The study offers insight into the approaches chosen and why or how they are chosen to facilitate professional learning focused on race and racism in professional learning in schools and school districts. The study sought the facilitator's perspective on and approach to defining effectiveness in professional learning focused on race. Qualitative data in the form of interview transcripts, artifacts, observation field notes and a reflective journal were gathered to describe the participants perspectives on professional learning. I employed a critical race analysis, to look at patterns in the way the facilitators approached their work and decision making to inform my study.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In the following chapters of my dissertation I present review of my theoretical frameworks, explain the methodology used and present findings. In chapter two I provide the review of literature focused on race in professional learning in urban school districts. The third chapter provides the methods used and the process used to analyze data.

The fourth and fifth chapter introduce the participants and analysis of findings. Chapter four provides a brief description of the ten participants followed by data gathered on their perspectives of effectiveness. Chapter five looks deeply at two of the ten participants and I include an autoethnographic analysis using my experience and knowledge as participant observer of their professional learning events. Chapter six the final chapter of the dissertation introduces implications and study findings. To close the chapter, I discuss limitations of the study, recommend future research on the topic and

address the policy and practice implications of the study in the urban school district context.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of the literature where I examined scholarship focused on professional learning with a focus on race and racism for teachers in schools. A search was conducted for journal articles from 2000 to present with the descriptors ‘teacher professional development and race and school districts’ using several databases including Education Source, Ed Admin Abstracts, ERIC, Professional Dev Collection, and PsycINFO. The 2500 articles that resulted from the search were reviewed to confirm that they included a discussion of professional learning for teacher(s) with a focus on race in a school or school district. Of the 2500 articles reviewed 122 met this initial criterion. A second review of each of the 122 articles with a focus on how race is dealt with or not dealt with in professional learning focused on race found that 49 fit these criteria. Additionally, 7 dissertation studies were found relevant to this topic of race in professional learning. I conducted a subsequent search for books locating 17 titles which look at how-to conduct professional learning based on race in schools and school districts. The literature review that follows details the scholarship found relevant to the topic of race and racism as a focus in professional learning in schools and school districts.

This literature review discusses how race is taken up in professional learning in schools and school districts. Findings in the reviewed articles indicate where professional learning is focused on race, 1) participants experiences are key, 2) multiple models are used to frame sessions around anti-racism, 3) challenges are uncovered in implementation, 4) racial identity development and 5) knowledge development

sometimes connecting from an intersectional lens are potential outcomes of this professional learning.

Professional Learning That Addresses Race

EXPERIENCES

The first set of articles and scholarship presented in this review of the literature focused on experiences of participants. Professional learning in schools is built around a series of experiences to engage teachers and staff in the development of shared understandings and practices. In this literature, researchers and professional developers attempt to show various experiences of participants in professional learning focused on race. For example, some authors a) focused on relationship building and creating a safe and supportive environment for critical dialogue. Other researchers found b) participants experienced safety and connection in professional learning that used carefully curated readings for dialogue, still others shared experiences where c) teachers talk about white privilege and institutional racism with colleagues. Each experiential area is presented below.

Relationship Building, Safe & Supportive Environment

Brooks et al. (2010) found that relationship building can be a focal point in professional learning. The researchers found those administrators and teachers who persisted and engaged to build relationships with other participants in the professional learning sessions, began to engage deeply when the conversations were the most challenging and some began to push colleagues to dig deeper. They found the discussions

and activities in this study provided staff a safe space to push, challenge assumptions and build the discursive muscle to tackle tough conversations in their daily work. Brooks et al. (2010) also found, relationship building seems to connect participants in professional learning in a school setting charged with mistrust and marginalization. An interesting finding in this study was that ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers and paraprofessionals were marginalized in this space and not recognized as an important part of the decision-making team for student success. Such marginalization has the potential to prevent the development of a safe environment for critical dialogue where relationships might be cultivated. With this in mind the authors argue for “a shared-leadership orientation” (p. 148) removing hierarchy, engaging principals and staff (Palmer, 2013) in professional learning “to...have difficult discussions to examine...underlying assumptions about the languages, cultures, and experiences that their ELL [English Language Learner] students bring.... (Brooks et al., 2010, p. 149). Additionally, Sanders (1999) study of teachers in professional learning focused on geography content, argued that “...a teachers’ personal values and positionality determines the frame of reference from which the curriculum is approached.” (p. 3) This frame led them “...first...to create social relations and a ‘space’ that would foster confidence, trust and...complex mental activity. They wanted a space where teachers felt “...comfortable talking openly and honestly. [Teachers] also had to feel secure that their comments would be listened to and their ideas would be treated with respect.” (Sanders 1999, p. 4) Marcy (2010) focused specifically on white teachers finding that creating a safe space for dialogue was crucial to the ability of teachers to talk about race in

professional learning. Another layer of staff who might engage in professional learning focused on race was studied by Spikes (2014) who addressed the building of a safe and supportive environment in professional learning for central office administrators. These studies add to the idea that a safe learning environment for teachers can be fostered through relationship building in school based professional learning focused on race.

Batthey & Franke (2015) and Johnson & Fargo (2014) address relationship building and supportive environments for professional learning focused on race for content area teachers in math and science respectively. In each study they create environments where teachers shared their perspectives but also challenged the narrative that students cannot engage in higher order thinking tasks in order to shift their thinking and transform practice around what students can do with regard to intellectual engagement in coursework. Tatum (2000) and Taylor (2013) focused on teachers experiencing this professional learning environment uncovering teacher assumptions about the fixed nature of the intellectual capacity of students of color (Batthey & Franke 2015) and pointed out how dialogue was deepened when teachers were authorized (Skerrett, 2011) through district policy to discuss race. Through the authorization of the district teachers and staff can feel safe to share openly exposing participants to personal and professional experiences to deepen the understanding of themselves and colleagues.

Use of Resources to Establish Safety & Connection

In Sanders' (1999) study detailed above, teachers in professional learning focused on geography content. The author points to four kinds of experiences teachers had when exposed to carefully curated readings "focus[ed] on race, class, or gender...." (p. 6) These included feeling "...dominated, negotiated, oppositional, or ambivalent [or indifferent]...." (Sanders 1999, p. 6) Hyland (2000) also exposes participants to carefully curated readings using shared decision-making. Participants selected readings from a carefully curated list of resources and found discussing the readings a helpful experience. In Brooks et al. (2010) readings were chosen to push participants to "investigate contributing factors for ELL students' marginalization in the school community." (p. 149) One administrator remarks on connections and safety in their experience, "I have willingly read books and articles on diversity and culture.... There was something unique about the way the material was presented and the choice of activities that forced me to rethink my obligations. That makes me uncomfortable." (Brooks et al. 2010, p. 150)

Discomfort in Talk about White Privilege and Institutional Racism

Researchers in this review of the literature attempt to show how uncomfortable experiences focused on white privilege and institutional racism are dealt with in professional learning addressing race. In Palmer (2013), participants experienced talk about white privilege and institutional racism with colleagues in "...two general groups: enthusiastic or defensive, with a few teachers experiencing both emotions together." (p. 134). The author found teachers and administrators experienced how to dialogue about

race in a safe and supportive environment in an effort to combat "...the fear of being called racist [which acts] as a roadblock to the work..." (Palmer 2013, p. 84). Patton (2011) conducted an evaluation study of an urban school district's large scale professional learning focused on race. Facilitators of professional learning in this district were found to have designed experiences that addressed institutional racism and its "...effects on various cultural groups" resulting in uncomfortable experiences for some (Patton 2011, p. 90). Two studies (Schniedewind, 2005; Spikes, 2014) used models to design structured experiences for staff in professional learning where participants talked about white privilege and institutional racism. Other researchers found through the experience of talking about white privilege and institutional racism with colleagues the potential existed to build teacher knowledge (Colombo, 2007) and open dialogue with families (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009; Tatum, 2000). In the Tatum (2000) study, the author also found that sitting through uncomfortable experiences highlighting white privilege and institutional racism had the potential of enlightening educators to "...a heightened sense of responsibility and power to address issues of inequity in the school." (p. 56) The researchers in this literature review point to specific structures to create the space where participants can lean into discomfort while discussing the challenging topics of white privilege and institutional racism.

MULTIPLE MODELS

Given the taboo nature of racial dialogue in society (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 2014; Katz 2003; Omi & Winant, 1994; Pollock, 2004) schools and school districts often

approach professional learning on the topic in a structured and focused (Burant et al., 2007; Katz, 2003; Richardson, 2008; Singleton & Linton, 2006; Thomson & Stakhnevich, 2010) manner. Several authors have argued for the use of multiple professional learning models to engage participants in open dialogue to surface personal bias, values and beliefs that limit a school or school district's ability to address racial issues impacting student success. Across this scholarship, authors pointed to (a) models that focus on race and structure the dialogue around race, racism and sociohistorical impacts on students, and (b) models that addressed race in professional learning from an inquiry stance.

Models that Focus on Race

In many cases when authors in this review of literature choose to describe a model, their work focused squarely on race. Palmer (2013) uses a model that isolates race as she conducts a study in the context of professional learning for teachers and administrators in a suburban metro area. Foundational to this study, teachers participated in a *Beyond Diversity* seminar created by Singleton & Linton (2006) based on the Courageous Conversation About Race (CCAR) Protocol. This protocol (*model*) “begins with the premise that initially, educational leaders collectively view themselves and the schooling enterprise to be inherently non-racist” (p. 6). The CCAR model uses three foundational structures to push antiracist thinking while holding up race as a central theme of the professional learning (Singleton 2015). Teachers in the Palmer (2013) study surfaced initial fears about engaging in interracial dialogue. Teachers also reported an increase in

conversations and collaboration with colleagues around racial issues due to the professional learning designed to center race. Other studies use the CCAR protocol to center race and shape inquiry work in professional learning and in the classroom (Michael 2015). Still other studies push antiracist thinking as participants confront institutional racism and white privilege in the context of a workshop where central office staff use the CCAR protocol to focus on race in interracial dialogue (Spikes 2014).

Similar to the CCAR protocol, Philip (2011) and Philip et al. (2013) use a model, *ideology in pieces*, to center race and to assist participants in gaining an understanding of their racialized place in society while developing antiracist actions and agency in their work in schools (Philip, 2011). Drawing from Hall's (1982, 1996) theory of ideology and diSessa's (1993) theory of conceptual change, Philip (2011) conducted a study in which the ideology in pieces model set up a professional learning inquiry space to highlight race in teachers racialized or deracialized sensemaking. The author focused on transformative shifts that occurred as a teacher centered race in "self-checks" to uncover how poor students of color were disproportionately unsuccessful in his course. (Philip, 2011) According to the authors, ideology in pieces challenges one to critique common understandings of the terms race, racism and racial justice and to interrupt ourselves when we fall into the dominant common sense understanding of the terms.

In addition to models that highlight dominant status quo sensemaking other scholars like Alkins et al. (2006) centered race in a study focused on novice teacher attrition and retention using a model that involved a protocol plus a self-study technique. A classroom assessment protocol Five I's: Considerations for Anti-Racist Solutions from Lee et al.

(2002) and autobiography as self-study were used in Alkins et al. (2006) to uncover what was said and not said, done and not done by teachers with regards to daily practice in schools. The protocol coupled with the autobiographies engaged teachers in critical reflection on their practice, their place in the school as an institution and empowered some to challenge others on issues involving race. Similarly, Pennington & Brock (2012) used critical autoethnography as a self-study tool for two white inservice teachers in a two-year university course focused on teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students. This writing technique took teachers through the indepth analysis of their personal cultural histories, and evaluation of their daily practice as teachers. Participants who used the self-study technique in the Pennington & Brock (2012) study came to critically evaluate race in their practice. These models that focus on race can provide participants with an opportunity to critically reflect on practice and understand societal and structural impacts on their practice.

Another model used to focus on race in professional learning is presented in the Undoing Racism® Workshop from the Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB) (2017). This workshop takes a cross systems approach (*model*) to talking about race, and racism in all aspects of American society. The workshop is framed by the Institute's Anti-Racist Principles, Undoing Racism®, learning from history, shaping culture, developing leadership, maintaining accountability, networking, analyzing power, gatekeeping, undoing internalized racial oppression, and identifying and analyzing manifestations of racism. Facilitators of this workshop take participants through the history of race as a socially constructed, institutionally maintained system of oppression

and marginalization (Michael, 2015; Palmer, 2013; Philip, 2011; Spikes, 2014), emphasizing that something “created”, such as race, can be “undone”. In this workshop facilitators address how the black/white binary systemically maintains an us versus them and a perpetual state of oppression for black people compared to other racially oppressed groups. The models presented in this segment focused squarely on race. Other models provide inquiry structures to address race in professional learning in schools.

Inquiry Models

This literature review finds examples where professional learning in schools and school districts use models of inquiry to engage participants in open dialogue to surface personal bias, values and beliefs. Inquiry space for such open dialogue is needed in schools and school districts to assist teachers use of critical reflection on race, racism and the plight of students in their care (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992). Across the literature, authors point to models that address race in professional learning taking an inquiry stance to a) address educator racial consciousness utilizing interpretive tools with action plans, b) use of guiding theoretical frameworks c) on specific activities and tools, and d) cycle through a process to develop alternative explanations of the experiences observed in classrooms and school structures.

The design of professional learning focused on race as suggested in this literature utilizes models of inquiry to create a space for dialogue and critical reflection. *Educator racial consciousness* is addressed through inquiry in Lytle & Cochran-Smith’s (1993) study of the Philadelphia Writing Project (PhilWP), a teacher collaborative

school/university partnership. Teachers in this study were provided prompts to transport their thinking about praxis. The researchers used inquiry to shift teachers to an internal space of critical reflection on their own histories to connect to the immediate circumstances of students in their care. Schniedewind (2005) conducted a study focused on a teachers' consciousness of race, particularly how racial identity plays out in their practice and daily life. Drawing from Cochran-Smith (2004), the author studied long term professional learning where the teachers took an inquiry stance troubling the notion of schooling and the teachers' roles as change agents. Discussion models designed a space for critical inquiry and teachers reported interacting with students more around issues of race and developing a deeper understanding of race. Other studies used models of inquiry to draw on personal experiences with race and racism in one on one culturally responsible mentoring (Tolbert, 2015) relationships.

In this review of literature how-to books were reviewed to find practical application of race in professional learning in schools. Some how-to books addressed educator racial consciousness utilizing interpretive tools with action plans. Thompson (2004) in *Through Ebony Eyes: What Teachers Need to Know But are Afraid to Ask About African American Students* endeavors to teach white teachers about her perspectives. She offers tools and strategies to work through consciousness building challenges, and at the conclusion of this work offers a three-part long-term PD plan for educators who want to continue their professional growth related to African American students. Thompson (2004) offers that the combination of scholarly study with personal stories provide a human touch and the potential for connection to educators in the

professional learning session. Tatum (2000) found that use of interpretive tools and action planning supported the development of consciousness in teachers. In this professional learning the researchers use of an inquiry model saw participants develop a higher level of agency with regard to addressing inequity in their school system.

Pollock's (2008) book *Everyday Antiracism* is a collection of essays organized as a how-to for educators to practically apply everyday strategies to combat racism in schools. Pushing for an *everyday* educator consciousness she challenged each author to offer educators actions they could take through the normal everyday operation of a school that would ultimately address racism and systemic inequity. Pollock (2008), like Katz (2003), addresses the typical simplistic nature of racial dialogue and challenges educators to take an inquiry (Carini 1973; Carini 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Michael, 2015) focus. Nuri-Robins & Bundy (2016) argue for the use of "story" and the "sharing of stories", as do other African American authors cited in this review of the literature, to make personal connections to other people as a foundational strategy to raise consciousness. Key to Nuri-Robins & Bundy's (2016) work is the inquiry (Carini 1973; Carini 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Michael, 2015) opportunity provided throughout to critically self-reflect as well as the embedded prompts for dialogue in professional learning sessions.

Other studies utilizing inquiry models drew from research on *key theoretical frameworks* as part of a professional learning focus. For example, Johnson & Fargo's (2014) study considered how improving elementary science teaching for Hispanic ELL students might occur through the use of culturally relevant pedagogy (Burant et al., 2007;

Ladson-Billings, 1995; Tatum, 2000) and inquiry. Teachers in this study uncovered the cultural values and backgrounds of the students layered with the societal impacts of those experiences to build a classroom culture that engaged students in scientific discourse. Terry (2016) conducted a case study to understand how district professional learning influenced the application of culturally responsive (Gay, 2002) practices in classrooms. Through this case study the researchers uncovered a need for formal training in culturally responsive teaching. With a focus on action planning anchored by the Six Conditions of CCAR, Singleton's Pacific Education Group (PEG) (Singleton, 2015), developed the Systemic Racial Equity (SRE) Transformation Framework (Singleton, 2013 & 2015) in *More Courageous Conversations About Race*. In this how-to book, Singleton (2013) takes a critically reflective inquiry stance providing the reader with prompts and essential questions to take them to a transformative, acting space where racial equity practice takes center stage.

Researchers on professional learning in schools and school districts who used models of inquiry to engage participants in open dialogue to surface personal bias, values and beliefs also used *activities as a tool* to put teachers at disequilibrium to make societal norms visible to them in the professional learning space. Colombo (2007) uses Barnga as a tool, a simulation game on cultural clashes (Thiagarajan, 1990), to put teachers at disequilibrium in the context of a professional learning where parent coordinators joined them as participants. The researcher found, the game coupled with new participants in professional learning shifted the paradigm and thinking of some teachers regarding social dynamics of Latino families in the school. Delano-Oriaran & Meidl (2012) focus on

white inservice teachers engaging in a book study activity. In this study teachers used the book study as a tool to engage in critical conversations on race, racism, racial identity and implications for culturally and linguistically diverse students in their care. The Taylor (2013) study used racial touchstones with teachers as a window into the sociocultural worlds of their students as they engaged in activities such as disaggregation of data by race. The connection of these touchstones to racial experiences in their lives caused teachers to critically reflect on the experiences of their students and how their white privilege blinded them to the fact that the experiences of the students are out of their control. What is unique about the Taylor (2013) study in relation to the other studies in this literature review is that it occurred in an all-White-high performing school context. Several authors focused on models of inquiry reference the work of Peggy McIntosh (1988) in which she illuminates the impacts of unearned privilege granted to white people through skin color using an Invisible Knapsack activity (Spikes, 2014; Sanders, 1999; Taylor, 2013). McIntosh's (1988) work has served as a cornerstone around race and whiteness in professional learning in schools as well as other institutions.

Finally, we found that professional learning that took an inquiry stance *cycled participants through a process* to develop alternative explanations of the experiences observed in classrooms. For example, certain models of inquiry in this literature review were used by facilitators to assist teachers in the examination of their expectations and assumptions about students of color. Abu El-Haj (2003) studied the Teacher Learning Cooperative which uses descriptive review of the child (Carini 1973, 1986; Lytle & Cochran-Smith 1993) to reveal the complex needs of the individual child and to analyze

equitable and inequitable impacts on the child's success in school. Michael (2015) references a "process of asking questions, investigating answers, trying something new, observing impact, and asking more questions" (p. 29). Similar models are taken up in other studies focused on inquiry in professional learning focused on race (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Tatum, 2000; Taylor, 2013). In the Michael (2015) study, teachers critique rather than blindly accept perfectly logical explanations for inequity keeping the dialogue space open for inquiry and dilemmas (Burant et al., 2007; Michael 2015). Other studies that use models of inquiry examined fears in racial dialogue (Palmer 2013), constructed racial touchstones (Taylor 2013) to draw on personal experiences with race and racism, or used the excursion of kin (Hyland 2000) model operating in a space of familiarity on a school campus to set up the professional learning space for dialogue and critical reflection. Even with carefully constructed inquiry models, strategies and tools, scholars found challenges in the implementation of professional learning focused on race and racism in schools and school districts.

CHALLENGES WITH IMPLEMENTATION

When race was the focus, professional learning was found to have implementation challenges. Researchers have found that layering race on the topic of professional learning might encounter challenge in implementation when a) the facilitators of the professional learning possessed internal resistance that had the potential to limit their

facilitation abilities, b) practical application and succession planning was not embedded in the professional learning, and when c) race was situated as a power struggle.

Internal Resistance and Facilitation

In the literature, facilitators faced several internal challenges as they prepared and implemented professional learning focused on race. Hyland (2000), who draws from Duarte (2000) to discuss the Excursion of Kin Model, referenced the challenge of her own white fragility (DiAngelo, 2004) in the space as facilitator leading race discussions coupled with her strong desire to feel connected to those in the space. Hyland (2000) first sensed that participants were resistant to her facilitation but were not expressing feelings openly. Second, Hyland (2000) shared how she ignored personal feelings of discomfort, fear and guilt. She recognized that she was unprepared and used defensive moves (DiAngelo 2004) stepping into difficult conversations then backing out of them without addressing issues that should be unpacked, thus limiting her leadership throughout the session described in the study.

Alkins et al. (2006) uncovered internal challenges as they studied facilitators of professional learning. They found that dialogue was not implemented effectively when university mentors lacked the preparation skill, or will to address race in professional learning. Through the course of the project, researchers learned that some university mentors were personally at odds with the conversation about race, and the discomfort they felt led them to avoid engaging (DiAngelo 2004). The Alkins et al. (2006) and

Young (2011) studies found the facilitators lacked the skill and tools for critical examination and understanding of institutional racism, skills each study identified as necessary to combat challenges in implementation of professional learning focused on race. Young (2011), who acts as both participant observer and coresearcher with participants, frames antiracist professional learning using critical race theory (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Young draws from Tatum's definition of racism in her study, yet a troubling finding in Young (2011) was the dismissal of a portion of Tatum's (1997) work identifying racism as a system of advantages based on race that includes privilege plus power (p. 1449). Young (2011) faced the internal challenge of seeing herself outside the realm of privilege based on her identification as an Asian American Female. Her argument was to focus instead on racism as individual where Tatum's definition focuses on systemic or institutional racism which are foundational to CRT, the theoretical frame used in Young's (2011) study. Internal challenges of the facilitators and researchers of professional learning focused on race in schools can impact application of learning as well as action planning.

Practical Application/Succession Planning Not Embedded

Implementation of professional learning focused on race sometimes lacks practical application (Taylor 2013) as shown in a longitudinal action research project by Rothstein-Fisch et al. (2009). The study focused on elementary teachers using the cultural framework of individualism vs. collectivism to understand differences between the culture of Latino immigrant students and the culture prevalent in U.S. schools. At the

close of the study participants requested more time and support to apply their learning.

(Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009) The authors speak to the challenge of support from the site administrator, finding they are a crucial piece to the succession planning and practical application of the teachers learning.

Researchers have also found instances when some protocols designed for cross racial dialogue are not followed potentially limiting the successful implementation of the knowledge gained. Marcy (2010) set out to design a space where teachers could feel safe and build trust in order to have racial dialogue. What the researcher found was, the school assigned the book *Courageous Conversation About Race* (Singleton, 2015) that outlines a clear implementation strategy for its CCAR protocol. Marcy (2010) found challenges to implementation when school leaders set up structures counter to the structured use of key elements of the protocol. For example teachers were not asked to use the compass (Singleton & Linton, 2006) to monitor themselves in conversation and personal attacks occurred because the agreement to speak your truth was not valued in the space. Such conflicts have the potential to insert power dynamics into the professional learning space that are difficult to overcome.

Race Situated as a Power Struggle

While this particular theme was only found in a few articles it is important to highlight how power struggles were situated in language and have the potential to impact implementation of professional learning. Watson (2013) in a study of the Sacramento

Area Youth Speaks (SAYS) program looked at how spoken word poetry is used as a form of critical literacy development and empowerment in a school setting by community members. Students reported feeling heard in the SAYS classroom, yet in this study teachers report feeling attacked by the SAYS pedagogy. Race is situated as a power struggle manifesting as teachers dismiss student home languages and cultures judging the validity of the student's words in society, limiting student voice and potential growth for the teachers. Thomson & Stakhnevich (2010) posit an internal power struggle where teachers seem to possess "an internalized sense of linguistic inferiority..." (p. 294) to their mother tongue "prefer[ing] English-only instruction". The author goes on to illuminate racial overtones to the linguistic power struggle, as they highlight how the teachers' preference for English-only was contrary to South African policy which endorsed the use of the mother-tongue in schools, erecting a potential barrier to success with students following this professional learning session.

Racial power struggles might also exist among the facilitators of professional learning. Popular frameworks like Omi & Winant's (1994) racial formation theory are crucial to the Suyemoto & Fox Tree (2006) study as they critically reflect on their work with the Building Diverse Schools (BDS) initiative. The authors find that the dominant discourse surrounding race and ethnicity is rooted in a black/white binary that the facilitators confront and face challenges in implementation and coalition building. The authors share their reflections post initiative that they recognized the black facilitators took offense to their attempts to expand dialogue beyond black and white as an attempt to

maintain the racial hierarchy that would always place black at the bottom (Omi & Winant, 1994). An interesting finding in the Suyemoto & Fox Tree (2006) study, which highlights the inherent power struggle, is the more the white facilitators, in partnership with the authors, pushed for an inclusive approach, the more all the racial groups separated, adversely impacting the implementation of the professional learning. It is possible that the juxtaposition of race, racial identity and the fear of maintaining a marginalizing status quo put facilitators at odds in this study.

RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning that addresses race in schools and school districts can at times spotlight race and engage teachers in dialogue and discussion to uncover the roots and impacts of the teacher's personal racial identity. A few studies attempt to show how the subjects racial identity a) is situated and can reshape teacher understandings of race and b) how whiteness, white racial awareness, and white identity development can be shaped and uncovered in the context of antiracist professional learning for action in schools and school districts.

Situatedness of Identity

Drawing from Gee's (2001), notion of the situatedness of racial identity the following scholarship focused on reshaping teacher understandings of race. The Delano-Oriaran & Meidl (2012) study uses the context of a book study to discover how white teachers understand their own racial identity. The theme of "localizing change" (Delano-

Oriaran & Meidl, 2012, p. 16) emerges as teachers in this study learned to critically reflect on their place in society and expressed the need to get out of their comfort zones and interact in spaces with people of color (Singleton & Linton, 2006). The teachers also came to take ownership, to request, and engage in staff development to help other teachers arrive at these same understandings. Helms (1990) theory of white identity development is a recurring theory that shows up in Delano-Oriaran & Meidl (2012) and throughout this literature review (Brock, Pennington & Ndura, 2012; Michael, 2015; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Philip et al., 2013; Singleton, 2013; Singleton, 2015). Helms (1990) articulates situatedness through the series of moves the white teacher makes as they struggle to develop knowledge of their personal racial identity juxtaposed against a masternarrative that would have them ignore or silence knowledge of that personal identity. Michael (2015) found Helms (1990) theory highlighted situatedness and gave her "...a way to understand what was happening...psychologically and to help...get unstuck." (p. 45) Tatum (1997) cautions one to understand identity as a fluid and constantly developing thing. Tatum posits that even once a person arrives at a place of antiracist thinking, they are still impacted by their place in society and potentially "triggered" (Tatum 1997) into responding uncritically based on the situatedness of their racial identity.

Similar themes around teacher understanding emerge in Brock et al.'s (2012) case study, in partnership with a university. Drawing also from Helms (1990) this study situated participants racial identities in displacement spaces to push them to think differently about how they see the world and studied how those identities played into

literacy instruction. In the Pennington et al. (2012) study these researchers capitalized on the physical setup (in a circle) as well as experiences that engaged the white teachers in discomforting spaces. The authors describe stages the teachers progress through as they engage and disengage in uncomfortable professional learning situations, such as the privilege checklist, highlighting counternarratives, and the privilege walk. As a result, the white teachers by the end of this study were able to situate themselves in Helms (1984) Pseudo-independent stage accepting that whiteness is responsible for racism and its perpetuation, choose to engage more with people of color, and inquired about racial issues outside the white race. (Brock et al. 2010, p. 290)

Whiteness, white racial awareness, and white identity development

Many of the scholars in this review of the literature focus their research on the racial identity development of white teachers. Scholars highlight the situatedness of white and whiteness in society and the inherent responsibility of woke (conscious) white people to actively work to dismantle oppressive structures. Katz (2003) found that typical antiracism programs aim to change behaviors of the oppressed, rather than the oppressor, so she designed her program to raise awareness of white people (Landsman & Lewis, 2006) to dispel myths that shelter them from whiteness and would have them perpetuate meritocratic structures in society. She found through a follow-up study of her program that racist attitudes and behaviors of the white participants changed and that change was maintained after the program. The author's main goal was to develop antiracist, action oriented, conscious (Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Okun, 2010; Pollock, 2008;

Schniedewind, 2005) white people who would interrupt inequities at work, in their daily lives, and speak up when needed to educate other white people. Landsman & Lewis (2006) take the same stance as Katz (2003) arguing that white teachers (Marcy, 2010) are the dominant racial group in education and work must be done to interrupt the privilege afforded through the “single consciousness” of whiteness, drawing from W.E.B. DuBois’ “double-consciousness” (1903) of black people. Also, drawing from Freire (1970) she calls for action from white teachers (Katz, 2003; Okun, 2010) to critically reflect on whiteness and consciously understand how a failure to act on inequity is detrimental to the success of students in their care.

RACIAL KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

Professional learning that addresses race in schools and school districts focused on identity development and used frameworks and structures to open dialogue to develop the knowledge of teachers. Teacher knowledge development is a component that can assist with teacher capacity building for the inclusion of race in professional learning. This section finds some connections to the *Models* section of this review pulling out certain concepts that were formulated to develop teacher knowledge. There are a few specific ways the authors work to address teacher knowledge development in the pieces that follow. Researchers in this review of the literature find that teacher knowledge is developed in professional learning centered on race as these learning spaces assist a) the interruption of dominant commonsensical ways of sensemaking, b) development of critical stances, c) highlight the need to develop racial literacy, d) the challenge and

critique of assumptions and e) connections for educators through use of an intersectional lens.

Interrupting Dominant Commonsensical Ways of Sensemaking

Professional learning in this literature review finds that scholars work to develop teacher knowledge through the interruption of dominant ways of viewing their work in schools. Emdin's (2016) how-to book shifts the dominant narrative of schooling, pushing the teacher to take cues from the culture of the student to improve classroom pedagogy. The author calls for a challenge to traditional school structures and teacher creation of new lenses rather than the common-sense notion of saving poor inner-city children. *For white folks who teach in the hood...and the rest of y'all too: Reality pedagogy and urban education* introduces the term "neoindigenous" to describe urban youth of color, inviting teachers to reposition their thinking to see the neoindigenous as co-constructors of knowledge in the urban classroom context. Battey & Franke (2015), informed by the work of Perry, Steele, and Hilliard's (2004) notion of counternarratives, assist the knowledge development of teachers to uncover ways in which they collected information for the stories they told about mathematics and race. Recognizing the teachers' inclination to reify and rearticulate (Philip, 2011) the dominant commonsense narrative, the researchers took a relational approach to working with the teachers. They aimed to help them tell their narratives to hear counternarratives of the students in the context of the classroom rather than narratives laden with assumptions about the abilities of students of color.

Musanti et al. (2009) challenged the notion of teacher knowledge development and change coupled with ongoing, sustained professional learning needed to reach the desired impacts on student learning. The study similar to Battey & Franke (2015), took place in the context of a mathematics classroom where teachers focused on how they developed knowledge of mathematics, language and culture in students mathematical thinking. Results of this study saw teachers begin to develop knowledge of students need to connect new learning to prior learning. Through new understanding of the cultural knowledge of the students, teachers began interrupting their own commonsense, often deficit notions of the student's mathematical abilities.

Hammond (2015) used the Ready for Rigor frame in *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students* to connect brain science and culturally responsive teaching drawing from the work of Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2000). Hammond (2015) argues for an approach counter to the one that typically views culturally responsive teaching as an engagement strategy. In this how-to book, the author interrupts the commonsense way of viewing this concept focusing instead on how a teacher thinks and organizes for instruction with an understanding of how the brain organizes information culturally. She (Hammond, 2015) argues further for adaptive behaviors in teaching and highlights relationship building teacher to student in the classroom as a touchpoint for the success of culturally responsive teaching.

The professional learning inquiry space in Philip (2011) and Philip et al. (2013) was set up to center race in teachers racialized or deracialized sensemaking (Michael, 2015). The teacher of focus in this study worked through an inquiry model to make sense of and develop the intellectual ability to critique reasons for generalizations he made about students in his math course. Collectively, the teachers in the Philip et al. (2013) study chose to rearticulate notions of the communities as lacking rather than critique the historical, social, political, or capitalistic reasons for how the behaviors in the community showed up. The authors critique this professional learning space as one that reproduced deficit notions of students of color rather than support the teachers in the development of a critical stance. The author uses the concept of “collective rearticulation” (Philip et al., 2013) to explain how the teacher’s ideology shifts after he begins to shape knowledge of how his ideology is constantly contested by dominant commonsense ways of understanding his student’s ways of being. Philip (2011) found that as the teacher learned to critique his common-sense explanations and understandings he was more capable of actively checking himself as well as the reproductive practices of the school that limited student success. He began to foster critical reflection as a way of being that impacted how he engaged with his students.

Developing Critical Stances

Rogers et al.’s book (2009) focuses on a grassroots teacher-led professional learning group engaged in developing knowledge in a socially just community. Key to this study is the use of a critical literacy framework where the teachers work together to

develop critical stances, build community and engage in critical inquiry and analysis. (Rogers et al., 2009) Teachers in this study purposefully faced personal deficit thinking and through study began to develop critical stances to disrupt dominant notions of historical, social and political power that impacted their students. The key takeaway is that through an inquiry process, teachers shifted uncritical views of knowledge reproduction as necessary in the classroom to knowledge construction as an ingredient to capacity building success. Okun (2010) offers *The Emperor Has No Clothes: Teaching About Race and Racism to People Who Don't Want to Know* to add to the literature on how-to teach content focused on race, racism, institutional racism and the systemic impacts of each. Okun (2010) argues that books on this topic are needed to prepare principals and teachers to lead schools with a critical understanding of the racial impacts on their work and success in schools. Multiple perspectives and collective experiences are key themes in Okun's (2010) five assumptions to ground this work as she takes a descriptive approach considering the myriad of experiences that might exist in a room of participants, as well as the experiences of the facilitator and the need to adapt and flex with the group to ensure all receive the learning support they need in a professional learning dialogue space. The development of critical stance within the facilitator of professional learning is supported in this how-to book preparing would-be facilitators for the shifts and transformations in the knowledge development of their participants. Knowledge development in professional learning on the topic of race is impacted through the literacy and understanding of race of the participants.

Racial Literacy

An awareness of one's racial identity has the potential to advance a person's racial literacy, yet is also impacted through their position in society. Racial literacy considers the nuanced ways race impacts a person in society and how they recognize as well as interact within spaces based on structural, and interpersonal racial knowledge. Drawing from Guinier (2004), Skerrett (2011) conducted a study where she compared how secondary English teachers of two racially diverse schools, one in Canada the other in Massachusetts, talked about teaching about race and racism. Through semi-structured interviews and subsequent data analysis "three broad approaches to racial literacy were identified by the teachers... apprehensive and authorized; incidental and ill-informed; and sustained and strategic" (Skerrett, 2011, p. 318). This study further focused on the knowledge and skills possessed by the teachers opening the space to dialogue about what was still needed to support them with regards to professional learning that focuses on race. What the author found was teachers developed a clearer understanding of their need for racial literacy. Teachers longed for time to collaborate professionally to develop a shared language (literacy) and pedagogy to focus and build each teachers capacity for racial literacy instruction. Teachers also identified the need for a focused curriculum and strategic supports to prepare them so that they would no longer be *ill-informed* or *apprehensive* about the subject.

Stevenson (2014) a scholar of human development, Africana studies and education offers the book, *Promoting Racial Literacy in Schools: Differences That Make a Difference* for teachers, students and social service staff to build racial literacy. He

argues that schools are full of people who do not act on issues of race and racism because they simply do not possess the knowledge, skills or language to attack the subject with confidence. Drawing from his background in psychology, Stevenson (2014) points to the stress inflicted on those who are most marginalized when no one acts as well as the stress inflicted on those in the system who witness the marginalizing acts. He offers a model applying Gaye's (2000) culturally relevant approach, to stress management strategies. The author suggests his model can be applied in teacher professional learning to assist teacher racial literacy development as well as integrated into the K-12 curriculum for student learning. His work provides a tool to challenge and interrupt when issues surface focused on race and racism in schools.

Challenging & Critiquing Assumptions

Professional learning focused on race and racism in schools and school districts can develop teacher knowledge through careful critique of narrative constructs. Johnson & Fargo's (2014) study considered how improving elementary science teaching for Hispanic ELL students might occur through the use of culturally relevant pedagogy (Burant et al., 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Tatum, 2000) and inquiry. Prior to Johnson & Fargo (2014), Johnson (2011) used concept mapping to describe middle school science teachers' knowledge transformation in a three-year longitudinal study looking at culturally relevant pedagogy. Through inquiry the teachers in the 2011 study looked critically at societal impacts based on the masternarrative of students as uncaring and assumptions of parents as unsupportive. They discovered both evidence in their

classroom discourse and counternarratives to the dominant, commonsense way of viewing their students (Battey & Franke, 2015; Philip, 2011; Philip et al., 2013; Michael, 2015; Rogers et al., 2009) ultimately developing new knowledge seeing the students and their abilities to engage in scientific thinking and reasoning.

Similarly, the Pennington et al. (2012) study addressed the masternarrative and challenged teachers to sit with the notion of whiteness to examine caring relationships with their students of color. In this study race was dealt with by repositioning white teachers racially through “social semiotics” (Pennington et al., 2012, p. 748). Informed by the work of Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001), the authors “...used semiotic resources – such as language, image, music, sound, gesture, and so forth...to construct various meanings, representations, and interpretations of race.” (Pennington et al., 2012, p. 748) The authors argue that white teachers must begin to develop knowledge of how “unexamined white privilege plays into teacher-student caring relationships” also, they must “...understand and privilege the needs of the cared for (students of color) over the needs of the one caring (white teachers)” (Pennington et al., 2012, p. 766-67). Critique of the traditional way of schooling flows throughout Vilson’s (2014) memoir *This is not a test: A new narrative on race, class, and education*. In it Vilson engages the reader in a walkthrough of Freirean (1973) critical self-reflection through personal story and example. He styleshifts, sets the stage for conscientization (Friere, 1970) of his students, uses voice and articulates choices he makes, struggles he engages in as he resists, while using agency to present workable solutions that affirm the students in his care. The reader sees the system and the critique of the system through Vilson’s lens and is able to engage

in the counternarrative he presents as well as his recognition of his role in erecting and sustaining institutional racism in the school he works in. Vilson leaves the reader with the challenge to enact change through the creation of new and different reform efforts.

Drawing from scholarship grounded in organizational leadership (Argyris, 1990; Senge, 1999;) and moral reasoning (Habermas, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1992), CampbellJones, et al. (2010) focus the reader on the internal knowledge development journey of Culturally Proficient leadership in schools with an awareness of sociopolitical impacts on educators. Authors organize *The Cultural Proficiency Journey* around a case study approach with tools and discussion prompts to build new knowledge and to surface assumptions and beliefs that might hinder the success of students in schools. The book is presented as a tool to assist educators in developing an inquiry (Carini 1973; Carini 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Michael, 2015) stance to critique the traditions and mainstream ways of doing schooling.

Howard's (2015) book *We can't lead where we won't go: An educator's guide to equity* is provided as a how-to for teachers and practitioners. It is designed as a manual to help teachers heal from the age-old disengaging professional learning and school reform efforts Vilson (2014) talks about that have left them out of the decision-making process. Focusing on and defining the terms inclusion, equity and excellence, Howard teaches teachers and practitioners how to challenge and critique the normal ways of schooling. Where Hammond (2015) focuses on student development, Howard (2015) engages in a discussion of the neuro-plasticity of the brain and the productive struggle in the adults

with regard to how they engage students and coconstruct new knowledge through his structured step by step process interrupting the system from the bottom up.

Drawing from Paulo Friere's (1970) notion of a critically reflective education the editors of *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A practical guide to K-12 antiracist, multicultural education and staff development* searched for authors whose articles were framed from a critical perspective of education and schooling (Lee et.al., 2002). Like Singleton (Singleton & Linton 2006; Singleton, 2013 & 2015) the editors focused squarely on race and sought to compile resources that exposed race and racism as it manifests in schools assisting educators in a critique of whiteness as the norm. This book focused on how-to guide staff and students through difficult conversation offering a collection of lessons and articles to aid educators in racial equity reform (Vilson, 2014; Howard, 2015) efforts in schools and school districts.

In an effort to challenge and critique assumptions, using a critical perspective of education and schooling caused me to analyze word choice as I reviewed the literature. In a few instances colorblindness as a construct takes center stage in the literature. The term colorblindness in the critique of schooling addresses the unwillingness to acknowledge the presence and impact of race in social relations (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). Race is avoided in everyday vernacular often because of the taboo nature of racial discourse in society (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 2014; Omi & Winant, 1994; Pollock, 2004).

The three-year Hollins et al. (2004) study, with a majority of black participants, approached race from a colorblind stance silencing sociohistoric issues in dialogue meant

to uncover institutional impacts on students of color, and used an antiracist protocol in a piecemeal fashion. In this study, the authors give only cursory attention to the socio-historic issues that impact the low performing status of the school based on race. Authors reported that the socio-historic impacts were referenced when teachers had limited time to do a good job implementing the new cultural strategies to support black students. Multiple studies replaced race for other terms and participants were found to avoid the topic in polite (Erickson, 2004) conversation choosing to consider what was appropriate to say and how their words would be heard or interpreted. Softer terms had the potential to distract from the critical self-reflection needed for participants to critique race as a socially constructed system of oppression (Johnson, 2011; Johnson & Fargo, 2014). Philip et al. (2013) reiterated throughout their analysis the notion of missed opportunities for critical dialogue as teachers used the word community/communities of color to replace race. The authors troubled the notion that a critical analysis of historical, political, social issues were given no thought in the context of this professional learning as the dominant narrative and deficit notions took center stage through the polite conversation that left assumptions about the student's communities intact.

This review of the literature introduced avoidance of the words race, racism and a critical analysis in some cases, but not all terms chosen in the research to replace race limited the critical reflection of the participants. Terms like dominant culture and individualism compared in dialogue to collectivism, critical literacy education, and Latino provided the space for participants to engage in critical reflection about race as a system maintained by colorblind policies, practices and uncritical actors in said systems.

Rothstein-Fisch et al. (2009) used a plethora of terms to replace race, such as culture & immigrant children as a stand-in for Latino children, dominant culture for whiteness and the contrasting terms individualism and collectivism to soften language around race. The authors cautioned against the oversimplification of culture and the differences among and between cultures, yet they found that use of the collectivist vs. individualist culture opened the door to interracial dialogue, spotlighted race and provided a frame to point to the issues in society that impacted the teacher's success with students. Similarly, literature replaced race with unconscious bias (Schniedewind, 2005) and some studies focused on the child as racially unique with broad human capacities (Abu, El-Haj, 2003) as a window into the dialogue addressing race. Those broad capacities lead to a focus on race and its intersections with other identities.

Race addressed from an intersectional lens

Patricia Hill Collins (2016) posited intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) as a form of “critical praxis”, or the ways in which we draw upon or use “intersectional frameworks” in our lived experiences. (p. 32) Hill Collins (2016) offered this lens as a critical strategy to enacting work centered around activism and social justice.

Intersectionality theory in mainstream dialogue has been coopted and watered down from its origin. In schools the intersections of race, class and gender have detrimental impacts on poor, black males at the hands of largely middle class, white female teachers. The approach to teacher knowledge development and the assumptions made in Thomson &

Stakhnevich (2010) are strikingly similar to other studies in this literature review, the difference is this study takes place in South Africa. This study deals with race at the intersection of language dominance and marginalization. The authors take care to inform the reader that "...the majority of African countries, whether colonized by the French, English, Portuguese, Spanish or Belgians, have continued with the language policies of the colonizer." (Thomson & Stakhnevich, 2010, p. 275) This is key to understanding the dynamic at play with the teachers in the study, because the authors also share that in South Africa the mother tongue is endorsed in policy as appropriate for instruction in schools. The authors found in this study that the schools elected an English-only policy and did not foster a welcoming space for isiZulu, their mother tongue, spoken by the students. The authors use lesson planning/presentation and journal reflection to support educator connection so that they critique the autonomous model of literacy and ultimately the dominant racial narrative at play in the classroom that marginalizes the students into submission and silence.

Like Thomson & Stakhnevich (2010) many of the studies in this review of the literature approach race from the lens of intersection. Studies look at the intersection of race with: mathematics and language (Battey & Franke, 2015), gender, and culturally relevant teaching (Burant et al., 2007), language, culture and sexual orientation (Brock, et al., 2012), class, gender, and/or language-based biases (Patton, 2011), gender, language and politics (Rogers et al., 2009), or gender and class (Sanders, 1999). Caruthers et al., (2004) approaches intersection through the notion of the "hidden transcripts" of

race/ethnicity, class and gender. (p. 38) The researchers use storytelling, like many of the how-to book authors, to open dialogue and critique the current state of schools. They trouble the notion of white, middle class, patriarchal norms shaping the ways we do school and create what is deemed official knowledge in schools and society. Storytelling, in this study, acts as a new lens through which teachers might see the world, where staff engaged in professional learning critique the commonsense (Battey & Franke, 2015; Michael, 2015; Philip, 2011; Philip et al., 2013; Rogers et al., 2009) notions of society and the uncritical stance of accepting normal ways of being. The authors argue that storytelling in this study “create[d] dissonance without defensiveness,” (Caruthers et al., 2004, p. 37) narrowed the playing field, and thereby made the professional learning space less adversarial.

Hancock & Warren (2017) kept the spotlight on race and examined the presence and role of whiteness (Singleton & Linton, 2006) in schools in their contemporary work *White women’s work: Examining the intersectionality of teaching, identity, and race*. Building on Hancock’s article published in Landsman & Lewis (2006) the editors spotlighted the lesser discussed topic of the wide-reaching influence of white women in the field of education. According to the editor’s, educational policies, practices, ways of being were cosigned and normed against the social value system of the women whose identities most closely aligned with white, cisgender, feminine, and middle to upper class. Recognizing the push in schools to hire a more racially diverse staff, the editors offered in addition the need to design research based professional learning that focused on white

women teaching racially and socioeconomically diverse students. Hancock & Warren (2017) like Katz (2003), Landsman & Lewis (2006) focused professional learning efforts on white women, and the rest of ya'll (Emdin, 2016), who were unaware and not culturally or socially adept at working with racially and socioeconomically diverse students, how to focus on the development of culturally affirming solutions for their work. These efforts have the potential to develop teachers who critique and challenge their own racial and societal assumptions about the students in their care.

CONCLUSION

When we look across this literature we see several things. Professional learning in schools is built around a series of experiences to engage teachers and staff in the development of shared understandings and practices. Those experiences have the potential to assist teachers in the development of safe and supportive professional learning spaces. Multiple models engage participants in open dialogue to surface personal bias, values and beliefs in the learning spaces set up specifically to address racial issues at play in schools. These models push teachers and staff to inquire through structured processes and protocols that highlight a particular level of consciousness or dysconsciousness in their daily pedagogy. The literature reviewed recycle the notion of student intellectual capacity as scholars' address deficit notions of students of color in the minds of their teachers and attempt to develop racial literacy as they introduce counternarratives to assist the teachers in finding evidence to refute the masternarrative.

They use terms like common sense and sensemaking, critical stances, but each term is focused on opposing narratives in society, often tied to racial identity development and knowledge development of the teacher. This literature reveals several implementation challenges to professional learning focused on race connected to the skill, will and knowledge of the facilitators, as well as practical application and succession planning following the professional learning. The next chapter will introduce methods used in this critical study focused on race and racism in professional learning in urban schools and school districts.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the method of inquiry used for a study focused on race in professional learning in urban schools and school districts. There is a dire need to rewrite the norms, values, policies and procedures that dictate professional learning in schools and school districts. Terms like training, professional development, trainer of trainers, often used to describe professional learning all wreak of compliance, sit and get, non-critical engagements, ultimately recycling dysconscious educators back into the classroom year after year. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research allows for an understanding of the meaning people apply (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3) to a social problem. This study used a critical race theory framework to collect and analyze data for patterns and themes. To understand the complexity of the professional learning event a critical socio historical analysis was needed.

This research project considered facilitators of professional learning, if focused on race, must be prepared to hold space for those who understand outcomes of systemic racism and those who might hold deficit beliefs about the origins of disparate educational outcomes. The literature does not tell us how these facilitators of professional learning focused on race make decisions in the midst of the myriad of approaches, models and challenges inherent when this topic is introduced. The literature also does not tell us what defines, nor how a facilitator defines or determines effectiveness in professional learning focused on race. This research aims to add to the literature as we learn from facilitators of professional learning focused on race, how they define effectiveness in implementation of

the topic of race in a white dominant educational system, predicated on race, racism, power and privilege.

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to inquire into the world of several professional learning facilitators in urban schools and school districts to discover how they define effectiveness in implementation of professional learning focused on race. The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) How do facilitators define effectiveness in implementation of professional learning focused on race?
- 2) How do these perspectives on effectiveness in implementation inform the curricula and pedagogical decision-making of facilitators when developing professional learning experiences focused on race?

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This research project studied the everyday (Holt, 1995) decisions of facilitators in the design and delivery of professional learning and sought to uncover their thinking and decision making. Case study according to Yin (2009) is a concrete entity, person, small group, or organization, occurring in a real-life situation or context. Key to a case study is that it is bounded by a specified time and place and must provide a detailed description of and in-depth account of the cases or compare several cases in detail. Conclusions for case

studies are grounded in relevant literature to validate the usefulness and meaningfulness of the findings as well as to add to existing literature. “Case studies [originate] from the human and social sciences and applied sciences areas such as evaluation research.” (Creswell, 2013) This particular approach provided the ability to use multiple perspectives to paint a picture of real-life occurrences and provide a critical analysis centered on race generalizable to others’ lives and work. VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007) posit, “it is also instructive to define case study research in relation to other domain assumptions or paradigmatic considerations.” (p. 88) As such the tenets of critical race theory were used to inductively and deductively code themes in the data and constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Creswell, 2013; Thomas, 2017) was used uncover meaning constructed by the participants. The case study methodology allowed this project to traverse various data sources, such as interviews, observations, artifacts, field notes, and transcripts

PARTICIPANTS AND STUDY CONTEXT

A detailed description of the participants is provided in chapter four. Each participant is employed at the central administration level of their respective district and leads professional learning opportunities in midsized to large districts in the Western, Southwestern, Northeastern, and Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States. The range of educational experience reaches three to over 30 years. Experience delivering race-centered professional learning spans one and a half to 15 years within public school education and private consulting.

Participants were chosen considering their knowledge base of professional learning in the setting of urban schools and school districts. Urban schools were the optimal setting for this study focus because often these settings center district success on student success based on achievement by race. Several scholars refer to urban schools as “demoralized institutions”, or “bottom tier” schools where students are largely of color and poor, staff morale is low, innovation is nonexistent, and pessimism abounds. (Alkins et al., 2006; Caruthers et al., 2004; Hollins et al., 2004; Payne, 2008) As Payne (2008) frames the description of an urban school he focuses on the “structural roots” creating them with a comparison stating, “take a decently functioning suburban school, take away 40 percent of its funding, most of its better teachers, and the top-performing 50 percent of its students...” (Payne, 2008, p. 24). It is within these schools that this type of professional learning is often attempted and not successful. This study aimed to understand how facilitators in urban schools prepared and implemented effective professional learning in this context.

With my background as a national facilitator of professional learning in an urban school district I was able to draw from a sample of equity focused educators who work in urban districts across the United States. Purposeful & snowball sampling (Creswell, 2013; Thomas, 2017) was used to recruit participants from the population of educational leaders in urban schools. Prior to beginning the study, I reached out to colleagues and asked if they would be willing to participate in my study. In my request, drawing from tenets of critical race theory, I shared the goal of the project to recruit participants who

held (a) a current job role in an urban public school setting designing and facilitating professional learning focused on race and racism that troubles the notion of the impacts of race and institutional racism in their urban school district, and possessed a (b) working knowledge of race as a social construction.

Applying a critical race lens I sought participants who design and deliver professional learning focused on race and racism in urban schools and school districts. Given that the schools and school districts of focus are urban schools I anticipated engaging with facilitators who support the professional learning of teachers who work with and are members of communities of color. Participants drew from a variety of backgrounds, a chart detailing participant demographics is provided in chapter four. I sought out as many perspectives as possible aiming for a balance of racial, ethnic, gender, gender expression, national origin, and other identity categories. In an effort to lift up marginalized voice I sought to find participants who might possess a view counter to the typical view of professional learning as a sit and get, compliance, or telling about a process, skill or strategy. With a lens towards understanding antiracist and racist epistemologies (Duncan, 2005), I also sought participants who have an appreciation for the wealth of knowledge within a professional learning session, opting to pull in the collective knowledge and experiences of the learner to enhance the construction of knowledge of using multiple rather (Battey 2015; Hyland 2000; Marcy 2010) than singular perspectives.

RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY AND ROLE

My positionality as a researcher is complex. My knowledge base as an exemplary teacher with over 20 years of preK-12 educational experience provides a wealth of knowledge on the subject of professional learning in schools and school districts (Eisner, 2017). I have worked in lower and higher socio economic schools, designed, and delivered professional learning for compliance as well as professional learning focused on race. As a professional learning designer in an urban school district I am expected to look at historical and current data about our students. That data is organized by class, gender, age and race. The efficiency and effectiveness of the school district finance and accountability systems are contingent on how well students perform in these categories, which leads to school closures, staff reassignments and clouds of despair over historically underperforming school communities.

Meetings are held daily in schools and district offices where the staff look at the data and race is one of the most highlighted categories lifted up in the data. Yet, in these same meetings, little attention is given to the societal influences that contribute to disparities in this data. Given these parameters and standards I am often baffled by the unwillingness of district leaders to talk about race and the limited handling of race in school developed professional learning. I am particularly troubled by the rhetoric of today's society that would have The President of the United States validate hateful and hurtful views that spill into our schools and invite school staff to demean and throw human decency behind a veil of freedom of speech and "adultism". (DiAngelo, 2012, p. 47)

As an educator and professional learning designer I used autoethnography and a black feminist perspective to gather and review the data. Drawing from Theoharis' (2007) research with principals and Taylor's (1998) study of nurse scholars that troubles the absence of "Afrocentric ways of knowing" I include my perspective as a skilled facilitator of professional learning focused on race. A black feminist perspective (Hill Collins, 2009) allowed me to "...empirically validate the experiences...[and] actively promote social and educational policies at the micro- and macro-level, with [black women] in mind who exist at the intersections of race, class, and gender." (De Lissoyov, 2008; Evans-Winters, 2010, p. 15). The methodology and protocols I designed structured my focus on each case to review it at face value, and through the CRT lens. As an educator of twenty-three years I was able to draw from multiple experiences and apply that learning and growth to my analysis. I used Taylor's (1998) concept of "participant witness" to gather and analyze data through my lens as a black female and Brown's (1989) to "pivot the center" of professional learning to provide room for more perspectives on effectiveness. I chose these constructs to aid my approach as connoisseur (Eisner, 2017) and knowledgeable facilitator to ensure that I chose particular salient themes that were relevant and to structure my data analysis to uncover what was in the text and not over think or layer additional meaning that did not exist.

DATA COLLECTION

Several methods of data collection were used for this research project, including interviews, observation, document analysis and a researcher reflective journal. The data

was drawn from semi-structured interviews of facilitators whose work involves the development of professional learning focused on race. The data consisted of interview transcripts, artifacts, field notes and analytic memos.

INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews (Mason 2018; Rapley, 2001; Smith, 1995; Thomas 2017) with participants were conducted throughout the study as a major form of data to provide a window into the thinking and meaning making (Creswell 2013; Eisner 2017) of the facilitators of professional learning focused on race. Questions were designed using constructs to encourage study participants to share a narrative account of their work in the school or school district. I inquired into their preparation for their current job role. I engaged each participant in an examination of their racialized lens with regards to the design and delivery of professional learning focused on race. Each interview time ranged from one to two hours.

Questions were designed as “open probes” (d’Ardenne, 2014) using a critical race lens to help the participant articulate their vision and expectation for effective professional learning focused on race. I used topic initiating questions (Rapley, 2001) to introduce constructs I outlined in the questions to understand how the participant made meaning and designed professional learning. A combination of “respondent-driven” to get at participants initial reactions and “theory-driven probes” aligned to the constructs to investigate problems and contextualize pre-existing knowledge of the participants were

employed (d'Ardenne, 2014). As participants shared their views and visions of the work I looked for patterns coded in their talk and word choice with relation to the tenets of CRT.

The interview data was gathered to support a developing understanding of the values, biases and beliefs of a facilitator of professional learning on this topic and potentially how their background impacts how they define effectiveness. Drawing from Graue & Walsh (1998) who suggest "...any single answer in an interview is situated within a much larger data record, allowing the researcher to make judgments about the believability of what who said when" (p. 120), I conducted observations and gathered artifacts to add to the data record. This additional layer was included to aid in the trustworthiness of the data adding validity to the data gathered.

OBSERVATION

Of those interviewed I chose two participants to conduct a second semi structured interview after a participant observation of a professional learning session they delivered. The observation was conducted to gather additional data with regards to how the facilitator defines effectiveness in professional learning focused on race. Using Taylor's (1998) concept I set out to "bear witness" on the "concrete particulars" (Graue & Walsh, 1998) of the interactions of the participant with learners. As I witnessed the particulars in each space I regarded Eisner's (2017) advice that "...nothing in connoisseurship as a form of appreciation requires that our judgements be positive. What is required (or desired) is that our experience be complex, subtle, and informed." (p. 69)

I recorded in my observation schedule (Eisner, 2017) what I saw as I entered, what was physically brought in by the participant, I took photos of the space to remind myself of what I saw and experienced. I drew my attention to the clothing, the age, racial identity, what was said, antecedents to participant responses. I watched the movements and expressions of learners, facilitators and the interpersonal exchanges occurring throughout the day and collected artifacts to aid triangulation (Graue & Walsh, 1998) with my observation notes. Bearing witness (Taylor, 1998) is a complex task as a researcher. Graue & Walsh (1998) state, “full participation makes field notes problematic.” (p. 107) I chose to use photos of the space with brief notes, and expanded memos from memory once I left the professional learning to provide myself the ability to engage fully as a learner in the professional learning experience.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Artifacts were of particular interest to this study as they are an unobtrusive (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 1966) avenue for generating data and can assist in triangulation adding to the validity of the study. Eisner (2017) posits artifacts, “...provide a kind of operational definition of what [educators] value.” (p. 184) To add to the validity of participant perspectives and my witnessing the professional learning events I gathered documents and artifacts. Artifacts that were gathered to inform the analysis of interviews and observations included: professional learning agendas, readings assigned before, during and after, images, intended outcomes, evaluation/feedback of

participants in the professional learning, amount of time allotted in the agendas, district/school data and values contributing to the professional learning design.

As I received each artifact I analyzed them considering their usefulness to the participant's definition of effectiveness and how it aided curricular or pedagogical decisions. Mason (2018) posits, "any qualitative researcher who is an active epistemological thinker...will be making interpretations throughout the whole data generation process." (p. 210) Documents and artifact analysis happened in the moment and as I reflected through analytic memos (Eisner, 2017) following the professional learning events. As I analyzed documents as witness to the events I used questioning and active journaling along with reflective inquiry. Documents were reviewed first to consider how they contributed to the two research questions, and how the documents connected to the questions outlined as preestablished codes in the chart in the data analysis section of this chapter. The following questions were used to guide document analysis.

- Does this document help answer how the participant determines effectiveness in professional learning where race is the topic?
- Does this document help to highlight curricular and pedagogical decision making of the participant?
- How should I understand the validity of this document in relation to the interviews and/or observations? Does the document refute or confirm claims

made by the participants interview about the professional learning? How does this impact the participants claim of effectiveness of implementation?

- Can I see patterns in this document? How does it relate to other documents or other data sets?

RESEARCHER REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

With an understanding of my positionality I kept a reflective journal of my connections to the cases of the participants. Recognizing the complexity in my positionality I chose to incorporate reflective journaling to gain personal insight and to catalogue and process how I engaged in a deliberative process throughout the data collection. Yenpasook (2016), offers that a “reflective journal...served multiple purposes...captured thoughts, reflections, perspectives, and biases with regard to data that was collected during the...personal interviews.” (p. 81) The author goes on to say that nonverbal cues captured in the reflective journal, “...aided in enhancing or supporting verbal responses. Additionally, the reflective journal was used for validity and reliability during the triangulation process.” (Yenpasook, 2016, p. 81) The journal was used as a data gathering tool to authentically connect my internal frames of reference with the work of the participants providing triangulation of data connected to the artifacts gathered to include in the analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS: PHASES

Analytically I drew from CRT to examine an oft forgotten aspect of educating students in public schools: the ongoing professional learning of the schools teaching and leadership staff. In keeping with DeCuir and Dixson's (2004) push that the researcher "utilize the full power of CRT, including Whiteness as property, interest conversion, and the critique of liberalism" (p. 30) this research project used CRT to analyze data gathered to disrupt the status quo of professional learning in schools and school districts. Critical Race Theory frames racism as "...a deeply entrenched system of social, economic, and political privileges afforded to Whites based on their skin color" (Hughes & Berry 2012). Drawing on this understanding of race and racism, data collected in this study was analyzed through the raced lenses of the researcher as a woman of color. A critical race heuristic was designed to aid the data analysis process.

Granger (2011) describes, "the ability to look unflinchingly at self and others, along with a willingness to accept what is revealed is foundational to heuristic research." (p. 61) He goes on to say that discipline in the process is key to uncovering the needed analysis of the data (Granger, 2011, p. 61). As a scholar of color, I was drawn to the notion of CRiT walking (Giles & Hughes: 2009; Hughes & Giles, 2010) as an analysis tool to challenge the dominant narrative of professional learning in schools and school districts. CRiT walking is one of the ways scholars have designed heuristics for reviewing literature or to look at teaching and teacher education. "CRiT walking is the method of strategically thinking and talking through various institutional norms, policies, and procedures to re-interpret and re-connect our understanding of the intersections of

race, racism, power, and praxis.” (Giles & Hughes, 2009, p. 692) In the data analysis section of this chapter I crafted a chart to detail a preestablished code (Stake 1995) I used to design questions, observation protocols and analyze the data. I found the full weight of CRT in data analysis useful to consciously challenge the prevalence of racism using clearly constructed tools to give voice to the historically voiceless and “deconstruct the status quo.” (Giles & Hughes, 2009, p. 692) As a scholar battling with the square peg of critical consciousness working to fit it into the round hole of the white dominant, structurally racist institution of public school education, I was drawn to using CRT as an analytical tool.

Phase 1

In the first phase I reviewed field notes from the interview sessions. The interview data was “...interpreted as realist accounts and as sources of information...” (Luckett, 2006, p. 506). Using video as a primary data collection tool I used auditory and field notes to transcribe the data in the moment. As I conducted interviews detailed field notes were used to gather data in the moment striving to reproduce the data as it was delivered. The detailed field notes (Creswell, 2016) during the interview were beneficial to develop a “realist account” (Luckett, 2006) that informed the vignettes presented in the chapters that follow. Field notes were particularly useful to capture nuance in my interaction with the participant that might be missed on a video given angles, lighting and positioning of the camera. Analytic memos (Eisner, 2017) were written following interviews to inform

and make sense of the formal data gathered during interviews, in detailed field notes, and transcriptions of the interviews.

Phase 2

In the next phase of data review, used a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2018) and open coding (Creswell, 2016; Thomas, 2017) looking for patterns in the data as I highlighted and marked salient information. As themes emerged from the video transcriptions I used an excel spreadsheet as an organizing structure for each question to support the development of findings. Once themes were uncovered I worked to uncover axial codes (Thomas, 2017) searching for meaning making in connections among the themes, and related ideas across themes in the actual talk of the participants highlighting quotes from their talk. After coding I did a first pass at analysis using thick description (Creswell, 2016; Thomas, 2017) reflecting on the interviews, my journaling and my knowledge of race in professional learning in schools and school districts.

Phase 3

This phase of data analysis was framed using a critical race theory approach to the case study data and documents. DeCuir & Dixson (2004) suggest researchers heed caution as they “consider how their scholarship aids in the project of social justice and social change.” (p. 30). This CRT lens on the data provided insight into the codes and provided contextual analysis of the themes with respect to effectiveness of professional

learning focused on race from the perspective of facilitators of the professional learning. Employing CRT as an analysis tool this research sought to aid the “deprivileging of mainstream discourses while simultaneously affording the voices, stories, and experiences of the...” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 30) most marginalized in our educational institutions.

Drawing from Stake (1995) I was conscious that “the case and the key issues need[ed] to be kept in focus.” (p. 85) CRT as an analysis tool was used to return to the data for repeated critical review and meaning making. Stake (1995) suggests “...using preestablished codes but to go through the data separately looking for new ones. (p. 79) The chart that follows lays out the preestablished CRT coding scheme (Espino & Trickett, 2008). I used the following critical questions to “deconstruct” (Giles & Hughes, 2014) professional learning focused on race throughout the data review and the descriptive analysis of the participants.

Table 1: Critical Race Theory Data Analysis Coding Scheme.

<p><i>A Critical Race Theory Data Analysis Coding Scheme for Effectiveness Race-Centered Professional Learning in Urban Schools and School Districts</i></p>	
CRT Tenet	Questions for a critical race analysis of the facilitator data
Centrality of Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the facilitator define race? racism? • How does race show up in the talk? (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004) How does the facilitator racialize their voice, their narrative? In what ways do they racialize the data? How do they lift up race in the data? What values, biases or beliefs are articulated and deployed in the facilitator’s talk? • What is the facilitator’s background? How do they racialize it? • What is the level of/positionality of the facilitator in the hierarchy of the school or organization? How do they racialize the hierarchy? How might whiteness as a property right show up in this context? • How might the racial hierarchy play a role in the effectiveness of professional learning focused on race? • How do they hold space for race, once race enters the professional learning dialogue? • Is race actually an afterthought of the facilitator? What evidence in the data supports? (Consider: what if their critical analysis of systemic racism doesn’t exist, or has taken a back seat to another content?)
Intersectionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the facilitators self-identify? (race, gender, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin...)(Crenshaw, 1989 & 1995) • Do they center race in connection with other forms of subordination? (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002)

Table 1: Continued

<p>Critique of Liberalism (“includes notions of colorblindness, meritocracy, and assumptions of neutrality of educational policies” Giles & Hughes, 2014, p. 92)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In their talk, how critical of the professional learning or the district’s commitment to professional learning focused on race is the facilitator? • How does the facilitator acknowledge a “token commitment to diversity”? (Incremental change and hiring a black person falls under DeCuir & Dixson’s (2004) “token commitment to diversity” (p. 29)
<p>Counternarrative/ Counterstorytelling (Duncan, 2005; Giles & Hughes, 2009, 2010, 2014)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the facilitator prepare for, or anticipate the potential to silence voices of color in the historically white dominant professional learning space of a school or school district? (<i>Participants can attend professional learning every year for 20 years in a school district and never encounter a professional learning space where race is central.</i>) • How and in what ways do “racist epistemologies…” show up in the storytelling of the facilitators and participants? (Duncan, 2005, p. 101)
<p>Interest Convergence (Bell)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the facilitator chosen? Was it race, gender, nationality or some other identity that “looked” or “sounded” good for the organization? What evidence is provided in the data? • How do the school’s interests or school district’s interests converge with the vision of the facilitator of this professional learning focused on race? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data driven interests tied to a checkbox on a compliance document? ○ Community interests strong and well organized pushing the district? ○ Facilitator gone rogue? Based on what, why the focus? ○ Recent national push, so national recognition for facilitator or district? ○ Law suit forcing professional learning as a compliance issue? ○ Partnership or grant requiring focus as a compliance issue? • How does the facilitator’s autonomy factor into the district’s or school’s interests? Do the interests converge with a certain level of trust with the facilitator? Why?

Table 1: Continued

<p>Whiteness as Property (Harris 1995)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do facilitators of professional learning focused on race consider how certain white property rights extend to white participants in the curricula (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and pedagogical decision making as they develop professional learning experiences? What evidence is found in the data? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Norms of behavior/engagement ○ Clock time ○ Structure of the professional learning ○ Seating arrangements ○ Facilitators physical positionality ○ The need to feel safe • How does systemic racism and the power dynamics associated with whiteness show up and get deployed (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004) in the context of the professional learning, and in how the facilitator determines effectiveness? • How does the facilitator interrupt when white staff exercise white privilege through “den[ial of] their individual participation in the collective, structural racism that perpetuates racialized student failure.” (Vaught & Castagno, 2008, p. 103)? • Do they choose to critique the data from a critical standpoint in the context of the professional learning to guide educators through a critical analysis of the property rights of whiteness in education? What is shown in the data? • How does the facilitator deploy the notion of the collective power (Vaught & Castagno) of whiteness?
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Table 1: Critical Race Theory Data Analysis Coding Scheme.

Phase 4

In this phase of coding I endeavored to find emerging themes that extended beyond CRT. Stake (1995) argues that when looking at case study the analysis should go in and out and in again, in keeping with his suggestions I returned once more to the data

to continue making meaning. I used a network analysis of themes (Thomas, 2017) to organize and look for the interrelationships of the themes across participant responses. The network analysis was useful for uncovering findings and implications from the data.

ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS

The aim of this research study was to provide a full view of the data collected from interview, participant observation and document analysis. Graue & Walsh (1998) state, “researchers have to monitor themselves constantly as they seek to understand interactions. Triangulation provides an important way of doing this.” (p. 102) Observation and artifact gathering pushed my analytical eye beyond the typical optics seen by all. Looking for concrete particulars (Graue & Walsh, 1998) and employing epistemic seeing (Eisner, 2017) in the professional learning space drew my attention to the most nuanced details in the data. To present the full story and establish trustworthiness I attended to the items brought in by participants to setup the learning space, I looked at what was placed on the tables or chairs, I noticed how they used technology and what went into making the learning space physically comfortable. The reflective journal as data recording source provided the opportunity to review my thinking in the context of the space, to connect to the participants interview and artifacts gathered.

Pseudonyms were created for the participants to provide confidentiality. I used a phased systemic data analysis detailed in the phased analysis section above. Scheduling

participant observations, plus a follow up interview with the participants after the professional learning session added to the validity of the data gathered. The transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were compared against each other and reviewed in the context of the analysis of documents and artifacts.

Lincoln & Guba (1982) reference that "...emphasis on process and product is a crucial one..." (p.4) drawing from Cronbach and Suppes (1969) they point to the rationality or public examination of the process and product. Guba and Lincoln (1982) suggest that the process should be conducted in such a way that the inquiry is dependable and confirmable. Clear articulation of the process from the beginning to the end of data generation and analysis was used to attend to dependability and confirmability.

Rationality according to Guba & Lincoln (1982) refers to ability to ensure "...the methods chosen for the data [generation] are appropriate to the problem to be studied... and that all assertions about the context...can be traced to authentic data units or categories." (p. 6)

Data was stored in a file on my computer locked with a passcode that I alone have access to. Written material was kept in a locked drawer in my home office. Discussion of the research was only conducted with participants upon consent and in a private location.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

In this chapter I am presenting findings on what goes into the understanding of effectiveness in professional learning focused on race and how the participants perspectives on effectiveness inform curricula and pedagogical decision-making. I sought to learn the perspectives and approaches to defining effectiveness from ten facilitators of professional learning. The participants understood race-centered professional learning connected to a) understanding and negotiating the emotional nature of race for the learner and themselves, and b) understanding that learning is a longterm process.

PARTICIPANTS

Ten subjects participated in the study providing data on their understandings and perspectives around curricular and pedagogical decision making for professional learning. I am providing brief snapshots of the participants below to provide context on the data I will present in this chapter. It is important to highlight the racial identity of the participants given the nature of this study: five identify as black, two as Latino or Hispanic, two as white, and one as Asian American. The participants are referred to by the following pseudonyms: Taylor, Maya, Eve, Daniel, Andrew, Violet, Chloe, Enrique, April, and Patricia.

Pseudonyms	Regions	race	Pro nouns	gender	years of race PL exp	Years Ed Exp	Org Chart
Taylor	Mid Atlantic	black	she, her	female	5	20	#3
Maya	Western	black	her, she	female	6	7	#3/2
Eve	Western	Hmong	she, her	female	4	22	#3
Daniel	Western	brown, Latino, Hispanic	he, his, him	male	20	15	#3/2
Andrew	Mid Atlantic	white	he, his, him	male	12	22	#3/2
Violet	Mid Atlantic	black, Afr. Amer.	she, her, hers	female	1 1/2	6	#3
Chloe	SouthWest	black	her, she, we, they, us	female	4	13	#3/2
Enrique	North East	Latino/ El Salvador, Immigrant	he, him, his	male	3	30	#3/2
April	North East	white	she	female	15	3	#3
Patricia	SouthWest	Afr. Amer.	she, her, hers	heterosexual female	7 (learning)	30	#2

Table 2: Participant Demographics.

Taylor identifies as a black woman, is the mother of an African American male, has an advanced degree in the field of education, and has been leading race equity work for 5 years in a large urban public school district in the Mid Atlantic United States. Her executive job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization.

Maya is a black woman and is the mother of a black male and a black female. After receiving an advanced degree, she started her career in education and has worked in her current position for six of seven years in a large urban public school district in the Western United States. Her job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization with a reciprocal working relationship to the top district leader.

Eve describes herself as an Asian American female and has spent her full twenty-two-year career in the field of education, four of which have been in her current role. She works in an urban school district in the Western region of the United States. Her job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization.

Daniel uses several descriptors identifying as a brown, Hispanic, Latino male and has spent fifteen years doing race equity work. Prior public and private job roles involved many years of race equity work in the community in which he lives. He currently works in an urban school district in the Western region of the United States. His job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization with a reciprocal working relationship to the top district leader.

Andrew is a white male, has three white children and has twenty-two years of experience in the education field. He currently works in a mid-sized urban school district in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. His job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization with a reciprocal working relationship to the top district leader.

Violet describes herself as a black and African American woman, has spent 6 years in the field of education, and one and a half years in her current role in a large urban district in the Northeastern United States. Her job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization.

Chloe, a black woman, has thirteen years of experience in the higher education and public K-12 field. Her current role is in a large urban district in the Southwestern United States. Her job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization with a reciprocal working relationship to the top district leader.

Enrique is a Salvadorian man with thirty years of experience in education. His current role is in a small to mid-sized urban district in the Northeastern United States. His job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization with a reciprocal working relationship to the top district leader.

April identifies as a white woman, is a mother of an elementary age child, and comes from a family of public-school educators. Despite receiving her master's degree in education, she did not begin her career in the field of education immediately. Prior public and private job roles involved many years of race equity work in the larger community in which she lives. She has worked in her urban district in the Northeastern United States for the last three years. Her executive job role in relation to the top district leader is at the second level of leadership in the larger organization.

Patricia, an African American woman from a family of educators, has thirty years of experience in the K-12 field. She has been in her current role in a large urban district in

the Southwestern United States for seven years. Her executive job role in relation to the top district leader is at the second level of leadership in the larger organization.

DEFINING EFFECTIVENESS OF RACE-CENTERED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The study aimed to add to the research to understand how facilitators of professional learning in urban school districts define effectiveness when implementing professional learning on the topic of race and racism. I wanted to learn about decision points used to plan for, design, and implement effective professional learning focused on race. In the context of professional learning the term participant is often used to describe the learner. To present the data, I use the term learner to aid the reader to distinguish the study participant from the participant (learner) in the professional learning context.

Understanding and Negotiating the Emotional Nature of Race for Learners and Facilitators: When discussing why some facilitators of professional learning focused on race are successful and others are not, the notion of the social emotional capacity of a facilitator was highlighted by participants in the study through terms such as humility, vulnerability as well as vulnerability-based trust. This finding was also salient in responses when asked how they honed their craft, and learned and prepared for the design and implementation of professional learning on the topic of race. In the literature relationship building in the context of a safe and supportive learning environment were focal points for race-centered professional learning (Battey & Franke, 2015; Brooks et al., 2010; Johnson & Fargo, 2014; Sanders, 1999; Skerret, 2011). Four examples of data I found to support the larger finding around the social emotional capacity needed to

negotiate emotions around race for learners and themselves were that it is important to understand and attend to personal triggers, the importance of having strong social emotional capacity in professional learning application, being mentally prepared to hold space for emotion, and to participate in racial affinity groups to be heard and affirmed.

Participants understand internal challenges about race and how that plays out as a facilitator negotiates emotion in the context of a professional learning session. The acknowledgement of and navigation of emotion for the learner and themselves was seen as necessary to be effective in professional learning on this topic. The following are examples of focusing on negotiating the emotional nature of race for learners.

Daniel talks about effectiveness when triggers might hinder the ability of the professional learning facilitator to mentally hold space for the emotion that often enters when race is introduced as a topic. His example acknowledges the emotional impact of race on a learner and what he feels an effective facilitator must be prepared for as they implement professional learning centered on race.

Researcher: When the topic is race why do you think some facilitators are effective and others are not?

Daniel: I think those who are not effective either come at it from blaming people for their interactions or they're not comfortable with the emotionality that's connected to it.... I think a lot of facilitators have an intellectual understanding of race and don't have as much connection to the emotional impacts that race has on people, especially black folks. Because the reality of America is the darker your skin color, the worse you're treated. And there are some trainers, even black trainers who don't buy into that historical context....

Eve, in laying out her personal philosophy about race-centered professional learning, talks about negotiating the learner as they enter the learning space. She values grounding the learning in the experience they bring into the room. As she learns what they have to offer, she shifts and navigates to accommodate their learning.

Eve: ...My philosophy is how do we surface, bring to light, what's below the surface for adults, but also how do we walk along in that journey of awareness with them, supporting, scaffolding, ensuring that they are also feeling safe, as they're treading into moments of discomfort.... So how do I attend to their emotional needs? As they engage in this learning, helping them to continuously reflect...tools to grow...tangible concrete things they can see.

Andrew acknowledges the complexity of race in a professional learning context addressing his intent as he navigates the emotion that can surface in the conversation. He also speaks to what is brought into the room by the learner and ways he addresses it.

I want to help people learn about racism.... Talking about racism as the system that produced [race] in the first place...where they don't recoil, check out of the conversation.... I've seen for the past three years...a lot of white women who are yelling check your privilege, [I ask] how's that working? Is that changing anyone's hearts, minds, or actions?

The following are examples of how personally the participants negotiate emotions as they facilitate race-centered professional learning. When discussing why some facilitators of professional learning are effective and others are not, Taylor speaks to the personal triggers that must be acknowledged and navigated by the facilitator. Without acknowledgement and intentionality in the professional learning space, she feels the facilitator is not able to be effective.

I was doing a training at a college and an older white gentleman said to me, in front of the group, “you know, I’m just glad that I can listen to you.” ...I’m not used to having professional black people, black women maybe.... If I haven’t done my own work around who I am, my racial identity, where I stand and things, then that [will] trigger me.... What I remember about the experience is that it didn’t go anywhere in my body. ’Cause..., when something triggers you, your heart starts racing, and you might have a problem concentrating.... I was able to, in that space...after having years of training...help him unpack his experience. And everybody was watching....

Daniel recognizes the facilitator must possess the skill to navigate personal social emotional triggers in the space. He expresses this level of facilitator preparation is crucial to how learners connect in the professional learning.

If you can’t sit in the fire of somebody else’s emotion, don’t start the conversation...if you get triggered by other people’s emotion, then find somebody else to facilitate it because you’re going to do more damage to that person and people are going to walk away and they’re not going to come back. Eve also discussed the social emotional capacity of a skilled facilitator able to

take a neutral stance in the face of a potential trigger, to get the learners to critically reflect.

So, I think skills and facilitation around courageous conversations is really important...and...speaks to...the social and emotional capacity and capital of people.... As a facilitator I’ve got to manage my emotions...especially when somebody is telling me that this is not true, what you’re saying doesn’t exist.... You have to manage your emotions as a facilitator to say well tell me a little bit more about what your data is saying. Because your data is telling me one thing, and you’re telling me another.... Let’s deconstruct that data...part of that is... neutrality of facilitation that I think is really important.

Finally, many participants spoke to the notion of spaces and places to let their hair down, to be authentic and unapologetically true to self. April engages in affinity groups to give herself space, much like Taylor uses therapy to process and refresh her social emotional capacity without the concern of judgement from others.

April: ...Personally...I go every year to, a weekend workshop that is specifically for white people's work on racism.... I've been doing that... 30 years now. ... If you're going to sustain yourself as an activist in doing this work you have to have ongoing support...this is where I go...to refuel and refresh and make mistakes and all....

An interesting finding that emerged from these data was the belief that in order to negotiate emotion for themselves the facilitators needed to engage in self care. Self care played out in three ways: extending a protective level of vulnerability, finding balance in learning, and being authentic in spaces outside the professional learning .

For example, Maya shared the vulnerability she needs to care for herself even when she knows her colleagues cannot understand how taxed she is while leading race learning in her district context.

Researcher: What district supports personal and professional are provided to you as a facilitator

Maya: Personally...I am not willing to be vulnerable enough with the people that don't look like me and share my similar experiences to receive personal support.... Because when I say to you how stressed I am, how tired I am, and the weight of this work.... Do you really get it, do you really understand? I'm not complaining, I'm just telling you the truth...I'm mentally exhausted.

Andrew quotes Audre Lorde as he connects with the political nature of his role in the district, with the black woman's existence in society. He makes these connections to his role in the organization as he navigates and negotiates the politics of his position in the organizational structure of the organization. Although he has the full weight of visible support from the top district leader he extends a protective level of vulnerability because resentment exists among others in the organization.

This really made sense to me...that day, that was about black women, it was about self-care.... A simple statement...for black women self-care is an act of

resistance.... I understand because you're actually resisting a culture that is trying to beat you, foot on your throat, ...beat you down...taking care of yourself, loving yourself daily is resisting.... I didn't think about that as...militant, but it really is...for all of us I realize how important that is.

Taylor shares the importance of balance and the facilitator finding the right self-care practice that fits their personal needs. She also touches on how all the book knowledge and historical knowledge can be damaging to the psyche of the facilitator who like her, want to soak it up to inform practice. Taylor recognized she must find a way to balance all that she holds in order to be effective.

How you care for yourself and how aware you are about what you're taking in and how it's sitting in your body, do you have a meditative practice, or...a self-care practice? ...it's really important, you can spend time with people who teach you, help you become a better trainer.... I was all in my head, I was in my craft, I was all in the books...because I'm hungry to know more.... So much stuff has been withheld from us that when you start reading it's just freaking crazy....

Taylor expresses the nature of her role as facilitator requires that she hold space for the learners and place herself and her emotions in check to support the learner's experience in the professional learning space. She recognizes that she cannot show up fully authentic and say everything she wants to say because it could potentially limit the learner's growth. Instead she uses her voice as a black woman, outside the professional learning experience in meeting spaces and other places in the school district.

Researcher: How do you hone your craft? What do you do to develop your facilitation skills personally?

Taylor: ...When I am not training, I give myself permission to be authentically me.... Part of honing your professional craft has got to be about self-care, and creating spaces where..., the rage, or the joy, or whatever is...happening with children has free expression.... I'm in lots of different meetings where I do not demonstrate even a fraction of the reserve that I might if I were training.... People are multidimensional and part of what happens to us as black women especially in

professional spaces...things are so dangerous and tenuous, that we learn how to share parts of ourselves, and the parts of ourselves that we share are the most valuable, and the most beautiful, and the most necessary.... Part of how I show up in my power as a facilitator is giving myself permission to be a whole human being in as many spaces as I possibly can be.

The social emotional capacity of a facilitator was highlighted by participants in the study through terms such as humility, vulnerability, and vulnerability-based trust as a necessity for effectiveness. When a facilitator stands before a group of educators to discuss the taboo topic of race in the context of professional learning in urban school districts emotion frequently impacts the learning environment. Participants in this study feel it is the duty of a responsible, effective facilitator to work on themselves so that they can be fully present and able to hold space for emotion, challenge, personal attack, and the overall struggle of the learner with this topic.

Understanding Application of Learning as a Long term Process

Participants in this study view effectiveness in professional learning focused on race as a long term process. In the literature, studies also referenced a long term “process of asking questions, investigating answers, trying something new, observing impact, and asking more questions” (Michael, 2015, p. 29). In Holt (1995) the author looks at the writings of W.E.B. DuBois and Franz Fanon to understand the discovery of race and an understanding of self as a racialized being. Holt (1995) argues for the “...study of everyday life and ‘everydayness’”, to engage in critical inquiry of the “everydayness” of race (Holt, 1995, p. 7). Many studies have shown the need for educators to take an inquiry stance (Carini 1973; Carini 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Cochran-Smith,

2004; Michael, 2015) in the context of professional learning focused on race. By looking at race as an everyday phenomenon, a system or structure designed to get certain results, we are engaged in an inquiry that normalizes the impacts of race on our lives and in turn, a critique of how we as adults might shift and change to combat those impacts on our work with students in urban schools and school districts. Participants in this study share examples of grounding design and implementation in an inquiry stance with the understanding of effectiveness as a long term process that involves stages, levels and cycles; includes collaboration, coaching and follow-up to shift adult behavior and holds equity as a central focus.

Eve and Andrew were both very process oriented in their discussion of a long term process focused on the ability of the adult learner to move through stages, levels and cycles. Andrew talks about his thought process of planning to implement a yearlong professional learning series. He focuses on the design and creation of the professional learning environment holding the need to design in a way that guides the learner through stages, levels and cycles. In the example below Andrew's thinking about the race-centered learning event and the need to hold space for the learner's application of learning connects to Holt's (1995) notion of everydayness. This example further illuminates the conscious reflection of a facilitator grappling with the concepts of race vs. racialized beings as he plans to implement in the professional learning environment to engage learners in this long term process.

...When it's racialized, racialize it. You know, isolate it, don't beat around the bush, you know be real, and provide an opportunity.... Cause if people stay stuck in viewing themselves as racial beings, instead of racialized beings this is...what

I'm interested in, racism not necessarily race.... There needs to be a really deep nuanced understanding of what racism is...that it's a system that dehumanizes and violates dignity

Andrew goes on to talk through setting up for effectiveness in implementation of the professional learning event as he designs a process that includes levels and stages of the day. These stages and levels are attended to throughout the course of the professional learning series he conducts with staff over the course of the school year.

So it starts with whose coming? And there's all types of detective work to do..., do they know each other? What's the level of trust... What are the outcomes...ideally the outcomes would be specific to that group, but from a programmatic standpoint that can't always be, so I try to make these outcomes broad...what are we trying to do? Then from there...what content and processes are going to help us accomplish...these outcomes for this particular, specific group? Then it becomes what are the stages of the day and that's where the four levels come in really...handy in terms of structuring the day.... You're always going through attention, emotion, thought, and action every single cycle and then from there comes an agenda of here's what we're going to do and this remains flexible.

This example is illustrative of how participants in this study sought to design professional learning that scaffolds for learner growth as a long term learning process.

Eve talked extensively about the effectiveness of a facilitator to collaborate, coach, and follow-up as a guide for adult learners to uncover shifts in their behavior. In planning for implementation Eve uses strategies to maintain a neutral stance as facilitator/coach. In her discussion of the prerequisites for someone to effectively facilitate professional learning focused on race, Eve first focuses on the processing and reflection of the facilitator. Next she discusses the processes the facilitator takes participants through, then she speaks to guiding the learner in a series of moves that take place over the long term in order to engage adults in the learning process.

...We can have the mindset, we can have the heart set, but if we don't know how to walk people on this journey...and navigate around those uncomfortable topics in a way that's constructive, and that is productive, then we will walk out of that space having people who continue to say, well that didn't work! ... So part of the learning is also how do we find opportunities as supporters to follow-up, and to observe, to build...professional learning communities where folks are afforded opportunities to continuously reflect and debrief and to share...? Whether it's a problem of practice or to share their thinking around particular issues that they might be struggling with and learning needs that they might...look for additional supports with.

Eve values the facilitator as the person who acts as a guide on the learners'

journey during and after the professional learning session. She sees the process as a reciprocal one.

...Again going back to that ability to enroll people into a process so that they feel that they are a part of the conversation and that they are in fact adding to their growth as opposed to us telling them what they ought to do and changes they ought to be making. ...That enrollment process I think is built on the way in which we communicate, the relationships we build, and the way we welcome people into a learning space. Creating safety, creating physically as well as certainly emotional safety, and that is a place where all voices are honored and that when you are uncomfortable check in with that because that's an opportunity for growth.

When discussing the notion of effectiveness in the context of this type of professional learning, Taylor uses an equity lens to assess effectiveness in professional learning, but also to have a clearly articulated theory of action that includes adult development.

Taylor: ...Professional learning...is going to be...assessed in the long term sense on how we served underserved or marginalized students, our historically underserved populations. But before we get to that place we're going to have to ensure that we're building staff capacity.... We have to have a theory of action for how people develop that is based on some level, some research and then we need to identify outcomes and create curriculum around those things. Then hold ourselves into account for...achieving them....

Researcher: What in particular do you use to infuse the race equity piece from a theory of action standpoint? Are their particular pieces of research that you tie in all the time or a certain framework that you follow?

Taylor: ... We use critical race theory as an analysis tool.... So for example, one of the tenets of critical race theory is permanence of racism, ...it can show folks how you can do restorative practices, you can do virtuous language, you can do...whatever tier behavioral system, but if you take the same thinking into it you'll get the exact same outcomes.... We try to use tools like critical race theory to help people to develop a more sophisticated level of analyzing their choices.

Taylor understands the necessity of grounding the long term process in theory that supports a critique of everydayness. This critique in a facilitator's design process makes this type of professional learning more complex than typical urban school district professional learning. In the design and implementation process she is operating from a critically reflective notion of the positionality of the adult learner in an educational system that values professional learning, but does not value holding a critical analysis of yourself as a racial being in that professional learning space.

Understanding application as a long term process, the facilitator of race-centered professional learning is in a constant state of reflection on the sociohistorical impacts of race on the work they are tasked with as facilitators, which leads to their personal growth. Participants in this study find effectiveness in professional learning requires attention to self to prepare to support the learner's growth. Ways of work for the participants included personal time to reflect and plan, but more importantly down time providing themselves space to rest and not focus on the needs of others. Much of the work of the facilitator of professional learning in urban school districts involves attending to the social, emotional needs of the learners and leaders of their organization and little time or attention is given

for them personally. They are tasked with scheduling time to design and deliver research based professional learning structured for the growth of the adult learner. If they do not purposefully include it little to no time is built in for the mental preparation time needed to effectively hold space for the emotion and growth capacity of the adult learner.

Participants also value the ability to make space in their design for a long-term process to lead the adult learner to engage in critical consciousness and application in their daily work.

Informing Pedagogical and Curricular Decision Making

Each participant interviewed shared their personal philosophy on effectiveness in the implementation of professional learning focused on race. Their perspectives informed their curricular and pedagogical decision making as they developed each professional learning experience. In this section I will present findings on pedagogical decision making followed by findings on curricular decision making of the participants. I sought to learn how the participants engaged in pedagogical decision making as an ongoing process before, during and after the professional learning event. I was interested to know how those decisions connected to their definition of effectiveness. Study participants articulated that in order for a facilitator to be effective, they have to attend to pedagogical decision-making a) with an understanding of the situatedness of their racial identity in the professional learning context, and b) when creating audience affirming learning environments.

PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR DECISION MAKING FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF RACE-CENTERED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

With an understanding of education as a racial project (Omi & Winant, 1994) I endeavored to unlock the codes to effective design and delivery of professional learning as defined by the participants. I sought to understand how race, and the implementation of the topic of race in professional learning impacts the way participants focused on pedagogical and curricular decision making.

PEDAGOGICAL

In this section I present findings that show how the participants made pedagogical decisions before, during, and after implementing a professional learning opportunity with an understanding of race. Study participants articulated that in order for a facilitator to be effective, they have to attend to pedagogical decision-making by a) accounting for the complex ways that race operates in the learning encounter and b) establishing an affirming, affective learning environment.

Accounting for the complex ways that race operates in the learning encounter

When asked how he identified racially, skin color was the first connection Daniel made to identify himself. He toggled between the complexity of what the government says his race is and what he feels internally and identifies with more closely, ethnicity. In the excerpt below, Daniel is thinking through the ways in which the learner is engaged in the interrogation of this complexity. He considers race as a tool to assist him as facilitator to guide the learner to an understanding of the ways race operates even while they are

engaged in activities together. Recognizing whiteness as a barrier, Daniel inserts multiple perspectives through questioning strategies as a pedagogical technique to invite learners to reflect on their socialization as they experience the professional learning.

Researcher: How do you interrogate learners' racial socialization in the context of the professional learning?

Daniel: ...if we're being honest, most professional learning is socialized through a white Eurocentric lens.... So even when people say well everyone in the room needs to be respectful, I ask people to tell me what that means to you because then it honors their perspective.... I might spend two hours of the four-hour training just setting it up, ...and talking about the implications of race,...power and privilege....

White participants in this study address race head on in the learning encounter. When answering the question about his racial identity Andrew connected to how it shows up in his pedagogical decision making during the professional learning. He uses himself to model a healthy racial self-identity to invite learners who identify as white to lean into experiences with exclusion. Andrew believes to clearly understand race one must understand the damage it does to white people. Below he describes the pedagogical moves he makes to prepare white people to insert their stories in the context of professional learning adding complexity to how learners are socialized in a professional learning space in the traditional urban school professional learning experience. Andrew decides to use himself as curriculum to build empathy. He defines effectiveness as helping white learners specifically connect to exclusion and marginalization in their lives as a relevant facilitator scaffold for a conversation about race.

...It's always important to me to share that I have a racial identity... working on a healthy racial identity has been a part of my journey...it's not about being white, it's about what am I doing with the whiteness.... Getting white people to tell their

stories [is] so important.... What I'm trying to do is help them identify the emotions they experience when they are excluded so they can connect their patterns of marginalization with broader societal patterns, so that they can see themselves as a part of this like really damaging society that wants the beaten down...the lower you are on that social hierarchy the more beat down you get.

White participants describe race as a way of being and speak to the need to advocate for deep dialogue about race in the context of professional learning.

Pedagogical decisions happen as an ongoing process before, during and after the professional learning event. All of the participants shared equity work and race equity work is a way of life: it is not just a job, it is a way of being. For example, April, as a white woman, feels a sense of responsibility to advocate for racial dialogue to happen in professional learning in schools. With a clear understanding of the racial hierarchy in society and her position in that hierarchy she chooses to use her racialized voice to challenge her district to create space for dialogue about race.

... I believe that how I get treated in a society has to do with my parents, so I identify as white... I have a moral obligation.... In this work I think there is an important role for white people to play and I try to do my best.... We need to normalize that having discussions about race, that's just part of the work that we do. I believe we need to learn about how issues of race play out on an interpersonal level, microaggressions, self-social segregation ... I believe we need to talk about race on an institutional level where racism is baked into how we do our work.

Participants who identify as black and female—the largest group represented in the study—bring a different complexity to this planning process. Each woman described her pedagogical moves with a clear understanding of how Black women are situated in society and the racial stereotypes aligned with their positionality. Chloe made a salient

point on the trauma racism inflicts on black women when describing an activity where she takes learners through a series of steps to highlight identity characteristics. She asks the learners to focus their attention on their race or culture then makes a pedagogical move using herself as an example when they get stuck. She uses this move, recognizing how complex it is for them to get unstuck, to engage the learner in critical self-reflection which can lead to empathy as well as critical consciousness.

...I ask them to share a negative story about one of the identifiers they've written down, for like a minute or so, they pair up...share a positive story.... I give this one as an example, ...I am a black woman, but I am not an angry black woman, ...it depends on what day it is. (*Laughter*).... Giving my own lived experience.... What that causes you to do is think about what stereotypes have been placed on me that I don't necessarily own.... I'm not what you would consider to be in the media what an angry black woman is, right? Because that's...been a destructive way of acknowledging someone who maybe experiencing something that is traumatic.... And we all get mad....

Establishing an Affirming, Affective Learning Environment

In Brooks et al. (2010) the researchers found that relationship building as a focus and goal in professional learning has the potential to connect learners even when their school environment is rife with mistrust and marginalization. Throughout this study participants speak to the notion of authenticity of self and affirmation of the learner. To the participants it is important that the learning environment created is affirming, emotionally safe and attends to the just in time needs of the learners. When attending to beliefs about affective learning environments facilitators make space in the professional learning session to build the capacity of the learner to empathize with the plight of the marginalized group.

Enrique expressed that his philosophy about professional learning focused on race “...is based on being aware, knowledgeable of the cultural differences [so] you can start to relate to the soul of the relationship...”. In the context of a professional learning session Enrique was able to attend to pedagogical decisions for the relational needs of participants when he chose to hire a skilled facilitator to create space for districtwide work through small campus specific teams. He chose to work this way because the district wanted to meet the needs of the ninety eight percent white teaching staff.

Researcher: In the context of professional learning, from your perspective, why would you bring this consultant to your school district?

Enrique: Yes...we wanted to bring, number one, credibility, expertise and, also the fact that this kind of training, because it's very sensitive, it needs to be delivered by somebody who comes in from a neutral position.... [He] being a white person with so much experience...can deliver this message and speak truth about what's going on.... You know in this work I believe...this is an inside/out kind of work. You can't impose these concepts and these competencies on people. They really have to become aware of what's inside, deal with it, work with it, and move forward.

Violet, in contrast, feels it is the responsibility of the district level facilitator to be ready to honor resistance and tension, intentionally preparing before the professional learning to place themselves in a space of vulnerability. Whereas Enrique values an outside voice to first create that space for authenticity, Violet values facilitator authenticity. Participants recognized authenticity as showing up as your full self and being a whole person within the session. Violet believe that learners should experience the facilitator as a unique person who struggles with race and talks through how to overcome the impacts of race. In her district, the work is still new and she strives to

ensure the affective needs of the learner is met so they are affirmed in the professional learning space.

Violet defines effectiveness in facilitation as comfort with discomfort. She describes the opposition she faces as a facilitator of professional learning in her school district. Her district approaches all professional learning from a compliance frame; little emphasis is placed on creating the audience affirming environment she finds necessary to move learners to their growth edge. She describes authenticity and what can happen when the facilitator is not prepared to hold space in the professional learning environment.

Researcher: When the professional learning topic is race why do you think some facilitators are effective and others are not?

Violet: Well I would say first and foremost comfort.... I'm pushing myself to be uncomfortable, ...I'm willing to take a risk with a group.... There have been some sessions focused on discipline recently that have been necessary sessions to inform staff about changes.... The language and tone has been of compliance... and the sessions include very explicit conversations about race and the racial disparities associated with the disciplinary practices.... Race being brought up without the facilitators anticipating and being ready to honor the resistance and tension that comes from the topic [has caused] ...school leaders [to] feel like they're not being heard. They feel like they're in the power dynamic of central to school.

Pedagogically, Violet is prepared to take a risk to have a difficult conversation about race. An effective facilitator is audience affirming when they pedagogically honor resistance and tension from the audience. An audience affirming facilitator picks up on tension and makes decisions in the context of the professional learning to support the learning needs of the school staff attending the professional learning.

Chloe illustrates Violet's point and gets to know her audience in advance to prepare for resistance. Pedagogically, Chloe believes the facilitator must take into

account the need to create physical and emotional safety where each person's voice is valued.

Researcher: What steps do you take to design effective professional learning focused on race when you're preparing to stand in front of the group?

Chloe: First..., I need to know my audience.... I try to create a room such that it's safe enough for people to really express how they feel.

April makes pedagogical moves to anticipate potential negative vibes from the white people in the room and provides an opportunity for all to show up as their best engaged selves in the context of the professional learning

Researcher: Learners enter with particular identities, norms, values, behaviors, and social skills. How do you interrogate their understanding of their racial socialization in the context of the professional learning?

April: I will often see a shift around the level of defensiveness.... White people will come in and be like, I don't need this, I'm not racist.... I often will say things like in the next hour we're going to review why racial equity work is so important in the...public schools. I bet for most of you this will be 95% review, you already know this stuff, but just in case, we're going to just go through it to make sure we are all on the same page and hopefully everyone will learn something new.... I try to call people to be their best selves....

Participants pedagogical decision making prepared them to effectively facilitate professional learning. Preparation is a process that can occur before, during and after a professional learning event. Pedagogical decisions are made with an understanding of the vulnerable state a conversation about race elicits in a professional learning environment that traditionally does not address taboo subjects. Pedagogical decisions are also influenced by the skilled facilitators' understanding of racial identity, socialization and the social construction of race in American society.

CURRICULAR DECISION MAKING

Participant perspectives on curricular decision making is informed by what they outlined as necessary in the context of professional learning focused on race. Participants expressed the importance of drawing from (counter) storytelling, studying or adopting curricular models to frame the professional learning, and ground learning opportunities in sociohistorical content knowledge. As they consider the curriculum of the learning event participants recognized the nature of an educator's experience in urban schools. This experience is tarnished due to missed opportunities in professional learning to interrupt the "existing dominant sociocultural knowledge base" (Brown, 2013).

Drawing from (Counter)Storytelling

Prevalent in this study was the sentiment that story is a significant curricular decision and creating the space to invite learners' story into the professional learning dialogue is important to build empathy. In the literature review African American researchers and authors also found storytelling important to dialogue about race, specifically in the context of professional learning on the topic of race. Nuri-Robins & Bundy (2016) argue for the use of "story" and the "sharing of stories," as a consciousness-raising endeavor, which provides space for critically reflective inquiry (Carini 1973; Carini 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Michael, 2015). Drawing from counterstorytelling (Bell, 1990, 1995a, 1995b; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001) participants describe the use of story as curriculum. It is important to understand the perspective with which each participant approaches curricular decision

making around the stories we tell ourselves and the stories told. Participants in this study have a deep, critical understanding of the masternarrative of race as taboo (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 2014; Katz 2003; Omi & Winant, 1994; Pollock, 2004) juxtaposed against a masternarrative of how professional learning in a school district should only focus on the teacher's pedagogy, practice and preparing students to be successful on multiple standardized tests. In the educator masternarrative participants in this study recognize there is no room for the critical reflection of a teacher or principal on how they enact their racial identity through their everyday work in schools, nor how those actions impact the student. Thus, in this study the knowledge of the participants of race as a permanent (Bell, 1990, 1995a, 1995b; Mills, 1997; Solórzano 1997, 1998) fixture in society informs curricular decisions. Participants critically understand the potential impacts and inputs into a professional learning space as byproducts of the permanence of racism. The centrality and permanence of race informs curricular decisions for professional learning through participants "...recognition that despite its uncertainties and contradictions, the concept of race continues to play a fundamental role in structuring and representing the social world. (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 55)

Facilitator perspectives on effectiveness are important when making curricular decisions to insert facilitator sharing and storytelling. Drawing from critical race scholars like Derek Bell (1990, 1995a, 1995b) participants describe using the counterstory to provide learners with a peek into the experience of someone who is different from them. Caruthers (et al., 2004) found that storytelling "...creates dissonance without defensiveness..." in the learner making a professional learning session focused on race

less adversarial. Study participants use modeling as a strategy in the professional learning environment to invite people to engage in storytelling. Daniel uses personal story as a curricular decision to model vulnerability in the professional learning. He uses himself as curriculum to move people from a thinking to a feeling space to get in touch with their emotions in the context of a dialogue in a professional learning session.

Researcher: What specific strategies or techniques do you use to put your personal philosophy about professional learning focused on race into practice?

Daniel: I share a lot of my own personal stories.... When I model those behaviors of vulnerability not only does it give them a visual and a model to do it, I find that my story connects a lot with the people in the room, and so it enables me to build more trust quicker by having those connections.

Chloe describes a scenario where a white male learner challenges the group on his feelings of being a member of a highly marginalized group in America. In the context of the conversation with the learner, recognizing his connection to the current narrative in society, she inserts her personal testimony or counterstory mirroring the language of the learner. She uses his words to affirm his feelings, recognize his internal struggle then uses the counterstory to share a similar sentiment from her lens and her authentic truth for his consideration. Her decision in the moment was to humanize his experience to validate his feelings.

Chloe: He said, I'm a white man and I feel like the most demonized demographic in the country. The room shifted a little bit...because he was honest and felt forthright

enough to say this is how I feel.... Thank you...for sharing that information...I'm a black woman and I have a black son, and I feel like he's the most demonized demographic in the country.

Similarly, Andrew in thinking through why some facilitators are effective and others are not effective, takes care to use the learners story as curriculum making connections in learners' discourse to enact his personal philosophy of professional learning on the topic of race. He uses storytelling as a tool to put new perspectives and experiences into the context of the professional learning. He states: "You can't force people to do stuff.... So, I do it in different ways where I'm trying to elevate other people's voices that share a mindset."

Study/Adopt Models

Facilitators of professional learning in urban school districts who take up the topic of race might also choose to adopt or study models already in use by others to inform curricular decisions. For example, April studies existing models that meet their professional learning needs for effectiveness and then tailors them to her district needs.

[We] sought out models that we think are effective and we've tailored them to the specific context of [our city]. Trying to, on the one hand not reinvent the wheel, consider people [are] doing great work out there. On the other hand make sure that we don't just cookie-cutter the work because there are very specific dynamics in the city that should be [taken] into account.

Taylor and Patricia both use the Courageous Conversations About Race (CCAR) Protocol and Taylor in particular chooses to study experiences and research-based theories to inform curricular decision making and professional learning expectations. Patricia, similar to Enrique, has chosen to contract with a well-respected, research-based antiracist professional learning group to coach her and offer professional learning in the school district. Taylor describes the use of models to inform curricular decision making.

Researcher: Are their particular pieces of research that you tie in all the time or a certain framework that you follow?

Taylor: ... We use the tools from CCAR courageous conversations, [as] the protocol for conversations... we use critical race theory as an analysis tool. And then we use other ... analysis tools like iceberg, ladder of inference, Peter Peterson, Gaye's work.... Those [are]...our major anchors for this analysis and conversation....

Patricia is coached by and partners with a consultant, so all curricular decisions are based on the model adopted by the consultant's firm. They work in partnership to see that the curricular needs and decision points necessary for professional learning are met in a collaborative process.

Researcher: Who in the district determines the content for the professional learning offerings focused on race and racism?

Patricia: Well we follow the curriculum sent through [the professional learning] group, that's how we get our curriculum on what's going to be discussed. We look at critical race theory and examining, going deeper.... [The Consultant Coach] is working with me.

Grounding the learning opportunity in sociohistorical content knowledge

When the professional learning topic is race, educators need skilled facilitators to support the practical application of tools and resources. According to the participants in

this study, facilitators of professional learning focused on race in urban school districts must have sociohistorical knowledge to inform the curricular decisions they make for session content. Participants value situating the work and learning of the urban school district in the sociohistorical context of the impacts on racial and ethnic groups. An effective facilitator of professional learning on the topic of race should possess the content knowledge and understand these impacts in the school district context. Participants identified key components important for curricular content to address the impacts on racial and ethnic groups, including: case studies of actual district challenges and decisions, understanding impacts of critical incidents in society, and critical personal self-reflection.

April speaks to the measures and goals available to her as a facilitator. She does not see them as critical of the school district's policies and practices and the measures and goals do not consider sociohistorical impacts on racial and ethnic groups. Here she describes how she uses actual district issues as curriculum to critique equity in the system grounded in an understanding of the underlying sociohistorical issues at play.

Researcher: What district professional learning standards expectations or goals are used to focus on effectiveness in professional learning focused on race?

April: So generally, we do have evaluation tools that we use for all of our professional learning. ... at this stage I have a lot of confidence in our curricula and I feel like the most important impact that the kind of training we're doing ... is really not measurable. Like how we gonna measure whether we have less institutional racism now than before? ...At the end we do a mock application of the tool. As much as possible we're choosing actual pending decisions to run the tool with rather than... a hypothetical scenario.... We're actually applying it to pending controversies and that's I think incredibly meaningful and effective. How we measure that is a little difficult.

Like April, Eve speaks to the need to use actual district and societal issues as curriculum for people to grapple with in the context of the professional learning while attending to the sociohistorical impacts of race and racism in our schools. She describes a racial incident that occurred and the question she posed to the campus leader as they began to design professional learning engagements to address the issue.

Researcher: Why do you facilitate professional learning in your school district on the topic of race and racism?

Eve: ...This national discourse right now is so toxic to not only our national conversation, ...[it is] surfacing among our student body.... Two students at a particular high school posted on social media, ...putting on black face mask and posting a video of one individual calling the other the N-word.... How do we address this with your staff and how do we also take this into the classroom?

Eve understands the national discourse is having a detrimental impact on the climate and culture of some schools. Eve possessed the curricular content knowledge of the societal impacts on the school and was able to work with the campus leader to design a series of engagements to address the students directly involved as well as the students and staff impacted by the incident.

Chloe similarly understands the impacts of critical societal issues as important curricular considerations in professional learning. She shares her perspective here.

Researcher: You talk about humanizing, you talked about making sure that you're...setting the stage for people to talk about it. What do you think it means to be effective when race or racism is the topic?

Chloe: In order to be effective.... you need to have a historical context.... We have people in this country that are losing their jobs because either they're not familiar with the historical ramifications of race or they are okay with it.... Just in a recent example...[a public figure] lost her job because she felt like blackface was okay to...promote.... If she was familiar with history...perhaps she would recognize...it

wasn't the right thing to do. Especially with a national platform like that, perhaps the conversation should have been around why is blackface even something that comes up?

While considering sociocultural knowledge to inform the curricular decisions they make for session content, facilitators work to ensure that curricula is used to create opportunities for critical self-reflection in the professional learning. The racial consciousness flowchart (Singleton, 2015) is a curricular tool used to scaffold Maya's critical self-reflection and the reflection of the learners in this professional learning.

Maya: ...Whether I'm leading it or if I'm a participant receiving it...I got to allow myself to reflect, and if I can reflect, then my hope is that there's some growth.... To prepare for it is really thinking about the people in the room so I have to consider who's in the room, and what is the message, so take something like microaggressions around race. ... I know that I can't just...throw that into a session if I haven't built up to it.... When I'm working with my team I'm like yeah we've got to get to the racial consciousness flowchart, but we can't go day one racial consciousness flowchart. So often times we create activities...that break up the pieces so...they can make relative connection because otherwise you're gonna cause people to shut down, and they're not gonna learn anything.

The decision points used to plan for, design and implement effective professional learning focused on race is taken up by facilitators in urban school district through processes that inform learning over time. Each participant focuses their work in particular ways that attend to their district needs and find the work difficult to measure. Some facilitators choose to partner with departments, others choose to hire consultants, but the end goal of all is to focus people on the sociohistorical impacts of race and racism on the students and staff in their school district context.

FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the findings participants identify as important to define effectiveness in the implementation of professional learning focused on race. Two key findings emerged around how the participants defined effectiveness of professional learning around race including: 1) negotiating the emotional nature of race for learners and facilitators and 2) understanding application of learning is a long term process. With regards to how the participants approached curricular and pedagogical decision making, findings illuminate that 1) pedagogical decisions are made to account for the complex ways that race operates in a learning encounter in order to establish an affirming, affective learning environment and 2) curricular decisions draw from counterstorytelling, study or adopt existing race curricular models, and ground the learning opportunity in sociohistorical content knowledge. The findings show the participants' perspectives on the pedagogical, curricular and sociohistorical understanding necessary for effectiveness in the design and delivery of professional learning in this context.

The negotiation of the emotional nature of race for learners and facilitators is understood by each participant as more than a checklist or a protocol for dialogue. Designing to implement professional learning where race is the major topic of discussion is an affective and structured process. Social and emotional capacity of a facilitator was a major component of this theme that was recycled through the response of each participants. Effectiveness requires a high level of reflection on the facilitators' practice. An interesting development in this theme was the assertion from all the participants that self-care is an essential requirement for effectiveness. Each participant addressed the

emotional weight of this topic in professional learning and each took a different approach to self-care to combat the toll on their psyche. Participants in this study describe a responsible and effective facilitator as one who works on themselves so that they can be fully present and able to hold space for emotion, challenge, personal attack, and the overall struggle of the learner with this topic.

Participants recognize the application of learning in this context is a long-term process. They value the ability to make space in their design for a process to lead the adult learner to engage in critical consciousness and application in their daily work. It is through this process that participants are uncovering in the learner long held values of the world and those who are different from them. Effectiveness requires the patience and knowledge of adult learner development to design the supports for a long-term process to lead to a shift in mindset.

The ability of the facilitator to have a critical understanding of how race shows up in each learner based on their socialization in society is an important finding that informs pedagogical decision making. The participants expressed that when implementing professional learning they needed to attend to learners pulling from their own personal knowledge and skills as facilitators. In designing professional learning participants account for the complex ways that race operates in the learning encounter. They read the racialized interactions in the room and choose to insert curriculum in multiple ways to push the reflective growth of the learner. Participants were able to find effectiveness as they worked to build their own capacity to lead learner's capacity building efforts in the professional learning.

In this complex learning environment, the learner has to be considered. Participants take care to affirm through story, through processing and inquiry to move and guide the learner along a reflective path. They setup the learning environment making pedagogical decisions informed by their knowledge of the learners in the room. The holding of emotion and critical self-reflection are considered as participants structure their role and the learner role in the professional learning event. In this study participants use focused moves to position learners to arrive at an understanding of racial socialization pedagogically. Those focused moves include attention to how the learning environment is affirming to aid in learner connection to the curriculum offered.

We find across the themes that adult development is important to attend to in curricular decisions for this type of professional learning. As they plan for the professional learning experience participants in this study are aware of the process needed to move learners from knowledge to interruption, to application in their daily work. They insert themselves through story to model vulnerability. Counter Storytelling is selected as a curricular tool, used to build trust with the learner, and to invite the learner to engage deeply in the learning process. It is through this trust building process that participants have begun to observe learners develop empathy for those different from them.

All participants value sociohistorical knowledge to aid in curricular development that is relevant to the current and past racial issues that impact schools. Participants felt effective professional learning must be grounded in sociohistorical knowledge of the world, the community, and the learner's ability to receive the content. Two of the

participants contracted with experts to validate official knowledge of professional learning connecting curricular decisions informed through sociohistorical knowledge. The other eight participants used research to validate their knowledge and used personal sociohistorical knowledge of themselves as racialized beings to connect the curriculum.

Through the analysis of these themes I addressed the research questions guiding this study. The findings sought to present a description of the research process and the perspectives gathered from the participants. In chapter six I discuss how these findings connect to the larger body of research on race in professional learning in urban school districts and the preparation of facilitators. I discuss the implications to educational policy and practice and future research.

CHAPTER 5 PARTICIPANT OBSERVER – BEARING WITNESS

As a race equity leader in my school district I am tapped to lead a Council of staff, and community members through a process that addresses disproportionality in discipline rates of black and brown boys in our school system. The Council is tasked with making a recommendation to the School Board on whether they should choose to ban suspensions for children in Prekindergarten to second grade. The Council members have each received a packet of data focused on one student currently enrolled in our school district. To focus the thoughts and reflection of the Council on the task at hand I introduce a student narrative using a slide show. The Key National Facts from the *Cradle to Prison Pipeline Fact Sheet* (Children’s 2009) frame the slide presentation. On the screen the words “Student Narrative #ItsTooMuch” are displayed, I narrate as I toggle through the slides.

Angela:

A black boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison in his lifetime

A Latino boy a 1 in 6 chance

A white boy a 1 in 17 chance

A black girl born in 2001 has a 1 in 17 chance of going to prison in her lifetime

A Latino girl a 1 in 45 chance

A white girl a 1 in 111 chance

A baby picture is displayed, Ryan born January 13, 2001, is the title of the next five slides. Each slide addresses a Children’s Defense Fund Key National Fact. I read and included relevant details to highlight this student’s narrative. On the slide a playful photo of Ryan at 6 years old posing with his baby brother, both are dressed in tuxedos.

Angela: Children in the most economically depressed communities are at risk of low achievement and attainment and are often stuck in under-funded, overcrowded schools. Ryan, a black boy growing up in a middle-class, black family, is a great student in one of the top elementary schools in the area.

Slide: Photo of Ryan at 7 years old

Angela: Nationally the public school suspension rate among black and American Indian students is almost three times that for whites. When Ryan was in kindergarten he was one of two black boys in the class. Although all the boys exhibited developmentally appropriate kindergarten boy behaviors, only Ryan and the other black boy were placed on a classroom discipline management system. Ryan's mother was his school's Assistant Principal at the time.

Slide: A Photo of Ryan in his varsity uniform as a high school freshman with the caption #ItsTooMuch

Angela: A *black boy* born in 2001 has a *1 in 3* chance of going to prison in his lifetime. Ryan is my black boy born January 13, 2001.

To close out the meeting I transitioned to a video using the next slide with the same photo of Ryan as a freshman in high school with the new caption "We ALL must walk boldly toward our biases," adding a photo of the Courageous Conversations About Race Compass.

The last slide is used to transition to the video used to close out the meeting. The video is a TedTalk from *Verna Myers: How to Overcome our Biases? Walk boldly toward them* (Myers, 2014). The video is focused on black males and the impacts on them in American society. I set the stage for the why of the video by highlighting our demographics: seventy percent Latino and six percent black, yet the district level of discipline referrals and suspensions were two hundred percent black and overwhelmingly male. The members of the Council were familiar with the Courageous Conversation

About Race (Singleton, 2015) protocol, referenced in the review of literature, through past professional learning opportunities. I invited the group to reflect on where they were on the compass as they listened to Ms. Myers speak. I asked them to consider where reflectively her words took them in their thoughts. Was it a place of believing, thinking, feeling or acting? Some of the points shared by the speaker in the video were to walk toward your discomfort, do an inventory, expand your social and work circles. She pointed out how engaging in authentic relationships with young black and brown boys will assist people to interrupt the dominant narrative about them creating the opportunity to build empathy.

After the video I challenged the Council to walk boldly toward their bias as they reviewed the data about the student represented in their data packet. As with participants in this study this scenario as curriculum was used to build empathy for the plight of the child in our school system who is systemically marginalized like my child. Drawing from counterstorytelling (Bell, 1990, 1995a, 1995b; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001) this curricular decision recognized the school system clearly places the dominant narrative of consequences and punishment on children. I used a current district dilemma as curriculum like April as presented in chapter four to assist the Council members to craft another perspective.

Each member of the Council had a clear understanding that a discipline system is needed. My role was to hold space for that narrative and help them to understand the sociohistorical impacts on some given the current way the system operates. Using student data as curriculum, I invited them to craft the story of the student in a short video, a

poster or a presentation with a clear understanding of the bias and beliefs within our school system that have created the data and the need to consider a prek through second grade suspension ban. I left them with the narrative homework and a reflective question: Is school a right or a privilege?

This chapter looks at the implementation of professional learning with Daniel and Maya in their school district contexts. Daniel and Maya were observed as they facilitated a professional learning session focused on race. I focused on how participant perspectives on effectiveness in implementation transferred to pedagogical and curricular decision making in actual practice.

I have observed that in the typical professional learning session, or in educational decision making and programming, race and racism are taboo subjects (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 2014; Katz 2003; Omi & Winant, 1994; Pollock, 2004) subjects. There is a high probability that educators can attend professional learning in a school district every year for twenty years and never encounter a professional learning space where race is central. This is disconcerting given that funding and operational decisions for urban districts hinge on the academic achievement of students by race on standardized tests and restrictions are often levied on districts when discipline rates are racially disproportionate. Daniel, Maya and the participants in this study are shifting the professional learning narrative in their urban school districts.

RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

As a skilled facilitator, I shared the opening story in the spirit of Critical Race scholarship given the findings on counter storytelling in chapter four. “The use of narrative is a prominent theme within the writings of CRT scholars.... [Narratives] serve as a way to counteract the stories, or grand narratives, of the dominant group and to challenge the status quo.” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, pp. 61-62) This story briefly illustrated how I think of effectiveness and make curricular and pedagogical decisions to establish an affirming and affective learning environment. The story illustrated the results of my attention to curricular content that addresses sociohistorical issues as I prepare to implement professional learning. As shown in chapter four, it is necessary to think through every level of engagement of the adult learner from the welcoming ritual (OUSD, 2016) to the food we eat, and the closing reflection to provide an affective, audience affirming professional learning environment. The scenario I shared was designed through a combination of personal processing time, and collaboratively processing with a small group of equity focused educators.

I approached this study as a connoisseur (Eisner, 2017) of professional learning on the topic of race. As a black woman conducting research in urban school districts, I faced a dilemma in choosing the approach that would provide space for my perspective in a field that typically does not privilege my perspective. Like Theoharis (2007) I borrow from autoethnography (Cole & Knowles, 2001) and include myself.

As a black female public school administrator, and practitioner my voice and perspective are hyper marginalized. This study provided the opportunity to privilege my

voice using black feminist thought (Hill Collins, 2009) as a standpoint. Hill Collins (2009) resists the dominant research perspective putting black female "...ideas in the center of analysis, ...privileg[ing] those ideas...encourag[ing] White feminists, African American men, and all others to investigate the similarities and differences among their own standpoints and those of African American women." (p. ix) Patterson et al. (2016) positions black feminist thought as "...a necessarily oppositional stance to the features of mainstream society that keep oppressive power dynamics in place and render black women systemically inferior." (p. 57-58) Taylor (1998) in her study of nurse scholars troubles the absence of "Afrocentric ways of knowing" in research saying, "A Black feminist perspective values and centers African American women's experiences and empowers African American women with the right to interpret their reality and define their objectives."

It is important to know what lens I bring into the observation of the professional learning endeavors presented in this chapter. I am a black woman, the mother of two black males, the wife of a black husband, fulfilling the requirements of a doctoral degree in the field of education at a predominantly white institution. I have been leading race equity work in my large urban public school district in the Southwestern United States for nine of my twenty-two years in the education field. I use my knowledge of pedagogy and curriculum development to design and deliver professional learning in my daily work. My job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of leadership in the larger organization. I grounded this study in critical race theory (Bell, 1976, 1980, 1990, 1992; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Harris, 1993; Lipsitz, 2006;

Solórzano 1997, 1998) because traditionally in the field of public school prek-12 education we are accustomed to having curriculum or programs that provide a roadmap and guidebook for the content we engage in. Those guides and roadmaps give suggestions on facilitator moves and mindset and can walk anyone through delivery and implementation of content, be it math, science, history, or language arts. We do not have a systematic program with a roadmap or guidebook for race that attends to the findings in chapter four, for example that first helps a facilitator to understand their own racial identity, then develop racial literacy and a critical lens to lead learners through a long-term process to develop racial consciousness, all of which were defined as crucial to effectiveness by participants. As illuminated in chapter four, facilitators need to hold their personal understanding of the sociohistorical impacts of race and possess the skills to negotiate and plan the nuanced design and delivery of professional learning.

Black Feminist Thought is used to apply a critical race theory analysis to this work that includes me as a participant observer. Taylor (1998) introduces the concept of the researcher “bearing witness” that is in alignment with my beliefs and values connecting my lived experiences to this research study and places a black feminist, Afrocentric analysis on my role as participant observer. She states, “participant ‘witnessing’ is more accurate than our roles as researchers.... In participant witnessing, the distance between the ethnographer and informant fades as the researcher begins to listen in a way that encourages self-representation and accurate ‘other-representation.’ Participatory witnessing is an act of bearing witness.... Acts of witnessing and testimony are part of the African American tradition.” (p. 59) Taylor (1998) goes on to say

As a researcher, to bear witness is more than written documentation of the experiences of others. Bearing witness involves an active engagement of the self in order to create the space in which to share in the experiences of others. In this mutual space of copresencing, we affirm and validate the experience as real. (p. 59)

In anticipation of operating as a participant observer in this research I formulated a critical race heuristic to guide my analysis of this work. As recommended in Taylor (1998), I took care to practice self-reflection with a reflective journal, field notes and gathered artifacts at the observation sites to aid me in clearly separating the boundaries between my experiences and the experiences and narratives of the study participants. In the narrative vignettes that follow, I present two portraits of how two participants, Daniel and Maya, engaged in a professional learning opportunity. I also discuss my own perspectives and experiences as a facilitator of professional learning, in light of what I observed.

PARTICIPANT VIGNETTES: MAYA AND DANIEL

As I interviewed my counterparts in urban public school districts around the country I was curious to know how the districts selected staff members to lead professional learning focused on race and how that might factor into how the facilitators define effectiveness. What I found in each case was the participant thought effective facilitation that attends to pedagogical and curricular decision making before, during and after the learning endeavor, is crucial to effectiveness in professional learning focused on

race. This adds a new dimension to the existing scholarship for designing and delivering effective professional learning on the topic of race in urban schools and school districts.

Participants were asked to describe the school district prerequisites for a staff member to be chosen to facilitate dialogue about race and racism. Both Daniel and Maya stated they have autonomy in their roles to determine prerequisites. The descriptions they provided are included in this chapter to give validity to their perspectives on effectiveness and to set the stage for how they envision preparation and effective implementation in the vignettes that follow. Daniel describes the process necessary for a school staff member to be prepared to lead race and racism professional learning.

That they can breathe. A little facetious...there is not a set training trajectory per se, with the people who work with me. The prerequisite is that they go through foundational bias training, they do bias 2.0. They understand how their biases on race effect relationships, we do a lot of equity work, they have to go through a trainer of trainer process which is about eight hours long.

For district department level staff Daniel requires that they possess foundational knowledge of bias and how personal bias impacts their ability to lead a professional learning opportunity focused on race. He would also like to see more self-awareness in the preparation for district level staff.

Maya also speaks to the level of autonomy she has in establishing the prerequisites for staff to lead professional learning on this topic.

There aren't any district per se prerequisites, because we have an equity and diversity department, so the prerequisites would come from me as the lead. It's really about the person's ability to facilitate.... You [must] take in people's values and beliefs and stances and still be able to maintain a normal space to build their capacity, that's hard work.... You have to be able to read a room and be able to work with adult learners.... You [can't] take it personal...it will just eat you up anyway because of the emotional weight of the work, but if you start to take it personally it's going to eat you up faster.

Maya mentions some of the sentiments highlighted by Daniel and other participants in chapter four on understanding and negotiating the emotional nature of race for learners and facilitators in this professional learning setting. Maya also mentions “normal,” perhaps recognizing that learners in an educational professional learning session expect a certain way to work in a district level professional learning session. Perhaps the normal space is also collegial in nature. In order to engage the learner in critical consciousness study participants shared the facilitator must be able to engage the learner in a long term learning process while holding space for what learners bring in and what they are offering in the way of curriculum. Maya and Daniel are both given the responsibility of training and developing the capacity of district facilitators to lead this work effectively. The following analysis looks at both as they facilitate a professional learning session in which I was a participatory witness.

Professional Learning Vignette 1

The professional learning session is a four-part series that occurs over four consecutive days, for four hours each day. I attend the first two days of the series. Of the twenty learners in the session one is from a community partner organization and the rest are principals and teachers from the district. The series is designed to provide district staff with an overview of equity and to understand how to apply knowledge of equity to their daily work. I was provided with the facilitator’s outline for the four-day session. In the outline provided the descriptions for the sessions state:

Session 1: Introduction & Finding Equity - Participants will be introduced to the department and equity terminology...and take time to discover race and the frame of reference and assumptions from where they operate in their interactions with students and families...introduced to the Equity Framework to build an understanding of characteristics to achieving equity....

Session 2: Finding Equity & Defining Equity – Participants will engage in activities to understand difference and common ground, the power of establishing relationships and explore some of their implicit biases.... Explore their own privilege...understand the term on an individual level.

In this vignette Maya’s professional learning session is a beginner level session. She described the facilitator moves she made in the context of the professional learning session. The scenario provides examples connected to chapter four findings on curricular decision making and questioning strategies facilitators employ pedagogically to engage the learner. A summary of the observation is provided here to illustrate Maya’s focus and pedagogical decision making as facilitator using artifacts as curriculum, and inquiry as pedagogy. Following this professional learning vignette I share connections in how Maya’s and my styles are similar and how our pedagogical decisions inform effectiveness.

Artifacts as Curriculum

Maya’s curricular decisions support her in establishing an affirming, affective learning environment. She chooses curriculum for sessions that create dialogue opportunities and opportunities for learners to reflect alone. The artifacts used in this professional learning series are a seventy-page bound booklet with the title “Reflection Journal”. On the front cover is the title of the department and their logo with four key

ideas from the book of focus. Each learner is provided a reflection journal, a nice, sturdy black canvas bag with the department logo, a pen with the logo and a copy of the book of focus for the four-day series. Each of these items are a part of the curriculum. The pen says to each learner you are expected to write. The Reflection Journal tells the learner as soon as they choose a place to sit, you will reflect on equity and diversity, we take your time and your learning seriously. The journal has a table of contents organized by the four class meetings which tells the learner we have prepared a specific curriculum for our time together and it is important to us that you have an idea of the direction the series will take. This workshop journal is professionally prepared with a cardstock cover and back cover which illustrates the facilitators were prepared months in advance to receive you, they put serious effort and work into the planning and delivery of the curriculum. The logo messages: “This work is important, we take this work seriously and we want your help messaging your experience about the learning to others in the district and the larger community.” As a participant observer “bearing witness” (Taylor, 1998) the artifacts enriched my ability to situate myself as a learner and participate in the professional learning offering. I was able to fully engage in the professional learning and focused my thoughts on how my fellow learners were receiving the curriculum and receiving what Maya was offering in the way of facilitation.

Inquiry as Pedagogy

Maya had the learners engage with the reflection journal after reviewing district level data. The group engaged with journal prompt number one, where we determine

which of the equity characteristics will be easiest and most challenging for us personally to practice with students and other constituents. Then I notice an exchange as Maya engaged a learner at a point of interruption. The learner was in the front of the room and I was in the back, but I picked up tension in body language and tone of voice from the learner in the interaction. In a follow-up interview I ask Maya to talk about the interaction as I take field notes.

Angela: You were pushing a learner, the ELL learner. Talk to me about what happened in that exchange, she was sitting toward the front of the room.

Maya: ... We were talking about the data. We had shown the demographics for the entire district and then we showed the demographics for the school, then we showed the snapshot profile that they had. ... We showed the increased number of students of color in the district, so we are 51% students of color. At that time, I was coming around listening to the conversation...

Learner: I have a question

Maya: What's your question

Learner: I'm confused I would think that because the increased number of Hispanic students in the district, there would be an increased number of EL students.

Maya: Why is that?

Learner: Well all Hispanic students speak Spanish.

Maya: Why do you say that?

Learner: At my school

Maya: OK, at your school, in your experience what do you see?

Learner: They all speak Spanish

Maya: They ALL?

Learner: In their document for enrollment they put their home language as English, but then they stand around speaking Spanish all the time.

Maya: OK, so what does that mean?

Learner: I don't understand if their home language is Spanish, why wouldn't they put that down?

Maya: Why do you think?

Learner: They may be afraid that someone may be tracking their documentation, or someone is looking into their records.

Maya: Or... (She just looked at me) I said, or they may be afraid that they'll be mistreated based on how they're labeled.

Learner: OK, well it just still doesn't make sense.

Maya: But is EL only Spanish speakers?

Learner: No it's not

Maya: So you need to be mindful of what you say. Because one thing you have to understand is I don't represent that population, but I'm offended by your statement. So the intention might not have been to offend, but it's the way it landed on me.

Angela: So, when you tell her the intention, and landed on me, what are you working towards in the PL when you use those words?

Maya: When I use those words, I need the participants to understand that the intention of our work and our conversation does not always equal the impact of how that lands on people. Oftentimes when you're training people they want a checklist of information to do. But we have to get them to internalize the information so that they understand that just because it came from a good place ...that the intention is not always equal to impact and they need to understand that.

Maya values creating an audience affirming learning environment that requires critical self-reflection from the learners as evidenced by the reflection journal, pen and

reflection points embedded throughout the sessions. She values inquiry and dialogue in a professional learning session, makes pedagogical decisions, and moves accounting for the complex ways race operates in the learning encounter. Her ultimate goal is to move learners to a growth edge.

In the next section Maya described how she used inquiry grounded in her sociohistorical knowledge of the content to engage a learner in listening to and hearing her own word choice. For context, an activity was used to separate the group into partners. We each walked around the room on day one and introduced ourselves. As we did so, we used a page from our reflection journal and signed four sections of a clock so that we could meet up with the same person later in the four-day session.

Angela: After clock partner number 3 you asked a learner for clarification. “Native in what sense?” The learner said, “black hair, olive skin,” she was a white female. She shared a percentage of Native American that she had and that her sisters looked different. You asked “Native in what sense?” Why did you ask that?

Maya: The actual person that shared the information was that [learner’s] partner... in the activity. What he said was, my partner said her siblings look more native. I turned to the learner and said “Native in what sense?” She started giving descriptions. So I said what does that mean? Because what we also know that predominant white educators and white culture make statements not understanding what that means. So when she said dark hair, dark skin, I said that doesn’t define native. So my goal in that was getting her to hear what she was saying.

Maya’s facilitation style here is to ask questions to move the adult learner to a level of consciousness. Accounting for the complex ways race is operating in this exchange, she pushes the learner to repeat and explain their thinking aloud to gain a personal understanding of how they are thinking about themselves as a racialized being.

RESEARCHER CONNECTIONS

When I design for effectiveness in my professional learning focused on race I am concerned with organization, preparedness and clearly articulated learner expectations and agreements to meet learner needs. Attention to these details connect the learner to the traditional urban public school professional learning expectation, while inserting a new paradigm into that structure. To establish an audience affirming, affective learning environment, I, too, create artifacts as tools and use existing reflection tools to scaffold the learning of the learners in the session.

Perhaps it is our positionality as black women in these institutions, but it is important to both me and Maya that all documents and resources shared with the learners message the equity or diversity office logo. I chose to use a wordmark early on in my equity work because it told the learner what the work is about. The wordmark is made up of the words “cultural proficiency” and “inclusiveness” with an ampersand flowing through the first letters of each word. My purpose in using the wordmark is to brand the office, and also to remind people of their engagement in the professional learning setting. The words remind them where they learned about the intersection of race and gender, where they learned that their colleague’s name has been mispronounced since they were in first grade, or where they felt uncomfortable listening to someone talk about a racialized experience. I take care, like Maya, to label books that I provide with the name of the office and the topic of the session or study group. Evidence of the effectiveness of this curricular move is found when I hear from equity focused colleagues that people envy their book collection. This move aids learning as a long-term process when they are

then able to look at the stickers to remind them where they received the curricular materials, opening the door to conversations that extend the reach of the professional learning session beyond the learners attending.

I take special care in the design of handouts down to whether I will have the computer number the pages or have the learner's number the pages. In traditional professional learning in urban school districts learners enter a session in search of handouts. Recognizing the complexity of inserting race into this learning space I typically keep the handouts and pass them out after we have built a certain level of comfort with each other. My curriculum often includes the use of provocative images of an issue we are impacted by socially and politically on the cover of most of handouts. My goal in withholding the handouts is a pedagogical move where I seek to provide the learner space to understand the purpose of the session, their role as learner, and a few protocols before diving into deep dialogue about controversial issues. I use images like those presented in the introduction to this chapter to help learners connect to their own stories and their own narratives about the world. I use video to invite guest speakers into the room who offer a world view and experience different from my own.

Additionally, like Maya, I value the ability of the learner to come to their own understanding and use questioning and mirroring strategies using the words of the learner as curriculum to engage them in more reflective thinking. I ask questions to uncover meaning in the words the learner uses to build a level of consciousness in their word choice. I often find through using questions as a facilitation strategy I encounter one or more learners who say they never paid that much attention to their words. In this context

learners begin to understand how their words can be taken to mean something different than intended. An effective facilitator of professional learning focused on race must attend to the sensemaking (Battey & Franke, 2015; Emdin, 2016; Michael, 2015; Philip, 2011; Philip et al., 2013) of the learner. Attending to the meaning making of the learner provides an opportunity for them to make connections to their daily work and hopefully begin to impact the way they think about the practical application of their learning in their everyday (Holt, 1995) setting.

It has been my experience in professional learning focused on race that when an affective environment is set through shared agreements the learner arrives at a level of comfort to share what's on their mind. In the earlier exchange where the learner is confused about Spanish speaking families and official school paperwork, I would use the prompt "tell me more about your thinking", a pedagogical move to get at the learner's intent. As a skilled facilitator it is important that I attend to the complexity of race by anticipating the questions or comments that will show up in the talk of the learners and to create a learner affirming environment that encourages talk. This prepares Maya and me to review the content of the session before the event and think through the examples, questions, stories or prompts we might use to insert a counter story or to move the learner a little closer to their growing edge of learning. We recognize as skilled facilitators that no matter how much we prepare in advance, we will always come across an issue we did not anticipate as I shared in the introduction to this dissertation with my facilitation of the color arc. In that instance, to affirm learners and hold an affective learning environment, I

drew from my knowledge of the sociohistorical impacts of race and the complexity in negotiating race for myself and the learner.

Professional Learning Vignette 2

The professional learning session is one full day. The handout provided to each learner includes the learning outcomes: disrupt hierarchical leadership behaviors, understand why we need to build relationships, use vulnerability-based trust to build strong culture, and use a growth mindset to build relational leadership. Daniel's professional learning session was also a beginner level session with about 100 learners made up of teachers, community organizations, principals and the superintendent. He took a different approach from Maya's leading a portion of the session and inviting in three guest speakers. Daniel's vignette connects to the notion of official knowledge and how the dominant culture of the school district eliminates the rich culture outside the district from professional learning. His learning session illustrates the chapter four finding of the use of the counter story in curriculum to humanize sociocultural knowledge (Brown, 2013) and lift up the wealth of knowledge in the community (Yosso, 2005). In this vignette I share what I witnessed as key decisions he makes for curriculum and pedagogy in the session around collaboration, official knowledge, and storytelling.

Collaboration

The presentation of one of the guests connected to this study and the critical race lens I bring to the analysis. In the follow-up interview I asked Daniel about the guest

speakers to understand his pedagogical decision making. I've used pseudonyms for the guest speakers below.

Angela: How did you decide on the guest speakers?

Daniel: People are part of my team and do the work. Alice does self-care and Augusta does three or four equity sessions each year. The use of story connects to the work plus the movement and creativity in dance. When we first started the work, they (the district) spent thousands of dollars, when we already had expertise in the district. That devalues the experts in our district. I decided to work with local partners. So, we share the space with local partners and let them lead.

Daniel expresses a personal value in collaboration and how it has granted access to multiple perspectives and to others who see the world differently from him. Drawing from his understanding of sociohistorical content knowledge he grounds his curriculum in a strong connection to people and organizations from the community to share in the delivery and creation of the curriculum for the professional learning session. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) provide a critical race critique of the curriculum in the educational system as a property right that is strictly granted to white students. Daniel's identity as a Latino, Hispanic male is counter to the mainstream dominant narrative of what curriculum should entail for educators in a professional learning session. From his lens he critiqued the choices made, he did not racialize the experts that were paid thousands of dollars in his description, yet his decision to engage with Augusta perhaps was driven to give voice to a racial group marginalized previously by the school district.

Official knowledge

Daniel values Augusta as a key partner in the equity work he leads in the district. Collaborating with Augusta, he taps into what Yosso (2005) calls community cultural wealth and also troubles the notion of “official knowledge” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Ladson Billings, 2000; Solórzano, 1997, 1998). This community organization has deep roots in the city, as evidenced by the personal narrative told during the professional learning session. Augusta, the community partner, brings her family history, biography and *testimonios* (Yosso, 2005) through storytelling (Solórzano, 1997, 1998) while using dance as an artistic medium in the professional learning.

Black feminist scholars have troubled dominant, official knowledge. In the context of this study official knowledge deals with what traditional professional learning looks like and the people who are held up as experts with the correct, approved knowledge in prek-12 education learning. In this study the dominant, mainstream way of “doing,” holds up people as “experts” in professional learning in urban school districts. In all of the school districts represented in this study, including mine, the district professional learning department operates apart from the equity department. I found that the role of facilitator of professional learning offerings focused on race does not typically exist in the department that produces the professional learning offerings for the district. In all of the districts the professional learning department was responsible for content, but a focus on race was not represented in their offerings nor in their level of pedagogical expertise.

Recognizing what knowledge is recognized as central and placed at the center of what a district expects all teachers to know is key to know for the facilitator who is operating in opposition to the center. What Taylor (1998) challenges us to do as researchers can be applied in this case to professional learning. Taylor (1998), when drawing from Brown (1989) says "...the researcher has to 'pivot the center' and 'learn to center in another experience, validate it, and judge it by its own standards without need of comparison or need to adopt that framework as their own.'" (p. 55) Brown (1989) who drew from Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's 'partial truths' (1989) research on the quilt making pedagogy of African-American women offers that we can hold both truths, that there is a center and we need to "pivot in order to center someone else." (p. 922) Both would have us see the need to recognize the space that the dominant system of education holds and the stronghold on the psyche of those socialized into the system.

In his pedagogical decision to center Augusta's knowledge as approved and relevant for professional learning in his district, Daniel gives validity to the cultural wealth and knowledge (Yosso, 2005) of the community outside the district. In this choice he offers the learner a new perspective on curriculum and works to open the consciousness of the group to understand that curriculum can include music and dance. This curricular decision centers the learner's knowledge of traditional professional learning curriculum and pivots to provide the learner with another perspective of professional learning in their school district context outside the traditional way of doing professional learning.

Counter Storytelling

In chapter four, counter storytelling plays an important role in the curricular decision-making for the participants. Brown (1989) and Dowd Hall's research provides the scholarly context for the facilitator's decision to make space in the design. As a facilitator myself I connect to the sentiment of all the participants in this study to grapple with the notion of placing counter stories inside the masternarrative of the traditional learning space, so we each pivot the center in our own way. Daniel chose to center Augusta's experiences and stories in this session. He gave her a few hours shifting learning to center our experience in dance as a relevant and valuable tool to tell stories about the everyday (Holt, 1995) lives of black and brown students in the care of the learners in the room. "Everydayness" (Holt, 1995) is crucial to a critical race analysis of these two vignettes. As I review the data connected with my lived experiences doing the same work, I will address it in the section on storytelling that follows.

Augusta's socio-cultural knowledge enriched my experience as participant observer. Taylor (1998) offered "a black feminist perspective" that I use to center my experience as a black woman and participant observer in this professional learning session. When I first saw Miss Augusta I was not sure of her racial identity; she presented as a white woman from my vantage point on the other side of the room. To explain the shift in pseudonym, as a black child growing up in the southern region of the United States, I was taught to respect my elders, one way to respect elders that was ingrained is to recognize age as wisdom and official knowledge. In my experience, we honor our

elders by never using their first name. I pivot the center out of respect and refer to her as Miss Augusta as I bear witness to her portion of the professional learning.

As she began to speak engaging the learners for her session, I drew from my experience as a black woman and placed her in a racial category as I picked up on her cadence and her body language. It is the notion of everydayness (Holt, 1995) that I use to pivot the center interpreting the reality of my “knowing” her racial identity and shifting her name in respect as official knowledge. “Everydayness” aids connection to a critical race analysis of Miss Augusta’s presentation. My interpretation as a participant observer draws on everydayness giving attention to how pedagogically learners are socialized in the session to understand their lived experiences in the context of the experiences of those who are racially different from them presented here as curriculum. Holt (1995) challenges research methods to “explicate more precisely the relation between individual agency and structural frameworks, on one hand, and then...conceptualize more clearly just how one’s consciousness of self and other are formed, on the other [hand].”

In the narrative vignette below, I place Miss Augusta in the context of the larger professional learning session to provide my perspective on the insertion of the arts and a rich local socio-cultural history to influence effectiveness in professional learning focused on race.

Daniel facilitated the morning session. His style was more of a lecture with turn and talk and was intersectional in nature. I was unable to determine antecedents for his responses to learners on the topic of race so, I’ve chosen instead to focus this analysis on the afternoon session with Miss Augusta the arts-based partner. To prepare the learners to

receive Miss Augusta, Daniel posed these questions to the group, “How do we incorporate this into the kids’ day? How can we disrupt an assessment driven system to bring in the arts?”

Community Based Facilitator: Miss Augusta is a black female founding director of a company that is celebrating its 50th year in the city. Her work with the school district spans decades and her impact on the city is tremendous. After lunch we are introduced to her dance troop and counterstorytelling the impacts of race on families of color in society through dance. She tells her story using a gourd for auditory emphasis as she speaks. She shares that she is a product of the school system highlighting how her parents’ love of the arts inspired her growing up. She racializes her voice and the life her parents lived as a black and white couple in opposition of Jim Crow laws. She brings into the room the socio-historical past and the impacts on her mother and father through dance. Another story was told through dance of the plight of black boys in America. Similar to my narration of Ryan’s story in the introduction of this chapter, Miss Augusta narrated the story with authenticity and intimacy of the real issues we as black families raising boys deal with.

Words and language used by Miss Augusta:

We use the arts to get through the tragedies we don’t understand.

We use the arts to have discussions about race and culture.

Her language focuses on “respecting the children”.

Dance and endorphins...authentic child. We don’t get to see where their power lies.

Spoke to the tension present in the country today.

Activities/Dance:

1. Dancers perform a number focused on police and black boys in the United States of America. Miss Augusta brings the story into full view for learners to fully engage and empathize as discussed in the findings on storytelling as a necessary curricular decision in chapter four. Uncle and nephew experience the world through the nephew’s innocent eyes. I get chills experiencing the dance and am saddened when the nephew saw the cops and fearfully lay on the ground in the fetal position. No one can walk away from that scene and not be forever impacted by the imagery, the sounds and the emotions it evokes.

Miss Augusta attends to the learners' affective needs through the story told through dance. The learner is held through her narration of the piece and the dancers elicit emotion that is felt by each person in the room. This attention to the affective environment accounts for the complexity of sitting in a space where a societal racial issue is centered. After leading the learners to experience the deep emotion of the visual representation of police violence on black boys' bodies, the dance troop adjusts and begins to lighten the mood through dance. This pedagogical move by the dancers and Miss Augusta enabled the learners to come back from deep emotion, reflect, process and get centered. Effective facilitators of professional learning focused on race as presented in chapter four hold the learning space for learners through the ebb and flow of emotion elicited through empathy evoking activities. Effective facilitators according to the study participants know when they choose a highly political issue like police violence they will need processing, reflection and recentering time for the learners. Participants expressed that they make curricular decisions to push the learner to a growth edge. This topic had the potential to shift the majority white audience to a deeper level of understanding of their role in holding this knowledge of societal impacts and their daily work with black boys in the school setting.

2. The learners participated in a number led by the dancers. The dance is facilitated in a call and response style common in African American culture. We watch then imitate with our bodies and our enthusiasm. Miss Augusta and her dance troop have a certain charm that hooks us as learners into their whimsical routine.

Everyone is laughing, smiling and joyful during this activity. Miss Augusta gets down with us and surprises those of us who have just met her. The Afrocentric language “gets down” references the agility with which Miss Augusta is able to move her body. Getting down means that she moves with the speed and agility of her young dancers, one cannot tell through her movements that she is 60 to 70 years old. The pedagogical move to light hearted, joyful dance represents what is called in social emotional learning an optimistic closing (OUSD, 2016). Effective facilitators of professional learning focused on race understand how complex race is and vary the intensity of the activities and the engagement of the learners to meet each person where they are and to invite opportunity for multiple perspectives to enter the space.

RESEARCHER CONNECTIONS

In my role as facilitator, professional learning collaboration is a key component of effectiveness in pedagogical decision making and curricular decisions. To prepare for professional learning I schedule time during the work week to plan, review materials, and dialogue about potential professional learning sessions. I often invite outside experts to collaborate and when I do we conduct the session together. I combine my institutional knowledge and pedagogical decision making with their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to design a professional learning session that pivots the center (Brown, 1989) of our traditional way of doing professional learning in the school district. One such partnership was done with a local art museum and a local nonprofit. We chose

pieces of art work and designed anti-bias activities to accompany the artwork printed on large foldout posters. The posters were distributed to art teachers across our school district who were able to use the curriculum in their classroom to engage every student in the school through art class. This curricular tool was designed for the use of art as a medium to discuss bias with students and adults in our school system.

As evidenced in the opening vignette to this chapter, storytelling is an important pedagogical move when planning for effectiveness in professional learning focused on race. Story has the ability to insert new perspectives and to shift a learner's assumptions of people they know. There was an assumption from some Council members that because I am a middle-class black woman my children and I are immune to the impacts of race in society. My story shed light on their perspective providing a new narrative to their understanding.

It is important in this analysis to point out the socio-political structure within which Daniel operates. Through this study it was shared in different ways by participants that they operate in opposition to the district structure of professional learning. Daniel's job role in relation to the top district leader is at the third level of the organizational chart and he has a reciprocal relationship with his district superintendents. In the political structure of a public school district this means he does not have to request permission from the staff at the first and second levels of the district to speak face to face or communicate electronically with the Superintendent. This relationship puts him in a space very different from my space as a facilitator of professional learning in my district because my relationship, while also at the third level of the organization, is not a

reciprocal one. What this means for my work focused on race in the district is an indirect path to major decisions that can impact the ability of staff to meet the socio-cultural needs of the students in our care. I will notice issues of equity that I should be able to bring to the attention of the Superintendent, but often those issues have to be addressed through updates to the Board, long processes to locate data to corroborate my findings, and paperwork to complete and submit for review to the first and second levels of the organization. Like Daniel, I do have complete autonomy in the development of professional learning and can choose who delivers the professional learning that I design and prepare.

SUMMARY

As I observed these two participants I sought to understand the context within which pedagogical and curricular decision making showed up in the design and implementation of professional learning. I used critical race theory as an analysis tool to understand the use of the counterstory as a curricular tool. In urban school districts the masternarrative of professional learning as lead by experts with no consideration of race, focused strictly on teacher pedagogy and practice is structured, often unconsciously, on the white dominant understanding of how students and educators exist in society. In this chapter the counterstory is used by a participant to pivot traditional professional learning as the center of analysis to make space to center the counterstory. This chapter extends critical race theory through black feminist thought (Hill Collins, 2009) and pivoting the

center to include my perspective as a black woman as participant witness (Taylor, 1998) to the professional learning event.

Through this analysis of Maya and Daniel's professional learning sessions we find several things across the vignettes that facilitators do to illustrate findings from chapter four to implement effective professional learning experiences focused on race. Maya displayed pedagogical decision making as she engaged learners in inquiry and used artifacts as curriculum to scaffold for learner sensemaking. Daniel's curricular decision making included inviting others to collaborate troubling the notion of official knowledge in professional learning curriculum, and the counter story to shift perspectives in his session.

In my observation Maya demonstrated the perspectives of participants in this study that an effective facilitator is in a constant state of reflection on the sociohistorical impacts of race. Maya grounds her questions in an understanding of the learner's socialization in society and the need to negotiate that in her facilitation of activities. Inquiry and critical self-reflection as pedagogy are used as tools to establish and attend to affirmation of and to encourage a shift in the personal narrative of the learner. These tools used in the professional learning context have the potential to move learners to consciousness causing them to critique the decisions they make and the impacts of those decisions on student success. Artifacts in Maya's perspective are the curriculum that establish the structure and protocols familiar to educators who attend traditional professional learning in urban public school districts. Familiar artifacts like handouts, agendas, norms, openings and closings scaffold the learning and allow the facilitator of

professional learning to build in new knowledge to counter the official knowledge expected by the learner.

Daniel's curricular decision to include a community partner troubled the notion of official knowledge expected in this setting and highlighted counter storytelling as a valid curricular or pedagogical learning tool. Collaboration is a promising pedagogical decision with potential to enrich the experience of the learners in the professional learning session. Other participants in chapter four also collaborated with organizations to aid in the implementation of race-centered curriculum. Through collaboration the facilitator of professional learning focused on race can bring a fresh perspective to a difficult subject as evidenced in Daniel's session. Collaboration for Daniel centered on collaborating with organizations representing the arts. Using a partner from the arts brought new curricular choices to his professional learning delivery and design.

The center of traditional professional learning as official knowledge presents a pedagogical challenge to the facilitator that would design effective professional learning focused on race. A critical race analysis of the design process is promising to aid the facilitator in a critique of activities and scaffolds. This critique can begin at the center of traditional professional learning pedagogy and pivot to provide opportunities for the learner to experience multiple perspectives, counter stories and to understand the impacts of whiteness on every person in the system of education.

Finally, counter storytelling is an effective tool to connect the learner with a narrative different from the one they tell themselves or have been told throughout history. The community partner in Daniel's session used storytelling to insert a curricular element

to move learners to empathy. Miss Augusta demonstrated storytelling, a finding introduced in chapter four as a curricular vehicle to connect to the learner's knowledge of self, the world and their daily work. Through counter storytelling the facilitator is able to insert curriculum that is not always accessible in traditional professional learning.

CHAPTER 6

In this research study I have explored the pedagogical and curricular decision making of ten participants who design and deliver professional learning in urban school districts across the United States of America. The issue of race in adult professional learning is of central importance for our understanding of the impacts of race on students in urban schools and school districts. It is also important that the facilitator of professional learning is skilled and prepared to hold space for the adult learner as they embark on a taboo (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 2014; Katz 2003; Omi & Winant, 1994; Pollock, 2004) topic like race in society. Despite this little attention has been paid to how a facilitator defines effectiveness in the professional learning or to the pedagogical and curricular decisions that are made by the facilitator. In my research I set out to understand: How do facilitators define effectiveness in implementation of professional learning focused on race? and How these perspectives on effectiveness in implementation inform the curricula and pedagogical decision-making of facilitators when developing professional learning experiences focused on race?

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was the guiding theoretical framework for this study. Using Delgado & Stefancic's (2012) tenets of CRT I designed a critical race heuristic (Granger 2011) introduced in chapter 3 to guide my thinking and to frame the interviews, observations and data review. In keeping with DeCuir & Dixson (2004) the heuristic was designed using "...the full power of CRT..." to collect and analyze data. CRT as an analysis tool was useful as I drew from autoethnographic methodology to include myself

in the study as a participant observer. Considering my positionality as a facilitator of professional learning focused on race, who identifies as black and female, the CRT heuristic allowed for a strategic review of the sociohistorical impacts of race on the professional learning event. The participants in this study focused on the social, historical, and cultural dynamics at play in their districts as they engaged in decision making for professional learning. As I reviewed data the CRT tenets of the permanence of race, counterstorytelling and Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth emerged as relevant to how the participants defined effectiveness and spoke about their pedagogical and curricular decision making.

In chapters four and five I present findings from ten participants. Chapter four reveals four findings that emerged from my analysis. First, two key findings emerged around how the participants defined effectiveness of professional learning around race including: 1) negotiating the emotional nature of race for learners and facilitators and 2) understanding application of learning is a long term process. Second, regarding how the participants approached curricular and pedagogical decision making, findings illuminate that 1) pedagogical decisions are made to account for the complex ways that race operates in a learning encounter in order to establish an affirming, affective learning environment and 2) curricular decisions draw from counter storytelling, study or adopt existing race curricular models, and ground the learning opportunity in sociohistorical content knowledge.

Chapter 5 presented narrative vignettes of observations from two of the ten participants who provided examples of chapter four findings in the implementation of

two professional learning endeavors. These examples focused on the pedagogical decision making of the two participants as they engaged learners in inquiry and used artifacts as curriculum to scaffold for learner sensemaking. Participants' curricular decision making included inviting others to collaborate, troubled the common acceptance of whose knowledge is official in professional learning curriculum, and use of the counter story to shift perspectives in a professional learning session. I also presented my own researcher connections that highlighted how my practices and experiences as a facilitator of professional learning center on race aligned with my observations of the two focal participants.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF EMERGING THEMES

When taken together, the data gathered across participants revealed the salient themes for effective facilitation regarding effectiveness in professional learning were a) negotiating the emotional nature of race for learners and facilitators, b) understanding application of learning is a long-term process, c) pedagogical decisions are made to account for the complex ways that race operates in a learning encounter, and to establish an affirming, affective learning environment, d) curricular decisions draw from counter storytelling, study or adopt existing models and ground the learning opportunity in sociohistorical content knowledge..

Negotiating the emotional nature of race-centered professional learning

This finding expands the existing literature around reflection and intentional planning and preparation of a facilitator of cross racial dialogue. Participants shared the vulnerable nature of this topic in a professional learning space for themselves and the learner. Findings in my study point to the critical importance of attending to professional learning in a structured way to prepare for the emotion that can bring personal attacks on the facilitator and learners. Participants define an effective facilitator as one who is responsible for their full presence, prepared and ready to hold space for what the learner brings into the learning environment. Scholars have noted the challenges in implementation when facilitators were not reflective, with a lack of reflection resulting in missed opportunities for critical dialogue that placed race at the center of the work (Suyemoto & Fox Tree, 2006; Philip et al., 2013). This literature noted how facilitators in the existing literature were not reflective during conflict in implementation and did not possess the capacity to understand how history and race impacted them and the learners in the school district context. Another related finding was that self-care was necessary for the participants as they prepared for and engaged in the implementation of professional learning centered on race.

Understanding application of learning is a long-term process

Participants defined effectiveness in professional learning as a long-term process before, during and after the learning event. In this study participants valued adult development and focused their planning on guiding the adult learner through a process to

engage them in critical consciousness and application to their work. Drawing from Holt's (1995) notion of everydayness, this finding expands the literature on educators taking an inquiry stance in professional learning focused on race (Carini 1973; Carini 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Michael, 2015) as a longterm process which includes stages, levels and cycles; collaboration, coaching and follow-up to shift adult behavior. The everyday focus on race in this study in alignment with the existing literature, normalizes racial impacts on the learner and further illuminates the need to engage the learner in structured long-term reflective practice on their work.

Pedagogy

Participants in this study accounted for the complex ways race operates in the learning encounter and take care to establish an affirming affective learning environment. Pedagogical decisions happen before, during and after the learning encounter and are a part of the everyday life existence of participants in my study. Existing literature calls for a critical analysis of historical, political and social issues as part of a facilitator's pedagogical reflection (Philip et al., 2013). In this study, participants took a critical understanding of race with them to the design phase of the professional learning and critiqued who was represented in the intended audience for the learning session and who they are in relation to the audience (Suyemoto & Fox Tree, 2006). From there participants engaged in the act of facilitation with a critically reflective stance on their ability to build relational capacity with the audience and how interpersonally they were able to hold the professional learning space as a reflective learning space for others. This finding

contributes to and strengthens the existing literature around drawing from the historical and sociopolitical nature of race in professional learning centered on race.

Participants intimately describe the complexity of understanding how racial identity, socialization in society and the social construction of race show up in a professional learning experience. In my study they defined effectiveness as attending to the setup of the learning environment, attending to how the learner engages or does not engage and taking ownership to inform themselves through reflection on past and future professional learning. Internal reflection based on the race of the participant looked different. White participants focused exclusively on how white participants engaged in the professional learning. They felt responsible for the racial knowledge development (Battey & Franke, 2015; Emdin, 2016; Musanti et al., 2009; Philip, 2011) of the white learner. They used structured processes and protocols to model a healthy racial identity and to encourage the same from white learners. Participants of color were more apt to use story or inquiry as a pedagogical tool to engage the learner in critical self-reflection on the impacts of race on them personally.

Literature on pedagogy in race-centered professional learning uses multiple models to engage the learner in open dialogue to surface the personal beliefs and biases that might negatively impact students' success. This finding addresses a gap in the literature regarding the research on how facilitators make decisions in the midst of all they have to hold to implement effective professional learning on race. Connecting back to the finding that self-reflection is a critical need for an effective facilitator of this professional learning, facilitator pedagogy is informed through that critical reflection.

Curriculum

Participants in this study drew from counter storytelling, studied or adopted existing curricular models, and grounded the learning opportunity in sociohistorical content knowledge. In the literature review studies presented collaborative projects between schools and universities (Brock et al., 2012; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1993) and partnerships with professional learning consulting firms (Palmer 2013). Participants in this study expand the use of collaborative projects to organizations focused on the arts. Use of a partner focused on the arts expanded curricular decisions from the traditional content found in these learning endeavors to include music and dance. Findings from this study provide a new perspective on the traditional way of designing and delivering professional learning in urban school districts and expands the notion of constructed racial meaning using “semiotic resources – such as language, image, music, sound, gesture...” as curriculum in a professional learning context (Pennington et al., 2012).

Chapter five presented an example that shifted traditional professional learning as the center of analysis. As a facilitator of professional learning I witnessed how Daniel troubled the notion of whose knowledge and what knowledge is official (Caruthers et al., 2004; Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Ladson Billings, 2000; Solórzano, 1997, 1998) inserting a community partner’s narratives of the world into the professional learning. Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth evidenced through Miss Augusta’s partner organization inserted the CRT counter story as official knowledge in a professional learning space in this study. Existing literature also address challenges when community cultural wealth is counter to teacher values (Watson, 2013). This approach in the study

centered the everyday (Holt, 1995; Pollock, 2008) experiences of black and brown students leading to learner socialization and empathy as they critically self-reflect.

Conscious of the research and existing models on race-centered professional learning, participants in my study discussed how they used them for curriculum (Lee et.al., 2002; Singleton, 2013 & 2015). Some participants adopted models while others chose to implement the models of existing organizations and experts on this topic. Central to this decision is the sociohistorical knowledge of the facilitator.

The sociohistorical impact of race was a salient theme that weaved throughout the findings. Here, participants perspectives on effectiveness included an effective facilitator who possessed sociohistorical content knowledge to develop meaningful curriculum. Participants used actual district level issues, had a critical understanding of societal impacts on the school district, and used this knowledge to design and facilitate for learner reflection and growth. Participants shared that they were not always able to pinpoint when and where growth occurred in the learner, yet they were able to understand and interrogate through learner socialization in the professional learning the effect the curricular and pedagogical decisions were having. Learner questions and reflections, their engagement and evaluations provided some insight into learner growth. Interesting, few scholarly sources point to the facilitators charge to develop their own sociohistorical knowledge through research and building their own personal racial knowledge to design effective professional learning (Campbell Jones, et al., 2010). My study indicated the importance facilitators placed on finding and reading curricular artifacts to increase their own knowledge.

This study confirms earlier work by scholars focused on professional learning who found effectiveness is affective and structured through a long-term process (Abu El-Haj, 2003; Battey & Franke, 2015; Brooks et al., 2010; Helms, 1990; Howard, 2015; Landsman & Lewis, 2006; Marcy, 2010; Musanti et al., 2009; Palmer, 2013; Pennington et al., 2012; Philip, 2011; Philip et al., 2013; Rogers et al., 2009; Sanders, 1999; Tatum 1997 & 2000; Thompson, 2004). Earlier work also found pedagogical decisions are made with an understanding of the vulnerable state a conversation about race elicits (Colombo, 2007; Hancock & Warren, 2017; Katz, 2003; Okun, 2010; Schniedewind, 2005; Skerrett, 2011; Stevenson, 2014). Scholars found that adult development of empathy is a goal espoused in the pedagogical and curricular decision making of the facilitator (Alkins et al., 2006; Battey & Franke, 2015; Emdin, 2016; Hammond, 2015; Johnson & Fargo, 2014; Pennington & Brock 2012; Philip, 2011; Pollock, 2008; Taylor, 2013). Participants in this study confirmed the importance of engaging learners in inquiry as they grapple with race in professional learning (Carini, 1973; Carini, 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Colombo, 2007; Johnson, 2011; Michael, 2015; Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009; Tatum, 2000; Tolbert, 2015). Earlier works were confirmed in this study on the use of artifacts as curriculum to scaffold for learner sensemaking (Brooks et al., 2010; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Hyland, 2000; Lee et.al., 2002; Oriaran & Meidl, 2012; Sanders, 1999). Finally, storytelling was confirmed as an important pedagogical move when planning for effectiveness in professional learning focused on race (Bell 1995a, 1995b; Caruthers et al., 2004; Nuri-Robins & Bundy, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

This review confirms the need for this study on professional learning focused on race and summarizes the existing literature. The existing literature does not specifically address how facilitators define effectiveness and it does not tell us how they attend to the nuance in pedagogical and curricular decision making. This study expands the literature and provides an understanding of the particular attention to, negotiation of, and critical understanding of the permanence of race needed to be effective as a facilitator who implements race-centered professional learning in urban school districts.

LIMITATIONS

While the findings from this study offer insight and clarity into how facilitators of professional learning centered on race define effectiveness in implementation, and engage in pedagogical and curricular decision making several limitations existed in the study. First, the project was restricted by the sample size. The research focused only on those staff in urban school districts who were responsible for the design and delivery of professional learning focused on race. Purposeful and snowball sampling was used to identify sixteen potential participants and ten consented to participate. I was limited also by the IRB requirement to obtain district level approval prior to interviewing participants and was not able to obtain permission from one district which limited the pool. I was also limited in funding and was not able to travel to additional sites to observe participants implement professional learning. The length of the study limited the ability to engage in a detailed study of participants pedagogical and curricular decision making or to observe more than one professional learning session. It is possible that additional findings might

have emerged if the pool of participants was larger or more time was spent observing professional learning sessions. However, these findings that define effectiveness and the approach to pedagogical and curricular decision making were consistent across most of the participants. Although I only shared a few examples to highlight each, the findings were in alignment with data presented in the interviews highlighting the complexity of designing and implementing effective race-centered professional learning focused on the topic of race. The observations of two participants corroborated the interview findings shared by most participants

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study I was able to interview all the participants and focus specifically on two participants and their pedagogical decision making. I found connections to support the findings in chapter four through observation of these two participants. I think future research might focus on ethnographic portraits of how facilitators engage in professional learning to illustrate how this work operates in context. Additionally, research might focus specifically on how facilitators make pedagogical decisions in the context of the professional learning event. Given the finding that facilitators view learning as a long term process, future research might look at the socialization and growth of learners after experiencing professional learning centered on race. A cohort study of over two or three years involving a sample of facilitators would address the stability of the findings outlined in this study. Research on the specific role of the learner in the context of the professional learning context would inform the impact of the facilitator's pedagogical and

curricular decision making on the learner. A comparison of the facilitator's planning and preparation coupled with the learner impacts would address the strength of the findings.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY & PRACTICE

This qualitative study sought to understand how facilitators of professional learning define effectiveness and how those perspectives inform pedagogical and curricular decisions. The study aimed to gain this understanding by interviewing facilitators of professional learning in urban school districts across the U.S. When viewed collectively, the findings that emerged from the participants and the observations revealed five important implications: 1) critically understand the emotional nature of race when centered in professional learning and carefully design the affective environment needed to hold space for emotion, 2) attention to historical, political and social issues relevant to their district, audience and learning outcomes, 3) use a CRT analysis to understand the impacts of district sociohistorical and racial decisions as they make pedagogical and curricular decisions for the professional learning experience, 4) consider and search for new knowledge perspectives to add to the professional learning experience, 5) consider in all curricular decisions the impact of race and the capacity of the learner to receive the message shared and the preparation needed for the facilitator to hold and build learner capacity.

These implications speak directly to the work of urban districts as they design effective race-centered professional learning. All participants spoke about the emotional impact of facilitating race-centered dialogue in a professional learning setting. To share

an example from my capacity as facilitator I presented in the introduction the Color Arc activity, then I also present in chapter five the use of my son as curriculum. Both activities elicited strong emotion in both groups. I describe the in the introduction the steps I took in the moment to hold the affective space needed for the learners. What I did not share in the introduction was the emotional toll the activity put on me and how then I processed the experience in a debrief session following the close of the day. District leaders must understand the skill needed to effectively conduct it and the toll this facilitation places on the staff member tasked with the design and implementation of race-centered professional learning.

All of the participants in this study are employed in the central administration of the school district. Central administration staff are responsible for all staff, students and constituents which makes a critical understanding of racial history an important knowledge base. Facilitators of professional learning in urban school districts should work to understand the sociohistorical and racial decisions of their school district. An example of this is how my understanding of the history of my school district has afforded the opportunity to educate current staff on the racial implications of funding cuts and school closures. Participants in this study expressed that a skilled facilitator is needed and a CRT analysis on this issue is critical to the pedagogical and curricular decision making of the facilitator designing a learning experience for dialogue and protocols to educate staff.

Facilitators of professional learning focused on race should also consider partnering with organizations in their local area as presented in Daniel's collaborative

partnership in chapter five. As an example, in addition to nonprofits and arts organizations, in my own practice I have collaborated with an organization that uses pie as a vehicle for cross racial dialogue, an organization that trains students to be park rangers and an organization that creates sustainable gardens on school grounds. All have committed to using their particular organizational focus and centering race as well as gaining a better understanding of their race and the impacts on the students they support in the schools. Collaboration in this research study introduced the arts, a medium that is losing traction in urban public school education due to funding constraints. The arts have the potential to bring visual, auditory, kinesthetic and other forms of engagement to the professional learning experience.

Facilitators of professional learning should consider the impact of race and the capacity of the learner to receive the message shared in the session in all curricular decision making. Pedagogically, the facilitator should also understand the audience and prepare to meet them where they are to create the professional learning space that supports learners' growth. Urban school districts should provide the supports and space for this structured and affective focus on professional learning.

Findings support the idea that an effective facilitator of professional learning focused on race moves beyond traditional professional learning in public schools. What was needed was found in how effectiveness was defined by participants in this study. They took personal responsibility for understanding the sociohistorical impacts of race. They focused internally and gained a critical understanding of how they show up as racialized beings in the professional learning context. Participants also understood the

need to negotiate the emotional nature of race for learners and facilitators. To prepare themselves to negotiate the emotional nature of implementing race-centered professional learning, participants valued selfcare. Given the emotional toll articulated by participants in this study facilitators of professional learning focused on race would benefit from the district supported opportunity to engage in self-care to support their effectiveness as facilitators. Self-care showed up in many ways for the participants, districts can resource personal supports through opportunity to build affinity with other facilitators of this professional learning topic and time to prepare, plan and collaborate with others.

The urban school districts represented in this study would also benefit from a review of the professional learning standards for delivery and design districtwide. All of the participants worked outside the traditional professional learning department in their district. While not salient as a key finding, many participants when asked what the district level standards were for effectiveness had no clear answer connecting to the district level professional learning standards to race-centered professional learning. Each district represented in this study has a public facing equity focus and most have viable professional learning offerings that touch multiple levels of the organization. Some of the districts have clearly articulated equity policy, but not all are implemented with fidelity and not all policy is accompanied with staff and a budget for implementation. Based on the interview data, many participants desire, but not all have strong district support through clearly defined policy. In order for an equity policy to be operationalized its impact in the district must be measured through a critical race lens and funding must be allocated to support implementation. In alignment with the effectiveness finding that

application of learning is a long term process, the policy recommendation is that professional learning focused on race is mandated for all staff. The district must take care to study, discover and/or create the most meaningful professional learning for all staff, professional and classified, that considers permanence of race and the sociohistorical impacts of race and racism on the students, staff and families. The chosen professional learning should not be a one time, but a long term series designed to move adult learners to their growth edge. To enact a mandated long term focus on race-centered professional learning, districts should consider a strong operational policy that informs the governing body and senior leadership. The policy should be written for sustainability. The policy, once written, should withstand multiple district leaders and multiple governing bodies.

CONCLUSION

The professional learning of a school district is an important part of the structure that makes its staff viable and prepared to receive the students in their care. The field focused on professional learning for school districts is replete with manuals, guides, and new methods that profess to teach a district how to get to student success. What is missing from most of these opportunities is the ability to push learners to a growth edge on the topic of race. This study complements the research on professional learning on the topic of race and has sought to extend the literature by offering a contextual examination using critical race analysis to understand how facilitators of professional learning focused on the topic of race define effectiveness and make pedagogical and curricular decisions.

Participants in this study were each skilled in their approach to the topic of race and had processes and protocols they valued to reach effectiveness in implementation.

While this study faced limitations in the participant sample, the study provided what can be important additions to the field including the need to support the development of skilled facilitators of professional learning focused on race in professional learning departments of urban school districts and the use of CRT analysis and attention to the sociohistorical impacts of race on the school district. The examination of participant perspectives uncovered the need to support the planning and preparation time and emotional downtime needed for effective facilitation. I am hopeful that this study provides district leaders with a better understanding of the value of a structured focus on professional learning that centers race in urban school districts.

APPENDIX

List of Semi-structured Interview Questions for Participants

- 1 What is your background in education? What other areas have you worked in?
- 2 With which race do you most closely identify? How would you describe your social class location (salient identity characteristics) now? Your social class location growing up? Are there any other social class locations you haven't mentioned?
- 3 What are your preferred pronouns?
- 4 What is professional learning in your school/school district context?
- 5 What does it mean to be effective in professional learning?
- 6 What led you to this work? How many years have you led professional learning focused on race and racism? Where are you in the district org. chart?
- 7 What is your personal philosophy about professional learning focused on race?
- 8 Why do you facilitate professional learning in your school/school district on the topic of race and racism?
- 9 What are your school district prerequisites for a staff member to be chosen to facilitate dialogue about race and racism in schools?
- 10 Who in your district promotes/advertises/messages the professional learning opportunities focused on race?
- 11 What district support (personal, professional) is provided to you as facilitator of professional learning focused on race?

- 12 What district professional learning standards/expectations/goals are used to focus on effectiveness in professional learning focused on race?
- 13 Who in the school/district determines the content of the professional learning offerings focused on race and racism?
- 14 What does it mean to be effective in professional learning when the topic is race or racism?
- 15 How do you know if the experiences you design are effective?
- 16 How did you learn to & prepare for the design of professional learning focused on race and racism?
- 17 You shared your personal philosophy of professional learning focused on race. What steps do you take to design effective professional learning focused on race?
- 18 What specific strategies or techniques do you use to put your personal philosophy about professional learning focused on race into practice?
- 19 Can you share any artifacts that you use to deliver the professional learning focused on race and racism? (i.e. agenda, readings, images)
- 20 When the professional learning topic is race, why do you think some facilitators are effective and others are not?
- 21 Participants enter with particular identities, norms, values, behaviors and social skills. How do you interrogate their understanding of their racial socialization in the context of the professional learning?

22 You've shared your thoughts about effectiveness in professional learning focused on race. How do you attend to your intended outcomes for effectiveness within the context of the professional learning?

23 What are some methods you use to determine if the professional learning is effective? (before, during & after)

24 How do you hone your craft? What do you do to develop your facilitation skills?

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