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**SELF-REFLECTION AMONG TEACHERS OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE
LEARNERS:
AN INTERVENTION STUDY EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL
IDENTITY**

by

Susan A. Dube

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services & Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
Rowan University
January 15, 2019

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Kathryn McGinn Luet

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Dedications

This dissertation work is dedicated to my little darlings, as I so lovingly call them, from whom I learn so much as I seek to provide learning opportunities that promote personal growth, as well as the development of knowledge. Your willingness to allow me into your lives and to help you learn inspired me to ensure that others would also be able to reach and teach you in a way that values who you are! To Amanda, Dasia, Jazmine, Kelechi, Keenan, Kenderson, Kylie, Lamont, Nathalie, Rayquan, and all of the other students in that fourth and fifth grade class at LVM, you will always have a special place in my heart; working with all of you made me a better teacher and made me want to help others improve the way they interact with their students.

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Abstract

Susan Dube

SELF-REFLECTION AMONG TEACHERS OF CULTURALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS: AN INTERVENTION STUDY EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

2018-2019

Dr. Kathrine McGinn Luet

Doctor of Education

Student achievement is at the forefront of conversations related to education, yet culturally diverse learners continue to experience academic success much less than their White peers (Ajayi, 2011; Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011; Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Persistent gaps in achievement, graduation rates, and completion of college degrees indicate that educators need to reflect on how students from marginalized groups are prepared to participate in the global economy (Crouch, 2012; Ford & Moore, 2013; Frankenberg, 2009; Pennington, Brock, & Ndura, 2012). The purpose of this study was to investigate whether a structured intervention program would increase in-service teachers' racial awareness. The review of literature was explored factors that influence teacher positionality and teacher positionality and student success and the link between culturally responsive practices and teacher expectations. A qualitative line of inquiry was used to elicit lived experiences of the participants. The findings of this study support the disruption of the hegemonic practices as participants became self-aware of the influence of their whiteness on classroom practices. A framework for examining cultural awareness was developed to serve as a blueprint for educational researchers and educators to use to uncover and disrupt whiteness as the normative framework for teaching which marginalizes culturally diverse learners whose culture is not valued by the system.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Student achievement is at the forefront of conversations related to education, yet culturally diverse learners, students who are not members of the dominant culture, continue to experience academic success much less than their White peers (Ajayi, 2011; Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011; Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Gay, 2000; 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Persistent gaps in achievement, graduation rates, and completion of college degrees indicate that educators need to reflect on how students from marginalized groups are prepared to participate in the global economy (Crouch, 2012; Ford & Moore, 2013; Frankenberg, 2009; Pennington, Brock, & Ndura, 2012). The continued disparity in academic success sets the tone for a broader division between the working class and wealthy class perpetuating social reproduction wherein students' cultural capital differs from that of the dominant culture which impacts their ability to improve their position in society (Dantley & Tillman, 2010; MacLeod, 1995). As the education system in the United States tends to benefit learners from the dominant group (Goggins II & Dowcett, 2011), it is essential that teachers develop an understanding of cultural capital and its impact on education for culturally diverse learners (Chamness Miller & Mikulec, 2014; Yosso, 2005). Cultural capital refers to privileges members receive based upon membership in a particular group, which may differ from the capital of the dominant culture in the educational setting (Chamness Miller & Mikulec, 2014). Yosso (2005) posited that students of color bring multiple forms of capital that differ from the dominant culture that could be harnessed to better support the needs of culturally diverse students. A majority of teachers are members of the dominant culture and as such may have preconceived notions of how schools and classrooms should be structured based upon

their personal experiences, which may be incongruent with the diverse learners in the classroom (Chamness Miller & Mikulec, 2014). In-service teachers' personal beliefs and assumptions influence and impact their classroom practice; research has indicated that the problematic outcomes for culturally diverse learners may be related to their lack of opportunity for equitable and culturally appropriate educational experiences (Goldenberg, 2014; Reiter & Davis, 2011). Structural inequities may contribute to the problematic outcomes for culturally diverse learners that serve to maintain the power structures of the dominant culture (Bloom, Peters, Margolin, & Fragnoli, 2015). These practices may include the use of color-blindness and failure to challenge the status quo through acceptance of lower expectations for performance by students of color (Walker, 2011).

Despite the changing demographics of today's classrooms, students continue to be educated predominantly by White female teachers. The culture and identity of the White female teachers differs from the culture and identity of their students which may impact academic success for culturally diverse populations (Goldenberg, 2014; Kahn, Lindstrom, & Murray, 2014; Maye & Day, 2012; Mills & Keddie, 2012; Schmeichel, 2011).

Although the dominant culture attempts to minimize the significance of the ethnic, racial, cultural, social, and linguistic diversity that is increasing in U.S. schools and society, teachers have to make personal and pedagogical sense of what may appear to be incomprehensible incongruities related to the changing demographics (Gay, 2010). For example, teachers may be faced with students who have yet to acquire English language proficiency and require significant vocabulary instruction prior to introduction of material content; thus, the teacher must make choices regarding the delivery of instruction in order to meet the needs of the different levels of learners in the classroom. While teacher

preparation programs offer multicultural education courses, Goggins II and Dowcett (2011) posit that the courses do not provide enough depth about specific populations to be able to glean an understanding of issues related to privilege, power, and professional practice. Gay and Kirkland (2003) suggested a connection between multicultural education, educational equity, and excellence necessitating Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a lens through which to view practices in education. Additionally, Bloom, Peters, Margolin, & Fragnoli (2015) recommended dialogue about racial issues to facilitate continuous self-reflection of the role that Whiteness plays in the education of culturally diverse students. As teachers are responsible for pedagogical choices, it is important that teachers are cognizant of their own culture and the impact it may have upon their classroom practice (Bloom et al., 2015; Mills & Keddie, 2012; Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Schmeichel, 2012; Walker, 2011)

Cultural Incongruence

Research has demonstrated that the clash between the dominant culture of the predominantly White teachers and the non-dominant culture of students of color occurs within the classroom setting making teaching and learning difficult for all parties involved (Ajayi, 2011; Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Baily & Katradis, 2016; Goldenberg, 2014; Kahn et al., 2014). For example, heterogeneous pairing and/or grouping of students in the classroom to support student learning may be incongruent with certain cultural norms wherein male and female students are educated separately. Students whose culture does not support integration of male and female students may have difficulty working in groups that are not homogeneous by gender (Bae, Holloway, Li, & Bempechat, 2008). Some Hispanic students' cultural norms require direct instruction by the teacher to begin

working; thus, if the teacher directs the class to begin work but does not directly inform these students, work may not begin which could be misinterpreted by the teacher (Bae, Holloway, Li, & Bempechat, 2008). Moreover, within group variability exists for teachers and students; therefore, it is important that members of a group are not asked to be representative of the entire group (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higarreda, 2005).

The cultural incongruence between teachers and their students may result in lower expectations for academic achievement, as well as an inability to meet the diverse needs of the learners within the classroom that may result in lower levels of academic achievement. If learning expectations and standards are lowered, students may not have access to educational opportunities that promote higher level thinking skills that prepare them for college, work, and life (Rubie-Davies, 2010; Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson, & Dixon, 2010). Most culturally diverse students and their teachers live in different worlds, and they do not fully understand or appreciate one another's experiential realities (Gay, 2010). Teachers may be limited in their ability to teach what they know; they may be unable to teach what they are unfamiliar with, which impacts their ability to understand differences related to race, ethnicity, social and economic injustices, sexuality, and gender identity (Baily & Katradis, 2016). Cultural disparities between teachers and students require attention as populations in the classrooms become more diverse and the teacher workforce remains predominantly White and female.

Demographic Shifts in Schools

Locally, nationally, and globally, schools are experiencing shifts in their population demographics (Milner, 2011). For instance, the Hispanic student population is increasing exponentially and by 2050, half of the student population will be Hispanic

(Portes & Smagorinsky, 2010). Moreover, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has projected that by 2018 the Hispanic population will increase to 27.9 percent in United States public elementary and secondary schools (Institution of Education Sciences: National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Changing demographics in the United States suggest an increase in cultural diversity (Institution of Education Sciences: National Center for Education Statistics, 2014; Kena, Aud, Johnson, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, & Kristapovich, 2014). Additionally, demographic changes in the Northeast indicate a decrease in the percentages of White students and an increase in Asian/Pacific Islander students, as well as students from two or more races indicative of an increase of cultural diversity in the classroom setting (Institution of Education Sciences: National Center for Education Statistics, 2014; Kena et al., 2014).

The population in New Jersey has changed significantly between 2000 and 2010. The State of New Jersey is experiencing similar demographic shifts reported by the NCES with regard to increases in the population of Latino(a) and Asian/Pacific Islander students along with a decrease in the number of White students attending public elementary and secondary schools, see Table 1 (Enrollment District Reported Data, 2015-2016, 2014-2015, 2013-2014, 2012-2013).

Table 1

Change in Population in New Jersey between 2000 and 2010

Population Demographic	Percentage Change
Asian	51.1 increase
Hispanic	39.2 increase
Non-Hispanic Blacks	5.5 increase
Non-Hispanic Whites	6.2 decrease

Note. Source: Center for Public Education, 2012.

According to the Census Bureau report of “Language Use in the United States,” New Jersey ranks sixth in the nation in linguistic diversity of residents having 28 percent of the State’s population of persons five and over who speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau: “American Community Survey Reports,” 2010); this may have a significant impact upon the education of students who do not speak English at home. Additionally, the percentage of students participating in English Language Learner programs in New Jersey has increased suggesting a demographic shift (U.S. Department of Education, 2014a). Moreover, New Jersey is one of ten states in which 54.1 percent of the population currently resides (Crouch, 2012). The U.S. Census Bureau 2050 population projections of cultural diversity indicate that there will no longer be a dominant majority among the different groups (Crouch, 2012). Yet, White teachers make up the majority of the teaching force in the United States and New Jersey in particular; therefore, the success of culturally diverse learners is in the hands of the White teachers they encounter in the classroom each and every day (Goldenberg, 2014).

Due to the changing demographics of students in classrooms in New Jersey and the consistency of the predominantly White teacher workforce, it is crucial teachers possess a level of cultural competence to successfully meet the needs of increasingly culturally diverse student populations. Thus, exploration of the influence on teachers’ cultural identity is needed.

Teacher Workforce Demographics

Although the population demographics of students are changing, the teacher workforce remains stable with its predominantly White female population staffing a majority of classrooms locally and nationally. Furthermore, 74 percent of students enrolled nationally in teacher preparation programs in 2009-2010 were female and 68 percent of them were White (“Preparing and Credentialing,” 2013). The National Center for Educational Statistics (2014) reported that 76.3 percent of the teachers in public elementary and secondary schools were female and 81.9 percent of them were White (U.S. Department of Education, 2014c).

Teacher demographics in New Jersey. Workforce demographics for teachers in New Jersey are similar to the national and global demographics with a predominantly White female workforce. For the 2015-2016 school year, of the public schools in the 21 counties in New Jersey, all were staffed by a majority of female teachers with Hudson County reporting the lowest percentage at 73.8 percent and Monmouth reporting the highest percentage, 79.2 percent, (DOE Data Reports Certificated Staff, 2015-2016). According to the 2015-2016 Certificated Staff Data Report, all other counties in the State reported similar percentages of certificated female teachers. Eleven of the twenty-one counties’ public school districts have teacher demographics wherein 90+ percent of the teachers are White and less than ten percent are in the minority category (DOE Data Reports Certificated Staff, 2015-2016). Teacher demographics in New Jersey public schools vary from district to district while some districts have minimal minority teacher representation and other districts have higher percentages of teachers of color (DOE Data Reports Certificated Staff, 2015-2016).

The following teacher educator programs were selected as representative of the demographics in New Jersey as they are local to the state residents and align with much of the data reported by school districts in the State of New Jersey. In New Jersey, 90 percent of Kean graduates placed in teaching positions in the 2013-2014 school year were female and 75 percent of them were White (Kean Educator Preparation, 2014). Meanwhile, Rowan indicated similar statistics with 92 percent of the students being female and 90 percent of said students were White (Rowan Educator Preparation, 2014). Stockton described a 78 percent female population with 91 percent of the population placed in teaching positions being White (Stockton Educator Preparation, 2014) while Montclair reported a 72 percent female population with 85 percent of placements of White teachers (Montclair State Educator Preparation, 2014). Sleeter (2001, p. 94-95) suggested that “a large proportion of White pre-service students anticipate working with children of another cultural background,” but few have cross-cultural background knowledge and experience to bring with them to the classroom. The aforementioned data supports the research regarding awareness of cultural identity of educational professionals and the potential mismatch between them and the students seated in their classrooms (Kahn et al., 2014).

Students of color bring different perspectives and richer experiences to multicultural teaching (Sleeter, 2001); yet, potentially culturally mismatched White teachers may be more apt to use colorblindness as a potential coping mechanism when working with students of color in the classroom (Milner, 2011). Aware of the demographic shifts in urban schools, schools of education have done little to meet the challenges of the changing demographics in preparing graduates to successfully teach

culturally diverse populations (Greenfield, 2013; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Mills & Keddie, 2012; Pang, 2013; Portes & Smagorinsky, 2010; Taylor, 2010; Tolbert, 2015).

Research suggests that novice teachers of culturally diverse populations experience higher burn out, leave the field within the first three years, and experience lower levels of job satisfaction (Pang, 2013). The aforementioned lack of success experienced by novice teachers of culturally diverse populations elucidates the need for further research into the influence of cultural identity on teachers' cognitive frame (Ajayi, 2011; Baily & Katradis, 2016; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Mills & Keddie, 2012; Pang, 2013; Portes & Smagorinsky, 2010; Taylor, 2010; Tolbert, 2015).

Power, Cultural Identity, and Teachers

By virtue of their positions in the classroom, teachers “are in positions of power in schools” (Pennington et al., 2012, p. 767) which can be used to the benefit or detriment of the students within the classroom. For the purpose of this study, positionality is defined as the contexts, social and political, that shape one's identity and how one's identity influences one's viewpoint on the world. Teachers' positionality can manifest in positive and negative ways. Many factors influence a teacher's positionality, which in turn impacts their pedagogical practice as teachers are expected to make decisions regarding instruction on a daily basis (Pennington et al., 2012). The way in which a teacher interacts with his or her students can have a profound impact on the students' academic achievement, particularly with students whose culture differs from that of their teacher (Gay, 2000; Goldenberg, 2014; Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006, 2009; Pennington et al., 2012). For instance, teachers may connect well with their students and be very responsive to the diversity in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Russell &

Russell, 2014). Teachers who have explored their positionality and teaching philosophies may be cognizant of the impact of said positionality and work to provide learning opportunities that meet the needs of all learners (Nieto, 2009; Terrill & Mark, 2000). The dominant school framework that exists today in America's schools is that of the White Eurocentric system which tacitly accepts teachers' positionality that manifests in color-blindness and lack of acceptance of the cultural capital of students of color, privileging White students (Ajayi, 2011; Goldenberg, 2014; Pennington et al., 2012). "Teachers' understanding of their own cultural identity influences and shapes the ways in which they view others" (Maye & Day, 2012, p. 24). Having an awareness of one's own identity allows teachers to raise their level of cultural consciousness and build cultural competency which is essential in classrooms with culturally diverse learners (Gay, 2000, 2002, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Matias & Grosland, 2016; Maye & Day, 2012; Perez Huber, 2011; Perez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). Moreover, awareness of how one's culture is viewed by the students in the classroom allows one to ameliorate institutionalized norms of the dominant culture that perpetuate othering and deficit thinking (Matias & Grosland, 2016). As a majority of the teaching force consists of White females, the position of privilege can encourage color-blind caring, as the teachers' focus is on social constructs (race, ethnicity, physical characteristics, socioeconomic status) that are incongruent with their students (Pennington et al., 2012). By color-blind caring, teachers exhibit a level of caring but do not see the color of their culturally diverse populations masking dysconscious racism (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Teachers' positionality can also manifest in equity-based practices wherein teachers approach classroom practice from an equity cognitive frame that provides culturally relevant

practices that value and support diversity in the classroom (Gay 2000, 2002, Ladson-Billings, 2009, Tatum, 1993). Teachers working from an equity cognitive frame set high expectations for student achievement while providing caring learning environments that are culturally responsive to students' needs and funds of knowledge while promoting student learning which is often evidenced by marked student achievement, see Appendix E for equity practices (Bensimon, 2005; Gay, 2002; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Critical reflection is essential for teachers of students from culturally diverse backgrounds as it challenges teachers to examine their identity both as a person and as a professional (Howard, 2003). Critical reflection is a means of improving practice while revisiting one's personal beliefs and assumptions in order to meet the needs of students in culturally diverse classrooms (Ajayi, 2011; Goldenberg, 2014; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005). In order to recognize their positionality, it is essential that teachers participate in critical self-reflection of their positionality within the classroom in order to understand how their positionality influences their classroom practice and the students from culturally diverse backgrounds (Goldenberg, 2014; Howard, 2003).

Also, it is important for teachers of culturally diverse student populations to understand the difference in their students' perceptions of schooling can impact the way the teacher believes the students should perceive schooling (Goldenberg, 2014). Awareness of one's positionality within the classroom will assist in ameliorating this incongruence between teachers' beliefs and assumptions and the pedagogical practices necessary to meet the needs of culturally diverse students to improve student engagement and success within the classroom (Goldenberg, 2014; Hamachek, 1999; Howard, 2006).

Culturally relevant practices. Culturally relevant practices are provided by teachers who approach teaching from an equity cognitive frame (Bensimon, 2005; Gay 2000, 2002). These practices include holding having high expectations for student achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Building upon students' cultural capital and funds of knowledge improves students' opportunities for success in the classroom (Moll et al., 1992; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Yosso, 2005). Teachers who use culturally relevant practices have student-centered classrooms wherein students are empowered to lead the class and support their peers (Gay, 2002, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1999; 2006). Students have a sense of belonging in the classroom community and are often provided opportunities to choose the ways in which to demonstrate mastery of concepts (Gay 2000, 2002, 2013; Gay & Howard, 2000; Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

The research in this study provided an opportunity to explore the influence of teachers' cultural identity. It gave voice to the participants through sharing of their personal experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Moen, 2006). Moreover, teachers' experiences were used to understand their identity awareness and positionality, and the impact of their positionality on their practice.

Statement of the Problem

Students from culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse backgrounds are increasing in numbers, yet the teachers educating students remain "predominantly White and female" (Daunic, Correa, & Reyes Blanes, 2004, p. 105). Without direct intervention, this may likely result in a potential cultural mismatch between teachers from the historically dominant culture and students from minority cultures (Goldenberg, 2014; Kahn et al., 2014; Pennington et al., 2012). The changing demographics and increase in

diversity creates a challenge for teachers whose culture differs from that of the students they educate. In turn, student achievement may be adversely affected. To effectively educate culturally diverse student populations, the focus for educators must be on teaching and learning, the processes that lead to positive student outcomes (Milner, 2012). Interactions between teacher and student are the core of education, but the interactions must be “beneficial and productive for the student” in order for all students to be successful (Goldenberg, 2014, p. 112). Students from culturally diverse backgrounds perform better as learners when given the “opportunity to learn through a curricular framework that emphasizes student skills, interests, and knowledge—and from teachers who teach in solidarity with their pupils” (Goldenberg, 2014, p. 112). Culture is critical to student success in the classroom. It is essential that teachers of culturally diverse student populations understand how being members of non-dominant cultures may affect student learning and engagement in school (Goldenberg, 2014). Thus, it is important for teachers of culturally diverse populations to develop an awareness of their own personal cultural identity in order to know the culture of others. As teachers become more cognizant of their membership in the dominant culture, they may be more conscious of the non-dominant culture of their students. The increased cognizance may allow teachers to learn how to engage pedagogically with their students’ culture (Gay & Howard, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2011). Teachers will be better equipped to meet the needs of the learners with practices that incorporate students’ cultural capital (additional forms of capital that are not always part of the education system: social capital, resistant capital, familial capital), see Appendix D for definition of terms (Yosso, 2005; Yosso & Garcia, 2007).

Therefore, it was essential to learn about what influences teachers' cultural identity in order to better understand how that impacted student achievement. Lived experiences may impact and influence one's cultural identity (Milner, 2008). Lived experiences refer to events and experiences that have occurred in teachers' lives in the past and their daily life experiences, as well as their social and cultural realities (Milner, 2008). Milner (2008) posits that teachers' identities and experiences are often incorporated into the curriculum in the classroom, whether consciously or subconsciously, in the form of pedagogical practices such as setting high expectations for academics and behavior, modeling, scaffolding and clarifying of challenging curriculum, and using students' strengths as instructional starting points while creating and nurturing cooperative environments.

Research has indicated that that increasing awareness of one's own racial identity may assist in ameliorating said disparities for culturally diverse learners (Demers, 2016; Lee, 2012; Lee, 2013; Puchner et al., 2012; Pennington et al., 2012). Puchner et al. (2012) examined the impact of a race-related course on the racial identity attitudes of White preservice teachers and found that there was a positive effect on the students' understanding of racial issues. The use of autobiographical questioning was used in studies to promote self-examination to raise identity awareness (Demers, 2016; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Lee, 2012). The use of reading and written reflections was also present in the literature regarding the development of identity awareness (Hossain, 2015). Reflective writing after viewing of media literacy related to culturally relevant pedagogy was used in a study by Sassi, Lajimodiere, Bertolini, & Ketterling (2012). Pennington et al. (2012) used three distinct interventions that included written reflections as a

component of their study which is consistent with other research. Sassi et al., (2012) and Pennington et al., (2012) studies used McIntosh's (2008) *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* and the *White Privilege Checklist* as one of the interventions. Researchers (Demers, 2016, Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Lee, 2012, Sassi et al., 2012) posited that reflective writing can provide a more nuanced picture of one's multicultural awareness and sensitivity. Woods, Barksdale, Triplett, & Potts (2014) suggested that a lack of time to engage in reflection and discussion about their identities may have contributed to the lack of diversity displayed in the drawings of participants of their research study. Additionally, the use of surveys to assess one's awareness of diversity is commonplace in preservice teaching programs (Brown, 2004; Cain Fehr & Agnello, 2012; Henry, 1986; Lee, 2012, Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, & Flowers, 2003; Milner & Tenore, 2010). Therefore, additional information was required to understand how teachers perceive their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students when working with culturally diverse student populations, and the type of interventions needed to raise racial identity awareness that impact teachers' perceptions of themselves and their students.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether structured program in the form of interventions increased in-service teachers' awareness of cultural diversity by learning to know themselves and others in new and more profound ways. The majority of the research related to increasing identity awareness has been completed with pre-service teachers who completed a single diversity course or single intervention; thus, there is a need to conduct research that includes in-service teachers who participated in a series of interventions while working with diverse populations that are present in today's

classrooms. This analysis was anticipated to advance discussion on the types of programs needed to improve pedagogical practice of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms.

Research questions. Two research questions guided the study. The guiding research questions included:

(1) How do participants perceive their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students?

(2) What happens to participants' views of their students after participation in the intervention program that provides opportunities to reflect on their own cultural identity?

a. How, if at all, does the participants' participation in the interventions alter their classroom practices?

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory. The research explored the impact of racial attitudes on teacher perceptions; therefore, it was necessary to draw upon a theoretical framework that foregrounds the salience of race. The epistemological underpinnings of Critical Race Theory (CRT) draw from a number of traditions which include Marxism, feminism, liberalism, law and society, post structuralism, cultural nationalism, as well as pragmatism (Williams, 2012). Critical Race theorists (e.g., Bell, Delgado, Freire, Giroux, Ladson-Billings & Tate) posit that racism is so enmeshed in the fabric of American society that it has become the social norm for people. "Critical race theorists have looked at the manner in which race as a social construct has been utilized to limit the life chances of People of Color through institutionalized discriminatory practices ..." (Orelus, 2013, p. 576). Critical Race Theory (CRT) explains that the achievement gap that exists in education will continue to exist until such time as racism is addressed within our society

and organizations, as social structure and power play a critical role in our education system (Delgado, 1995; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2005). Experiential knowledge is an integral component of CRT as its focus is on the personal experiences of oppression which assist in contextualization of othering that occurs when one encounters racism while giving voice to the traditionally marginalized (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Another component of CRT is its criticism of liberalism and the snail's pace at which change occurs within the legal paradigm that currently exists in American society (Ladson-Billings, 1999). CRT advocates comprehensive changes, rather than legal arguments, to advance the rights of people of color (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2005).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) offered a lens through which to view educational outcomes of culturally diverse student populations. CRT sheds light upon the positioning of White middle class cultural expression as the dominant norm against which to compare others, in this particular case culturally diverse student population. Comparing others to the dominant norm is a practice that is prevalent in our education system in the United States (Chamness Miller & Mikulec, 2014). CRT seeks to provide an understanding of race and racism as a means of disrupting structural inequities perpetuated by our education system (e.g., such as valuing White cultural capital over other cultures-) and racist classroom practices (e.g., such as color-blindness and lower expectations for academic achievement) that vanquish traditionally marginalized populations (Chamness Miller & Mikulec, 2014; Pérez Huber, 2011; Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015).

CRT provided a lens through which to view the lived experiences of the participants and how their experiences are influenced and impacted by race. Acknowledgement of oneself as raced enables teachers to acknowledge their students as raced which is essential if teachers are to effectively meet the needs of culturally diverse learners (Baszile, 2008). Recognition of White privilege and the benefits of membership in the dominant group is necessary in order to acknowledge oneself and others as raced (Abrams & Gibson, 2007; Cameron & Wycoff, 1998; Doane, 1997; Jackson, 1999). CRT allowed me to examine and interrogate the data from the perspective of racism in the social structure and its role in cultural identity and how that plays out in culturally diverse classrooms (Delgado, 1995; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2005). Critical Race Theory's focus on personal experiences of oppression provided an additional lens through which to analyze the data to answer the research questions in this study (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999). CRT can assist educators in understanding "the degree to which race plays an important role in the manner in which People of Color are treated in society" (Orelus, 2013, p. 576) and particularly by the education system as it exists today.

Significance of the Study

This study was designed to explore the relationship between in-service teachers' perceptions of their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students in culturally diverse classrooms in New Jersey. Additionally, the study sought to explore whether interventions to raise racial awareness changed teachers' perceptions of their own cultural identity and that of their students to inform practice and research. As much of the literature regarding cultural identity of teachers related to pre-service teachers, this study

adds to the literature base because it dealt with currently practicing teachers who participated in a series of interventions, rather than a single intervention which is somewhat unique to the literature.

Practice. This study provided insight into the demographic landscape that currently exists in classrooms in public schools in New Jersey. Moreover, the study offered a detailed view of teachers' practices which may impact the academic achievement of students of color in New Jersey public schools. The relationship between teachers' cultural identity experiences and their ability to traverse different cultural contexts was examined. The findings of this study may contribute insight into approaches that may be implemented in order to raise awareness of the influence of cultural identity experiences upon teacher practice in order to increase student learning.

Research. As the educational landscape changes, the importance of qualitative research is noteworthy as it offers the sociological lens through which to conduct research in the natural setting (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative indicators, such as test scores, do not provide information regarding the ways in which demographic changes do or do not impact students' schooling experiences (Lichter, 2013). A qualitative lens was necessary because some educational practices cannot be measured quantitatively, yet they have significant impact upon student achievement (Lichter, 2013), such as the relationship that the teacher has with the student that enables the student to persist when confronted with difficult situations both in and out of the classroom. As the demographics of our schools change, a call for scholarly research has been made to offer further insights and to inform social and educational policy (Lichter, 2013; Mickelson, 2014). Thus, this qualitative intervention study answered that call and will contribute to the body of

literature regarding the changing educational landscape. The framework that resulted from the findings in this study and the extant literature reifies the abstract concept of cultural awareness with a blueprint for educators and educational researchers to use to uncover and disrupt the whiteness as the norm against which to measure culturally diverse learners whose cultural capital is devalued by a system that is permeated with whiteness. The findings of this study may provide insight into programmatic approaches that school personal may implement in order to increase the learning outcomes for culturally diverse students.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study may be data collection, specifically in that qualitative data in the form of interviews, observations, and intervention activities was collected from six study participants. As qualitative research focuses on depth rather than breadth, a small sampling size of ten was sufficient for the purposes of this study. Qualitative inquiry seeks rich, in-depth details of the participants' experiences; therefore, a smaller number of information-rich cases is essential (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). By exploring six participants' perceptions of cultural identity, I was able to develop a richer, and more complete understanding of the phenomena being studied in the natural setting (Creswell, 2014). Being the sole researcher of the study, and the instrument for data collection, I was the only coder of the data and did not have the benefit of a peer debriefing which could be seen as a possible limitation.

Data, in the form of observations, interviews, the pre- and post-Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventories (CDAI), and intervention session activities was collected from the six teachers in two different grade levels within a culturally diverse school district which

allowed me to elicit the lived experiences and perceptions of participants. Reliance on the perception of the participants may compromise the internal validity of the findings as their perceptions may not be representative of the sampling population. As the data collected was self-reported and related to cultural identity and racial awareness, a possibility exists that participants may have provided what they perceived were preferred responses which could skew the validity of the data (Bowman, 2010). Participants “know what answers they are “supposed” to provide when asked about racism, sexism, privilege, social action engagement, and cultural appreciation (Chang, 2002).” This social desirability effect (Bowman, 2010) may occur and be a limitation that may make it difficult to generalize the results of this particular sample outside the population to other populations with different demographic profiles; thus, the findings may not be generalized to all teachers of culturally diverse students. As the study was conducted in a culturally diverse school district in New Jersey, this may limit the ability to generalize the data to schools serving populations of students in suburban and rural communities. The goal of qualitative research was not necessarily to generalize the findings in the traditional definition of generalization, rather it was to allow readers to determine the level of similarity between their circumstances and the research situation and whether or not the findings are transferrable (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Toma, 2006). The findings and interpretations of this research were meant to allow participants to clarify identity issues and to inform future research.

Delimitations of the Study

Role of the researcher. As a middle-age White woman who changed careers specifically to make a difference in the lives of children, I work in a culturally diverse school district by choice. I remain zealous about creating opportunities to prepare my students for college, work, and life. Working as a team leader in my building, I have chaired a number of committees and worked tirelessly with administration and my colleagues to improve academic achievement. Opening a school in a culturally diverse neighborhood is a personal career goal. I believe the information from this research study, combined with an amalgamation of leadership theories (transformational/transformative, democratic, and situational, see Appendix D), would assist me in furtherance of this goal of providing exceptional learning opportunities for culturally diverse learners. These learning opportunities would include experiences that valued the students' cultures and used them as a starting point for continued learning, supporting students' funds of knowledge while building upon them (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Yosso, 2005). Students would feel valued and empowered to learn.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for examination, analysis, and interpretation of data (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Unlike quantitative research where objectivity is paramount, qualitative research acknowledges the impossibility of being totally objective and acknowledges the benefit of the subjective awareness of the researcher in assisting with the development of themes throughout the research process (Ahern, 1999). As a teacher, I operate out of a framework that I have created through my own personal experiences; therefore, it was imperative to bracket my personal beliefs and assumptions in order to ensure the integrity of the research (Ahern,

1999; Gearing, 2004). To that end, I continuously journaled and wrote analytic memos to monitor my own assumptions and bracket them as I delved into data analysis (Gearing, 2004). Reflexive bracketing required ongoing reflection of my role in the setting that I studied (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Being the primary investigator, I was able to collect and analyze data and respond to situations I encountered in the field thereby maximizing the opportunities to collect meaningful data by clarifying situations as they arose (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Thomas, 2012). Qualitative research afforded me the ability to have close personal contact with study participants and the phenomena under investigation (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Patton, 2002; Seiki, 2014; Thomas, 2012). Consequently, I engaged participants to collect data through interviews, observations, intervention session activities and graphic elicitations, a pre- and post-Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI), and informal discussions/conversations.

Sampling. Teachers were selected as participants in the study through purposeful sampling, wherein characteristics of the subgroups were considered to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2003 Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). I sought permission from the principal to conduct the research at the school (see Appendix A). Ten participants in the four main core content areas who self-identified as White and female were identified by the principal and then recruited through an invitation/letter to participate in the study, (see Appendix B). These criteria eliminated male teachers and nonwhite teachers. White female teachers who accepted the invitation to participate took part in a screening meeting wherein I asked participants to tell me

about their experiences with White privilege and their familiarity with an equity frame, see Appendix E, in their classroom to narrow down the number of participants. I asked six of those teachers who met the participation criteria (White female working in the four main core content areas (math, science, social studies, and language arts) with culturally diverse learners who may be unfamiliar with White privilege and equity frame in the classroom) to participate in the study.

Six participants were asked to complete a pre-and-post Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI), a checklist with 28 statements related to cultural diversity that the participant selects a response from a five-point Likert scale that has been tested for content validity (Henry, 1986). The CDAI was used to explore participants' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward culturally diverse students. It has been used by other researchers in studies exploring cultural identity awareness (Brown, 2004; Henry, 1986; Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, & Flowers, 2003). Next, participants were observed and participated in an initial interview session. The participants took part in six intervention activities. Intervention activities, which are expounded upon in further detail in the methodology section, include: identity chart creation and explanation, cultural competence presentation and discussion, autobiographical poem reflection and discussion with "I Come From..." poem creation, reflection, and discussion, and a School-Valued Discourse activity. The interventions were followed by a final observation and interview. The study culminated with the completion of the post Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory.

Table 2

<i>Intervention Activities</i>	
Intervention Activity	Meeting Type
Identity Chart	Individually
Cultural Competence Presentation	Group and individual reflection
Autobiographical Poems	Group and individual reflection and poem creation
School-valued Discourse	Individually

Interviews were used as a means of gathering experiential narratives from the participants (VanManen, 1994). Two phases of responsive interviews were conducted to elicit in-depth and detailed responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). One of the interviews took place at the beginning of the study and one at the end of the study. A two-step process was used for the interviews wherein data were gathered through responsive interviewing and then reflected upon in further conversations and/or email with participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; VanManen, 1994).

Similar to the interviews, observations took place once at the start of the study and a final observation at the end of the study. Two thirty-to-forty-minute observations occurred in the classroom setting, which was the natural setting for the research study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Participants were requested to partake in intervention that consisted of eight activities. During the intervention process, participants partook in activities, discussions, and reflection. Some parts of the intervention were completed individually while others were done in a group setting. The use of group activities was selected as literature supports the use of group activities to decrease resistance to change (Bowman, 2010; Brown, 2004b). Individual interventions were selected to support personal reflection that was necessary to effect change (Ajayi, 2011; Edwards, 2011;

Goldenberg, 2014; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Combining the individual and group activities into one study offered an innovative approach to research surrounding cultural awareness. Intervention activities and protocols are outlined in greater detail in Chapter 3. Comparative analysis of the initial and final versions of the CDAI ensued.

Generalizability. External validity refers to the applicability of the findings of the research to other groups (Martin, 2004); as such, there may be a number of limitations to this study. Qualitative research focuses on eliciting thick, rich, descriptive data from a small population of participants; therefore, the findings should not be generalized (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Consideration of a school's demographics and diversity was given when defining culturally diverse schools for use in the study. The specific focus on culturally diverse schools in New Jersey may limit applicability of findings to other types of schools (suburban, rural, and more homogeneously populated schools). Although the study may not be generalizable to other types of schools, the rigor and trustworthiness of the study must be addressed (Krefting, 1991; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Toma, 2006). Trustworthiness in qualitative research is essential for the work to be valued, particularly in the field of education (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Credibility. Validity and reliability was increased through the triangulation of data with multiple means of data collection: observations, interviews, intervention session activities and graphic elicitations, CDAIs, field texts, analytic memos, and the use of the researcher journal (Anderson & Herr, 1999). Triangulating the data assisted in mitigation of issues related to trustworthiness and credibility by confirming the data through multiple sources (Johnson, 1997; Krefting, 1991). Furthermore, member checking added an additional level of credibility and trustworthiness to the data collection process as

participants were able to review the interview transcripts and emerging themes and offered clarifications and modifications (Toma, 2006). Additionally, I engaged my community of practice in review and discussion of my coding methods to increase credibility of the research (Merriam, 1998; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Transferability. The methodology was a significant delimitation to this study with regard to population validity, which refers to how representative the sample population is and how widely applicable the findings are. Due to the nature of qualitative research eliciting the lived experiences of the participants in the study and building links to the larger social narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Seiki, 2014), the sample size that was utilized in this study was purposefully selected based on the following criteria: (a) the teacher works in a school with a culturally diverse student population; and (b) the teacher's culture differs in terms of race/ethnicity from the culture of the student population situated in their classrooms. The data that was collected was accurately represented through in-depth, lengthy interviews with a small number of participants to glean rich, descriptive data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which increased transferability by providing boundaries of the study. All participants in the study self-reported as White females which is consistent with teacher workforce demographics and representative of the population being studied, as approximately 80 percent of the teacher workforce is White and female.

Dependability. An audit trail ensured that sequencing of the data collection and analysis processes was made explicit with protocols, when applicable, in order to allow replication of the process by others. A researcher whose field of study is cultural awareness in the field of education was contacted to review the protocols that were used

in this study. The researcher is a Hispanic male who has been doing research in this field for over 15 years. The reviewer was asked to review the protocols to check for alignment of the research questions with the data that was sought to be elicited from the protocols. Social status was added to question seven of the initial interview protocol. Question nine was changed from how do you address students' culture in the classroom to do you address students' culture in the classroom so that the question was not leading toward a desired response. The protocols were reviewed and critiqued for change to increase dependability of the instrumentation that was used to collect data. Although I was the only coder, I shared my coding process with my community of practice to enhance reliability (Creswell, 2013). I practiced a code-recode procedure wherein I revisited the data at a later time, cyclically revisiting the data as each phase of data collection was completed, and recoded it to ensure the dependability of the data corpus (Merriam, 1998). Moreover, I revisited the data corpus monthly to review the data with a fresh perspective throughout the data collection process. Codes were added, deleted, and altered during this revisiting of the data.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues in conducting research warrant consideration across all stages of the research process. When conducting qualitative research, it was imperative that I ensured confidentiality of the participants in all phases of the study: the CDAIs, the identity charts, the interviews, the intervention discussions and reflections, and the graphic elicitations which occurred over a four-month period of time. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and provided a consent form prior to the start of the study and were advised to contact me if they had any questions or concerns. At the start of the

study, all participants were asked to sign a written consent to participate in the study, (see Appendix C). All participants were informed of their right to terminate participation in the study which was totally voluntary. To ensure confidentiality of the participants, all participants were asked to choose the time and location for the interviews and group sessions.

As qualitative inquiry is subjective in nature, I used both emic (from the perspective of the participant) and etic perspectives (from the perspective of the observer/researcher) to assist in ensuring the veracity of the data that was elicited through the research process (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Overview of the Dissertation

This study examined the influence of interventions on teachers' identity awareness and their perception of their students. The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the proposed research: an introduction of the topic of investigation, contextual background and demographic data, statement of the problem, purpose of the research, the research questions, significance of the study, and the theoretical framework. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework that undergirds the study and an in-depth literature review of the research pertaining to teacher positionality, student success, culturally responsive practices, and teacher expectations. Chapter 3 explains the rationale for the use of qualitative methodology and its applicability for this study, and methodological aspects including: the setting, sampling, participants, data collection, and analysis strategies. Chapter 4 provides the findings of the studies which may include limitations of the research. Chapter 5 presents conclusions and implications and the significance of the research for research, policy, and practice.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

The chapter begins by describing Critical Race Theory which served as the theoretical framework that guides the research. This review of literature was developed around two dominant themes as I provide analysis of scholarly research and empirical studies. The first theme explores factors that influence teacher positionality. These factors include information related to cultural disparities, White Privilege, dysconscious racism, cognitive frames, and identity awareness. Additionally, I provide background information from the literature related to increasing identity awareness for pre-service and in-service teachers and the methodology used in the studies. This information is provided to demonstrate the degree of intentionality that was employed in development of the interventions that were used in this research. The second theme examines teacher positionality and student success and the link between culturally responsive practices and teacher expectations.

Method

To review literature related to identity awareness and lived experiences of teachers, I conducted electronic searches, as well as ancestral searches of relevant research that I reviewed. I utilized the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) databases for the electronic searches that I conducted. To that end, I used the following keywords and identifiers: identity awareness, culturally responsive teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, racial identity, cultural identity, White privilege, White identity awareness, cultural diversity awareness, raising awareness, changing awareness, and

dysconscious racism. Additionally, I combined the terms in combination with teachers and/or pre-service teachers to elicit additional information.

Additional studies were also obtained from source citations in relevant works I reviewed. For the ancestral searches, I reviewed the references of the articles that I found in journals (such as *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *Multicultural Education*, *Multicultural Perspectives*, *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Urban Review*, *Journal of Negro Education*, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *The Urban Review*, *Theory and Practice*, *Theory into Practice*, and *Review of Educational Research*). I further narrowed my search of the articles found in the ancestral search by reading the abstract and scanning the articles for relevance to the aforementioned topics. In order to be included within the review of the literature, the peer-reviewed articles needed to satisfy the following criteria: the studies were empirically grounded and focused on teachers of culturally diverse students or pre-service field experiences of teachers of culturally diverse students. I reviewed over 125 articles and used 49 articles related to pre-service studies and 20 articles for in-service studies. Less than 20 percent of the articles located looked at in-service providers. All of the studies were qualitative in nature except for one quantitative study. No mixed methods studies resulted from the ancestral search. I sought to include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies that included lived experiences of teachers and pre-service teachers of culturally diverse students, but all of the studies were qualitative in nature except for one quantitative study. No mixed methods studies resulted from the ancestral search. Additional books and articles were reviewed related to culturally relevant practices which are synthesized in the sections that follow.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was selected to provide the lens through which to interrogate the data to identify themes within the data corpus as it served as a resource for analysis of the participants' narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). CRT provided the lens through which to interrogate the data to uncover the ways in which the White participants are not cognizant of being White because they systematically benefit from being White. I used this lens to reveal the systematic whiteness that permeates the education system and marginalizes culturally diverse learners.

Race. CRT places race at the forefront of discussion regarding inequities, particularly in education, to promote social justice and ameliorate inequities (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2005; Matias & Grosland, 2016; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Tate, 1997; Tolbert, 2015; Tolbert & Eichelberger, 2016). In the United States, race remains a significant factor in determining inequity with ramifications of the inequity for those impacted by racial injustice (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2005). For example, students educated in the culturally diverse district in which I work experience education differently than the mostly White suburban district in the next town whose facilities and resources (material and professional) are of greater quality than those found in the culturally diverse school district thereby perpetuating the cycle of social reproduction. Bell (1992) asserts the importance of acknowledging racism as an act of defiance of the hegemonic behaviors that dominate our social structures. These social structures are "culturally sanctioned beliefs" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 55) that deny the benefits that Whites receive due to their subordination of others (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015; Tolbert, 2015; Tolbert & Eichelberger, 2016). Therefore, it is important

for teachers of culturally diverse populations to have an awareness of their own racial identity, as well as the racial identity of their students.

Master script. CRT examines the structural roots of racism and the persistence of collective White control over power and material resources (Williams, 2012). “In education, the master script refers to classroom practices, pedagogy, and instructional materials—as well as to the theoretical paradigms from which these aspects are constructed—that are grounded in Eurocentric and White supremacist ideologies” (Swartz, 1992, p. 341). By positioning White ideologies as dominant over others, master scripting silences any other voices and perspectives related to the topic and places the White voice as the knowledge students need to acquire (Sleeter, 2008; Swartz, 1992; Williams, 2012). Swartz (1992) asserts that the master scripts omit all other accounts and perspectives unless they can be misrepresented enough so as to disempower said accounts and perspectives. Content that does not comport with the hegemonic voice is altered in order to become part of the master script (Swartz, 1992). For example, the portrayal of Rosa Parks as a seamstress who was too tired after a long day at work to give up her seat to a White person instead of portraying her as a rebellious protester of the Jim Crow laws (Blanchett, 2006). Thus, diminishing the role of Rosa Parks’ protest of the Jim Crow laws in the curriculum maintains the hegemonic status quo of the dominant White voice.

The “master scripts” used in education represent Eurocentric ideologies of the dominant White culture. By Eurocentric, Swartz (1992) refers to the ideology and practices which values the worldview and cultural manifestations of people of European origin over all others and disparages and subordinates the cultural manifestations of people of different origins. CRT seeks to critique the master scripts with regard to race,

class, and gender to ensure that all cultures and groups are accurately included in the curricula (Ladson-Billings, 1998, 1999, 2005, 2009; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Swartz, 1992, 2007; Williams, 2012). The hegemonic master scripts create curricular hegemony which produces and encourages racial silence while shifting responsibility for social, political, economic, and educational inequalities (Swartz, 2007). However, emancipatory narratives that correct the repressive and sanitized versions of history work to transform the monovocal portrayals in the curricula of traditionally marginalized populations (Blanchett, 2006; Swartz, 1992). For instance, rather than portray Martin Luther King, Jr. as a preacher dreaming about democratic values, an emancipatory narrative would portray him fighting the inequity in power and the social conditions that motivated his actions. Educators with high levels of personal identity awareness, who are cognizant of the master scripts and their impact upon the educational experiences of culturally diverse learners, provide culturally relevant learning experiences for their students (Matias & Grosland, 2016; Perez Huber, 2011; Perez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). Thus, there is a need to explore the influence of cultural identity awareness on teachers of culturally diverse learners.

Social justice. CRT presumes a social justice framework that seeks to eliminate racial oppression in order to achieve racial justice. CRT posits that in order to invalidate the inferiority paradigm that is pervasive in our societal and structural norms, an expansive examination of race and changing conceptions of justice must be pursued (Howard, 2003). CRT seeks to explain the lived experiences and realities of race in an effort to alter mindsets and ameliorate dysconscious and conscious racism that exists in society (Delgado, 1995; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 1999, 2009; Tate, 1997).

By raising awareness of race, White privilege, property, master scripts, the necessity of providing voice, disparities in school funding, etc., critical race theorists eschew societal and structural norms while advocating equity for all. This research study used the aforementioned components of CRT as the lens through which to view the data in an effort to advance discussion related to the influence of cultural identity awareness of teachers of culturally diverse student populations.

Cultural Disparities

Culture has many different meanings to different people (Gurung, 2009) and encompasses many different components (Gay, 2002). The function of human culture is to maintain social order and to prevent social chaos by creating and communicating belief systems to members of the group (Alviar-Martin, & Ho, 2011; Matsumoto, 2009). Moreover, culture gives these social constructs (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, physical characteristics, socioeconomic status, gender) meaning (Gay, 2002; Matsumoto, 2009). Culture influences the way people think, feel, and behave (Alviar-Martin, & Ho, 2011; Cone-Uemura, 2009; Gay, 2002.). Teachers are not exempt from the influence of culture; thus, it is important to understand the influence of culture on one's identity as in-service teachers' personal beliefs and assumptions influence and impact their classroom practice.

Culture is part of who a person is based upon many different interrelated cultural components which interact to form the person's identity (Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011; Gurung, 2009). Awareness of cultural diversity has positive outcomes, particularly in moderating stereotyping and prejudice (Cameron & Wycoff, 1998; Gurung, 2009). Research suggests that awareness of cultural diversity can have a significant impact upon

one's affect, behavior, and cognition (Gurin, 1999; Matsumoto, 2007; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Likewise, research posits that multicultural competence is composed of three parts: awareness of one's own beliefs, knowledge, and skills (Aronson, Venable, Sieveking, & Miller, 2005; Fowers, & Davidoff, 2006; Moore, Madison-Colmore, & Lott Collins, 2005). Awareness of one's beliefs includes recognition and ownership of said beliefs (Cone-Uemura, 2009; Gay & Kirkland, 2003), which includes White racial identity (Bloom et al., 2015). In order to develop cultural competence, it is important to incorporate awareness into one's knowledge and skills (Cone-Uemura, 2009; Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

As the demographics change in our schools, educators must also reflect on the needs of culturally diverse populations that are increasing in our schools. Culture includes many things that may have direct implications for pedagogical practice (Gay, 2002; Schmeichel, 2012). Knowledge about students' cultural values, traditions, communication, and learning styles may assist teachers in better meeting the needs of culturally diverse learners (Gay, 2002; Mills & Keddie, 2012). In Walker's (2011) study, the majority of study participants (teachers) did not acknowledge the ethnic or racial background of the students as part of the student's culture, which has ramifications for educational outcomes. Moreover, the elevation of the White middle class to the highest position within a hierarchy of cultures may also contribute to some teachers' struggles with culturally diverse learners as this promotes a self-fulfilling prophesy for low achievement for non-White students (Schmeichel, 2012). For example, the ways in which different ethnic groups direct their children to interact with adults has ramifications for classroom practice (Gay, 2002). In my personal experience with culturally diverse

students, for certain cultures it is disrespectful for a child to look an adult in the eye, which is contrary to my own culture. Without knowledge of the student's culture, I would have thought the student was being impertinent when I was speaking with the student, which was not the case. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the influence of teachers' cultural awareness.

White privilege. Race is a socially constructed classification system based on physical characteristics that has historically served as a tool to explain human diversity, justify exploitation, and advance privileged groups' interests (Cameron & Wycoff, 1998; Ledesma, & Calderón, 2015; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Orelus, 2013; Pennington et al., 2012). "Simply stated, use of the term race helps to perpetuate the belief that physical characteristics are linked to intellectual, behavioral, and moral qualities" (Cameron & Wycoff, 1998, p. 284) thereby allowing one group dominance over another and preservation of the hegemonic behaviors of the dominant group. Social stratification, as defined by sociologists, is shared social inequality wherein groups are ranked according to categories (Abrams & Gibson, 2007). Racial stratification is a widespread form of stratification in American society whereby skin color determines privilege or institutional disadvantages (Abrams & Gibson, 2007; Orelus, 2013).

White privilege places White members of society in a position of reward and privilege solely on the basis of their skin color and subjugates People of Color to institutional disadvantages evidenced by societal norms and social structures that are historically situated (e.g., case law and education reform in the U.S.) (Abrams & Gibson, 2007; Orelus, 2013; Pennington et al., 2012). Because Whiteness and White privilege engulfs many societal norms and social structures that exist in the United States, it

remains virtually invisible and unquestioned as it undergirds the social stratification of race in American society (Kahn et al., 2014; Ledesma, & Calderón, 2015; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Pennington et al., 2012). Even though Whiteness is the standard of valuation against which all other ethnic groups are measured, defined, and subject to differential treatment and rewards, White people fail to acknowledge the impact of being White because Whiteness holds the dominant position in society. For example, White students in higher socioeconomic areas who attend high-performing schools do not acknowledge the benefits of White privilege that they receive (access to technology, resources, highly qualified teachers, sports facilities, higher level courses, etc.) as a result of attending well-funded, well-resourced, well-staffed, high-performing schools. The absence of recognition of membership in a racial group allows White people to disavow responsibility for inequities resulting from the existing social structure dominated by Whites.

Swartz (2003) posits that “White students (at all levels) are being educated in White institutions that are generally monocultural and monological in character,” (p. 256) meaning that the dominant culture is presented as the norm against which to compare others through which a single perspective is considered logical and universal, indicative of the privileged worldview. The predominantly White teacher workforce that exists globally is the product of an education system in which White privilege has been institutionalized as neutral and universal (Henfield & Washington, 2012). Therefore, teachers who have experienced White privilege as their social norm cannot imagine life without it and infrequently consider the implications of their racial privilege (Henfield & Washington, 2012; Tatum, 1997). Racial awareness is an acknowledgement that life is

not always fair and just to people of all colors (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Brown, 2000). People with racial awareness demonstrate a cognitive understanding of race-based privilege and oppression that persists in society (Neville et al., 2000). However, those without racial awareness continue to minimize the influence of race in society exhibiting a colorblind view further perpetuating racist ideologies (Diggles, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Neville et al., 2000).

White privilege manifests itself in the education system as colorblindness and deficit thinking which diverts conversations away from the exposition of systemic discrimination of culturally diverse students (Henfield & Washington, 2012; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Milner, 2012). Acceptance of the idea of colorblindness and meritocracy in the education system allows the system to blame the victims (culturally diverse students) for their lack of achievement while teachers abdicate responsibility for student achievement (Henfield & Washington, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Milner, 2012).

White teachers' awareness of their cultural identity and the benefits of being a member of the dominant group allows them to shift from a colorblind lens to a racially informed lens from which to visualize others to understand the plight of people who are disadvantaged by being othered. With regard to classroom practice, identity and White privilege awareness of teachers is imperative in order to develop learning experiences that are relevant and meet the needs of all learners (Dudley-Marling, & Lucas, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2009; Ledesma, & Calderón, 2015; Matias & Mackey, 2015). Without awareness of their own identity and White privilege, teachers may be unable to understand the manifestations of being othered on the students' identity. Additionally,

cultural awareness may help teachers recognize and build upon the non-dominant cultural capital that students bring with them to the classroom (Gay & Howard, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2011; Yosso, 2005). Thus, it is imperative to examine whether interventions to raise cultural identity awareness and awareness of White privilege of currently practicing teachers alters their pedagogical practice in culturally diverse classrooms in New Jersey.

Dysconscious racism. Dysconscious racism is used by King (1991) to “denote the limited and distorted understandings” (p. 134) that people have about inequities and cultural diversity that exist, which precludes movement toward more equitable education for all learners. Dysconscious racism reflects the ideologies of a person that allows rationalization and justification of the status quo, as well as the devaluing of the culture of others (Dudley-Marling, & Lucas, 2009; Jackson, 1999; King, 1991; Ladson Billings, 2004; Lewis, Pitts, & Collins, 2002). It is important to understand that dysconscious racism is not a lack of consciousness; rather, it is a distortion of thinking that accepts the hegemonic status quo (Jackson, 1999; King, 1991; Ladson Billings, 2004; Lewis et al., 2002). Acceptance of the behaviors of the dominant White cultural norms is a byproduct of dysconscious racism. Questioning of the hegemonic status quo challenges the concept of White privilege and its implications for those who benefit from its beliefs and assumptions, which makes people resistant to change. Dysconscious racism includes those who internalize societal beliefs and norms placing a race or group in a position of superiority without inquiring as to its legitimacy; however, those who internalize the negative feelings imposed upon them by the inferior positioning and allow themselves to acquiesce through their compliance also exhibit dysconscious racism (Hays, Chang, &

Havice, 2009; Jackson, 1999; Lewis et al., 2002). Furthermore, the acceptance of racial victimization as a social norm is a form of dysconscious racism as it provides a foundation for racial inequities as they exist with its failure to ameliorate and disrupt this ideology (King, 1991). Therefore, the internalization of inferiority must be unlearned (Jackson, 1999). However, members of the dominant culture need to unlearn the false assumptions of others that have been perpetuated as societal norms (Jackson, 1999). These assumptions and beliefs may not be consciously apparent to members of the dominant culture as they have been internalized as societal norms. Dysconscious racism and its connection to existing social structures may affect the way in which teachers educate students. Therefore, it is essential that dysconscious racism and its association with teachers' cognitive frame and belief systems be disrupted (King, 1991), which may require interventions that will alter the status quo and its inequities.

Cognitive frames. Cognitive frames are the frameworks used by individuals to enable them to categorize and make sense of phenomena they encounter (Bensimon, 2005). The cognitive frame used by a person allows the individual to understand and interpret situations they encounter (Bensimon, 2005). Basically, one's cognitive frame is the conceptual map or schema one uses to determine what actions he/she needs to take when faced with an unfamiliar phenomena or situation (Bensimon, 1989, 2005). While one's cognitive frame assists one in making sense of unfamiliar phenomena, it may also serve to inhibit cognitive processing of situations (Bensimon, 2005). One's cognitive frame is a manifestation of his/her thinking which provides the cognitive rules by which he/she will make decisions; therefore, it is essential that one's cognitive frames support

equity for all learners (Argyris, 1991; Bensimon, 2005; Griner & Stewart, 2012; Pollack, 2012).

Teachers' cognitive frame refers to how they think about their students and how their personal beliefs and assumptions affect their interactions with them (Walker, 2011). This construct should be brought to teachers' conscious awareness in order to bring about change not only in education, but also societal change. The cognitive frame from which teachers approach their practice, either an equity cognitive frame or a deficit cognitive frame, may have significant implications for culturally diverse students in the classroom. Teachers who work from a deficit cognitive frame may make assumptions about the students based upon the students' socioeconomic status, neighborhoods in which students live, and/or students' home lives and tend to make decisions about students' abilities based on misattributions and not the students' actual ability (Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Walker, 2011). Contrarily, teachers who work from an equity cognitive frame work to provide educational experiences for culturally diverse learners that build upon the students' cultural capital, which improves opportunities for success for diverse learners (Bensimon, 2005; Walker, 2011). Gurung (2009) suggests an examination of one's self and a cognizance of how one differs from others as a means of providing curricula that incorporates and infuses culture in learning. Teachers should be encouraged to recognize the non-dominant culture of their students and learn to interact with it pedagogically to ensure success for all learners (Ajayi, 2011; Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Baily & Katradis, 2016; Goldenberg, 2014; Kahn et al., 2014).

Deficit cognitive thinking refers to the cognitive frame in which the individual allows their beliefs and actions to be guided by disapproving attributions of a certain

group of students based upon socioeconomic status and/or racial background and disadvantages associated with lower socioeconomic status or race (Bensimon, 2005; Ford & Moore, 2013; Goldenberg, 2014; Milner, 2011; Pollack, 2012; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Walker, 2011). Working from a deficit cognitive frame, teachers expect lower outcomes of students who may be economically disadvantaged and/or from culturally diverse backgrounds, as they expect students will be underprepared and incapable of reaching high expectations regarding academic achievement (Bensimon, 2005; Ford & Moore, 2013; Goldenberg, 2014; Milner, 2011; Pollack, 2012; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012; Song, 2006). This deficit perception of teachers regarding culturally diverse learners may stem from teachers' views of culturally diverse learners as "culturally deprived or disadvantaged," (Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002, p. 52) which prohibits teachers from recognizing the potential of culturally diverse learners. While Bensimon's article refers to higher education, it is applicable to the K-12 setting as evidenced by research studies with similar findings (Ford & Moore, 2013; Goldenberg, 2014; Milner, 2011; Pollack, 2012; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012; Song, 2006). The importance of being aware of one's personal identity, paradigm, and examination of privilege as it relates to one's identity is significant as these factors contribute to the way educators interact with students in the classroom (Goldenberg, 2014; Henfield & Washington, 2012; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Tatum, 1997).

Teachers who work from an equity cognitive frame value students' culture, build learning experiences that enrich students' culture, and provide opportunities for success for all students within the classroom (Bensimon, 2005; Walker, 2011). In the Milner

(2011) study, the teacher's awareness of his personal paradigm influenced his practice; his students were successful in the classroom because he approached teaching from an equity frame (Bensimon, 2005). Teachers working from an equity cognitive frame set high expectations for student achievement while providing caring learning environments that are culturally responsive to students' needs and funds of knowledge while promoting student learning which is often evidenced by marked student achievement (Bensimon, 2005; Gay, 2002; Moll et al., 1992). Milner (2008) posited that successful teachers of culturally diverse students reject deficit notions and build upon the skill sets students bring with them into the classroom. By building on students' skills while recognizing their own assets, teachers are practicing from an equity cognitive frame providing learning experiences that support student learning (Bensimon, 2005; Milner, 2008, 2011). Moreover, teachers that critique the knowledge and information available through the development of critical consciousness provide learning opportunities for culturally diverse students that empower their learning (Milner, 2008), see Appendix E for a comparison of equity and deficit classroom practices. A recurring theme throughout the literature was the impact that teachers' personal paradigms have upon their pedagogical practice and the expectations they set for student achievement, which may be improved through increased awareness of one's identity and personal beliefs and assumptions (Ajayi, 2011; Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011; Aronson, Venable, Sieveking, & Miller, 2005; Bae et al., 2008; Barnes, 2006; Blanchett, 2006; Bloom, Peters, Margolin, & Fragnoli, 2015; Brown Buchanan, 2015; Cain Fehr & Agnello, 2012).

The cognitive frame of the teacher, whether it is an equity cognitive frame or a deficit cognitive frame, impacts the pedagogical practice of teachers working with

culturally diverse student populations whose culture may differ from their own culture and personal experiences (Bensimon, 2005; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011; Griner & Stewart, 2012; Maye & Day, 2012; Milner, 2011; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Walker, 2011). Research posits that awareness of cultural diversity has positive outcomes, particularly in moderating stereotyping and prejudice (Gurung, 2009). Therefore, exploration of whether interventions will increase in-service teachers' cultural awareness and alter one's cognitive frame is essential in order to assure that high expectations are set for all students.

Identity awareness. Despite an increase in cultural and ethnic diversity of student populations, the teacher workforce consists mainly of middle-class White women whose dissimilarities in culture may create a potential cultural mismatch between teacher and student (Henfield, & Washington, 2012; Ledesma, & Calderón, 2015; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Matias & Grosland, 2016; Perez Huber, 2011). The discrepancy between the teachers' cultural and ethnic backgrounds and those of their students may impede the teachers' ability to effectively reach their culturally diverse students (Song, 2006); however, teachers with high levels of personal identity awareness mitigate the potential cultural mismatch with improved cultural competence (Matias & Grosland, 2016; Perez Huber, 2011; Perez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). In order to be able to intentionally interact in a culturally conscious way with students, one must first know oneself individually and culturally (Goldenberg, 2014; Swartz, 2003). To be able to assist students with their identity development, it is imperative that teachers have successfully interrogated their own racial identity and its impact on their practice (Matias & Grosland, 2016). Within the teachers' interrogation of their racial identity, it is important that

teachers of culturally diverse learners develop an understanding of race from the perspective of those who are othered in society to ensure that they do not place “the burden of race back on the shoulders of People of Color” (Matias & Grosland, 2016, p. 162). Cross (1971) recommends teaching Whites through a historical perspective of People of Color to assist them in the development of an understanding of how People of Color understand themselves in relation to White people. As many White people do not identify themselves as members of a racial group, discussions regarding race and racial privilege in connection to classroom practice often elicit confusion and frustration among teachers (Henfield & Washington, 2012). Learning to take responsibility for one’s identity provides opportunities to become racial justice educators and advocates for racial justice, which is essential for teachers of culturally diverse student populations (Matias & Mackey, 2016).

Successful teachers of culturally diverse students seem to have a commonality: the willingness to acknowledge their own cultural identity and its potential impact on pedagogical practice in culturally diverse classrooms (Henfield, & Washington, 2012; Maye & Day, 2012). “Teachers’ understanding of their own cultural identity influences and shapes the ways in which they view others” (Maye & Day, 2012, p. 24). Having an awareness of one’s own identity allows teachers to raise their level of cultural consciousness and build cultural competency which is essential in classrooms with culturally diverse learners (Gay, 2000, 2002, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Matias & Grosland, 2016; Maye & Day, 2012; Perez Huber, 2011; Perez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). Moreover, awareness of how one’s culture is viewed by the students in the classroom allows one to ameliorate institutionalized norms of the dominant culture that

perpetuate othering and deficit thinking (Matias & Grosland, 2016; Maye & Day, 2012; Memmi, 1965; Perez Huber, 2011; Perez Huber & Solorzano, 2015). This is especially important for teachers whose culture differs from that of the students they educate as research has shown that culturally responsive practices have significant implications for academic achievement for students considered to be “at risk” (Ajayi, 2011; deWet, & Gubbins, 2011; Gay, 2010; Griner, & Stewart, 2012; Henfield, & Washington, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Milner, 2011; Riley, & Ungerleider, 2012; Tolbert, 2015).

According to the research, (Henfield, & Washington, 2012; Matias & Grosland, 2016; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Milner, 2011; Perez Huber, 2011; Perez Huber & Solorzano, 2015), effective teaching and learning necessitates the acknowledgement of students as raced (gendered, classed, etc.) which can only be accomplished to the extent that the teacher knows oneself as raced (gendered, classed, etc.); therefore, the development of self-awareness is critical for teachers of culturally diverse learners.

Increasing Identity Awareness

In the United States, public school students of color (particularly poor students) are experiencing academic success at lower rates than their White peers due in part to the teaching force that is unable to meet the needs of diverse students (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Puchner, Szabo, & Roseboro, 2012; Schofield, 2006). This disparity in achievement is due in part to a lack of understanding of racial issues that the predominantly White teacher workforce possesses that are necessary to effectively teach culturally diverse populations (Howard, 2006; Sleeter, 1993). Therefore, the need to increase teachers’ awareness of bias, privilege, and structural inequality is needed in order to effectively meet the needs of all learners. Research has demonstrated that

increasing awareness of one's own racial identity may assist in ameliorating said disparities for culturally diverse learners (Demers, 2016; Lee, 2012; Lee, 2013; Puchner et al., 2012; Pennington et al., 2012).

Pre-service teachers. As the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic demographic divide increases between culturally diverse students and their majority White teachers, it is essential that teacher candidates, particularly White preservice teachers, examine how their beliefs about race and cultural differences influence their pedagogical choices in the classroom (Demers, 2016). The racial isolation in which many preservice candidates experienced education leads them to interpret racial issues through a colorblind lens which further distances candidates from the realities of racism (Bell, 2002, 2003; Sleeter, 2008). Therefore, it is essential that preservice teachers unpack their personal beliefs and understanding of race and Whiteness and its impact, consciously or subconsciously, on their professional practice (Demers, 2016; Hossain, 2015; Puchner et al., 2012). This can be accomplished through a variety of methods as outlined in the literature below.

Puchner et al. (2012) examined the impact of a race-related course on the racial identity attitudes of White preservice teachers and found that there was a positive effect on the students' understanding of racial issues. Demers (2016) proposed the *Racial Geography of Teaching* framework to assist preservice teachers and in-service teachers, who were trained without examination of their personal beliefs and assumptions, in unpacking their beliefs in order to understand how personal beliefs influence their professional practice. Autobiographical questioning of one's culture, race, and linguistic topography is at the core of Demers (2016) framework that requires self-examination of one's origin to raise identity awareness. Similarly, Austin and Hickey (2007) used a

process of autoethnographic interrogations of self to uncover ways in which pre-service teachers developed an awareness of their own racial identity. Findings from these studies suggested that once an element of race enters considerations of personal identity, the existence of whiteness is acknowledged and personal awareness increased. Lee (2012) also examined five preservice teachers' identity awareness through multicultural autobiography. The findings suggested that once aware of their lack of knowledge, teachers were able to reconstruct their beliefs and knowledge to create more culturally relevant learning experiences for their students (Lee, 2012). Gooden and O'Doherty (2015) also utilized autobiographies to develop a greater awareness of race in a principal preparation program. Their findings were similar to that of Lee (2012) in that the participants (12 principal candidates) demonstrated evidence of a growing awareness of race and movement away from racial unconsciousness and colorblindness (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). Fasching-Varner's (2013) study engaged nine pre-service teachers in two interviews in which he utilized a testimonial life history approach to glean information about their personal experiences and how these experiences may influence their interactions with others. The narratives of the participants unmasked the master narratives that "socialize White people to the meaning of Whiteness at the very same time they exclude those not possessing Whiteness (p. 41)." These findings align with the extant literature with regard to the unmasking of the prevalence of Whiteness in the education system through the use of different tools that cause one to reflect on their experiences and the influence of those experiences.

Hossain (2015) advocates for pre-service teachers' development of an understanding of White Privilege through the use of reading and written reflection. Based

upon the teachers' perceptions of White Privilege, Hossain (2015) stresses the importance of addressing the topic with pre-service teachers. Out of 240 students Hossain encountered in her classes over a four-year period, only 15 percent of the students were in the acceptance group while 85 percent of the student remained in the denial group, denying the existence of White Privilege while insisting that non-Whites had been privileged by society (Hossain, 2015). Sassi, Lajimodiere, Bertolini, & Ketterling (2012) also utilized reading and reflection to develop awareness of previous beliefs in order to make room for new understandings about racial awareness and identity. Sassi et al.'s (2012) study used McIntosh's (2008) *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* as one of the interventions. Additionally, participants in the Sassi et al., (2012) study viewed a DVD about culturally relevant pedagogy and participated in discussions with their peers. Sassi et al., (2012) posited that reflective writing can provide a more nuanced picture of one's multicultural awareness and sensitivity.

Fifty pre-service teachers participated in a research study to explore identity development of themselves as teachers in a program that used a variety of approaches to support the development and understanding of cultural diversity (Woods, Barksdale, Triplett, & Potts, 2014). The pre-service teachers created four drawings that were submitted over the course of a school year. Only 8.5 percent of the drawings demonstrated diversity, which the researchers posited was due to a lack of understanding of the role of students' characteristics within the classroom (Woods et al., 2014). The authors suggested that a lack of time to engage in reflection and discussion about their identities may have contributed to the lack of diversity displayed in the drawings of participants (Woods et al., 2014).

The use of surveys to assess one's awareness of diversity is commonplace in preservice teaching programs. For example, Cain Fehr and Agnello (2012) surveyed 400 preservice teachers in a college education program to assess students' dispositions related to teaching diverse populations in the P-12 setting. Cain Fehr and Agnello (2012) advocate the use of Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions with unique rubrics to categorize the responses. While many more research studies exist regarding preservice teachers, the aforementioned are offered as a sampling of the different modalities used to raise awareness.

Fasching-Varner's (2013) study engaged nine pre-service teachers in two interviews in which he utilized a testimonial life history approach to glean information about their personal experiences and how these experiences may influence their interactions with others. The narratives of the participants unmasked the master narratives that "socialize White people to the meaning of Whiteness at the very same time they exclude those not possessing Whiteness (p. 41)."

In-service practitioners. While a plethora of literature exists related to preservice teachers' cultural awareness, significantly less research can be found regarding in-service practitioners. Lee (2013) conducted a mixed-methods study aimed at facilitating a transformation of racial attitudes of currently practicing and pre-service teachers. Out of the 19 participants, five participants had taught in the K -12 setting and five of the other participants were also graduate students (Lee, 2013). Participants completed two pre/post surveys (the Implicit Attitude Test and the Explicit Attitude Test) and participated in an interview, created written reflections responses to readings, and visual art responses to studio assignments (Lee, 2013). Findings from this study indicated that participants

showed changes in their attitudes after participation in the interventions throughout the study (Lee, 2013). Of particular significance in the findings were the art-making experiences that enabled participants to explore race in a different way that they were able to personalize and make meaningful (Lee, 2013).

Johnson's (2002) study examined the autobiographical narratives of six White classroom teachers with the intent of determining "what experiences help White teachers reflect on concepts of race and racism, and how might their racial views influence their teaching? (p.153)." In-service teachers participated in four rounds of interviews as part of this study. Narration of their life experiences helped the participants "clarify their views on race and their own racial identity (p. 162)," which is consistent with the literature surrounding increasing racial identity.

Pennington et al. (2012) studied two in-service White teachers' understanding of Whiteness in relation to caring and privilege as the participants engaged in a year-long professional development course. The professional development course consisted of three distinct experiences that were designed to facilitate participants' understanding of how their White racial identities influenced their classroom practices (Pennington et al., 2012). The three experiences consisted of completion of the *Privilege Checklist* from McIntosh *Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, a privilege walk activity, and the use of counter-narratives (Pennington et al., 2012). Written reflections were also used in this study as a way to further understand their learning (Pennington et al., 2012). The findings of this study revealed repositioning of the participants' understanding of race and caring due to participation in the three experiences and debriefing sessions that followed. The aforementioned studies offered differing modalities by which to raise awareness

demonstrating the different means available. Thus, a need exists to explore whether interventions to raise cultural identity awareness will change in-service teachers' practice.

Systemic Factors That Shape Teachers' Positionality

Teachers' beliefs and assumptions are shaped by many factors that include the cultural context in which they reside. The organizational structures and systems that teachers have experienced contribute to their cognitive frames and the ways in which they practice their craft. Whether consciously or subconsciously, teachers may be affected by the larger cultural context that includes institutional norms and the dominant cultural capital.

Giroux (1985) identifies the way in which various associations of power influence our experiences such that the socio-cultural structures impact our mental processes as teachers and students. The education system in the United States is based upon the dominant cultural capital which privileges those from the dominant culture over culturally diverse students who have to learn to navigate an unfamiliar system in order to be successful (Ajayi, 2011). Schools, which are sites for cultural and social reproduction, play a significant role in the domination of one group over another, whether consciously or subconsciously (Pérez Huber, 2011). Social reproduction refers to the ways in which “features of economic background, cultural practice, and language use” (Collins, 2012, p. 193) affect the educational processes of the students and the perpetuation of inequities related to social class. For example, different individuals may behave differently in different situations due to the strategies they possess or due to their interpretation of the situation, which causes them to utilize different strategies to resolve the situation (Calarco, 2014).

As culturally diverse students possess cultural capital that differs from that of the dominant culture, they are disadvantaged by the education system (Chamness Miller & Mikulec, 2014; Yosso, 2005). Educators are not exempt from internalization of beliefs and assumptions promulgated by the education system in the United States. Because a majority of the teachers in our schools are White and female, their beliefs and social norms are aligned with that of the dominant culture, which may inhibit their ability to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners in the classroom (Daunic et al., 2004; Goldenberg, 2014; Kahn et al., 2014; Pennington et al., 2012). Furthermore, awareness of one's cultural identity is critical in developing an understanding of its role in one's pedagogical practice.

Teacher positionality. Fifty-six years after its publication, Nin's (1961) quote, "We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are" has garnered increasing significance (Doyle, 2015). This quote highlights the importance of identity awareness and the role it plays in one's cognitive frame which translates into actions and practice in daily life. One's belief system is affected by exposure to cultural structures and norms encountered in daily life and these beliefs may affect interactions with others. Specifically, with regard to education, teachers' beliefs may impact how and the way in which they deliver services to students (Castagno, 2005; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2011; Ford & Moore, 2013; Jackson, 1999; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012). For example, a justification for tracking students by ability is fostered by beliefs engrained in American culture that intelligence is fixed at birth and is unchangeable (Chambers, 2009). Therefore, it is acceptable to label people as less intelligent and place them in lower educational tracks based upon perceived ability rather than potential to succeed.

Coincidentally, students of color are often identified as having lower levels of intelligence and are disproportionately represented in special education (Griner & Stewart, 2012; Pringle, Lyons, & Booker, 2010; Skiba, Simmons, Ritter, Kohler, Henderson, & Wu, 2006). Thus, the cultural structures and norms impact teachers' positionality and their pedagogical practices. Therefore, it is important that teachers have an awareness of the cultural structures and norms that have shaped their identity in order to understand those whose norms and structures differ from the dominant structure. Raising awareness of one's identity may assist in remediating misconceptions that may result in practices that do not support the needs of all learners.

Student success. Many factors affect the success of students in the classroom. Teacher expectations, defined by Ladson-Billings (2009) as the lens through which teachers view or evaluate their own ideas or behaviors, play an integral role in student success within the classroom particularly for culturally diverse student populations locally and globally. Of particular importance in a research study was a teacher's comment about the "soft racism of low expectations" (Fisher, Frey & Lapp, 2011, p. 59). No student has ever risen to the low expectations set by their teachers, evidenced by comments of African American males who expressed a desire for their teachers to push them harder when surveyed by Garibaldi (1992). A similar situation was noted by Milner (2011) whose study of a White science teacher who personally connected and cared for his minority students, resulted in performance comparable to White students in the district. Students reported feeling as if their teacher cared for them and believed in their success which became a self-fulfilling prophecy for student achievement (Milner, 2011). Teachers in the aforementioned studies had high levels of cultural identity awareness and

worked from an equity cognitive frame and set high expectations which garnered higher achievement from their culturally diverse students.

Maye and Day (2012) assert that acknowledgement of one's identity has a greater influence on pedagogical practice than the actual identity itself. One's success with culturally relevant teaching appears to be contingent on how willing teachers are to acknowledge their cultural identity and the impact of their own identity, which affects their classroom practices (Maye & Day, 2012). Garcia and Guerra (2004) called for cognitive dissonance between teacher beliefs, assumptions, and practices in the classroom, and resolution of said dissonance to ensure that learning is equitable for all. Hence, the study explored whether interventions to raise cultural identity awareness influences the cognitive frame of teachers in a culturally diverse school district in New Jersey.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As the educational landscape evolves, teachers are faced with additional challenges as they attempt to interact with and meet the needs of students from a variety of different backgrounds. Gay (2000, 2002) describes culturally relevant pedagogy as an instructional approach that integrates the culture of students into the classroom. Ladson-Billings (1995, 2009) stresses the importance of developing the whole child in order for the child to not only achieve academically, but to also develop cultural competence and an awareness of the socio-political world in which they live. Researchers (Demers, 2016; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Lee, 2012; Pennington et al., 2012; Puchner et al., 2012) posit the necessity for understanding one's own personal paradigm prior to attempting to understand the worldview of others; thus, it is essential that teachers who engage

culturally diverse learners demonstrate self-awareness in order to ensure academic achievement for all learners.

Culturally responsive pedagogy in the form of responsive caring is particularly crucial for culturally diverse students as they are at risk for disengagement and failure academically (Milner, 2011; Pennington et al., 2012; Perez, 2000). As culturally diverse students' experiences may differ from those of the teacher in the classroom, their perceptions of teachers' actions may be different than what educators perceive of their actions which may lead to negative schooling experiences for students (Perez, 2000; Pringle et al., 2010; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012). Dillion's (1989) ethnographic study revealed that the effectiveness of the teacher was due to his ability to create a "social organization" (p.228) that considered the cultural background of the student population, which enabled the teacher to provide meaningful learning experiences that the students could connect to. Culturally responsive teachers work to bridge the gap between students' home culture and the school culture to improve academic achievement (Dillion, 1989; Milner, 2008, 2011). Teachers' expectations of their culturally diverse students may differ from the students' perceptions of their expectations due to cultural norms of the culturally diverse populations (Gay, 2000; 2002; Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Teachers from the dominant culture may need to be more explicit when articulating expectations that may be innate for members of the dominant culture, but unclear for culturally diverse learners. The importance of connecting students' cultural values, traditions, and relational patterns to classroom instruction to further student achievement is stressed when working with culturally diverse populations (Fehr & Agnello, 2012; Gay, 2000; 2002, 2010; Milner, 2008, 2011; Nelson & Guerra,

2014). Research has established the necessity for teachers to utilize culturally responsive practices in the classroom to provide equitable learning experiences for all learners.

Therefore, understanding of one's cultural identity may assist teachers in better understanding the students present in culturally diverse classrooms and may assist in ameliorating the disparities in achievement that persist for students of color.

Teacher expectations. Research indicates that teachers' perceptions of students may influence their expectations for achievement in positive and negative ways. "When teachers show that they expect students to perform well, students do perform well; when teachers project no such expectations, students do not attain the same level of performance" (Reynolds, 2007, p. 475). In 1968, Rosenthal and Jacobson termed this phenomenon the Pygmalion Effect. Much research (spanning decades) exists supporting the Pygmalion Effect in the classroom wherein teachers' beliefs, whether conscious or not, influence their practices in the classroom and can positively or negatively impact student achievement (Brophy & Good, 1970; Brown & Medway, 2007; Love & Kruger, 2005; Natesan, Webb-Hasan, Carter, & Walter, 2011; Pollack, 2012; Prime & Miranda, 2006; Pringle et al., 2010; Reynolds, 2007; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968a; Rubie-Davies, 2010; Rubie-Davies et al., 2010; Tyler & Boelter, 2008). Rosenthal randomly assigned the students into different groups but designated one group as high performers in order to compare the achievement results between groups. Teachers' perceptions of the high achieving group were altered by the idea planted by Rosenthal regarding prior performance; therefore, the teachers held higher expectations and altered their behavior (providing additional wait time and more positive feedback) for the group they were told were overachievers. The students for whom higher expectations were set performed at

higher levels compared to the control group for which no information (positive or negative) was provided (Rosenthal, 1968a, 1968b). Thus, it is critical that teachers understand the impact of the Pygmalion Effect upon student performance as teachers, consciously or subconsciously, may hold lower expectations for students based upon societal and structural norms that undergird the education system.

The Golem Effect is the opposite or negative version of Pygmalion Effect wherein behavior reflecting lower expectations generates negative performance results (Reynolds, 2007). The Golem Effect is of particular interest for educators of culturally diverse students for whom negative stereotypes exist. Children tracked by the education system as “at risk” or “low ability” are particularly susceptible to exposure to lower expectations for achievement and less challenging learning experiences by virtue of their past performance (Griner & Stewart, 2012; Natesan et al., 2011; Pollack, 2012; Rubie-Davis, 2010; Rubie-Davies et al., 2010). Hence, it is necessary that teachers are aware of societal and structural beliefs that influence classroom practice and work to mitigate the potential harmful effects of low expectations upon performance.

Concluding Thoughts

Summary. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 provides perspective as to the structures that undergird education in America. Additionally, the literature review examined the manner in which teachers’ beliefs influence the cognitive frame of the teachers and the expectations they set for their students. The way in which the cognitive frame of the teacher impacts pedagogical practice and the learning process for culturally diverse students was also explored. The review process unmasked the complexities involved in creating the circumstances that will allow teachers to successfully educate

students in increasingly diverse classrooms whose demographics continue to evolve. The research posited that identity awareness was essential to prepare teachers for the challenges they may encounter in culturally diverse classrooms. To ensure a long-term change in pedagogical practices, opportunities should be made available for practitioners to be educated with regard to identity awareness, stereotypes, beliefs and assumptions, and how they influence expectations and practice in culturally diverse learning environments.

Most of the research related to mitigation of stereotypes, negative teacher beliefs, and perceptions of culturally diverse learners was for pre-service teachers, yet a large majority of the population of students are educated by teachers whose culture is incongruent with that of their students that were not included in the research studies. As the focus of this study was on in-service practitioners, the study may add to the research related to the influence of in-service practitioners' identity awareness in culturally diverse learning environments. The review of the research revealed a need to study whether interventions to raise cultural identity awareness can alter teachers' cognitive frame in culturally diverse classrooms. This study examined whether a structured program of interventions with teachers of culturally diverse classrooms in New Jersey will influence their cultural identity awareness. More specifically, this study examined whether interventions to raise cultural awareness alters in-service teachers' perceptions of themselves and their students, which is important as it adds to the literature related to interventions to raise identity awareness.

Implications for Further Research

While a body of literature exists related to lived experiences, identity awareness, and personal beliefs and assumptions of pre-service teachers, limited literature was found with regard to examination of the lived experiences and identity awareness of in-service teachers and how it influences the beliefs of in-service practitioners of culturally diverse learners. Again, a body of literature is present regarding mitigation of stereotypes, negative teacher beliefs, and perceptions of culturally diverse learners for pre-service teachers, but in-service practitioners are underrepresented in the existing research studies and a large portion of the population of students are educated by in-service practitioners whose culture differs from that of their students. Less than 20 percent of the articles located looked at in-service providers. Moreover, in-service teachers may have ingrained beliefs after working in the field, so interventions that work with pre-service teachers may not be as effective with in-service teachers; therefore, they warrant their own study. This research study may contribute to the literature looking at in-service providers' awareness and how that influences their practices which is insufficient in the extant literature.

“The future of any society lies in ensuring *all* of its children receive the very best education it has to offer” (Chambers, 2009, p. 428); thus, it was essential that additional research be conducted to answer the research questions that address the needs of an emerging culturally diverse student population as other research has explored teachers' beliefs and perceptions, but they have not specifically explored at what happens to participants' views of their students and their practices after participation in an intervention program that provides opportunities to reflect on their own cultural identity,

a guiding question for this research study. This research study delivered a more complete understanding of the participants' behavior and the development of an understanding of the circumstances in which the behavior was taking place. As the population of students who occupy classrooms in New Jersey becomes increasingly diverse, but continues to be educated by teachers whose culture differs from their students, the need for the aforementioned study is crucial. Research related to teachers' identity awareness is indispensable if educators are to meet the needs of the changing demographics teachers will encounter in New Jersey schools. Therefore, additional research in this area is warranted.

Chapter 3, which follows, centers on the methodological approaches that were used to guide the study. This chapter outlines the methods that were used to conduct the research including the strategies of inquiry, a rationale and description of the sampling, data collection techniques, and instrumentation and strategies that were employed in the data analysis, as well as any ethical considerations, which are delineated to ensure transparency with regard to the related research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Purpose of the Research

This qualitative research study was guided by research questions that were designed to examine and explore how teachers perceive their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students. Additionally, the study sought to determine whether interventions to raise identity awareness would change teachers' perceptions of themselves and their students. The two research questions and additional sub-question were:

- (1) How do participants perceive their identity and the identity of their students?
- (2) What happens to participants' views of their students after participation in the intervention program that provides opportunities to reflect on their own cultural identity?
 - a. How, if at all, does the participants' participation in the interventions alter their classroom practices?

Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research was selected as the methodology for inquiry in this research study as its "ultimate purpose is learning" (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 3). To begin, qualitative research is deeply rooted in the social sciences as it is carried out in the natural setting in which the phenomena occurs which allowed me to make interpretations of what I see, hear, and understand about the phenomena under consideration (Creswell, 2014; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, Morales, 2007; Glense, 2006; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Qualitative research enabled me to understand the why and how of the complex phenomena while developing an understanding of the influence of the context

and setting on the phenomena to develop a deeper, richer, and more complete understanding of the phenomena being studied, which is critical in an educational setting (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Furthermore, qualitative research begins with the recognition that as researchers we carry with us assumptions, beliefs, and worldviews, which assist us in understanding the data (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative research was the most appropriate choice of methodology for the research study because “our understandings of things, concepts, or ideas that we might take for granted are not somehow natural or pre-given but rather the product of human actions and interactions, human history, society, and culture” (Rapley, 2007, p.7). Thus, the iterative, cyclic nature of qualitative research provided opportunities to examine and explore insights that were brought to light through the data (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Qualitative research provided the opportunity for data to be collected where the participants “experience the issue or problem under study,” (Creswell, 2014, p. 185) which in this case was the classroom setting that allowed me to observe the teachers’ practices and interactions with students. This type of research delivered a more complete understanding of the participants’ behavior as it assisted in developing an understanding of the circumstances in which the behavior was taking place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Creswell, 2014; Lane, Bishop, & Wilson-Jones, 2005; Maxwell, 2013; Moen, 2006). The meaning that participants brought to the study was at the forefront of the research, not the meaning brought by the researcher, which allowed me to maintain a focus on gleaning meaning from the participants about the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Additionally, this

method allowed me to have face-to-face interaction with the participants over a period of time actually observing and speaking with the participants in the context of their practice (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, a qualitative research approach offered multiple ways in which to gather data through interviews, observations, reflections, interventions, conversations, and interactions of participants with students rather than being reliant upon a single data source which permitted me to make sense of the data as I compared it across different data sources (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2014). Because data were collected directly from participants, the emergent design of qualitative research was suitable for this study because divergence from the initial plan was necessary as events unfold and stories were told (Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Understanding that many factors and multiple perspectives affect a situation, the holistic account that qualitative research provided was particularly pertinent for this study (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative inquiry provided opportunities to collect data through open-ended questions that were rich with information directly from participants' perspectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Maxwell, 2013; Moen, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Seiki, 2014; Thomas, 2012). Additionally, qualitative research provided an occasion to elicit lived experiences of the teachers to see the world from others' perspectives (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Toma, 2006). Moreover, qualitative research bestowed the opportunity to immerse myself in the real-world setting to answer questions from emic and etic perspectives and to be an observer gleaning information in an active, inductive learning process (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Qualitative research offered both inductive and deductive data analysis that supported the research in this study (Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The inductive and deductive approaches to data analysis delivered opportunities for examination, amendment, and refinement of the analyses, as I scrutinized data against events and characteristics that were uncovered in the research (Miles, Huberman, & Saldña, 2014). The inductive process of qualitative research, working from the bottom up to build themes, afforded the opportunity to move back and forth between the data and the themes as they emerged in order to establish an inclusive set of themes from the data (Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Subsequent to the inductive process of data analysis, movement to a deductive examination of the data ensued wherein I operationalized and matched units of data within the data corpus (Miles et al., 2014).

As the research questions called for a method that allowed the questions to be answered in the real world, a qualitative method was preferred (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). To address the research questions, I implemented an intervention program that consisted of four activities. Four intervention activities were selected for this study to raise participants' identity awareness to further change their classroom practices. The interventions or types of interventions selected were used in other studies, but usually as a single intervention with pre-service teachers in which positive results were attributed (Lee, 2013; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Hossain, 2015; Pennington et al., 2013; Puchner et al., 2012). This study sought to use four interventions rather than a single intervention that was reflected in the literature to possibly augment the effectiveness of the existing interventions and add to the literature regarding the use of one packaged intervention with a limitation being that you cannot necessarily make an

assumption as to which of the four interventions led to a particular outcome.

Additionally, the study sought to utilize the interventions with in-service teachers, an area that is lacking in the literature and makes this study unique. The rationale for each of the intervention activities is discussed in detail in the instrumentation section of this chapter. Data in the form of interviews, observations, interventions that also utilized graphic elicitations, and informal conversations were collected in this study to answer the research questions.

Epistemology. The worldview of the researcher plays an important role in the research study (Creswell, 2014). My worldview was based upon constructivism and pragmatism. With regard to the methodology that was used in this study, my worldview influenced the type of study that was conducted (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The pragmatic side of me sought to use all approaches necessary to better understand the research problem which is why a qualitative research methods study was conducted. It rendered additional means by which to better understand all aspects of the phenomena under study by providing rich, thick descriptions in the participants' own words (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Maxwell, 2013).

From a constructivist perspective, I sought to better understand the world in which I worked by relying on the participants' understanding of the phenomena under consideration through qualitative inquiry, which deals with the study of human experiences (Creswell et al., 2007; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Using a transformative worldview, I sought to use this research to bring to light the need for

teachers to develop awareness of their cultural identity to better meet the needs of culturally diverse student populations (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Positionality. As a middle-age White woman who has benefitted from White privilege, I approached this study aware of my own background and the benefits I have been afforded as a member of the dominant culture. I attended Catholic school from kindergarten through seventh grade while living in the Bronx and then public school in a wealthy suburb of New York City. My own children (who are grown adults) were also educated in private schools by a predominantly White teaching staff. Having been educated in a school district with negligible diversity (two non-White families in the entire town) by a predominantly White staff, my personal educational experiences are dissimilar to those of the students that I educate, even though they are also being educated by a mostly White teacher workforce. Respect was given to the teacher due to their position within the classroom as students were receptacles in which teachers deposited information. In my classroom, respect is a two-way street; I do not garner respect by my position as the teacher. I give my students respect and I earn their respect which is dissimilar to my schooling experiences and those of my own children. Thus, I was cognizant of the differences in one's experiences and one's practice throughout the research study.

My professional experience as a freelance court stenographer afforded me the opportunity to witness firsthand the hegemonic behaviors of the dominant society as non-members were disenfranchised by the legal system. Changing careers brought me to the field of education wherein I have worked as a public educator in a culturally diverse

school district at different grade levels from third through eighth grade. The development of self-awareness and identification as a member of the dominant culture was essential to my professional growth. As I became more aware of my own culture, I was able to better reflect upon the impact of said culture on my practices and alter my pedagogy to meet the needs of the culturally diverse population I service. Personal identity awareness has enabled me to become more reflective and reflexive in my interactions with students, families, and other community members, as well as fellow staff. As one of the more senior staff members, I am a go-to person in the building for questions related to curriculum/instruction and classroom management. As the participants in this study were colleagues of mine with less experience in the field than I have, I am often called upon to assist them with needs they have in the classroom; thus, it was imperative that I do not allow personal interactions with the participants to influence the outcomes of the study. I used a research journal in which I engaged in self-reflection. Bracketing of my personal beliefs and assumptions was used to reduce and eliminate personal biases (Gearing, 2004). Journaling assisted me in monitoring and bracketing my personal beliefs and assumptions (Janesick, 1999) as I engaged in critical self-reflection in order to mitigate these biases (Howard, 2003).

Research Design

In the following sections, the research design that guided this qualitative intervention study is explained, as well as the scope and context of the study. The steps I followed through the research process from sampling of participants to data collection and data analysis through the writing of the final research text are outlined in detail.

Sampling and participants. Rossman and Rallis (2012) contend that the number within the sampling is dependent upon “the conceptual framework, research questions, genre, data-gathering methods, and time and resources” (p. 138). The use of a qualitative research approach attempts to yield “rich, in-depth details about lived experiences” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 139). Data continued to be collected until such time as data saturation was reached (O’Reilly & Parker, 2012; Patton, 2002; Riessman, 2008).

In order to be included in the study, the school district had to have a culturally diverse population, which for the purposes of this study means at least 75 percent of the population reported race/ethnicity as non-White on the NJ School Performance Report for the 2015-2016 school year. Yardsley (pseudonym), the district in which I am a teacher, is a P-12 school district that services the needs of approximately 2,800 culturally diverse students that range in age from three to 21 (for students with special needs). The district employs approximately 150 teachers in its seven district schools (“Certificated Staff,” 2016). Yardsley is located in the central part of the State of New Jersey and 73 percent of the student population is considered economically disadvantaged and eligible for free or reduced lunch. English language learners (ELLs) comprise seven percent of the student population while 14 percent are eligible for special education services (“NJ School Performance Report,” 2016).

Many languages are spoken within the school district with 48.7 percent of the children residing in homes where English is not the native language (“NJ School Performance,” 2016). Spanish is the language spoken in 30.5 percent of the students’ homes, as well as Haitian, French-based Creoles and Pidgins, and a mixture of other languages. The Yardsley School District is rich with different cultures: 54.7 percent of

the population self-reported as Black, 38.6 percent of the population self-described as Hispanic, and 2.3 percent self-declared as Asian (“NJ School Performance,” 2016). The Yardsley School District is responsible for the education of culturally diverse student populations that were the focus of this study, as well as a population of teachers whose culture differed from that of their students that provided in-depth information about the phenomena that was explored (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

White teachers make up 65.9 percent of the workforce in the district school that was the focus of this study, but 79.1 percent of the core content areas (math, language arts, science, and social studies) are taught by White teachers. While this percentage is slightly less than national percentages of White teachers (approximately 80 percent), the demographics of the teacher workforce was incongruent with the students they service (U.S. Department of Education, 2014c), which is why this setting was appropriate for the study.

After obtaining permission from the superintendent of the district, the principal of the district school was contacted in person to discuss the study and to gain access to the site to conduct interviews, intervention sessions, and observations of teachers willing to participate in the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Two stages of recruitment of participants were used as I am a teacher in the school and have access to potential participants (Creswell, 2014). There was an initial recruitment of participants by the principal who selected core content teachers (math, science, social studies, and language arts) who self-reported as White, and then a prescreening process (previously discussed in Chapter 1) to narrow down the number of participants to six who were advised of the full intent of the study at the time of recruitment. Teachers were selected for participation

in the study through convenience sampling of a population that is consistent with teacher workforce demographic and have knowledge of the phenomena under investigation (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Sample size. Purposeful sampling of the convenience sample was used to ensure that the groups that are selected are representative of the specific population that has knowledge of the phenomena under study. The rationale for the use of purposeful sampling was to include a number of information-rich participants who had knowledge of the topic being studied (Patton, 2002). Using purposeful sampling, a sampling of teachers was considered so that comparison might be made of the teachers' perceptions of cultural identity awareness and its influence on their cognitive frame when working with culturally diverse students, which enabled maximization of understanding of the phenomena that was explored (Patton, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Six teachers were selected from the initial ten respondents for pre-and-post CDAIs, interviews, intervention sessions, and observations (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Seventh and eighth grade students attend the school in which the study took place; therefore, the participants who were selected teach seventh or eighth grade in one of the four core content areas: math, language arts, science, or social studies. See Table 3 for participant demographic information. Participants range in experience from two to twelve years. The sampling was consistent with the predominantly White female teacher workforce demographic in New Jersey and representative of the specific population with knowledge of the phenomena under investigation.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Race	Years of Experience	Grades Taught
Shannen	Female	White	2	Seventh
Kristin	Female	White	2	Seventh
Colleen	Female	White	5	Seventh
Victoria	Female	White	12	Eighth, High School
Ena	Female	White	8	Elementary, Eighth
Emily	Female	White	2	Seventh

Participation in the study was completely voluntary and participants were asked to meet for two interviews at a location of the participants' choice. Observations were scheduled at the participants' convenience (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The lesson topics for the observations were selected by the participants. The location and timing of the intervention sessions were mutually agreed upon by the participants in the study. Some interventions were collaborative in nature; therefore, participants met at a time that was mutually convenient for all participants. Interventions that required individual completion commenced at a time that was convenient for each of the participants.

Researcher-participant connections. A prior relationship and history with the participants existed as I am currently working as a colleague with the participants in the study. I am a teacher in the school with the participants. I have had a relationship with three of the participants in the study for over five years with myriad of experiences and interactions in different contextual settings during that period of time both in and out of

the classroom. I have worked on committees with all of the participants and enjoyed intermittent social functions outside of the school setting with them. Four of the participants and I are members of the same team wherein we teach the same students.

As a result of these varying relationships and experiences, it was essential for me to recognize and view this study from both the etic and emic perspectives, from my researcher's worldview, the outsider perspective, as well as from the participants' insider perspective (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). While I am unable to fully understand and represent the subjectivity of the emic view, I worked to represent the etic perspective, my interpretation and understanding of the participants (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In this study, my lens was very complex and layered because I have both an etic and emic perspective as a teacher of culturally diverse students and of the participants. It was imperative that I use both an etic and emic lens as a participant and observer when I engaged in continual reflection, examination, interrogation, and interpretation of the data corpus throughout the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). As researchers, it is essential to recognize "the implausibility of being able to truly distance themselves from what they come to know and understand and yet continue to act with integrity and demonstrate trustworthiness, virtuosity, and rigor ..." (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 15). I used the multidimensional lens to ensure my interpretation of the findings preserve the intent and meaning of both individual and collective stories of the participants and researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Data Collection

As this study sought to elicit the perceptions of the participants, specific data collection methods were used that provided information about what the participants know

and have experienced. To that end, the following multiple data collection methods were employed to acquire thick, rich data from different data sources (Janesick, 1999; Moen, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2012); pre and post Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) responses, observations, interview responses, intervention session activities, field notes, researcher journal notes, and analytic memos.

Data collection occurred in three phases. See Figure 1 for phases of data collection.

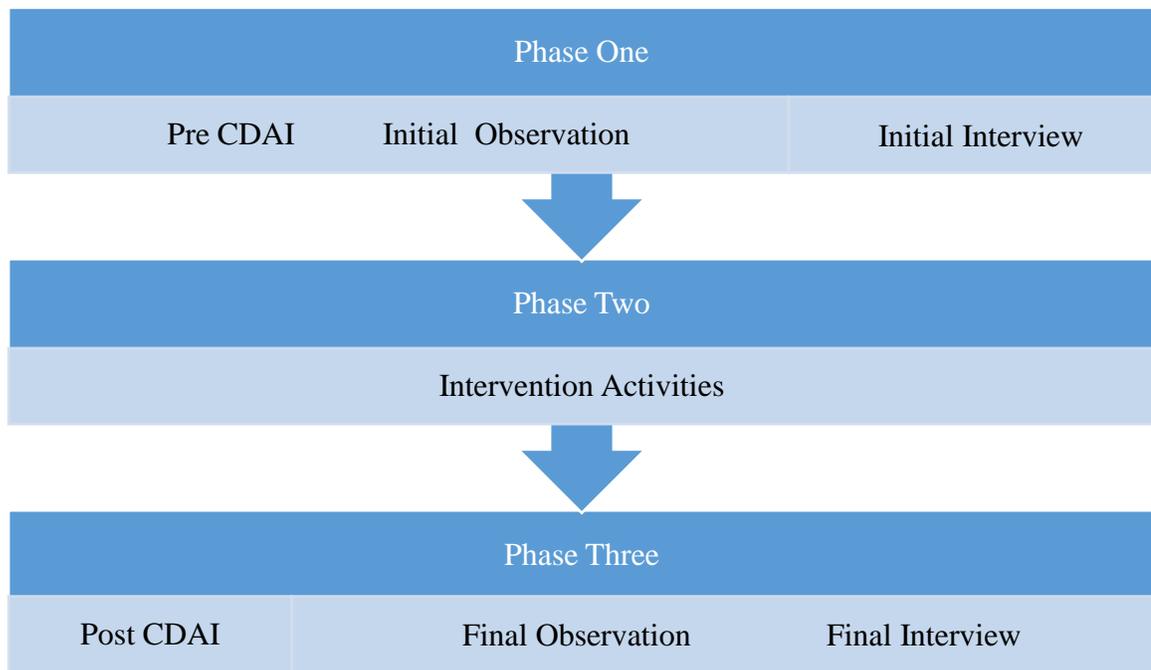


Figure 1. Phases of Data Collection.

Phase one began with participants completing the pre-CDAI, (see Appendix E for full listing of the items contained in the CDAI). Next, an initial lesson observation of the participants' choice ensued. The initial observation was followed by an initial interview

session with each of the participants, (see Appendix F for initial interview protocol). Initial and final interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission, transcribed, analyzed, and coded.

The second phase of data collection involved four intervention activity sessions, the purpose of which were to increase participants' awareness of their own cultural identity, as well as the cultural identity of their students. Intervention sessions generated a variety of data in the form of a graphic elicitation (Identity Chart), written reflections, and "I Come From" poems, School-valued discourses, and field notes. Intervention session activities are further elucidated in the instrumentation section of this chapter. The sequencing of the interventions was based upon the extant literature with regard to raising identity awareness with the first step in the process identifying oneself; thus, the first intervention selected was graphic elicitation Identity Chart. The cultural competence presentation was selected as the next step in the intervention process to provide that "unsettling experience" (Pultorak, 2010, p. 144) that could be the impetus for reflection. Subsequent to the unsettling experience that prompted reflection, the next two steps involved uncovering the participants' beliefs and assumptions with the autobiographical activities: the "I Come From" poem and the Maya Angelou poem. The final intervention would be the connection between one's experiences and the education system with the school-valued discourses activity to aid participants' understanding of how whiteness permeates the education system and marginalizes culturally diverse learners.

The final phase of data collection included the post-CDAI, a final observation of a lesson of the participants' choice, and then a final interview was conducted, (see Appendix G for final interview protocol). See Table 4 for timeframe and rationale for

data collection. Field notes from the observations and interviews were coded and analyzed as data. Comparison of responses from the initial and final interviews and observations was conducted.

Table 4

Timeframe for Data Collection

Sequence	Duration	Rationale	Individually or Collaboratively	Timeframe
1.CDAI (pre)	45 mins.	Initial assessment of cultural diversity awareness	Individually	Week #1
2.Initial Observation (Maye & Day, 2012)	45 mins.	Baseline of practices	Individually	Week #1
3.Initial Interview (Maye & Day, 2012)	45 mins.	Background information and awareness	Individually	Week #2
4.Identity Chart (De La Mare, 2013; Woods, Barksdale, Triplett, & Potts, 2014)	30 - 45 mins.	Bring personal identity to forefront	Individually	Week #3
5.Cultural Competence Presentation (Hossain, 2015; Rieger, 2015; Taylor, 2010)	45 – 60 mins.	Group discussion to raise awareness of White Privilege, dysconscious racism, deficit thinking	Collaboratively, then individual reflections	Week #4
6.Autobiographical Poems (reading, group discussion, and creation) (Lee, 2012; Rieger, 2015; Yu, 2012)	45 – 60 mins.	To find connections between poem and their lives; reflect on early experiences that may impact current practices	Collaboratively, then individual reflections; Individually create “I Come From” poems	Week #5

Table 4 (continued)				
Sequence	Duration	Rationale	Individually or Collaboratively	Timeframe
7.School-valued Discourse (Lazar, Edwards, & Thompson, McMillon, 2012)	30 -45 mins.	Reflect on role of White Privilege in access to literacy and denial of other groups' access to literacy	Individually	Week #6
8.CDAI (post)	45 mins.	To determine if there was a change in awareness	Individually	Week #7
9.Final Observation	45 mins.	To determine if there was a change in classroom practice	Individually	Week #7
10.Final Interview	45 mins.	To determine if participation in the study changed perceptions and practices	Individually	Week #8

Cultural diversity awareness inventory. During intervention session one, the participants were asked to complete a Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) to explore his/her beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors toward culturally diverse students at the outset of the study, (see Appendix E). CDAIs was collected, coded, and analyzed as data.

In the final phase of data collection, participants retook the CDAI to determine whether there had been a change in participants' cultural identity awareness and the impact on the lives of their students due to participation in the intervention activities. Post CDAI responses were coded and compared with initial CDAI responses.

Rationale. Cousik (2015) posits that teachers must constantly work to hone their cultural competency in order to provide effective instruction in culturally diverse classrooms. To that end, Cousik suggests the use of self-evaluative questionnaires as a means of examining prior knowledge and attitudes about cultural diversity which is also supported by the research of Milner and Tenore (2010). The purpose of this intervention using the CDAI is to raise awareness about cultural identity to determine whether an increased level of identity awareness translates into more culturally relevant pedagogical practice.

The CDAI was tested for content validity by a panel of experts and was revised (Henry, 1986). The CDAI was deemed reliable with a test-retest for reliability established at .66 (Brown, 2004). The CDAI uses a five-point scale and measures the extent to which the participant agrees or disagrees with each statement for each of the subscales: general cultural awareness, the culturally diverse family, cross cultural communication, assessment, and the multicultural environment (Henry, 1986; Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, & Flowers, 2003). All of the statements on the CDAI begin with “I believe” and ask participants the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement (Henry, 1986; Milner et al., 2003).

Graphic elicitation. Crilly, Blackwell, and Clarkson (2006) connected graphic elicitation techniques as a means of gathering data to “graphic ideation” which “offers the opportunity to both record and stimulate thought” (p. 345) which was the purpose of the graphic elicitation that was used in this study. Responses to the graphic elicitation were monitored closely to ensure confidentiality as much as possible, unless the participant specifically referred to an attribute that would only be characteristic of herself or himself,

to which the participants were asked if they felt comfortable and were willing to proceed with the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Interventions

There is a large body of scholarship related to pre-service teachers and race that shows the need for intentional experiences in teacher education that fosters thinking about race and offers opportunities for teachers to reflect and talk about their beliefs and assumptions about race (Garrett & Segall, 2013; Gomez & White, 2010; Kumar & Hamer, 2013; Landsman & Lewis, 2011; Laughter, 2011). Kwegyir Aggrey (2007) suggest that “encouraging pre-service teachers to connect abstract concepts (such as racism or equity) to contemporary and personal issues is the most effective approach for multicultural educators ...” (p. 8). While there is less literature related to in-service teachers, it is my belief that in-service practitioners would also benefit from intentional experiences in the form of interventions. Four interventions were selected for this study to provide multiple opportunities for reflection and professional growth rather than a short, one-time intervention (Garmon, 2004, 2005; Sleeter, 2008; Van Gunten & Martin, 2001). My assumption in this qualitative intervention study was that reflection and processing of the interventions may lead to understanding that will increase cultural awareness and sensitivity in pedagogical practices of teachers of culturally diverse populations.

Identity chart. Session one requested that participants complete the Identity Chart graphic elicitation that was adapted from the (2013) De La Mare study to raise awareness of one’s cultural identity in order to better know oneself and ultimately know the students better. The identity chart’s graphic elicitation exercise (De La Mare, 2013)

asked participants to divide the circle they are provided into different categories that are indicative of their identities thereby creating a pie chart, (see Appendix I). The graphic elicitation asked participants to use words or graphics that are indicative of their identity; the pie chart may illustrate, but is not limited to, the identities that are most visible such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, social class, and ability (De La Mare, 2013). Participants were asked to explain their social identity pie chart, elucidating why certain identities were more salient than others (De La Mare, 2013). The graphic elicitation exercise was very vague and open ended to allow participants the freedom to express themselves with minimal constraints to elicit as much information as possible directly from participants (Copeland & Agosto, 2012).

Rationale. Graphic elicitations may be produced by the researcher or participants and allow for the creation of self-portraits (Bagnoli, 2009; Crilly et al., 2006). They also provide access to and represent different levels of participants' experiences as the researcher makes meaning of the phenomena in a depictive manner (Bagnoli, 2009; Crilly et al., 2006). Graphic elicitation, with its focus on the visual level, allows people to go beyond a verbal mode of thinking, and this may help widen the dimensions of experience and may encourage thinking in non-standard ways, avoiding clichés and 'ready-made' answers which could be easily replied. In this way, an arts-based method or graphic elicitation tool may encourage a holistic narration of self and also help overcome silences, including those aspects of one's life that might for some reason be sensitive and difficult to be related in words (Bagnoli, 2009, p. 566).

As this study examined and explored cultural identity of participants, a graphic elicitation is an apropos means of producing data. For the purpose of this study, the

graphic elicitation provided a tool that represented information from participants more effectively through illustration or diagrams rather than orally (Bagnoli, 2009; Umoquit, Dobrow, Lemieuw-Charles, Rivto, Urbach, & Wodchis, 2008). The protocol for the graphic elicitation was reviewed by an expert in the field (Johnson, 1997; Krefting, 1991; Rossman & Rallis, 2013).

Cultural Competence Presentation

The purpose of this activity was to provide information to participants to enable them to make sense of their racial identity to better understand and work with the culturally diverse learners found in their classrooms. The ultimate goal was to understand one's racialized identity and the role of that identity in the culturally diverse classroom (Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013; Howard, 2006). The presentation began with participants being asked review the privilege list and say whether they agreed or disagreed with the list of 26 privileges cited in McIntosh's (1989) article entitled "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." Hossain (2015) used this activity in his study of White privilege with pre-service teachers by also having his participants write an anonymous reflection to enable students "to express their opinion freely without having to defend their responses openly" (Hossain, 2015, p. 54). This study used reflective writing as a means of providing participants opportunities to reflect and respond without worrying about how others may perceive their responses. Next, the participants viewed three video clips (Michael, Corina, and Jason) from the *Whiteness Project* which can be found at whitenessproject.org. The video clips were short, around one to two minutes each. The *Whiteness Project* videos were White Millennials from Dallas, Texas talking about race. White privilege, dysconscious racism, and cognitive frames were then

explained. Finally, participants viewed two more video clips (Claudia and Alex) from the *Whiteness Project* and were asked to reflect upon the video clips and information provided in the intervention session. Group discussion between participants focused on the privileges list, video clips, and information presented. Participants were then asked to provide a written reflection on the session.

Rationale. Numerous White teachers who have not had exposure to and/or opportunities to reflect on the social constructs of Whiteness may be unaware of its implications (Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013); thus, there is a need for teachers to understand what it means to be White and how that influences their interactions with culturally diverse learners. White teachers may lack understanding of the privileges and benefits associated with Whiteness and racism (Delano-Oriaran & Meidl, 2013; Howard, 2006).

Information was presented and participants were asked to partake in group discussions. The participants were asked to provide a written reflection and reaction to the activity. Researchers (e.g., Cousik, 2015; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; McAllister & Irvine, 2002) discussed the benefits of self-reflective writing of teachers and their lived experiences with diversity. Individual written reflection is a strategy most often identified by researchers to utilize when examining issues related to race (Brown Buchanan, 2015; Hossain, 2015; Laughter, 2011, Milner, 2006). Additionally, Lawrence and Tatum (1997) utilized reflections of teachers after participation in an anti-racist professional development.

Autobiographical Poem Review and “I Come From” Poem

Examination of self through reading and reflection of autobiographical poems was the focus for Part 1 of intervention session three. For this particular intervention, participants were asked to read: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. Reading of the poem was followed by group discussion of sharing. Teachers were asked to compose a written reflection in which they were asked (1) to find a connection between the readings and their lives, (2) how they became conscious of their race, and (3) how awareness of their race may impact their interactions with their culturally diverse students, see Appendix J for the protocol. This activity was adapted from a 2012 research study by Tianlong Yu.

Rationale. Autobiographical self-reflective writing was used by Lee (2012) in a study of how preservice teachers’ personal experiences with diversity shaped their identity. Thus, having participants read the aforementioned autobiographical poems and self-reflect regarding the content of the poems was supported by the literature related to raising cultural awareness.

“I come from ...” poem. Part 2 of intervention session three derives from the “I Come From” exercise in *Talking Diversity with Teachers and Teacher Educators: Exercises and Critical Conversations Across the Curriculum*. The “I Come From” activity provided opportunities for participants to reflect upon their past experiences and the ways in which said experience impact their beliefs, assumptions, and practices in culturally diverse classrooms. The purpose of this activity was to reconnect life experiences of the participants from early childhood to consider how said experiences influenced one’s current beliefs and assumptions with regard to their students.

Teachers created an “I Come From” poem with each stanza beginning with the words *I Come From* using a list of questions to facilitate participants reflection, see Appendix K for the protocol. Upon completion of their poems, participants were asked to reflect (in writing) upon their experiences and how they may be similar or different from their students’ and students’ families’ experiences. Additionally, the focus was on the way participants’ personal experiences affected their perceptions and interactions with schools and how that differed from their students’ and students’ families.

Rationale. Culture and differences play an integral role in humanity; thus, they should play a significant part of the education process (Gay, 2013). Ayers (2001) suggested that teachers need to have “a serious encounter with autobiography” (p. 122) because they teach what they know and who they are. Hamachek (1999) posits that teachers become part of the curriculum that they teach as the content cannot be separated from the teachers’ personalities. Ellerbrock and Cruz (2014) explained the importance of critical evaluation of one’s stances and viewpoints when participating in reflective tasks.

School-Valued Discourse Activity

The purpose of this two-part intervention was to assist participants’ understanding of their positioning with regard to school-valued discourses in relation to the culturally diverse students in their classrooms. Part one of this intervention asked participants to complete a checklist (see Appendix L) entitled *Assessing School-Valued Discourses* adapted from *Bridging Literacy and Equity*, Chapter 7 Transforming Teachers. The reasoning behind the completion of this checklist was to uncover the role of race in one’s access to literacy. The second part of this intervention was to reflect upon language and literacy practices within one’s home as a child. This portion of the

intervention was adapted from *Bridging Literacy and Equity*; Chapter 4 Variation is Normal. Participants were directed to reflect upon bedtime and dinner table rituals, etc. that used literacy and language. Participants examined their own language and literacy experiences and compared their experiences to those of their students in a written reflection, see Appendix L for intervention protocol.

Rationale. Literacy standards that all students are expected to achieve are formed around the practices of middle-class families (Lazar, Edwards, & Thompson McMillon, 2012). Children from the mainstream have families that are accustomed to the language and literacy practices expected in school; they “tend to know certain things about how print works and how to talk about texts” (Lazar et al., 2012, p. 18). The skills these children possess are due to conditioning within their home where their families’ use of print and language are familiar (Lazar et al., 2012). However, research posits that literacy practices are cultural in nature and serve particular purposes for particular groups, elucidating the connection between literacy practice and culture (Lazar et al., 2012). Thus, one’s personal experiences with language and literacy affect their expectations of the students in their classrooms. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers, whose culture may differ from that of their students, to understand how their language and literacy experiences influence their personal beliefs, assumptions, and expectations when supporting culturally diverse learners.

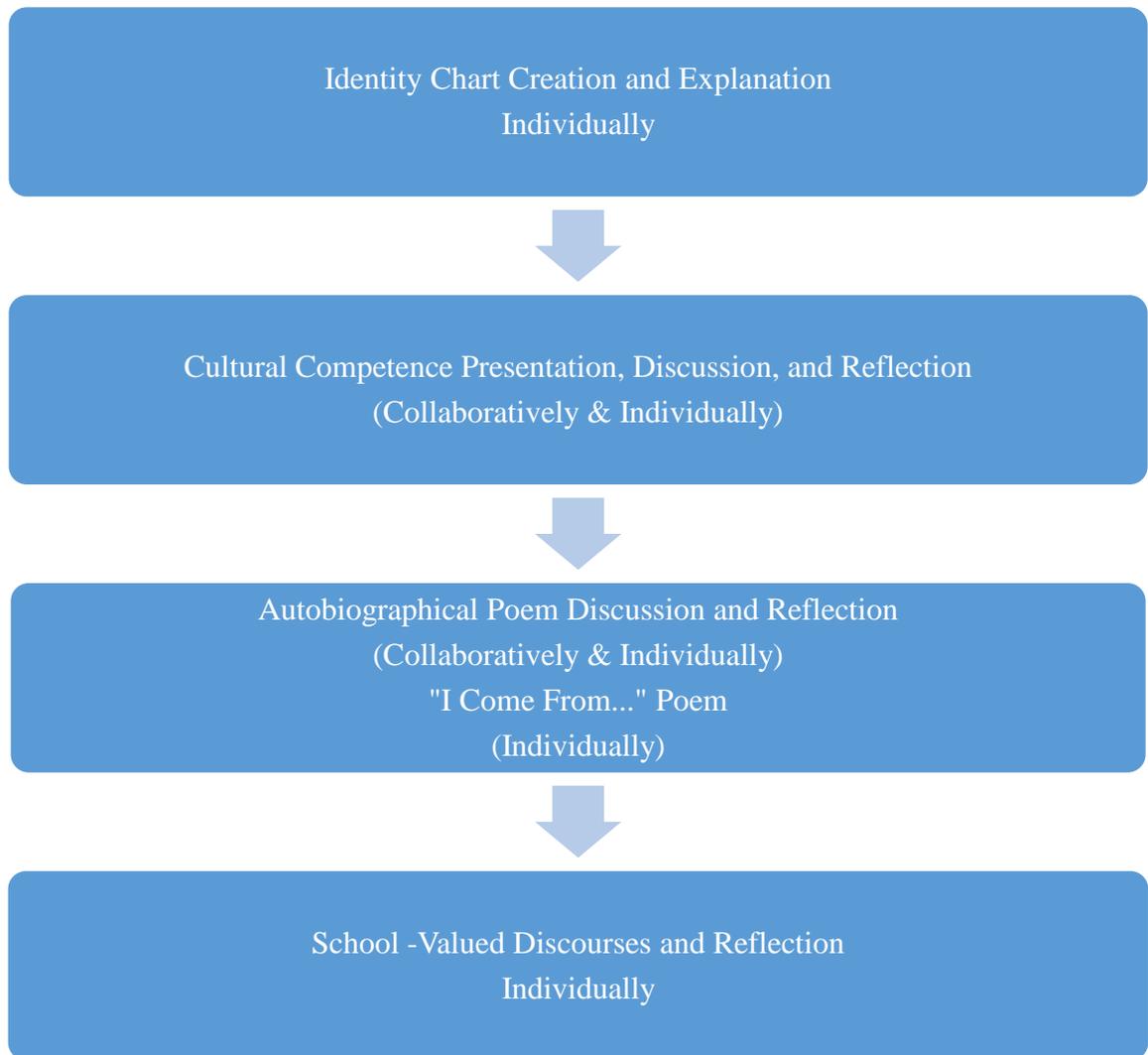


Figure 2. Sequencing of the Intervention Process.

Interviewing

The use of interviews in qualitative research provided an opportunity to elicit lived experiences of the participants in their own words. Interviews serve different purposes in different contexts (Van Manen, 1994). Interviews afford opportunities to collect data from the participants' experiences and to become "more experienced ourselves" (Van Manen, 1994, p. 62) in order to determine the full significance and

meaning of the experience, which was essential as the study sought to elicit influence of lived experiences of the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Responsive interviewing allowed me to play an active role in the process while encouraging conversation with the participants and following up with questions to participants' initial responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As responsive interviewing was utilized, it was essential that I was aware of my own attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions that may have affected the questions asked and my reaction to the responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Careful attention to the emotions of the participants was crucial during the interview process, particularly as participants share their lived experiences with me (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As the conditions in which the interview occurs may affect the outcome of the interview, participants were asked to select the date, time, and location for the interviews to ensure that they were comfortable during the interview process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

In the context of this study, the interviews were conducted as “a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that served as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon” (Van Manen, 1994, p.66). Additionally, the interviews were conducted to “develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience” (Van Manen, 1994, p. 66). These interviews began with semi-structured questions from which I gleaned information from participants, but morphed into conversational exchange of information about participants' lived experiences wherein participants actively contributed to the lines of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Active listening was crucial as I followed up with probing questions to garner clarity from participants regarding their stories and responses which allowed me to obtain rich, descriptive data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). “Vivid examples, narratives, and stories engage readers and convince them that your descriptions are about actual events, real people, and genuine emotions” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 105) which was the intent of the interviews that were conducted in this study.

The two-step process that was followed in this study involved gathering of data through responsive interviewing and then reflecting on the experiences in a conversation and/or email (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Van Manen, 1994). The interview protocols that were used can be found in the instrumentation section of this chapter and in Appendices E and F.

Field notes. In this research study, field notes for the research study were kept in notebook form and contained “descriptions of people, places, events, activities, and conversations” (Glense, 2006, p. 55) that were obtained during the data collection process. Additionally, noted in the field notes were personal notes and reflections about patterns that I began to see emerging as the research progressed while I explored my own personal reactions (Glense, 2006). The use of field notes enabled me to develop preliminary categories for the data early in the research process, which provided opportunities for further inquiry and exploration. Glense (2006) stressed the importance of expansion of field notes as soon as possible to ensure the researcher’s ability to accurately recall details; therefore, I made every attempt, when possible, to make field notes immediately after an observation, conversation, or interview to ensure the veracity of the documentation. Reflection upon the field notes provided additional opportunities

for expansion of notes, as well as the addition of reflective thoughts and ideas (Glense, 2006).

Attention to details was paramount as I sought to utilize rich description to ensure that in the future the field notes allowed me to visualize the moment, person, setting, interview, and conversation being recounted (Glense, 2006). Attention was paid to word choice in making the field notes with an emphasis on the use of non-vague descriptive language (Glense, 2006).

Autobiographical notes, as suggested by Glense (2006), situate the researcher within the research process. Moreover, the autobiographical notes in the form of a researcher journal (Janesick, 2006) provided a platform on which to explain how the actions and interactions shaped the inquiry (Glense, 2006). The autobiographical field notes from the journal entries became part of the narratives in the final research text.

Additionally, the field notes also contained an analytic component on one side of the page wherein I made notes and reflections on the data. In this section of the field notes, I added reflective notes that included ideas and impressions that I had, interpretations, as well as speculations about an observation, interview, and/or conversation. Sometimes, I made notes about plans for future conversations, interviews, and/or follow-up regarding previous data collection. The field notes created a stage on which I questioned my data, identified problems, and worked to develop an understanding of patterns and themes that emerged in the research (Glense, 2006). Field notes as a source of data collection were appropriate to the research questions as they expanded upon the data that was elicited regarding the experiences of the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Observations

Close observations, as posited by Van Manen (1994), “generates different forms of experiential material than we tend to get with written or the interview approach” (p. 68). As a focus of this study was to examine and explore the influence of cultural identity on pedagogical practice, observations were conducted in the natural setting of the participants’ classrooms (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Close observation required that the researcher play a dual role of observer and participant at the same time which required the researcher to be reflective without manipulating the social situation in which the observation was occurring (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Van Manen, 1994). Cognizance of the events as they were transpiring was essential as the participant-observer made notes (anecdotes) of daily living that were cogent and contained a specific point in the narrative (Van Manen, 1994).

Researcher Journal

The researcher journal which was begun at the outset of the research process prior to finalization of the research questions served as a tool through which to bracket my preconceptions and assumptions that were identified and reflected upon throughout the research process (Ahern, 1999). Maintaining the journal presented opportunities for me to maintain reflexivity throughout the research process as I explored different aspects of the research, such as my reasoning for undertaking this particular research and my personal beliefs and assumptions about race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Ahern, 1999; Janesick, 1999; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Moreover, the researcher journal allowed me to examine my role as the researcher and its place in the hierarchy of power of the

research to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner, valuing and empowering the participants in the study (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Janesick (1999) suggested different reasons for the use of journal writing: “a process to provide a data set of the researcher’s reflections on the research act,” (p. 505), as a means of refining one’s ideas, beliefs, and personal responses as the research progresses. Moreover, Janesick (1999) posited journal writing as a documentary tool of the role of the researcher and as a means of triangulating data because the journal itself could become a data set.

My researcher journal consisted of dated, hand-written notes in a bound notebook. In the notes, I kept track of my personal thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions in conversational form with the data, as well as questioning of the data, looking inward and outward through the research process (Ahern, 1999; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Janesick, 1999; Long & Johnson, 2000). The researcher journal offered the outlet in which to be reflexive while I attempted to develop a better understanding of the effects of my personal experiences rather than “engaging in futile attempts to eliminate them” (Ahern, 1999, p. 408; Porter, 1993). Porter (1993) emphasized the importance of the researcher in analyzing his or her own textual products which were enabled through the use of the researcher journal.

Instrumentation and Settings

This section contains the instrumentation tools that were used in the research study. This section begins with the observation protocol as it was the first point of data collection and is followed by the interview protocols, the second point of data collection.

Observation Protocol

Two observations were conducted and the same protocol was used for both sessions. The observations were approximately 40 minutes in duration and took place at a time selected by the participant and agreed upon by the researcher. An observation protocol rubric was created to allow the observer to focus attention of specific areas of pedagogical practice identified in the research as evidencing culturally relevant pedagogy: Setting High Expectations for Academics and Behavior, Modeling, Scaffolding, and Clarification of Challenging Curriculum, Using Students' Strengths as Instructional Starting Points, Creating and Nurturing Cooperative Environments, and Cultural Competence, (see Appendix H) (Gay, 2000; Maye & Day, 2012; Milner, 2008). The observation rubric rating scale of 1 to 4 was developed by me and was similar to evaluation rubrics used by the Danielson and Marzano models that have been adopted by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Pedagogical practice and interactions with the students were the focus of the observations and assessed using the observation protocol rubric. With regard to pedagogical practice, the focus of the observation was on the type of practices used within the classroom and the ways in which the students responded to the practices. Notes were recorded during the observations and field notes made as soon as possible upon completion of the observations.

Interview Protocol

An interview protocol was created by me by adapting questions from other studies that examined identity awareness and its role in pedagogical practice in order to answer the research questions posed in this study (Austin & Hickey, 2007; Fasching-Varner,

2013; Johnson, 2002). Question 2 on the initial interview protocol did not include a component that asks about choices about school and career that were included in Fasching-Varner's (2013) question. Question 3 combined Fasching-Varner's initial and second round follow-up questions into one initial question for this protocol. Question 4 combined Johnson's (2002) line of questioning with Austin & Hickey's (2007) discussion around "instance and experiences of racial engagement formed the content of the conversations (p. 85)." Question 5 is the same question that was asked by Austin & Hickey (2007) and Johnson (2002), but followed up with Johnson's (2002) question asking what does White Privilege mean to you. Question 7 was altered to ask has the diversity in your classroom made you think about your own ethnic background and social status and if so, how, please explain from Austin & Hickey's (2007) question that asked "How has the diversity in your classroom made you think about your own ethnic background and social status?" Question 8 sought to uncover whether participants saw the race of their students without asking if they were colorblind as Johnson (2002) did and rephrased the question to uncover information from participants in a more indirect form of questioning. Questions 9 and 10 were altered and constructed to elicit information that Johnson (2002) elicited with the question: How does awareness of race influence their personal identities as a teacher and their views of their classroom practice? Questions 11-14 were follow-up questions to questions 9 and 10. In the final interview protocol, additional follow-up questions were added to question 2 that was used in the initial protocol from Johnson's (2002) study. Along the same lines as Johnson's (2002) study, the final interview protocol included questions about the effect of participation in the study and its impact on cultural awareness and practice.

The initial interview protocol consisted of 13 open-ended questions and the final interview protocol contained seven open-ended questions, both of which stimulated conversation as it provided the semi-structured framework for the interview process (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Initially, participants were asked questions about general life experiences, including information about where they grew up, their family and friends, the types of schools they attended and teachers they encountered, and their choices about school and career that extended into conversations. The participants were asked questions about why they chose to be educators which prompted a telling of events that occurred in their lives that drew out additional information about their lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Participants were free to respond with narratives to the interview questions. Follow-up questions were asked to clarify information provided by the participants both at the time of the interview, as well as through email communication at a later date. Deviation from the protocol occurred in order to clarify or elicit additional information from participants based upon their initial responses to protocol questions.

Interview setting. Interviews were conducted in person at a time and location selected by participants to ensure that participants were comfortable and at ease during the interview process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Additionally, participants were encouraged to select the location of the interview as the participants are in-service practitioners within the school district and selection of a location outside of the classroom setting provided an opportunity for participants and me to meet in a neutral setting while conversing about the phenomena under investigation (Maxwell, 2013). This setting enabled participants and me to converse in a more naturalistic setting which

allowed participants freedom for their thoughts to wander while responding to interview questions and recounting their experiences (Riessman, 2008).

CDAI Protocol

In this study, the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI) was used during the first and last intervention sessions to potentially raise cultural awareness of the participants. According to its developer, the purpose of the 28-item questionnaire was to increase teachers' awareness of their perceptions and related behaviors toward culturally diverse students (Henry, 1986). The CDAI has been used by various researchers to assess cultural awareness and examine the effectiveness of multicultural education programs (Brown, 2004; Davis, 1993; Deering, 1995; Flanagan, 1995; Larke, 1990). The CDAI was used by participants to self-assess their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward culturally diverse students, similar to the way in which it was used by Larke (1990) and Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, & Flowers (2003). More recently, Cain Fehr and Agnello (2012) made modifications to the CDAI to include additional types of diversity such as gender, religion, age, or sexual orientation for use in research.

Documentary Tools

A Sony ICD-PX333 recorder was used to capture the conversation during interviews with participants. The recordings were digitally formatted and transferred to my personal laptop that was password protected to ensure security of the files. The files were also backed up to my personal password-protected cloud account to ensure the safe keeping of the files.

Technological connections. In order to clarify responses to interview questions or conversations with participants, I communicated with participants through email which allowed us to communicate when it was convenient for both parties. As qualitative

research required clarification and expansion of topics discussed, email provided an outlet through which to communicate with participants without necessitating the inconvenience of additional in-person meetings (James, 2007; James & Busher, 2006). Clarification related to an initial interview question transpired with two participants resulting in two emails with a few sentence responses.

Data Analysis

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) posited that with the use of multiple forms for data analysis, the likelihood increases that the findings and narratives of the research will be grounded. Therefore, analysis of data was an iterative process that included intimate familiarity with the data through immersion, chunking of the data into categories, and meaning making of the categories of data through interpretation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). An examination and exploration of the interview transcripts, intervention activity data (graphic elicitations, autobiographical poems, written reflections, and CDAI results), and interrogation of the data through analytic memo writing aided the data analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Saldaña, 2013). The lens of Critical Race Theory was at the forefront of all iterations of the data as I examined the data to uncover the presence of whiteness and its effect on classroom practice. Three iterations of data coding were mapped into a table to illustrate the way in which the codes and themes connected to the research questions, see Table 5 (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode, and frequency) were used to analyze the data generated from the CDAs. Visual representations of data were used because Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) assert

that providing data in visual form augments information from the text in an easy-to-read format that shows trends and distribution of data.

Analytic memos. “An analytic memo is a brief or extended narrative that documents the researcher’s reflections and thinking processes about the data” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 95). Analytic memos were created in an attempt to synthesize data into “higher level analytic meanings” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 95). Analytic memos were generated to interrogate the content of the completed interviews, reflections, and graphic elicitations while analyzing them in light of preliminary assumptions regarding the research (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) and ensure that the CRT framework undergirding this study was at the forefront when analyzing data. Memos took the form of theoretical notes, which explicated the cognitive process of conducting research, methodological notes that explained the procedural aspects of research, and observational comments that allowed me to explore feelings about the research endeavor (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Questions I sought to answer through the creation of the analytic memos included what the data meant as I compared the data to my personal beliefs and assumptions regarding the phenomena and how the data compared to my observations in the field, as well as to Critical Race Theory and literature that related to my topic. The analytic memos were designed to allow me to converse with myself about the data (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) while reflecting and expounding on the data, to “tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 96). Analytic memo writing afforded me the opportunity to think analytically about the data and commit to emerging ideas regarding the phenomena being studied while putting forward tentative questions that still needed to be answered (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Researchers are often required to put aside assumptions so that the true experiences of respondents are reflected in the analysis and reporting of research (Ahern, 1999). As human beings, researchers acknowledge that it is not possible to be totally objective as our personal values and beliefs impact and influence our views of events and phenomena, yet the expectation exists that researchers will attempt to bracket their personal assumptions and beliefs throughout the data collection and analysis process (Ahern, 1999; Gearing, 2004; Miles et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Bracketing is a means of demonstrating the validity of the data collection and analytic processes (Ahern, 1999, p. 407). Bracketing is an iterative process that was undertaken by me to understand the impact and influence of my personal experiences, assumptions, and beliefs throughout the data collection and analysis process which was facilitated through the process of analytic memo writing (Ahern, 1999; Gearing, 2004; Miles et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Triangulation of data. Data from this research study was obtained through multiple sources which resulted in copious amounts of data requiring interrogation and analysis of data through multiple phases. Triangulation of data was accomplished through the use of different data analyses and focusing strategies. Interrogation of the data was imperative to understand the individual participant's perspectives, the researcher's perspective, as well as collective perspectives that emerged through data analysis, along with the personal experiences of the participants and the researcher. The phases of data analysis are outlined below.

Table 5 provides the data source matrix that shows the triangulation of data sources as it relates to the research questions. Triangulation of data allowed me to

mitigate issues related to trustworthiness and validity by using multiple data sources to confirm findings within the data corpus (Johnson, 1997; Krefting, 1991). Triangulation of data offered multiple means of data collection which increased validity and reliability of the data collection process (Anderson & Herr, 1999).

Table 5

Data Source Matrix

Research Question	Data Source 1	Data Source 2	Data Source 3
(1) How do participants perceive their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students?	CDAI	Interviews	Autobiographical poem; Identity Chart; "I Come From" poem
(2) What happens to participants' views of their students after participation in the intervention program that provides opportunities to reflect on their own cultural identity?	Documents collected from interventions; Participant reflections on presentation; reflections on school-valued discourses; field notes	Observations	Interviews
(a) How, if at all, does participants' participation in the interventions alter their classroom practices?	CDAI (pre and post)	Observations	Interviews

Phase 1: Data organization. A separate file for each participant was created. Data were sorted, organized, and summarized manually by me to build intimate familiarity with the data (Miles et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Phase 2: Coding and theme generation. Descriptive codes use a word or a brief phrase to connote a topic within the data, which is why descriptive coding was used to draw out topics in the data analysis process (Miles et al, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). Process coding was used to vet actions that occurred within the data, a coding technique that employed the use of gerunds, “-ing” words, to connote action that participants took (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2013). Pattern coding was employed as themes or patterns began to emerge in the coding cycles (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2013). Axial coding assisted me in explaining the actions within the data (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2013) and was applied as codes were grouped together into a category to see how the pieces fit together. See Table 6 for code mapping and theme generation cycles.

Table 6

Code Mapping and Theme Generation

RQ #1 How do participants perceive their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students?	RQ #2 What happens to participants' views of their students after participation in the intervention program to reflect on their own cultural identity? a. How, if at all, does the participants' participation in the interventions alter their classroom practices?
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Third Iteration: Interpretation

Initially, participants' perceived their whiteness as the norm against which to measure others based upon their life experiences and engaging in the educational process. Subsequent to participation in the study, participants had an increased awareness of their personal identity and were more open to understanding their students' cultural identities. Participants were more willing to build relationships with students and engage in more culturally relevant teaching practices.

Theme 1 Unquestioned conceptions	Theme 2 Unconsciousness: Lack of acuity	Theme 3 Awakening of consciousness
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Second Iteration: Patterns

Avoidance Fear and worry White as the norm	Superficiality Surface connections Misunderstanding	Engagement in education Building relationships Increased understanding
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First Iteration: Initial Codes/First Cycle Coding

Fear	Patience	Tolerance
Empathy	Lack of Confidence	Questioning
Lack of Exposure	Evasion	Resistance
Uncertainty	Beliefs	Assumptions
Discomfort	Awkward	Political Correctness
Awareness of Culture	Willingness to engage	Undergoing Change
Realizing Differences	Community	Expectations
Consequences	Lack of Structure	Structure
Uneasiness	Realizing differences	Transformation
Realization	Developing Aptitude	Self-reflection
Incongruity and	Contradiction	Rejecting Colorblindness
Inconsistency	Understanding Self	Respect for Differences

Phase 3: Theoretical analysis. Critical Race Theory (CRT) was the lens through which the data were interrogated in the data analysis process to identify themes within the data corpus as it served as a resource for analysis of the participants' responses to uncover the systematic whiteness that permeates the education system (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). CRT is particularly appropriate as a theoretical framework as CRT allowed me to examine and interrogate the data from the perspective of racism in the social structure and its role in cultural identity and how that played out in culturally diverse classrooms (Delgado, 1995; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT's focus on personal experiences of oppression provided an additional lens through which I analyzed the data to answer the research questions in this study (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1999).

CRT presented a different lens through which to view educational outcomes of culturally diverse student populations. CRT brings to light the positioning of White middle class cultural expression as the dominant norm against which to compare others, a hegemonic behavior prevalent in our education system in America. CRT provided an understanding of race and racism as a means of disrupting structural inequities and racist classroom practices that subjugate traditionally marginalized populations. CRT assisted educators in understanding "the degree to which race plays an important role in the manner in which People of Color are treated in society" (Orelus, 2013, p. 576) and particularly by the education system as it exists today.

Phase 4: Focusing strategy. Data analysis is an iterative process that required me to revisit and review the data in order to unpack and analyze the data corpus which was accomplished through additional focusing strategies (Saldaña, 2013). In this case, identification of a trinity of themes (Saldaña, 2013) was accomplished for each of the participants' responses. Those themes were then revisited and reviewed as a whole for further analysis and identification of overarching themes across the data corpus (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Saldaña, 2013). Conversations with the data emerged as I immersed myself in the data, chunked the data into categories, and then made sense of the categories (Miles et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). I continuously returned to the CRT framework and research questions I sought to answer as I interpreted the data and drew inferences to verify and make sense of the data (Miles et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Saldaña, 2013).

Phase 5: Analysis of pre and post CDAI. Responses to separate CDAI items were analyzed by category using frequency counts and percentages. Pre-and-post CDAI data were compared to determine changes from initial dispositions to final levels of awareness. Participants' CDAI responses were compared to "preferred responses" used by Wilson's 2012 dissertation that utilized the CDAI tool after assessing the tool for validity and reliability. CDAI data were used in conjunction with intervention, observational, and interview data to draw conclusions about participants' awareness of diversity.

Writing the Research Text

"Written products are the currency we use to transact in the world, and they help define us as researchers and scholars" (Colyar, 2009, p. 424). Denzin and Lincoln (2000)

suggested that writing was a form of inquiry, that it did not begin once the inquiry process had been completed, that it was a kind of data collection which is consistent with qualitative approaches to research. The recursive, iterative nature of the writing process provided opportunities in which to make sense of the data as I drafted, revised, revisited, and reflected throughout the writing process on the participants' responses individually, as well as collectively (Colyar, 2009; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Engaging in the writing process enabled me to ensure that the meaning of the data was conveyed in the research text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Colyar, 2009). As Colyar (2009) stated, "writing, literally, contextualizes my ideas; writing clarifies meaning," (p. 432) which is essential when compiling the research text. Writing the research text extended opportunities to "make sense of my own argument" (Colyar, 2009, p. 431) as I reflectively and reflexively engaged with the data.

Being reflective in the writing of the research text allowed me to "pause, cycle back, reread, and rethink the very descriptions and ideas we are formulating," (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 73) which was essential as I sought to retell the stories of the participants in such a way as to "offer possibilities for reliving, for new directions, and new ways of doing things" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 189). Colyar (2009) posited that writing is a "symbolic system" (p. 422) that enables and allows the writer to articulate what the writer knows about the topic and his or her self. Colyar (2009) also explained how writing was a tool that the writer uses to come to understandings about the phenomena about which they are writing.

"The voice you choose to tell your story (to relate your discoveries) is as likely to determine the impact you will have on the audience as the findings themselves"

(Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 330). Therefore, it was crucial that the voice I selected allowed me to not only reveal myself, but also the ability to articulate my biases, personal beliefs, and assumptions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Additionally, it was essential to establish my signature within the text, the “special way that marks each of us as writers” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 148) to ensure that the texts reflect the voice of the participants, as well as that of the researcher to avoid the perception of the text as deceptive. This was accomplished through the use of thick, rich descriptive academic language to describe the participants’ experiences while recounting their stories (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). “Writing reveals these discovered meanings to the reader, so writing must include description. What you write reveals the pathway to your interpretation and findings; the story in the data” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 287). The next section details the steps that I took to ensure rigor, validity, credibility, and trustworthiness of the study.

Rigor in Data Collection and Analysis

Trustworthiness. Qualitative researchers must explain “how their approach has rigor” (Toma, 2006, p. 405) as the holistic approach of qualitative research garners criticism as it differs from traditional quantitative research.

Confirmability. Confirmability refers to a research study’s ability to be confirmed, established, or substantiated by another researcher (Stringer, 2014). Confirmability ensures that a research study’s procedures and applications are accurate and systematic, to the point where another researcher could follow the same methodology yielding similar results. An audit trail was used to create a living path for the research that explains the steps and procedures that were used during the research study

(Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007). The audit trail created a map and understanding for the reader as to the how, what, and why design procedures were employed which ensured confirmability.

Transferability. Within the context of qualitative research, transferability refers to the detailed accounts of the participants in the study to create a sustainable and creditable report that can be transferred to others (Stringer, 2014). Stringer (2014) explains that while much of qualitative research is subjective, transferability ensures that the descriptions of the events, activities, and framework of the participants can be transferred or associated to another population of people. By providing thick, rich descriptions of the demographics of the population and geographic boundaries of the study, I was able to establish transferability as I provided a rationale for the study's applicability to educational practice of culturally diverse student populations (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Member checking. Through in-person member checking, I, as the researcher, assessed the authenticity of the participants and how their contributions were advantageous to this research study (Toma, 2006). All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim within a few days of the interview occurring (Bird, 2005; Hammersly, 2010) and were provided to participants for verification, a technique known as member checking which increased the validity of the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, Toma, 2006). In-person member checking was employed after completion of the interviews wherein participants were asked to review the transcripts of their interviews for accuracy and intent of responses. Member checking was used to secure the credibility and accuracy of a participant's testimony and contributions (Rossman & Rallis, 2012;

Toma, 2006). Participants were also asked to review themes as they emerge in the data (Toma, 2006).

Dependability. Dependability is the extent to which one's research is systematically completed and that all measures that were required of the research approach have been followed. The consistency with which the study was conducted applied not only with regard to analysis techniques, but also data collection (Morrow, 2005; Stringer, 2014). The process is explicit and is repeatable to whatever extent possible (Morrow, 2005). Inquiry audit establishes criteria against which to judge the procedures that were followed and to what extent said procedures are deemed reliable and dependable (Stringer, 2014; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). An audit trail was documented which consisted of a detailed account of activities and processes, data collection and analysis, and influences on said collection and analysis, as well as notes describing the emergence of connections and themes (Morrow, 2005; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). A disinterested, competent external auditor (community of practice, dissertation cohort members who had completed the program (CoP) and committee members) examined the process and provide a judgment regarding dependability (Morrow, 2005).

Credibility. Credibility in qualitative research refers to the degree of confidence in the believability of the research findings (Jeanfreau & Jack, 2010). To foster credibility, researchers may also elect to keep a journal. Journaling nurtured reflexivity and assisted me in attempts to identify, understand, and consider personal biases (Long & Johnson, 2000). Bracketing was used in my journaling throughout the research process to cultivate

reflexivity and assist my attempts to identify, understand, and consider personal biases (Gearing, 2004; Janesick, 1999; Long & Johnson, 2000).

Triangulation of data. Triangulation in this qualitative research study demonstrated the incorporation of multiple sources of information and methods which improved process validity of the research (Anderson & Herr, 1999). Multiple means of data collection: observations, interviews, and intervention session activity responses were employed to increase reliability and validity of the study (Anderson & Herr, 1999). Additionally, triangulation of data helped control bias within the research study (Mathison, 1988), and to increase validity and reliability of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Reliability. Reliability refers to the ability with which subsequent researchers would be able to reproduce the study and glean the same insights if the researcher were to follow the same steps of the research process through careful documentation and clarification of research procedures (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Careful documentation and clarification of the research procedures through an audit trail increased the reliability by increasing the ability of another researcher to replicate the work (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). To increase reliability with regard to interview data, it is suggested to tape record all face-to-face interviews to guarantee accuracy of spoken words, free of errors of interpretation of what the participant actually stated. The tape-recorded interview data were reviewed a number of times and revisited as research progresses and different categories and themes emerged (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010).

Ethical Considerations in Research

Ethical issues in conducting research warrant consideration as they apply to all stages of the research process. Ethical considerations are essential to ensure the fidelity of the research. When conducting qualitative research, it was imperative that I ensured confidentiality of the participants in all phases of the study. As relationships were created through the research process, it was essential that I was cognizant of the relationship and made every effort to be respectful, honest, considerate, sincere, and transparent when working with participants throughout the research process.

Upon acceptance of the dissertation proposal, approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was sought prior to solicitation of participants and data collection. Participants in the research study were provided an informed consent that clearly delineated the purpose of the research study, as well as their involvement within the research study that could be terminated at any time, which established a professional relationship required by IRB and ethical practices in research (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). All participants were informed of their right to terminate the research at any time and that participation in the study was voluntary. In order to ensure anonymity of the participants, all participants were asked to choose the time and location of the interview.

Due to the emergent nature of qualitative inquiry (changes in the puzzle as data emerges), researchers often encounter issues regarding explicit disclosure of the nature and scope of the study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Every effort was made by me to disclose the purpose, methodology, and analysis techniques I used in this research study with the participants, as well as the University Institutional Review Board.

The research study ensured the anonymity of the participants who are in-service practitioners in the classroom; therefore, pseudonyms were assigned to each of the interview participants to ensure confidentiality of the responses. Pseudonyms were known only to the researcher and all data connected with each participant was coded with the pseudonym without any other identifiable markings related to the participants' identity. Group norms were created at the start of the first group session to ensure that all discussion and commentary that ensued would remain confidential.

All data were stored on a password-protected computer and uploaded to a password-protected cloud platform. Data were stored for the required period of time and then destroyed in compliance with institutional regulations. Field notes, field texts, and analytic memos were also stored on a password-protected computer and uploaded to a password-protected cloud platform that only I had access to. My researcher's journal that used only pseudonyms was maintained in a locked cabinet within my home office to ensure security and integrity of the data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Physical and psychological risks. The focus of this study was on conversation between the participants and myself. Additional communication between the participants and myself ensued as I sought to clarify conversations with the participants. Discussions between the participants and me related to participants' personal narratives as it related to teaching and there was no intention to engage in discussions that promoted psychological harm to the participants.

Benefits. This study provided an in-depth analysis of self-perceptions of cultural identity of teachers of culturally diverse student populations, as well as their perceptions of their students' cultural identity. The findings of this study may advance discussion regarding the influence of cultural identity awareness for teachers of culturally diverse students. This may provide an opportunity for in-service and pre-service practitioners to reflect upon their cultural identity and explore the influence of their cultural identity upon their classroom practice.

Concluding Thoughts

This research study was essential as evidenced by the literature that demonstrated the negative effect a deficit cognitive frame has upon culturally diverse student populations. This study addressed a specific population, currently practicing teachers whose culture differed from that of their students, as a majority of culturally diverse students are educated by White females whose culture differs from that of their students. The literature reviewed informed the research questions posed in this study. As much of the literature spoke to identity awareness research with pre-service teachers, this study explored the influence of cultural identity on in-service practitioners to determine whether participation in structured interventions altered their perceptions of themselves and their students. The study explored the cognitive frame of a population that dominates the field of education. Ultimately, the study addressed whether targeted interventions to increase in-service teachers' cultural awareness (a) do so and (b) have an impact on classroom practices, a topic that required clarification through empirical study.

Chapter 4

Findings

Academic achievement is at the forefront of education and teachers are on the front lines in the classrooms with the students. While the primary role of the teacher is to provide learning experiences that foster academic growth, it is evident that teachers of culturally diverse learners must also have a level of awareness of their own cultural identity in order to successfully meet the needs of their diverse learners. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether a structured program in the form of interventions increased in-service teachers' racial awareness. Critical Race Theory (CRT) was the lens that was used during analysis of the data gleaned from this research study in order to maintain perspective when analyzing the influence of cultural identity. This chapter includes the key findings that were derived from six participants' pre-and-post in-depth interviews, pre-and-post CDAI responses, pre-and-post observations, and intervention activities and reflections. All participants' names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

The three major areas of inquiry of this study were related to (a) how participants perceived their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students, (b) what happened to participants' views of their students after participation in the study and (c) how, if at all, the participants' perceptions of themselves and their students changed. Observations, interviews, cultural diversity awareness inventories (CDAI), and intervention activity data were coded, analyzed, and synthesized and a trinity of themes emerged from the data (Saldaña, 2013) as answers to the research questions.

The findings that emerged from the research questions are outlined below and are described in further detail in this chapter:

1. Participants perceived their cultural identity as different from that of their students; participants perceived “white” as the norm based upon their personal experiences which required them to find ways in which to bridge the gap to reach their students.
2. Participants reported that participation in the study provided them the impetus for self-examination, allowing them to better understand themselves. This provided an opportunity to evaluate the ways in which they related to their students.
3. Participants engaged students in more meaningful ways designed to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners in the classroom.

The discussion that follows further elucidates the findings noted above. Excerpts from interview transcripts, intervention activities, group discussions, CDAI responses, and reflective writings, as well as observational data gathered further support the findings.

Using Codes and Themes

Three forms of data were collected (pre-CDAI, initial interview, and initial observation) to gather baseline data regarding the participants’ beliefs, assumptions, and dispositions for working with culturally diverse learners. These data were designed to gather insight into the participants’ views before and after the interventions. The post-CDAI was administered to determine if there was a change in the participants’ attitudes after participation in the intervention activities. The final observation was used to determine if there was a change in pedagogical practice. Finally, the exit interview revisited questions that were explored in the initial interview, as well as directly asking

the participants if participation in the study had altered their attitudes and awareness about race.

Multiple iterations of data coding were conducted for data reduction purposes and to generate themes. Analysis of data took place at various stages throughout the data collection process: at the start of the study, throughout the intervention process, and at the conclusion of the study wherein the data were collectively reexamined (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Data were analyzed using a thematic approach with findings authenticated with thick, rich descriptions and participant quotations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A code map (see Table 6 in Chapter 3) was created to demonstrate the ways in which the themes from the interviews, observations, and intervention data connected to the research questions. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables were used to calculate relationships among the pre-and-post CDAI data. Comparison of the pre-and-post CDAI data was undertaken and is shown in tables that follow. Measures of central tendency were used to organize observational data and compare initial and final observation scores.

Coding scheme. The coding scheme was constructed to facilitate the breakdown of the responses to the two research questions (see Table 6 in chapter 3). The initial set of subcategories emerged from the first iteration of coding of the data based upon the theoretical framework (CRT) in connection with the review of the related literature. Refinement of the subcategories occurred as patterns emerged in the data (interview transcripts, intervention data, and observational data) during the second iteration of coding. I designed the coding scheme to classify the participants' responses to interview questions and intervention activities, as well as data from observations.

Coding. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) data reduction is an essential component of data analysis which involves summarizing the data, coding of data, theme identification, grouping of data, and comparison of the qualitative data. As the study produced a substantial amount of data through observations, interviews, CDAIs, and intervention activities, I applied data reduction techniques to facilitate the data analysis.

Preparation of raw data for analysis and synthesis was included in the process of coding the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) define codes as units of meaning that the researcher assigns descriptors that are then assembled together to form categories. Data sources were compared and contrasted during data analysis to form categories and find evidence to support or negate the content of the category (Boeije, 2002). The ultimate goal of this analysis was to determine similarities in order to refine the categories to uncover patterns in the data (Boeije, 2002). I used the research questions in conjunction with the theoretical framework (CRT) to identify categories and themes in the data.

During the first iteration of coding, descriptive codes were assigned to portions of raw data (Saldaña, 2013). Initially, I utilized open coding by reviewing the data corpus using a line-by-line approach to establish preliminary categories and sub-categories. Coding categories were added, revised, and deleted as I continued to review the categories and re-examine the data. Pattern codes were created through the grouping of the first iteration of codes into categories. When analyzing qualitative data, Marshall and Rossman (2006) posited the importance of searching for relationships among the categories of data; therefore, I looked for groups of patterns by comparing initial and final CDAIs for each participant and initial and final interview responses for each participant.

For example, an initial category for the first research question was the “influence of life experiences;” however, during multiple iterations of coding, I realized that the initial category lacked specificity in regard to the responses given by the participants. Therefore, this category was refined to “unquestioned conceptions.” Through this change, the category expanded to include specific interactions, as well as life experiences of the participants. An additional category was added after review of the coded data to include unconsciousness: lack of acuity, which included avoidance and superficiality as sub codes in that category. After further examination of the data corpus and the research questions, another category emerged in answer to the second research question and sub-question, “factors that facilitated learning” which was changed to awakening of consciousness with a subcategory of willingness to engage and reflection.

Comparing the data corpus across different data sets at times required reclassification of codes and/or merging of the codes into categories (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). When reviewing the pre-and-post interviews, data were reduced by using the theoretical framework to assist in the identification of overarching ideas and units of information to ensure that all data were within the confines of the research study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Member checking was used to confirm reliability of the interview transcript contents by providing participants with copies of the transcripts and checking for accuracy and clarification from participants (Toma, 2006).

Analytic Memos

Miles and Huberman (1994) stress the importance of the conceptualizing data through the use of memo writing. Thus, throughout the continuing coding process, I utilized memos to reflect ideas, questions, and interpretations that I had of the data being

reviewed. For example, in the first round of interviews, I noted all of the participants' discomfort in speaking about what it meant to be White. I noted that it would be essential to assure participants that there are no right or wrong answers when discussing their personal beliefs and assumptions and that no judgments would be made which allowed participants to be forthcoming in our discussions throughout the study.

Displaying the Data

The use of data display is an integral component in furtherance of analysis of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, I created a number of data displays to assist me in identifying themes in the data corpus in order to formulate conclusions. For example, I broke down the CDAI into four separate categories and created a frequency table of the pre-and-post CDAI responses to assist me in examination and analysis of the data. The CDAI tables were then translated into frequency charts for assistance in visualization and interpretation of the results. Observational data were also organized into pre-and-post tables with overall average scores for each participant for ease of comparison and analysis. Additionally, a table was created that illustrated the overall change in performance from the initial observation to the final observation. Furthermore, the observational data were further broken down by each sub category of the rubric that demonstrated what, if any, change had occurred from the initial to the final observation. The frequency charts and data tables were used to assist me in drawing conclusions related to the data corpus which led to the interpretation and discussion of the participants' responses to the various intervention activities.

For the purposes of data analysis, assessment and classroom environment were grouped together because the researcher associated a connection between classroom

environment and pedagogical practice. The observation rubric created for the study was consistent with teacher evaluation tools adopted by the State of New Jersey that included a component that evaluated the learning environment which included creating an environment of respect and rapport, as well as establishing a culture for learning (Danielson, 2007). A learning environment that values the culture of the students should have practices that assess the students in a way that is consistent with the culture of the students. Thus, the inclusion of questions related to the translation of assessments into the student's native language would demonstrate an aspiration to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners in the classroom. Data from the initial and final observations were placed into tables and were examined for changes in the practices observed.

The CDAIs were broken down and placed into data tables with four categories that were consistent with the studies that utilized the tool: responses regarding cultural awareness, culturally diverse family, cross-cultural communication, and multicultural environment and assessment in the classroom (Cain Fehr & Angelo, 2012; Larke, 1990, Milner, et al., 2003; Wilson, 2012). The CDAI participant data were compared to "preferred responses" used by Wilson's (2012) study that utilized the tool and further analyzed to determine if there were any changes between the pre-and-post CDAIs.

Life Experiences and its Influence on Participants' Perspectives

The findings outlined below emerged from the first round of interviews, the purpose of which was to understand the participants' life experiences and interactions to elucidate its influence on the participants' perspectives of cultural identity: self and of their students. Moreover, the intent of the initial Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (pre-CDAI) and Identity Chart intervention was to elicit information through self-

reporting about the participants' cultural identity. The autobiographic poem interventions also provided an outlet for exploration and reflection of one's identity and life experiences. Research Question 1 sought to explore the participants' perceptions of their own cultural identity and that of their students. Research Question 1 was worded: How do participants perceive their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students? Initial findings with regard to cultural identity indicated that only two participants mentioned race as a part of their cultural identity. The findings indicated that a majority of participants believed that their families played a significant role in their upbringing and had a significant influence on their perceptions of themselves and others. Additionally, most participants believed that being part of a family, the socialization associated with their upbringing, were key factors in their conceptions of self. Furthermore, all participants indicated that their kindergarten through twelfth grade schooling, as well as their collegiate experiences, played a role in their identity awareness. Religious affiliation was also a key component of a number of the participants' identity. See Table 7 for an overview of the research findings related to Research Question 1.

Table 7

Overview of Findings Related to Research Question 1

Finding One: Interactions with family and schooling experiences played a significant role in how participants perceived their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students, but race was not revealed to play a salient role in cultural identity.

Initially, four out of six of the participants did not mention race as playing a role in their cultural identity. Five of the six participants discussed the significant role their families played in shaping their perspectives. Experiences that all participants had in school also emerged as having an impact on the formation of their perspectives of self and others.

Invisibility of Race

Four of the six participants did not mention race as a part of their cultural identity. Being White was associated with skin pigmentation by four out of six participants. Four out of six participants did not believe that they had benefitted from White Privilege. Two participants alluded to possible benefits of White Privilege.

Family Interactions Influences Perspectives

Five out of six participants said their family influenced their perceptions of themselves and others. Additionally, four participants explained how religion played a significant role in their identity.

Educational Engagement Affects Thinking

All of the participants described schooling as playing a role in shaping their identity and the ways in which they viewed themselves and others, particularly during their K-12 educational experiences. Additionally, five out of six participants discussed collegiate experiences had differed from their K-12 experiences. Furthermore, participants expounded upon the influence that exposure to literacy played in their schooling experiences.

Unquestioned conceptions. A number of unquestioned beliefs and assumptions emerged in the findings and are outlined below.

Invisibility of Race. Six teachers participated in the intervention study. Each participant created an identity chart that asked them to divide a pie chart into categories that were most salient to their identity. Only two of the six participants included race as playing a significant role in their identity. Ena included race as 12.5 percent of her

identity in her pie chart, but her explanation included “White” for her race but how others saw her, not as she saw herself. Shannen’s pie chart included 10% of her total identity as White. Shannen’s explanation stated, “Although I don’t want it to be a factor, evidence I have witnesses and ‘privileges’ that have come with being White are not the same as those who are not.” Shannen articulated the presence of White Privilege, but did not acknowledge her privilege. The other four participants lacked any inclusion of race or race-related notions as part of their cultural identity.

In the initial interview, participants’ responses to the question about what it means to them to be White related strictly to pigmentation of skin color as reflected in the following response: “I sunburn easily. Other than that, I don’t think it means anything. Is that a bad answer? (Emily). Along the same lines, Victoria explained, “When I look at my skin, I see lightness.” Similarly, Kristin declared, “To me it means that the color of my skin is white and even White people have different pigments. But it’s being White Irish, typically, we’re known as being the whitest of the White.” Shannen stated, “Honestly, it’s just the color of the genetics I ended up with. To me it means – to some it means you get another advantage, but to me it means you work hard, you get rewarded.” Based upon the aforementioned interchange, being White was not attributed by the participants to be a salient part of their cultural identity. Two of the six participants could not articulate what it meant to them to be White; Ena stated, “Oh, um, I don’t know. I guess – I don’t know. This is a hard question.” Collen said that “Um, I really don’t know. Really, that’s just how I grew up and that’s the only thing I know.”

When discussing White Privilege, four out of six participants articulated that they did not feel as though they had benefitted from White Privilege, that it was something

that existed, but didn't affect them. For example, Emily stated, "To me personally, it means nothing. I know it exists in the world, and you know, I am aware of it and the consequences it could have, but to me, it doesn't mean anything." Similarly, Colleen explained, "Um, I don't really know. I would say privilege, but I don't feel privilege in any way, shape, or form. Really, that's just how I grew up and that's the only thing I know." Following along the same lines, Shannen said, "I don't think I have it, but White Privilege means you're White and you get it and you don't have to do it. You just do the minimum and you get the maximum reward." Victoria talked about it being very difficult for a White person to talk about White Privilege because "it is so pervasive and I have had it for so long that it is hard to realize what it means until I see people who don't have it." Ena alluded to possibly benefitting from White Privilege with possible leniency by police officers if you are White. Victoria also mentioned police officers and feeling comfortable walking up to a police officer to seek assistance. While Victoria and Ena have some awareness of White Privilege, they did not articulate how they have benefitted from White Privilege. The aforementioned responses to the questions related to race and White Privilege indicated an overall lack of racial awareness.

Influence of family. Four out of six participants grew up and have lived in New Jersey their entire lives. Two participants lived in other states and moved to New Jersey while they were still of school age. The participants indicated that their experiences as children influenced the ways in which they saw others and themselves. When completing the identity chart, Victoria stated that "family should be/is my largest component. I strongly identify with my family, and what they have done and accomplished. The bonds that we all share are influential on how I identify myself." Emily echoed Victoria's

sentiment, “I chose sister and daughter because being part of a family is the most important thing to me.” Shannen also stressed the importance of family to her identity, “from my four-legged family members to my two, I am a family-loving, family-oriented person who always wants the best for those close to me.” Additionally, two participants spoke of having the support of extended family during their childhood.

Five out of six participants stated that their parents played a significant role in their lives, making them feel loved, wanted, and safe, a feeling that they espoused was different from their students. Kristin stated, “So I grew up with my mom, my dad, my sister (one sibling). We had pets, dogs. We always had a lot of support.” Five out of six participants self-reported coming from in-tact families. Four participants actually used the word “supportive” to describe their families. For example, Kristin stated, “We always had a lot of support. We had some more family over for the holidays.” When Emily spoke of her parents she said they were “very attentive parents, very involved, very loving, very supportive, always wanted to know what I was doing.” Shannen talked about growing up in a family where a “mom and dad are still together; they live at home,” and how they supported her growing up. Contrarily, Ena stated, “My mother and father divorced when I was six months old. My mother remarried a few times, so I had a couple of step dads. I moved out when I was 16 to move up with my father who lived in New Jersey and then stayed in New Jersey from there.”

For the “I Come From” intervention, participants were asked to create an “I Come From” poem describing their life experiences. The purpose of the “I Come From” poem intervention was to have participants reflect on their past experiences and upbringing in

order to become more self-aware. Colleen spoke of growing up in a middle class family.

Her “I Come From” poem described the many places she and her family lived.

I come from... many places, ever growing, never truly knowing ...
Backyards with neighbors so close and a little porch leading to an alleyway
Backyards with many trees to climb, hills to roll, and friends to play
Backyards where neighbors pry and also lie
Backyards where there was work to do – blood, sweat, and tears – children born,
pets buried for years
Backyards that are finally ours, with a pool to play in for hours (Colleen)

While Colleen’s family moved around a bit, they finally settled in a home where she had the security of knowing where she came from.

Victoria’s poem aligned with her unquestioned assumptions about family always being present and there to support her.

I come from a home where I heard ‘Like one hog waits for another.’
And ‘she’s the bright one.’
‘I love you to the sun, the moon, and stars, and back again.’
‘I love you a bushel and a peck.’
I know I come from a home where my behavior was corrected, but the words have not stayed with me over the years ... I remember the love (Victoria).

Emily’s “I Come From” poem was similar in content to Victoria’s poem reflecting a home that was supportive and filled with love.

I come from parents who never gave harsh lectures or rants
They treated us with love
They told us to see the world with an open mind
Because in this world, you never know what you’ll find (Emily)

Analogous to Emily’s poem, Shannen’s poem indicated a supportive home life.

I come from Eastern Europe
I stay in the United States
My family has a lot of history
And we are always learning more

I come from a neighborhood full of families who always talk in the streets
On Halloween, they are filled with kids and dogs (Shannen)

Kristin's poem also spoke to a safe environment in which to grow up until it was shattered by divorce, but the underlying feeling of being love persisted.

I came from smells of a clean home sprinkled with delightful scents of candles
Pine was one of my favorite scents
I come from hearing sounds of children playing in the street and dogs barking in
the backyard
Eventually, I heard sounds of constant arguing and fighting between my parents
over the TV turned up loud
I come from, 'why are you on the computer when your homework isn't done?'
'It's A'ight' and 'I love you' (Kristin)

The influence of family on the participants in this study is clear as participants self-reported the influence their families had on their identities in multiple formats in the aforementioned passages in their poems, their interviews, and their identity charts.

Influence of religion. Four participants emphasized religious affiliation when identifying themselves. Shannen labeled her identity chart with the largest percentage, 35 percent as Jewish American "since I was born I have been raised Jewish; however, with an American twist." Emily included "Catholic" in her identity chart "being an active member and believer of my church." Victoria also included faith/religion as the second largest part of her identity chart "connecting my faith community and the Divine also greatly creates/influences how I identify myself." Colleen identified a small portion of her identity as Protestant. For the aforementioned participants, religion influenced their beliefs and assumptions about themselves and others.

Influence of exposure to literacy. Exposure to literacy plays an integral role in the academic success of students. More importantly, early exposure to literacy in the home during the formative years prior to entering school is imperative. Kristin noted, "as a child, I was always encouraged to read lots of books, practice my penmanship, and

speak and spell words correctly.” She also noted that “I do not see or hear of at-home support for literacy from my students.” Victoria remembered being “surrounded by books” growing up in her home. Victoria also reflected upon family visits to Barnes and Noble after church on Sundays wherein she was allowed to purchase a book or two. She explained how her parents purchased copies of the novels that were reading in high school so that she was able to have her own copy to highlight and write notes in so that she could “make it my own.” When Victoria shared her passion for reading with her students, she recounted, “often, they would ask me why I would waste my time doing something so boring,” leaving her with the impression that reading was “not a big thing in their lives.” Similar to other participants’ experiences, Colleen reflected that her mom would read children’s books to her and her sister and “could be caught reading a new novel almost every week.” Like Colleen, Shannen’s parents read to her and encouraged her to read on her own. She explained that “when I struggled, they seeked (sic) help from their peers and my teachers.” Colleen also mentioned her students’ lack access to books and support at home. Emily elucidated that

my entire life, literacy played a huge role. My parents always read to me as a kid. Then, when I got older, I would read books independently from school. If I wasn’t reading something, my parents always got us books and had us read 30 minutes a night. I think that their reinforcement encouraged me to read at school and enjoy literacy as well (Emily).

Contrary to the other participants, Ena had no memory of being read to as a child. She stated that she does remember seeing her mom read books, “but I was never encouraged to read.” Ena countered that as a parent, “I read bedtime stories, took trips to the library, and bought my children books.”

The participants' early connection to literacy experiences in their homes affected their school experiences and their expectations with regard to literacy, both of themselves and their students. The participants' experiences and continual exposure to literacy sharply contrasts with the experiences of some of their students, a finding which came to light through the school-valued discourses intervention.

Influence of educational engagement. All of the participants expressed that schooling played a role in shaping their identity and the ways in which they view themselves and others. The influence of schooling on the participants has been divided into primary and secondary education and then post-secondary education.

Kindergarten through grade 12. The educational experiences of the participants varied with one participant attending private elementary school and then public high school while other participants attended public school throughout their elementary and secondary education. Colleen described her education as “public education, nothing too special,” whereas Victoria reported her experience as awesome with teachers that “catered to my individual needs as a student and that’s what inspired me to become a teacher myself.” Ena recounted two teachers who were kind and helpful in the elementary setting, but that she did not care for her teachers in high school stating, “I barely remember their names.”

In the course of her initial interview when Shannen was asked about the school community in which she teaches and whether it was similar to or different than the schools she attended, she actually said, “In some sense it’s different because the school that I’m teaching in now has a predominantly – what’s the proper terminology – it’s African American, Black population from different backgrounds.” Kristin spoke about

being in a school where “I was one of the few Caucasian students. I was mostly surrounded by African American students,” but then moved to a predominantly White school.

Colleen also spoke of being in a community where “it was mostly Caucasian all around.”

Emily also reported being educated in schools that were “99 percent Caucasian.”

The school communities from which the participants had been educated differed significantly from the community in which they teach. When asked, “Is the school community in which you teach similar to or different from the one in which you grew up?” all six participants responded that the communities differed. Emily responded, “It’s actually the complete opposite, like night and day. The district in which I grew up, the community – well, parents were very involved in the community.” Ena explained that her school community was “very different” and that she attended schools that were predominantly White, similar to the racial makeup of the schools Emily, Shannen, and Kristin attended. Colleen’s experiences differed slightly in that she initially attended school with some Hispanic students, but then moved to an area with mostly Caucasian students. Victoria described the difference in the school communities along socioeconomic lines stating, “it’s different in the economic level for sure” even though the population was half White and half Asian. Moreover, participants reflected on the disparity between their educational access to resources, supplies, and technology and that of their students’ access.

Participants perceived the school community in which they work as different from their experiences with lower expectations for achievement and lack of involvement of the parents. In addition to racial differences, participants also viewed students as lacking structure in that they don’t have a designated place to work and lacking consequences and

accountability. Kristin explained that “there were rules and they were followed” when describing her schooling experiences, divulging a lack of consequences for the students she educates. Victoria explained that there was “an expectation that just kind of went without saying. It was just part of me and part of the way our family functioned, that you will do this. I didn’t have to be told. It was just an understood thing.” Emily talked about class moms bringing things to school for holidays and parties and “that’s not really what you see in the district that I teach in now. It doesn’t seem as if they have that in the community.”

Another difference was also noted by a number of participants with regard to school-valued discourses. Emily recounted conversations she had had with students about her passion for reading and noted that her students did not share her love of reading. She said,

My students tell me all the time that reading and literacy aren’t important at home and their parents don’t care if they read or not. At school, they hate literacy and reading out loud, and I think that stems from the lack of literacy at home (Emily).

Furthermore, Shannen also reported that “it is clear that students do not have much access to books/support at home.”

The schooling experiences of the participants differed from those of their students. The participants felt as if they were part of a school community that was very supportive. The participants’ responses indicated the expectation of a sense of community at school that they do not perceive exists in the school in which they teach.

College. Emily described noticing race in college “because in college there’s a lot of different races coming together in college.” Colleen explained that she became more aware of race in college “where then I realized the big difference there and not just

because I was on a college campus, but because the community there is very diverse.”

Victoria who had gone to schools with diversity for elementary and secondary education, but the lacked diversity when she got to college,

When I got to college – the college that I went to was primarily White and Christian and I actually found myself kind of uncomfortable with the lack of diversity when I had grown up with so many people that were different from me. Now, all of a sudden, everybody was the same as me; it was actually kind of unnerving for me (Victoria).

Shannen reported that her level of awareness of race increased between high school and college once she went to a very diverse school and worked with students from the Equal Opportunity Program. Shannen stated, “I wasn’t interacting with those types of students when I was in high school. So once I started interacting with them in college, I was like okay. I learned more about their families, how they had grown up.” Meanwhile, Kristin’s awareness of race remained unchanged between high school and college stating, “I was aware of it. There were people of different races.”

Attending colleges with diverse populations rather than predominantly White schools was an eye-opening experience for some of the participants as stated above. Based upon initial interview and CDAI responses, participants’ exposure to different races and cultures in college appeared to have minimal change on their perception of others’ cultural identity.

Unconsciousness: Lack of Acuity

Unconsciousness, as in the state of being unaware or uninformed, permeated many of the participants’ awareness of their whiteness and overall cultural awareness. Initial responses to the CDAI with regard to questions related to cultural awareness indicated a lack of awareness of cultural diversity on the part of some of the participants.

For example, 50 percent, three of the six participants did not strongly agree that there were cultural differences between themselves and the students they service, see Table 8.

Table 8

Comparison of Cultural Awareness Responses (n=6)

CDAI Item	Preferred Response	Number and Percentage of Preferred Response Pre	Number and Percentage of Preferred Response Post	Percentage Change From Pre to Post CDAI
Cultural differences between teacher and students they service	Strongly Agree	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	0%
Important for teachers to identify students by ethnic group	Agree or Strongly Agree	6 (100%)	5 (83%)	-17%
Prefer to work with children and parents with a culture similar to mine	Disagree	4 (67%)	0 (0%)	- 67%
Uncomfortable with people whose values/beliefs differ from mine	Disagree	2 (33%)	3 (50%)	+ 17%
Surprised by minority participation in traditional nonminority school activities	Disagree	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	0%

Note. Preferred responses adapted from Wilson, 2012 dissertation; percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Furthermore, only one out of six participants, 17 percent, disagreed with the statement that parents know little about assessing their own children demonstrating a lack of

cultural awareness, see Table 9. Additionally, only two out of six, 33 percent of the participants agreed that cultural views of the diverse community should be included in school planning. Likewise, 33 percent of the participants disagreed that they were uncomfortable with people whose values/beliefs differed from their own beliefs/values.

Table 9

Comparison of Culturally Diverse Family Responses (n=6)

CDAI Item	Preferred Response	Number/ Percentage Preferred Response Pre	Number/ Percentage Preferred Response Post	Percentage Change Pre to Post CDAI
Teachers should interact with parents outside of school activities (phone conversations, social events, meetings)	Agree	5 (83%)	5 (83%)	0%
Include parents in program planning	Agree or Strongly Agree	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	+ 34%
Schedule IEP conferences or program planning at parent's convenience	Strongly Agree	3 (50%)	4 (67%)	+ 17%
Cultural views of diverse community should be included in school program planning	Agree	2 (33%)	5 (83%)	+ 50%
Sometimes experience frustration when conducting conferences with parents of different cultures	Disagree	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	+ 33%
Parents know little about assessing their own children	Disagree	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	+ 33%
During initial interactions, teachers should ask families their preference for ethnic identification	Agree	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	0%

Note. Preferred responses adapted from Wilson, 2012 dissertation; percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Most participants lacked a level of cognizance with regard to what it meant to be White; most attributed White only to skin color when asked what does it mean to you to

be White. Kristin stated, “To me, it means that the color of my skin is white and even White people have different pigments, but it’s being White Irish. Typically, we’re known as the whitest of the White.” Along similar lines, Shannen explained, “Honestly, it’s just the color of the genetics I ended up with. To me it means – to some it means you get another advantage, but to me it means you work hard, you get rewarded.” Additionally, Emily connected being White to skin color saying, “I sunburn easily. Other than that, I don’t think it means anything. Is that a bad answer?” Victoria’s response was a literal response, “When I look at my skin, I see lightness.” Colleen was unsure of what it means to be White; she declared, “I would say privilege, but I don’t feel privilege in any way, shape, or form. Really, that’s just how I grew up and that’s the only thing I know.” Ena echoed Colleen’s sentiment of not knowing what it means to be White. Ena stated,

Sometimes I think people look at you from other races and they automatically judge you, that you don’t – that this White woman is coming in and there’s no connections. Sometimes, it’s a barrier because I’m White, but other times I can go somewhere else and it’s – and get away with more things because I’m White. And so it kind of depends on where you’re at and the situation (Ena).

Emily’s comments revealed the unconsciousness of her Whiteness when discussing white privilege, “To me, personally, it means nothing. I know it exists in the world, and you know, I am aware of it and the consequences it could have, but to me it doesn’t mean anything.” Kristin stated that certain people are privileged, but did not acknowledge her own racial privilege. Similarly, Shannen explained that “I don’t think I have it, but White Privilege means you’re White and you get it and you don’t have to do it. You just do the minimum and you get the maximum reward.” Colleen’s discussion of White Privilege also indicated a level of unawareness of the benefits of White privilege with her comment,

Honestly, I know it's going to sound terrible, but I just don't believe in it because I didn't live it. I think many people do live it, but I have not seen it; I have not witnessed it myself from my point of view. It may seem differently from others, but I didn't grow up rich. I didn't grow up with all things handed to me. I think I worked for everything I have, just like everybody else does (Colleen).

Many participants viewed their Whiteness as normal and had little awareness of this belief as suggested by the preceding statements. Initially, the participants did not understand the complexity of their identity and measured themselves by White standards, reflecting a lack of consciousness of their race. Participant responses took on an ethnocentric worldview and lacked awareness, whether consciously or unconsciously, of how being White influenced their views. White values and behaviors were the norms by which participants gauged themselves and others, which may have impacted decisions made in personal and professional practice.

Avoidance. When speaking with participants about race and cultural diversity, many participants were hesitant to identify a particular cultural/racial group and were careful to use what they considered socially appropriate terminology. Initially, only two of the six participants agreed that they should inquire about the family's preference for ethnic identification on the pre-and-post CDAI, see table on previous page. Moreover, when completing the CDAI with regard to teachers' acceptance of ethnic jokes/phrases by students, at the start of the study, only one participant strongly disagreed and none of the participants strongly disagreed that teachers should sometimes ignore racial statements, see Table 10.

Table 10

Comparison of Multicultural Environment & Assessment in Classroom (n=6)

CDAI Item	Preferred Response	Number/ Percentage Preferred Response Pre	Number/ and Percentage Preferred Response Post	Percentage Change Pre to Post CDAI
Teachers accept the use of ethnic jokes/phrase by students	Strongly Disagree	1 (17%)	2 (33%)	+ 16%
Teachers sometimes ignore racial statements	Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	3 (50%)	+ 50%
Teachers are responsible to provide opportunities for students to share cultural differences	Agree	4 (67%)	5 (83%)	+ 16%
Teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is NOT the responsibility of public school programs or personnel	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	6 (100%)	5 (83%)	- 17%
Teachers should adapt programs to accommodate changing demographics	Agree	5 (83%)	4 (67%)	- 16%
Teacher displays and uses materials that reflect at least three cultural groups	Agree	1 (17%)	4 (67%)	+ 50%
Teacher's knowledge of a particular culture should affect teacher's expectations of students' performance	Disagree	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	- 34%

Note. Preferred responses adapted from Wilson, 2012 dissertation; percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

During Colleen's initial observation, students were reviewing questions related to a reading they had completed which was related to an immigrant's assimilation to the

norms of American society. The assignment was rigorous, asking students to cite examples and textual evidence to support their arguments. One student did not know what a brogue was and rather than take the opportunity to discuss immigrants with brogues and open the door for a discussion about others' cultures, the teacher ignored it and did not explain the concept thereby inhibiting the students' ability to fully understand the context of the book. Moreover, when discussing challenges of the characters' new surroundings, a student used the word perplexed when discussing the character's ability to figure out how to use the dishwasher. Another student replied, "I was perplexed when I saw a lawn because when I moved to New York City, I didn't have a lawn." The teacher commented good connection, but again avoided the opportunity to open up discussion about students' experiences coming to America. While these are small examples of avoidance, embracing the diversity in the classroom could have sparked additional constructive conversation that truly engaged the learners' personal stories and histories. Moreover, by avoiding the conversations in the classroom, Colleen was ineffective in making challenging curriculum accessible for the students. See Table 11 for initial observational data. Consistent with the observational data, Colleen remarked that while she created her "I Come From" poem that she wondered what her students' kitchens were like and their homes and their experiences, but

I'm kind of afraid to ask sometimes because I don't want to delve too deep; like I want to know about my students but I don't want to delve too deep. I don't want somebody to say I'm doing the wrong thing or going about it the wrong way (Colleen).

Table 11

Initial Observation Results

Participant	Setting Academic/ Behavioral Expectations	Making Challenging Curriculum Accessible	Using Students’ Strengths as Instructional Starting Points	Creating Cooperative Environment	Demonstrates Cultural Competence	Avg.
Colleen	3	2	2.5	2.5	2	2.4
Emily	3	2	3	2.5	2	2.5
Shannen	3	2	2.5	2	2	2.3
Kristin	1	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.5	1.6
Ena	3.67	3	3	3	3.6	3.25
Victoria	2	2	2	2	2	2

Note. Scoring key: 4-advanced; 3-proficient; 2-basic; 1-developing.

Kristin mentioned during the school-valued discourse intervention that “I often feel awkward correcting their grammar due to the knowledge of what is culturally acceptable and what I know about the physical make-up of their mouths.” Thus, Kristin avoids correcting the students when they misspeak such as they are going “aks” as question instead of ask and when they utilize improper grammar. Colleen acknowledged that

I feel uncomfortable addressing culture sometimes because I feel as though I’m perceived in a certain light like that White Privilege that’s spoken about so much in our community. I sometimes fear saying the wrong thing so I try to steer clear of it. And I know it’s important to try and bring it up, so I try to let the kids steer the conversation in that way, but with this age group, they get very defensive and they also get very – what’s the word, they say things inappropriately (Colleen).

Victoria mentioned sickle cell anemia in her lesson when discussing genetics and that there are counselors available to help parents make decisions about the possibility of passing on the trait, but the opportunity for a conversation as to its prevalence in certain communities was lost, which was something many of the students in the room could have connected with. Additionally, Victoria discussed malaria and mosquitos, but did not have

the conversation about its prevalence in communities from which some of the students emigrated, see the preceding table regarding observation results. Again, these opportunities to connect with the students with regard to their cultural backgrounds were lost.

Table 12

Comparison of Initial & Final Observation Results Cultural Competence

Participant	Demonstrates Cultural Competence: Initial	Demonstrates Cultural Competence: Final	Overall Change
Colleen	2.5	3.4	+0.9
Emily	2	3.6	+1.6
Shannen	2	3	+1
Kristin	2.5	3	+0.5
Ena	3.6	4	+0.4
Victoria	2	2.75	+0.75

Note. Scoring key: 4-advanced; 3-proficient; 2-basic; 1-developing.

The observational data indicated four participants performed at the basic level (2) with regard to the cultural competency category. One participant approached proficiency with a score of 2.5 in that category. Ena demonstrated cultural competency during her initial observation with a category score of 3.6 in that area, see Table 12 above. Lower scores in the areas of cultural competency aligned with the participants' propensity to make challenging curriculum accessible to the students. The observational data is consistent with participants' CDAI responses, school-valued discourse responses, and

interview responses related to a lack of demonstration of cultural competence through avoidance of culture in the classroom.

Superficiality. Initially, when addressing the cultures of students in the classroom, participants responded to questions about culture and were observed to address the culture on a superficial level. Victoria explained that she keeps it “very sterile” and related to the curriculum due to a negative experience in the past with administration in another school district that did not see the value of addressing students’ culture in the classroom. Shannen noted the use of students’ names and possibly interests on worksheets to include the students. Shannen explicated ways in which she addresses students’ cultures “when appropriate.” She provided an example of the word pound that had a Spanish root and the students asked why the abbreviation was lb., and one of the Spanish-speaking students said “it’s libros or something in Spanish and they said that’s why we have that abbreviation. So when appropriate, I also try to incorporate it into word problems. If there’s any current holidays coming up, I ask them to share a little bit for everyone.” See Table 12 for initial observational data related to demonstrating cultural competence.

Some of the participants are caught in the foods and festivals pitfall when attempting to address students’ culture. For example, Ena spoke about the different foods related to different cultures and conversing about that with the students, but only if it comes up in discussion. Victoria noted that she would address students’ culture when appropriate due to past experiences with negative outcomes when discussions were misconstrued, but “if it’s from a biological standpoint, we’re talking about melanin and specifically about biology and we’re not talking about their life experience.” Kristin also

described ways in which she uses students' names and things that they like in their class when working with a specific topic. When reflecting on the autobiographic poem, Colleen noted that she cannot relate to many of the struggles her students have endured, but "I try to keep an open mind and play devil's advocate during debates and times of differences in school and society," but she did not provide specific examples of the ways in which she would support her diverse student population. Kristin also had a similar reflection to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* stating that

It is important to be empathetic and understand that they (the students) may be a caged bird looking at me like I am a free bird. Being compassionate and allowing them to feel like they can make themselves into someone successful despite their circumstances is important (Kristin).

In the same way, Shannen spoke of giving the students "life tools to take with them to be successful, but like Colleen and Kristin she did not expound upon the ways in which she would assist her students in becoming successful.

Changes as a Result of Participation in the Study

The findings discussed below correspond to the second research question and the sub question: What happens to participants' views of their students after participation in the intervention program that provides opportunities to reflect on their own cultural identity? and (a) How, if at all, did participation in the study alter their classroom practice? The findings indicate that participants believed that they had a better understanding of who they are as a result of participation in the intervention activities of the study. Re-examination of participants' beliefs and assumptions resulted through participation in the intervention activities and discussions. Participants articulated a shift in mindset as they processed and reflected on their life experiences and how they affected their perception of what schooling should be. Moreover, a link between participants'

perceptions and their pedagogical practices was acknowledged through a willingness to engage in change articulated in the final interviews and observed in final observations of classroom practices.

Table 13

Overview of Findings Related to Research Question 2 & Sub-Question

Finding Two: Participation in intervention activities during the study allowed participants to acknowledge how their life experiences have shaped their identity. Additionally, participants recognized White Privilege and the influence of “whiteness” on schooling. Moreover, participants’ perceptions of their students changed as they began to better understand differences between cultures through the acknowledgement of diversity.

All participants reported that participation in the intervention activities helped them to better understand their own identity, both personally and professionally. Participants conveyed changes in their beliefs as a result of partaking in the study.

Influence of Working with Diverse Populations

All participants indicated that working with diverse populations influenced their self-awareness and recognition of their own identity.

Significant Learning

All participants articulated an increased level of identity awareness and a cognizance of how their personal experiences influenced their pedagogical practice. This resulted in a willingness to alter their pedagogical practices and to attempt new practices. Moreover, participants engaged in self-reflection, which played a significant role in their acknowledgement of self and others.

Awakening of consciousness. Research question two and the sub-question sought to explore the effect of the interventions upon participants’ perceptions of themselves and their students and to determine what happens to their views of their students after reflecting on their own cultural identity. The interventions provided opportunities for

participants to delve into who they were through activities such as the design of an Identity Chart at the start of the study, as well as the creation of an “I Come From” poem and a comparison of their life experiences with those of their students. A cultural competence presentation including videos from the *Whiteness Project* and use of the *White Privilege Checklist* and group discussion provided opportunities for participants to examine their own beliefs and assumptions and reflect on how they may affect their practice in the classroom. Participation in the Schools-Valued Discourse activity provided the impetus to explore the impact of their beliefs and assumptions about literacy and its impact on their life experiences and those of their students. The post-CDAI was provided to determine if there was a change in participants’ cultural identity awareness. Additionally, a final interview was conducted after the final observation to provide opportunities to elicit information directly from participants as to any possible change in perceptions and how, if at all, the interventions contributed to the change in mindset.

Influence of Working with Diverse Populations on Personal Awareness

Working with diverse populations had an impact upon participants’ awareness of themselves in that it assisted their reflection of their own ethnic background and social status. All six participants indicated that working with diversity has made them reflect on their life experiences, beliefs, and assumptions. For instance, Ena explained that it’s made her question her experiences. Additionally, Colleen also expressed thinking about how her views “are very different from my own students’ views and that’s something that I’ve been learning over the past couple of years.” Emily also noted that in a way it has made her think about her students and different cultural backgrounds and how “that affects their place in the world.” She further explained that the lessons she teaches and the topics

that arise from discussions have really “made me aware of my own ethnic background.” Shannen said that the diversity in her classroom has “absolutely” made her reflect on her own background and social status. Victoria clarified how “that has definitely increased my awareness of how people perceive me,” and that “I’m of a higher, at least perceived, social status than the students that I work with.” Kristin related how working with students whose skin color differs from her own skin color has increased her understanding of their “stereotypes towards White people. Oh, it’s a White people thing or I think they have their own views” enabling her to think about how other races view White people. Colleen recounted “I see that my own life experiences are very different from my students although I’d like to think they were similar, but by doing this, I see that there’s a big difference. It’s something that’s hard to see and you think that’s the norm.” Subsequent to participation in the intervention program, the participants were able to articulate that working with diverse populations had an influence on the way they viewed their own life experiences.

Awareness and realization as significant learning. The participants articulated that they had an increased awareness of self as a result of participation in the study that resulted in the questioning of their personal beliefs and assumptions. Additionally, participants demonstrated an increased willingness to engage with the students as demonstrated in the observational data.

Questioning assumptions. The use of multiple interventions throughout the study provided opportunities for participants to develop an increased awareness and a necessity to be more sensitive to the needs of others. The interventions used in the study allowed participants to reflect on their life experiences and the limited interactions with cultural

diversity prompting them to examine the need for ways to improve their relationships with their students in order to become more effective in the classroom. These activities were used to advance awareness of the potential cultural mismatch and find ways to minimize the impact of the potential cultural mismatch between participants and their culturally diverse students.

The data sources supported the significance of life experiences of the participants. The sharing of personal biographies in the form of “I Come From” poems illuminated cultural differences among the participants and their student population. These differences included family upbringing, single parent households, and educational experiences. Participants’ “I Come From” poems described the different places and homes in which they lived. Most participants depicted homes with backyards where they engaged in activities as a family. Emily stated, “I come from this; I come from that and I realized the abundance that I was provided as a kid.” Ena talked about always having a

decent home even though my home life wasn’t great. And I hear some of the stories here – I mean we always had food and we always had peanut butter and jelly. And we were able to eat cereal even though it was the cheap, no-name brand, but I always had that even though it was powdered milk. So I was always able to have food and that’s not the case here for some of the students (Ena).

Victoria stated that, “I am learning about how blessed and unique my home situation was in comparison to what I am experiencing now among my students.” Ena spoke of the ability to move around and improve the situation in which she lived and how she has an increased awareness that “they may not have the ability to move around and get out of their situation as well as I could.” Contrary to the participants’ life experiences, many of the students the participants educate do not live in homes their families own and do not have similar life experiences with regard to activities in their backyards.

The CDAI provided prompts related to awareness of one's beliefs and assumptions toward diversity given as a pre-and-post assessment illustrating changes in participants' views of cultural diversity. Data from the pre-to-post CDAI indicated a 67 percent increase in the participants' desire to work with students whose culture differs from their own, see Table 8. Likewise, there was an increase in comfort level of participants working with people whose beliefs/values differed from their personal beliefs and values on the post-CDAI. All but one participants agreed that the cultural views of the diverse community should be included in school program planning when completing the post-CDAI. Additionally, all participants indicated the need for an explanation when correcting students' spoken language on the post-CDAI. An increase in the responsibility of teachers to provide opportunities for students to share cultural differences was noted, as well as an increase in the use of and display of materials reflecting at least three cultural groups. The changes in the CDAs suggests modifications in participants' beliefs and assumptions from the start of the study.

The school-valued discourses activity challenged the participants to explore their experiences and beliefs about expectations regarding literacy which revealed additional differences. When participating in the school-valued discourse intervention, Shannen discussed the generational difference between the students and the teachers such that "this generation also focuses too much on technology and limits their reading time," which may contribute to differences between teachers and their students. Victoria stated she is able to see that schools have been set up "more along the lines of how 'traditional' White American families function." Upon further reflection, Victoria stated that, "It has increased my awareness of how different cultures approach school and how school in

general is actually built to cater to White culture.” Colleen talked about being more open-minded and not reprimanding students for not using standard English as this may not be the norm with which the students have grown up, which is something different than what she would have done in the past.

In their final interviews when questioned about White Privilege, participants shared experiences that demonstrated acknowledgement of White Privilege, which was contrary to their responses prior to partaking in the intervention program. Victoria elucidated with regard to life experience,

that being White does give me certain privileges, that I can walk into a space, I can be friendly and feel comfortable. I can definitely expect that I will see other people who look like me, who are like me so to speak. And if I’m polite and nice, that I tend to get cooperation automatically. And I recognize especially having worked in a school that is not predominantly White, that that is not always the case, that even if you are nice and polite that you won’t automatically get cooperation if you don’t have a certain skin tone (Victoria).

Well, now thinking about it because I didn’t as much before, that I am able to go into a store and not have issues and people don’t look at me. I am – you know, I don’t know, that I realize now that being lighter skin in our society can make it where you get special – I don’t want to say special attention, but not the negative attention, I guess I should say. And it goes with the typical stereotypes that people think of (Ena).

I think when me and my friend got pulled over in the car one day for tinted windows in a very White Jewish town, they let us go because they realized that we were not Black or Hispanic or any color, that we were White and that’s why they let us go (Kristin).

I mean, I think that every day you experience it. I mean I got an education that was good. I mean I went to (name of college), no big thing, but to other people, they would kill for that, but it was easy for me. And everything that I experienced was easy because of the circumstance that I’m in compared to other people (Emily).

Changes in participants’ beliefs and assumptions were clear at the end of the study as participants acknowledged being the beneficiary of White Privilege, as well as questioned the education system’s value base.

Willingness to engage. Shifts in the participants' attitudes toward their students were demonstrated as participants' approaches to classroom practices were altered. Behavioral changes from authoritarian-style classroom to more student-centered learning environments emerged as participants scrutinized their teaching practices. The participants' final observation results illustrate the changes that occurred in classroom practices in the participants' classrooms; see Table 14 for final observation results. Five out of six participants achieved proficiency with score of three or above. All six participants revealed growth in their pedagogical practice ranging from 0.65 to 1.53 points of growth. The average growth demonstrated by participants was 0.94, almost an entire point improvement in practice. Ena approached advanced proficiency with a rubric average score of 3.9 out of 4 possible points. While Victoria was slightly below proficiency with an average rubric score of 2.95 out of 4, she demonstrated improvement between her initial and final observations. See Table 14 for comparison of initial and final observation averages. Victoria's initial observation score was 2.0 demonstrating basic development with regard to the pedagogical practices observed, but her final observation score demonstrated 0.95-point increase bringing her five-tenths of a point away from demonstrating proficiency.

Table 14

Final Observation Results

Participant	Setting Academic/ Behavioral Expectations	Making Challenging Curriculum Accessible	Using Students' Strengths as Instructional Starting Points	Creating Cooperative Environment	Demonstrates Cultural Competence	Avg.
Colleen	3.75	3	3	3	3.4	3.23
Emily	3.67	4	3	3.5	3.6	3.55
Shannen	3	3	3	3	3	3
Kristin	3.67	3	3	3	3	3.13
Ena	4	4	3.5	4	4	3.9
Victoria	3	3	3	3	2.75	2.95

Note. Scoring key: 4-advanced; 3-proficient; 2-basic; 1-developing.

Both initial and final observations of Ena’s class revealed a willingness to engage the students and give them a voice in the classroom. During her first observation, Ena’s students were working collaboratively on a group project in which they were able to select their own groups and design the project contents as long as the project had the requirements set forth in the rubric. Students were actively working and engaging in conversation as they worked on their projects. Background music in the classroom was music that the students had selected. The only caveat was that if students did not work productively, the music would be shut off. All students were engaged and worked diligently on different aspects of the project.

During the final observation at the end of the study, Ena’s students were again engaged in a collaborative task working to answer questions and defend their responses related to an informational documentary that they had watched. The focus was on learning throughout the lesson and students respectfully listened to others’ responses and rebutted using evidence from the movie. The teacher was more of a facilitator as students

were empowered to work together and add on to each other's comments to support their arguments. Ena would occasionally add in a comment to spur discussion and students actively collaborated to respond to her query. Ena demonstrated a willingness to allow her students the freedom to demonstrate mastery of concepts in a collaborative format preparing them to be productive members of the school community, as well as preparing them for college and the 21st century workplace.

For the duration of Emily's final observation, she spent time explaining some of the idioms that were used in the text that the class was working with as many of her students were unfamiliar with baseball (and more familiar with soccer, football, and basketball); thus, the students struggled to understand the district-required text's essential concepts. By the end of the lesson, students were able to draw inferences due to Emily's explanations related to the dynamics of playing baseball. Emily's ability to understand her students' backgrounds assisted her in ensuring the students' academic success. Moreover, in her final interview Emily stated that she tries to address students' cultures in the classroom because "it makes them feel welcome and makes them feel part of the classroom. I think it's nice for them to see that their teacher is caring about their different cultures and traditions and things like that." She went on to provide an example about April being poetry month and selecting different poets from different parts of the world where the students are from.

Colleen's students were engaged in the creation of a "magazine" and were writing an article related to a sport of their choice whether a local team, a professional team, a specific athlete, or the history of the sport thereby ensuring that all students would be engaged in the assignment. Students were very focused on their research related to the

“sport” they selected with some students writing about their favorite athlete, some writing about a soccer player, a basketball player, a football player, a gymnast, while other students were focused on the history of the sport. Allowing the students to focus on a sport of their choice empowered the students to take control of their learning and not be pigeon-holed into the sport related to the text with which they were working. Colleen recounted that her class read *I Am Malala* during the school year and that she had a student who was able to speak to the class about Islam when they were doing background research about the text. She explained that she was trying to touch upon things, but she was too afraid to, but “I feel like I’m more open to it now” and a little less afraid to have the conversation after participating in this study. Subsequent to participation in this study, Colleen was able to verbalize her willingness to engage in activities that she previously shied away from which may further bolster her level of cultural competence in her classroom.

Most participants’ behavioral expectations were altered after participation in the study wherein participants also changed some of the teaching methods they utilized with their students. For example, Shannen said that she used hands-on activities “so that they have an excuse to move around the room and not get any disciplinary action for it.” During Shannen’s final observation, there was an indication of changes in her pedagogical practice with her being more indulgent of movement around the classroom, which fostered additional collaboration between the students who assisted each other when necessary. A few students were moving from group to group determining whether their peers required assistance. Victoria mentioned modification of her expectation that students sit still in her classroom after becoming more aware of the diversity in the room.

For instance, during Victoria’s final observation session, I observed her speak privately to a student who was exhibiting disruptive behavior and the student redirected himself to his work and also refocused another students asking him, “What do you need to do right now?” requiring the student to reassess his own behavior. Similar to Victoria’s interaction with the students, Emily established a rapport with her students wherein the students self-corrected their behavior after another student in the class quieted the disruptive behavior. Emily recounted her personal schooling experiences wherein her teachers built personal relationships with her that translated into her desire to do well and gain approval from her teachers. Thus, Emily believes that building relationships with her students assists in better engagement and student achievement in the classroom; “If a kid respects and wants to make that teacher proud, they’re going to do the work. If they want to make that teacher angry because they don’t like and don’t respect that teacher, they’re just not going to do their work.”

Table 15

Comparison of Initial and Final Observation Results

Participant	Initial Overall Average	Final Overall Average	Overall Change
Colleen	2.3	3.23	+0.93
Emily	2.7	3.55	+0.85
Shannen	2.3	3	+0.7
Kristin	1.6	3.13	+1.53
Ena	3.25	3.9	+0.65
Victoria	2	2.95	+0.95

Note. Scoring key: 4-advanced; 3-proficient; 2-basic; 1-developing.

Meaningful interactions with the students were evident as participants' willingness to interact and develop relationships with the students occurred. Providing choices for the students allowed students to decide for themselves how they wanted to interact with the material creating a sense of empowerment for their learning. A heightened awareness of identity and its influence on practice provided the stimulus for risk taking and changes in classroom practices, as suggested in the final observation scores.

Reflection. The purpose of the autobiographic poem intervention activity was examination of self through reading and reflection. Participants read Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, participated in group discussions, and then provided written reflections. Victoria's reflection demonstrates a willingness to engage her students due to a new-found awareness of self. She spoke of having made a "conscious effort" to inquire about her students by asking them questions about themselves; "I am learning how often I assumed (without realizing) that I have an understanding of what their lives are like outside of school. My increasing awareness has helped me to continually work toward being open and educating myself. This happens both formally and informally." Furthermore, Victoria now seeks to "pull from their experiences and incorporate some instances as real-world examples for them in the classroom," which is consistent with culturally relevant pedagogical practices. Emily likened the first four lines of the second stanza of the poem to experiences in the classroom "stalks down his narrow cage can seldom see through his bars of rage" with the analysis that she was different from her students, but "it is how you handle it that can impact your interactions. If you hold on to the fact that you are different races, that hinders your ability to see past it and

establish a relationship with your students.” In addition, Emily connects a line from the fourth stanza, “and he names the sky his own” to “anyone coming into their own self/race. It resembles the moment where you know you’re different from other people and decide who you want to be and how you want to be perceived.”

After completing the “I Come From” poem, Victoria reflected on her personal assumptions that she had made with regard to her personal experience being the same as that of her students. She elucidated further with regard to interactions with students and their families,

I have realized that I have the assumption that school and education means the same thing to them as it always has to me. I am realizing now that is not always the case. Home is not always a structured place where a person can count on being supported, or even on being fed (Victoria).

In her final interview, Victoria reflected upon how participation in the study increased her awareness of her own identity. She recounted the Identity Chart intervention and

When I did the pie chart, being White wasn’t a big part of my identity, but I just never really realized it. But now, I recognize it, I own it, and it has really, really helped me to actually work with my non-White students more now that I own my Whiteness, if that makes sense (Victoria).

Victoria also noted how different cultures approach school “and how school in general is actually built to cater to White culture. And so how kind of inherently disadvantaged non-White cultures are because without even realizing it, we’re holding them up to expectations that are norms in White cultures and not necessarily other cultures.” Victoria also commented about her interactions with students and her desire to assist them in their academic endeavors, “I hold the students accountable, but also try to make myself

available for extra help as needed. I see the hopelessness in their eyes, and I do what I can to bring back the hope.”

Ena reflected upon how her upbringing has assisted her in understanding her students as she stated in her poem, “I come from a complex layer of emotions that has made me understand my students more and for that I am grateful for my experiences.” She further revealed how her experiences factor into her ability to connect with the students and her practices in the classroom because

I come from a place that understands:
why my students feel sadness and helplessness
why they feel no one understand them
why they don't truly understand the importance of education
why they have so many emotions and don't know how to deal with them
in a way that will help them in life, not harm them
why they get angry and don't understand where that anger comes from
although my students may have different experiences, I do understand
feelings that come from sadness, frustration, and not knowing one's true
potential (Ena)

Colleen reflected on how she thought of herself as an open-minded person, but

I realized by doing some of these things (intervention activities), I've come up with some realizations that I really hold and that people in my own family – the realizations that I had like when we talked about Band-Aid colors, I would have never thought of Band-Aid colors like being a big deal, but then I realize and I see that. I think it just opened my mind a little bit more (Colleen).

Emily and Shannen both commented about having an increased awareness of other people's perceptions and bias after viewing the cultural competence presentation and the Whiteness Project videos. Shannen spoke about remembering something that was said in one of the videos and the “kind of immediate reaction of the room really generated good conversation.” Participants spoke about the students talking about fried chicken and Kool-Aid, but that some of the participants were uncomfortable to comment for fear of offending someone. The group conversation centered around “Jason's” video and how

relationships with people determine the ability to discuss certain things like “fried chicken and Kool-Aid” without “walking on eggshells. Kristin remarked that participation in the study “got me thinking more about the different cultures that were in my classroom, and how they might view me more than how I might view them.” Additional comments from the group discussion referring to White Privilege included how they didn’t realize what they were seeing because it’s so huge, that it’s not really easy to see.

Emily reported being more aware of the cultural differences between herself and her students and how it has enabled her to better meet the needs of her students. She indicated, “When someone becomes aware of something, it can either become a hindrance or a benefit.” Emily further stated that she “appreciates where they come from and how it helps to build rapport” with the students. Furthermore, Emily pointed out that “when you ask about their culture and their families and stuff like that, it makes them feel like you care about them and I think that’s good.” Ena explained, “I guess I understand more from them now when they say if it was a Black person, they would have gotten arrested right away. I understand their meaning behind what that means.”

Critical self-reflection played an integral role in participants’ ability to understand factors that contributed to their underlying beliefs and assumptions related to diversity. As the study progressed, participants became more reflective and candid about how their life experiences contributed to their interactions in the classroom. Participants articulated ways in which their perceptions of others had changed as a result of involvement in the study.

Concluding Thoughts

The findings in this chapter underscore the need for teachers of culturally diverse learners to have awareness of their cultural identity. These aforementioned findings emerged from the use of two in-depth interviews, one at the start of the study and one at the conclusion of the study, which were then further corroborated by initial and final observations. Additionally, the interventions used in this study, particularly the reflective writing pieces, emerged as findings in this study. The use of two interviews to gather information about the experience of the participants assisted me in identifying and better understanding how participants perceived themselves and their students. As noted, the emphasis of this study was on increasing the participants' self-awareness through reflection in order to be able to better understand others, particularly the culturally diverse learners in the classroom setting. The findings that emerged addressed the two research questions indicating that participants became more self-aware through their participation in this intervention study. The findings further explicated that these six participants achieved the principal goal of the intervention study, which was to reflect upon one's life experiences in order to become more self-aware and become more responsive to the needs of culturally diverse learners.

What developed from the interviews and the intervention activities was the significance of family members in influencing participants' sense of self. Participants articulated the influence of their family members on their worldviews. This was implicitly communicated through actions that were redolent of behaviors for participants, particularly with regard to school-valued discourses. Schooling experiences were significant for participants as this was the time when some participants encountered

circumstances that may not have been predominantly White. Schooling was also the setting in which most participants began to develop a mindfulness about differences between themselves and others.

The interviews also suggested that participants' perceptions of themselves and others were altered through participation in the various intervention activities. Through participation in the intervention activities, participants realized that their everyday life experiences and interactions affected their understanding of themselves and others. The participants stated that the "I Come From" poems assisted them in becoming more cognizant of the impact of their life experiences on their beliefs and assumptions. All participants said that the cultural competence presentation, particularly the videos from the *Whiteness Project* were eye-opening and facilitated personal growth and reflection. Participants described a higher level of comfort and confidence in attempting new practices to meet the needs of the students. The participants' responses in the final interviews were suggestive of a willingness to try new and different approaches in the classroom due to a newfound level of comfort in knowing themselves and recognizing how that affects practice.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Recommendations, Implications, and Conclusion

This study sought to examine in-service teachers' awareness of their cultural identity and how they perceived their students' cultural identity. Moreover, the intent of this study was to determine whether structured interventions in series of after school meetings increased in-service teachers' racial awareness through self-reflection and how that affected their perceptions of their students. Furthermore, this study also explored changes in pedagogical practices due to increased awareness of self and others. Six in-service teachers participated in the study which included an initial observation of their practice, an initial interview, and an initial Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI). Then, a series of interventions ensued wherein participants created an Identity Chart that included components that participants felt were salient to their identity; an explanation of the components was included with the Identity Charts. Next, a cultural competence presentation was viewed by the group of participants which included information about White Privilege, completion of the *White Privilege Checklist*, and videos from the *Whiteness Project*. A group discussion followed each section of the presentation, with productive conversation about race and racial awareness. The Autobiographic Poem intervention had two parts: an individual and group discussion/reflection of Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and then the individual creation of "I Come From" poems and a reflective writing related to the participants' experiences compared to their students' experiences. The closing element of the study was a post-CDAI, a final observation of teaching practice, and a concluding interview.

The implications of this research study's findings are based upon the two research questions that guided the study. The questions that directed the study were:

(1) How do participants perceive their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students?

(2) What happens to participants' views of their students after participation in the intervention program that provides opportunities to reflect on their own cultural identity?

a. How, if at all, does the participants' participation in the interventions alter their classroom practices?

The following sections discuss the findings of this study. In addition, directions for future research are delineated. Additionally, I explain a framework that I have crafted based upon the findings of this study and the extant literature, which is meant to be utilized by educational professionals and researchers to inform and guide others about the process of examining cultural identity and self-awareness. The final segment of this chapter includes recommendations for practice and concluding thoughts.

Discussion of Findings

The findings resulting from the data analysis below are organized by theme and broadly answer the research questions. I begin the discussion with Identity Perceptions as I answer the first research question related to how participants perceived their own cultural identity, as well as the cultural identity of their students. Next, the discussion centers around reflection and changes in answer to the second research question and its sub-question that asks about participants' views of their students after participation in the interventions and how their perspicacity of themselves and others change. As previously noted, three findings emerged from the research questions:

1. Participants perceived their cultural identity as different from that of their students; participants perceived “white” as the norm based upon their personal experiences, which required them to find ways in which to bridge the gap to reach their students.
2. Members of the study reported that participation in the study provided them the impetus for self-examination, allowing them to better understand themselves. This provided an opportunity to evaluate the ways in which they accommodated their students’ needs.
3. Contributors engaged students in more meaningful ways designed to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners in the classroom.

The findings from this study can add to the knowledge base with regard to how in-service teachers’ personal beliefs and assumptions influence and impact their classroom practice, an area which is deficient in the literature regarding in-service teachers. Additionally, the findings of this study could add to the literature base with regard to the process of examining cultural identity and self-awareness.

Identity perceptions. Conversations regarding culturally relevant/responsive teaching practices have permeated education for two decades. Cultural diversity is a major issue confronting in-service, as well as pre-service teachers, as the workforce remains predominantly White and female (Ajayi, 2011; Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Baily & Katradis, 2016; Goldenberg, 2014; Kahn et al., 2014). Researchers (Gay, 2000, 2002, 2010, 2013; Gay & Howard, 2000; Ladson-Billings 1999, 2009) pointed out that oftentimes teachers do not have similar experiences to those of their culturally diverse students resulting in a potential cultural mismatch between teacher and student. Previous

research and the findings from this study revealed that teachers' life experiences play a significant role in how teachers interact with their students, whether consciously or subconsciously (Gay 2010; Gay & Howard, 2000, Milner, 2008). Multiple areas contributed to participants' perceptions of their own cultural identity which included, but was not limited to: race, influence of family, influence of religion, influence of exposure to literacy, and the influence of engaging in the educational process. These findings are evident in this intervention study.

Research question one asked: How do participants perceive their cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students? Milner (2006, 2008, 2011, 2012) posits that teachers who lack an awareness of their own cultural background cannot effectively teach students whose culture differs from theirs, as they lack an appreciation of the cultural differences between themselves and their students. At the outset of the study, only two of the participants included race as salient factor in their cultural identity. Both participants included race as a minor percentage of their identity, 10 percent and 12.5 percent respectively. Shannen explained that she did not want being White to be a factor in her cultural identity chart, while Ena included her race as White and "how others see me." The other four participants did not include race at all as factoring into their cultural identity indicating a lack of racial awareness. A majority of the participants associated being White only with skin pigmentation and not the benefits and privileges of being White further evidencing a lack of racial awareness. Two participants could not articulate what it meant to be White indicative of a lack of racial awareness. Often, this lack of awareness manifests as colorblindness wherein teachers state that they don't see color, that they just see children which whitewashes students of color (Milner, 2006, 2012). The

research has indicated that reflection on one's beliefs and habits of mind is not characteristic of pre-service and in-service teachers (Bloom et al., 2015; Howard, 2003; Irving, 2006; Landsman & Lewis, 2011) and must be prompted through programs and coursework with exposure to culturally diverse settings. Thus, the interventions were used to develop awareness of self in order to effectually know others.

The participants' life experiences included limited exposure to cultural diversity which factored into their perceptions and cultural aptitude which was similar to Jester's (2012) findings of pre-service teachers. Initially, participants did not clearly articulate their cultural identity, although they did acknowledge differences in their cultural identity in comparison with that of their students in their CDAI responses. Initial interview data were consistent with a lack of cultural aptitude on the part of participants, as they were unable to clearly articulate what it meant to be White, other than the literal sense of white as a color. When participants were asked what it meant to be White, their responses related to skin color, pigmentation, and genetics or that they didn't really know. Kristin explained, "To me, it means that the color of my skin is white and even White people have different pigments." Victoria echoed Kristin's response with reference to looking at her skin. Ena stated that it was a hard question and hesitated to answer without prompting from me that there was no right or wrong answer. Emily asked if her answer about it not meaning anything other than being sunburned was a bad answer. Outside of skin color, the participants did not acknowledge that being White played a role in their experiences. This lack of cognizance of what it means to be White subdued participants appreciation of the cultural differences among people, particularly their culturally diverse students which often manifests as colorblindness (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015; Edwards, 2011;

Jester, 2012; Milner, 2003, 2008, 2012; Williams, Edwards, Kuhel, & Lim, 2016). The aforementioned finding is consistent with the literature that centers mainly around pre-service teachers, but I have generalized it to include in-service teachers as they were the subject of this intervention study.

Sleeter (1993, 2001, 2008) and Milner (2006, 2012) speak of the ideologies that pre-service educators bring with them to their education programs and the classroom being shaped by their families and their life experiences that have been reinforced in areas such as schooling and processes of everyday life. Buchori and Dobinson (2015) also speak to how in-service teachers' "unquestioned responses to cultural diversity" are shaped by "family, friends, the media, and interaction with people from other cultures" (p. 74). While much of the literature speaks to pre-service teachers, I extend the meaning to also include in-service teachers whose experiences have also shaped their identities, which is consistent with Buchori and Dobinson's (2015) findings. Participants' perceptions related to their own cultural identity and the cultural identity of their students were linked to interactions with family and educational experiences. Moreover, a majority of the participants discussed the significant role their families played in shaping their perspectives. Additionally, four participants explained how religion played a significant role in their identity. Experiences that participants had in school also emerged as having an impact on the formation of their perspectives of self and others. All of the participants described schooling as having an impact on the shaping their identity and the ways in which they viewed others' cultural identities. Furthermore, participants expounded upon the influence of exposure to literacy in their schooling experiences, stating that their exposure to literacy had assisted their academic achievement. Five out of

six participants discussed collegiate experiences and the ways in which they shaped how they viewed themselves and others. Some of the participants explained how their views differed particularly during their K-12 educational experiences due to a lack of exposure to diversity. The findings from this research study are consistent with the literature surrounding pre-service teachers' perceptions of self and others (Gay, 2000, 2002, 2010, 2013; Gay & Howard, 2000; Ladson-Billings 1999, 2009).

The research findings suggested in this study as articulated by the participants align with the literature. The participants voiced the influence of their family life, their exposure to literacy in their homes, religious practices, as well as engagement in schooling as factors that shaped their identity. This was conveyed through their identity charts, their "I Come From" poems, the school-valued discourse reflections, as well as through interviews. For example, in their "I Come From" poems, Victoria, Emily, Shannen, and Kristin all spoke of coming from supportive families remembering the love and support they received growing up. Additionally, the participants perceived their school communities as being supportive which they perceived was dissimilar to the students in the district in which they worked. Participants cited a lack of parental involvement as disparate from the K-12 schools which they attended. Furthermore, exposure to literacy in the home was another area in which participants noted differences between themselves and their students citing growing up "surrounded by books" (Victoria) and always being "encouraged to read lots of books" (Kristin). The norm of exposure to literacy was reinforced in schooling and as such the participants' norms aligned with schooling standards furthering their expectations that the students they encountered would have similar experiences. The participants' experiences became

unexplained perspectives and habits of mind that required exploration if teachers were to be successful in their quest to effectively educate their culturally diverse learners.

The observational data from the participants' initial observations were consistent with the literature regarding classroom practices of teachers whose cultural aptitude is low wherein their practices lacked appreciation of their students' cultures (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015; Jester, 2012). Buchori and Dobinson (2015) advance that, "Building an inclusive culture in a school is paramount. This can only occur if teachers are informed, willing, and confident to question and critique their own personal and collective beliefs and values and practices underpinning their practice (p. 77)." Initially, five out of six participants demonstrated little ability to advance a classroom environment that was inclusive of culture. This was evident in Colleen's initial observation when she did not take advantage of teachable moments related to culture in discussions the students were having about a book they were reading. Furthermore, even when students questioned cultural items such as a brogue, Colleen failed to take the opportunity to further the discussion. She also stated in her interview that she was "kind of afraid to ask, sometimes because I don't want to delve too deep." Colleen's hesitation to initiate and/or continue the conversation is reflective of a lack of cultural awareness of self which inhibits her from engaging with others. During Victoria's initial observation, she also failed to capitalize on an opportunity to connect to students' cultures when discussing malaria and sickle cell anemia as some students' families come from areas where malaria is ubiquitous and sickle cell anemia is prevalent. Yet again, this is consistent with the literature which is mostly positioned around pre-service teachers, but is also applicable to in-service teachers with a lack of cultural awareness. While the majority of the literature

focuses on pre-service teachers' perceptions and self-awareness, the findings in this study shed light on the need for research in this area for in-service teachers.

Reflection. The literature advocates for critical reflection, particularly for teachers of culturally diverse students as this assists educators in the exploration of their identity personally and professionally (Howard, 2003). Edwards (2011) posits that if teachers' (pre-service) dispositions are not altered, skills and knowledge that they develop in their educational programs will not translate into practice in the classroom. Researchers (Ajayi, 2011; Edwards, 2011; Goldenberg, 2014; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2005) suggest using critical reflection to reexamine one's perceptions and habits of mind to better meet the needs of culturally diverse learners. Howard (2003) defined critical reflection as a means through which to reflect upon experiences within multiple contexts: moral, political and ethical. The participants discussed how difficult some of the interventions were because the activities forced them to ponder questions that were directly connected to their personal constructs, evidencing the need for their use of critical reflection. Howard (2003) spoke to the importance of providing the space for critical reflection for pre-service teachers to be able to rethink philosophies, which I extrapolate is also essential for in-service practitioners. As suggested in the literature, this study utilized critical self-reflection in the interventions as a means of assisting the participants' reflection of their positionality and how said positionality manifests in the classroom (Goldenberg, 2014; Howard, 2003).

It is imperative that teachers "grapple with deep-seated beliefs regarding race and how these beliefs impact their decisions," (Gooden & Doherty, 2015, p. 247) which was the intent of this intervention study. Bloom et al. (2015) suggested discourse about racial

issues to enable continuous self-reflection of the role that Whiteness plays in the education of culturally diverse students. To precipitate this critical reflection, the study asked participants to examine the development of their racial experiences through a series of interventions that required participants to scrutinize their life experiences and the way in which those experiences manifest in practice in culturally diverse classrooms. Consistent with the literature that posits that “an unsettling experience” (Pultorak, 2010, p. 144) may be the impetus for reflection, the videos used in the cultural competence presentation from the *Whiteness Project* provided that constructive stimulus. Moreover, all participants talked about how the “I Come From” poem was beneficial in assisting their personal growth by forcing them to reflect on their cultural filters and how those filters affected the ways in which they interacted with others.

The findings related to reflection and its role in helping participants learn about themselves so that they can better know and serve others were consistent with the literature (Gooden & Doherty, 2015; Bloom et al., 2015; Pultorak, 2010). All six participants spoke about questioning assumptions they had about others as they learned more about themselves and began to own their whiteness and understand its role in their life experiences. Changes in diversity awareness were evident in the post-CDAI responses with a 67 percent increase in the comfort level of participants to work with individuals whose culture differed from their own. Furthermore, 83 percent of participants felt it was important to include the cultural views of the community in program planning on the post-CDAI. Participants were appalled by the tenor of the videos they viewed during the cultural competence project stating that they couldn't believe people thought like that, let alone said the words out loud. This sparked

discussion about how they viewed things and how their views were changing as they reflected on their life experiences.

Acknowledgement of White Privilege permeated the conversation during the final interviews. Not only did participants have an awareness of White Privilege, they were able to cite examples of when they had benefitted from White Privilege. Additionally, some participants voiced the conclusion that schooling was set up to “cater to White culture” (Victoria) and how it inherently disadvantages culturally diverse learners. Furthermore, Victoria articulated her lack of awareness of being White when she reflected upon her Identity Chart and that being White was not included as a large part of the chart. This was in stark contrast to initial dispositions wherein participants were unaware of whiteness and White Privilege and how they had personally benefitted from it. Critical reflection, as suggested in the literature, allowed participants to examine their deep-seated beliefs and alter their mindset (Gooden & Doherty, 2015).

Moreover, participants also reflected upon experiences that they had assumed were similar to those of their students, but after completing the “I Come From” poems they realized that their students’ experiences differed significantly from their experiences. Colleen recounted that everyday things such as finding a Band-Aid that was the color of one’s skin was something that she had never thought about, but she now realizes that it is “a big deal” and “it just opened my mind a little bit more.” Victoria explained how she had assumed that school and education meant the same thing to her students and their parents as it did to her, but that she had erroneously made that assumption. Thus, she stated that she is now able to better meet the needs of her students if they are not fully supported at home. The lens through which the participants had previously viewed

themselves and others was shifting. An awareness of their own cultural filter was allowing them to process how that prism was affecting the ways in which they saw and interacted with others. A new sense of self-awareness was voiced by the participants as suggested by researchers who studied the influence of life experiences on racial awareness (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Gooden & Doherty, 2015; Jester, 2012; McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001; Milner, 2008, 2010, 2011).

The findings from this study with regard to the role of self-reflection in raising awareness of diversity are consistent with what is espoused in the literature. Participants were able to reach a level of cognitive dissonance, albeit different levels for different participants, that enabled them to authentically engage and promoted individual growth through disruption of their perceptions, which is consistent with the literature surrounding the creation of dissonance for pre-service teachers and in-service teachers (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001). These findings are similar to Jester's (2012) findings for pre-service teachers who also completed the "I Come From" poem as part of a diversity course study. The interventions provided opportunities for the participants to generate the cognitive dissonance between their beliefs and assumptions, which resulted in changes in cultural aptitude, as well as the participants' pedagogical practices which was evident in their final observations. The interventions in this study challenged participants to unlearn their previous beliefs and relearn through a new lens. Critical reflection played an essential role in furtherance of these attitudinal alterations; again, which is consistent with the literature regarding the development of culturally relevant dispositions (Edwards, 2011; Jester, 2012; Milner, 2011). Changes in practices

of the participants moved them closer to providing more equitable learning opportunities for all learners (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

Changes. In order to be successful in the classroom, content knowledge and pedagogy are not the be-all and end all to ensure teachers' success with culturally diverse learners. Additional dispositions contribute to the teachers' ability to meet the needs of culturally diverse learners. "Teachers' attitudes and expectations, as well as their knowledge of how to incorporate cultures, experiences, and needs of their students into their teaching significantly influence what students learn and the quality of their learning opportunities" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 243). This was evident as participants in the study experienced changes in cultural aptitude which was evident in pedagogical shifts that were observed during the final observations of the study.

Varying levels of change occurred among the participants as they spoke to the disruption of their prior beliefs and creation of a new mentality with regard to their culturally diverse learners in their final interviews. Participants reported that learning about themselves through the intervention activities better allowed them to engage with others as the lens through which they now viewed their culturally diverse students had been altered. This finding demonstrates consistency with the literature. Once again, a large portion of the literature is related to pre-service teachers, but I advance it can also be generalized to in-service teachers who had similar experiences and outcomes. The ways in which the participants spoke about the value they had gleaned from participation in the study revealed an increased mindfulness of their cultural capacity. This finding is compatible with the existing literature for pre-service teachers and is surmised by me to also apply to in-service teachers.

Changes were also observed during the final observations that used the same rubric as the initial observations. I inferred that these changes may be attributed to participants' newfound understanding of how their experiences affected their thinking and their engagement with their students. All but one participant achieved a proficient score of 3, falling short by only 0.05 of a point. Ena missed advanced proficiency by 0.1 of a point with a final score of 3.9. All participants exhibited growth ranging from 0.65 to 1.53 point increases. These findings are consistent with other studies of pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and educational leaders whose cultural attitudes were altered as a result of self-exploration and self-reflection (Buchori & Dobinson, 2015; Edwards, 2011; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Jester, 2012, Williams et al., 2016; Wilson, 2012).

Most participants moved from unquestioned assumptions drawn from being members of the dominant culture to articulation of changes that they would make in their practice that were observed during the final observations. Some of the participants' interpretations of their life experiences prompted them to question their assumptions and understanding of said experiences, similar to the findings of Jester's (2012) study and consistent with other studies. For instance, Victoria was very outspoken with her revelations related to the predominance of White culture and its impact upon schooling, which she was unable to communicate at the start of the study. She also expounded on discussions that she had at home with her dad about people wanting to migrate to the United States, as his attitude was one of egocentrism where we are the best here and why wouldn't people want to come here. Victoria expressed how having the conversations with her parents has "increased my awareness of their perception of the White race."

Once more, these were unquestioned conceptions at the outset of the study. Additionally, Victoria was explicit in changes that she had already made in her practice and changes in the way she would move forward in the classroom at the start of the new school year. Victoria's final observation score improved 0.95 of a point placing her five-hundredths of a point away from proficiency. Victoria demonstrated growth particularly in the area of cultural competence which was a significant finding and affirms the notion that self-reflection and a willingness to examine one's beliefs enables one to transform herself.

Colleen talked about creating the Identity Chart at the beginning of the study and how she found it difficult to label herself. She stated, "It's hard to label yourself, to look at you and who you are as a person. I'd rather do it on someone else." With regard to the "I Come From" poem, Colleen said that the poem helped her remember things about how she grew up and that she found herself wondering about her kids' (students') kitchens. "I wondered do they have everything that they need there?" (Colleen). At first, Colleen was reticent to be reflective, but by the end of the study not only did she reflect on her own experiences, she became curious as to her students' experiences evidencing an increase in cultural aptitude, a shift that the literature posits results from self-reflection and an increased awareness of self (Bloom et al., 2015; Mills & Keddie, 2012; Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Schmeichel, 2012; Walker, 2011). During Colleen's final observation, pedagogical changes were observed that supported better student engagement and empowerment of students through student choice, practices that are consistent with culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

An additional change noted in this study was the participants' acknowledgement of White Privilege and how they had benefitted from White Privilege. Some participants

were further along the continuum of acceptance of this reality than others, but had made some forward motion as indicated in their final interviews. In their final interviews, all six members of the study acknowledged that they had been the beneficiary of White Privilege, which was in stark contrast to their responses in the initial interviews when none of the participants recognized their privilege. Recognition of White Privilege demonstrated a shift in the participants' cultural capacity and cognizance of their Whiteness. This acknowledgement of White Privilege provided participants the ability to form connections with students within the students' social context as they had come to realize that their social context differed from that of their students' (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The interventions in this study provided a plethora of opportunities for the participants to reflect on their life experiences, as well as their professional practice which the literature posits is essential for change to occur. As critical reflection ensued, participants became more cognizant of their life experiences and their influence on their beliefs and assumptions which allowed participants to make changes in their pedagogical approaches in the classroom.

Post Reflection

The concluding question of the final interview was added and asked participants what activities they thought should be changed, removed, and/or added to the study to advance professional and personal growth. All of the participants expressed a lack of connection with the *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* intervention and did not glean much for participation in that activity. Contrarily, all participants voiced positive comments regarding the "I Come From" poems. Commentary ranged from enjoyment doing the activity to development of self-awareness as a result of involvement in the

intervention activity. All six participants' poems were detailed and demonstrated exploration of their past experiences. Their reflections articulated a cultural mind shift and an increasing level of self-awareness. While the participants stated that the Identity Charts were difficult to construct, I surmise that their difficulty resulted from a lack of self-awareness and a reticence to be self-reflective. One of the participants said that she thought "it would be cool to do a final Identity Chart to be able to visualize the changes" that emerged as a result of participation in the study. The pre-and-post CDAs that required participants to check off answers were well received by the contributors, even though they said that the questions made them really think about whether they agreed/disagreed or strongly agreed/disagreed with the questions. They indicated that they spent the time to consider the questions before selecting an answer demonstrating the use of critical reflection during the intervention. The same sentiment was echoed with regard to the White Privilege checklist and the school-valued discourse survey. All six participants stated that the videos used in the Cultural Competence presentation stimulated their self-reflection and that the group discussion spurred further reflection. Three participants indicated that they would have liked more group discussions as they felt the collaboration assisted their cognitive dissonance. The members of the study reported that they would not alter the sequencing of the intervention activities and the timing of the activities. The honesty of the participants as it related to constructive feedback regarding the intervention activities, as well as the sequencing of the activities (see Figure 2), contributed to the creation of the framework delineated below.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the extant literature related to identity awareness, examination of cultural awareness should be shaped to include components that include the use of an instrument that measures cultural identity awareness, critical reflection, identity identification activities, group discussion and sharing, autobiographical activities, and reflective writing opportunities. Therefore, I have developed a framework for a process of examining cultural identity that can be used by education professionals and researchers. The participants in this research study contributed important information related to the intervention activities and which interventions they perceived had the most value in advancing their personal growth and which activities participants felt did not contribute a considerable benefit to their change in mindset. Members of the study were very open and honest as we had developed a relationship in which participants felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions. Moreover, the participants stated that they had experienced both personal and professional growth as a result of participation in the study and they thought if others were to partake in the activities it would assist their growth as well; thus, the contributors offered suggestions that were incorporated into the framework, see Figure 3 for overview of the framework.

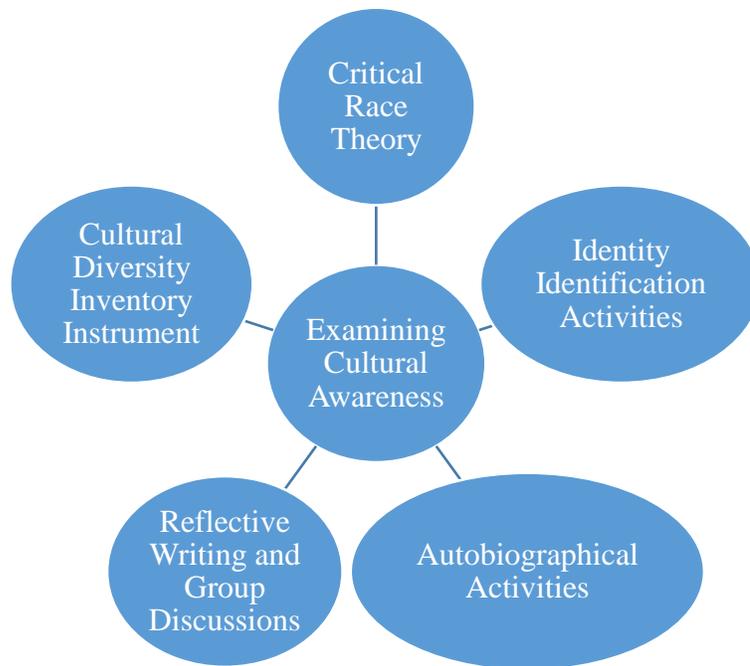


Figure 3. Framework for Examining Cultural Awareness.

The framework is proffered as an outline with which to assist educational leaders and professionals in supporting teachers' growth and knowledge in the field with regard to cultural awareness. The framework differs from other contexts in that it is not a one-time encounter with an expectation of miracle growth and development. Rather, the framework was developed to take place over a course of time and allow participants to reflect on the encounters with the activities to assist in their personal growth related to diversity, as research posits that a one-time diversity course may not be as effective as learning over time (Sleeter, 2008; Van Gunten & Martin, 2001). Critical Race Theory is an integral component of the framework as it provides the lens through which to interrogate one's identity to expose the pervasive whiteness in all aspects of our everyday lives.

Based upon the research findings and consistent with the literature (Bowman, 2010; Brown, 2004b), group discussions were included as a component of the framework. Group discussions are essential and an integral component of the framework as participants in the study stated that the group discussions were a beneficial part of the interventions. Therefore, it is essential that group norms are created at the outset to ensure that all participants are given a voice and that each voice is respected regardless of their contribution to the discussion.

As research exists evidencing the ability of teachers of all ethnicities to become effective teachers of culturally diverse students, it is my hope that by creating this framework, which is based on the findings from this study and the extant literature, that educators and others will have an increased awareness of who they are as people. This increased cultural capacity will better enable educators to question their beliefs and assumptions (Gay, 2002), as the literature speaks to improved pedagogy of teachers who know themselves and others (Cousik, 2015; Howard, 2006). Teachers are an entryway for students to connect to information, and making sense of that information in a way that students can relate that is relevant to their lives is critical to the success of all learners.

Implications

The findings from this research study have implications for policy, practice, and future research. The implications for policy, practice, and future from this study are outlined in this section.

Policy. Teachers in the State of New Jersey are required to earn at least 20 hours of professional development each year, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-3.4. (Professional Development in NJ, 2013). This is a change from the previous statute that

required teachers to participate in 100 hours of professional development over five years. Since 2013, teachers must complete at least 20 hours per school year. The framework created as a result of the findings in this study can be used to inform and guide others in their professional growth. The types of intervention activities suggested in the framework could be completed in professional learning communities (PLCs) to fulfill the 20-hour requirement.

With regard to higher education NCATE devotes an entire standard to diversity, in particular, standard 4d, experience working with diverse students in P-12 schools. To that end, institutions of higher education are required to expose teacher candidates to diversity-related topics with a responsibility to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to understand diversity and equity in the teaching and learning process. Thus, the findings from this research study may provide insight into programmatic approaches that may be implemented in order to raise awareness of the influence of cultural identity.

The findings of this study and the framework resulting wherefrom may inform policy makers of the importance of identity awareness and cultural competence. Additionally, the findings could be used to create an impetus for the development of programs that raise identity awareness and cultural competence that could become policy.

Practice. Academic achievement for culturally diverse learners continues to lag behind that of White students. As accountability for subgroups is the focus of school achievement, it would be beneficial to have research on academic improvement of culturally diverse learners whose teachers have participated in programs to improve their professional capacity with regard to diversity. The findings from this study and the recommendations in the framework can provide educators with an understanding of the

demographic landscape that exists today in classrooms. It may contribute insight into approaches that may be implemented in order to raise awareness of the influence of cultural identity. Therefore, it would be beneficial for administrators in culturally diverse schools to take the recommendations presented in this chapter and create programs to increase the cultural capacity of their in-service staff members. By increasing cultural aptitude of current practitioners, it is my belief that said practitioners would also experience a change in classroom teaching practices. Hopefully, these changes in pedagogical practice would translate into better relationships between staff and students, as well as learning experiences that are more culturally relevant to the students' life experiences. The research speaks to increased academic performance of culturally diverse learners who are provided culturally relevant learning opportunities (Gay, 2000, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Howard, 2006).

Using an inventory instrument. This research study outlined the continual attempts to encourage in-service teachers to challenge their assumptions by exploring the beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions they bring with them into the classroom and to understand how these assumptions influence their thinking and practice. This research study illustrated the significant influence of family and life experiences on how individuals think about and understand diversity. Educational leaders should consider employing an instrument like the CDAI that may screen for diversity awareness and reflectiveness on the part of in-service practitioners to help identify where teachers are on a continuum of necessary skills. This would assist educational leaders in developing programs that would enable in-service teachers to help themselves address their personal and professional learning needs with regard to cultural diversity. Thus, it is my

recommendation that in-service teachers partake in a program to raise cultural awareness that utilizes an instrument that measures cultural identity awareness. Furthermore, based upon the findings of this study, it is suggested that in-service teachers complete a pre-and-post inventory to measure any changes that may occur as a result of participation in an awareness raising program. These findings could also be applied to higher education and pre-service teacher preparation programs.

Developing reflective practitioners through critical reflection. The findings of this research study suggest that in-service practitioners may not have fully developed the necessary skills to engage in critical reflection. Therefore, it is suggested that educational leaders develop a plan that supports the development of critical reflection skills in order to be able to increase self-awareness and improve cultural aptitude. Research posits that those who engage in self-reflection about their own identities and have an increased self-awareness are more likely to engage in reflection about others' cultures and identities (Howard, 2003; Milner, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2011), which is essential if we are to provide learning experiences that are meaningful for our culturally diverse learners (Cochran Smith, 2003; Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Milner, 2011, 2012).

Using reflective writing prompts. The findings of this study and the existing literature (Cousik, 2015; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; McAllister & Irvine, 2002) support the use of reflective writing as a way in which to improve cultural aptitude. The participants in the study were very vocal about the impact of the autobiographical writing in promoting personal and professional growth; therefore, it is my recommendation that reflective writing be utilized to support personal and professional growth for in-service

teachers. Members of this research study reported that the reflective writing stimulated self-reflection and growth.

Engage in identity identification activities. The extant literature (Austin, & Hickey, 2007; Bloom et al., 2015; Puchner et al., 2012), as well as the findings from this research study support the use of identity identification provoking activities as participants noted that the activities in which they had to identify themselves roused their thought process and supported personal identity growth.

Directions for Future Research

This research study provides insight into programmatic approaches that school personal may implement in order to increase the learning outcomes for culturally diverse students. It contributes to the body of literature regarding the changing educational landscape and it augments the literature base linking research to practice.

This study was limited by time (four-month period of data collection) and the small sample size of six participants; therefore, the findings for this study may have unknown or limited generalizability. Studies with a larger sample size could provide additional chances to collect a large-scale data corpus whose results may be more generalizable. A larger sample of in-service teachers may make available valuable data on how these findings compare across cultural and geographical areas. Furthermore, studies that take place over a longer period of time may yield data that may have greater generalizability.

Moreover, this research was conducted over a short period of time, and the extant literature is replete with studies that investigate findings over a single semester diversity course or a short-term interventional study (e.g. Alvarez McHatton.& Vallice, 2014;

Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011; Bowman, 2010; Brown, 2004a; Brown, 2004b); thus, additional opportunities for a long-term longitudinal study may be warranted to determine if the changes demonstrated by the participants in this study and other research studies are sustainable and if so, what precipitated the sustainable change. If changes are not sustainable by the participants that opens up another area of research as to why the changes were not sustainable.

Future research may also include the willingness of the participants to change as all six participants volunteered to participate in this research study. Results may differ when participants in an interventional program are required to participate rather than participated willingly in the interventions. A comparative study could be conducted exploring the level of personal growth and awareness of participants that volunteered to participate in the interventions compared to those whose participation was mandated by administration.

An additional area of future research could be a comparative study between and among in-service teachers' cultural awareness growth based upon demographic data as the participants' demographic data in this research study was similar; thus, a study comparing findings of cultural awareness growth with participants whose demographic data differed is an option. Further, another avenue for future research could be a comparative study of cultural awareness growth based upon the teachers' placements within schools: pre-school, elementary, middle school, and high school settings as the participants in this research study were all middle school teachers in the same building. This could provide additional information that is more target specific toward ethnicity and program specific to placement levels.

Teachers' willingness to examine the genesis of their personal beliefs and assumptions may influence the extent to which they reflect on their professional practice. As reflective practice is a dynamic process, teachers' commitment to lifelong learning is essential to personal and professional growth and development. Allowing participants to have multiple forums for reflection supported the participants' personal change through an increased self-awareness as demonstrated in this research study. Thus, programs for in-service teachers should provide multiple opportunities for critical reflection about self and others, as well as educational practice. Writing as a reflective practice may not be effective for the range of teachers that serve our student populations. Therefore, as we provide students with opportunities to choose their own learning activities through choice menus and different platforms to demonstrate learning, perhaps, professional growth opportunities might provide chances for choosing the platform for reflection in order to meet the needs of in-service teachers. This could also provide an additional avenue for future research as much of the research with regard to reflective practice focuses on reflective writing.

An additional area to be considered for future research is the ways in which teachers' interactions with the students' families factor into the ways in which they meet the needs of the growing population of culturally diverse learners. Factors for examination could include teachers' communication, partnership, and outreach with students' families.

Another area for consideration of future research would be the inclusion of exposure of participants to new culturally responsive practices and modeling of the

practices for the participants for implementation in their classrooms subsequent to participation in the interventions.

An additional avenue to consider for future research would be including an intervention that actually involves teaching/exposing participants to new culturally responsive practices that they can use in their classrooms, with modeling/role playing or practice opportunities and using the observation protocol to assess the efficacy of the intervention and its impact on teacher practice.

Leadership

Research indicates that school culture affects the practices of novice teachers who tend to mimic the practices they encounter in their local setting (Schultz, Jones Walker, & Chikkatur, 2008). It is my contention that the same is true for in-service teachers who also imitate the practices that are prevalent in their buildings; therefore, it is imperative that instructional leaders of culturally diverse schools ensure that the students are not marginalized by the learning environment and school culture (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). Teachers have the opportunity to be social justice leaders in their classrooms and school districts which can be accomplished by providing equitable learning experiences for all learners. The aforementioned framework provides the blueprint to assist educators in becoming social justice educators.

Educational leaders who seek to provide equitable educational opportunities for all learners could use the framework provided to support the professional growth toward meeting the needs of culturally diverse learners. School leaders, teachers, and support staff would need to commit to and be supported in making culturally responsive practices the norm in all classrooms. This may be accomplished by raising cultural awareness of

the staff, as well as administration, as the first step in the process. After becoming aware of one's culture, the next step is developing awareness of others' cultures and using practices that support and enhance student learning. In furtherance of this goal, additional interventions related to culturally responsive practices may benefit the staff.

Identification of staff members who exhibit culturally responsive practices may be a model for other staff members and could serve to assist staff in the development of culturally responsive practices.

Concluding Thoughts

The participants in this research study underwent varying degrees of change with regard to their level of cultural awareness of self and others. Changes were demonstrated in the participants' practice wherein all participants' final observation scores were higher than their initial observation rubric scores, particularly with regard to the area of cultural competence. The changes in classroom practices were suggestive of a movement away from hegemonic practices that marginalize culturally diverse learners. Critical Race Theory provided the lens through which to view the data in this research study to unmask the pervasive whiteness that permeates the education system and marginalizes culturally diverse learners. To that end, the participants articulated changes in mindset with acknowledgement of White Privilege and the influence of White Privilege on their life experiences. It is suggested that these changes were accomplished through self-reflection of their beliefs and assumptions brought about by participation in various interventions over a four-month period. The research (Cain Fehr & Angello, 2012; Cousik, 2015; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Sassi et al., 2012; Zimmerman, 2011) is replete with the importance of being a reflective practitioner and the ways in which to develop reflective

thinking skills; thus, in accordance with the literature, I posit that discourse and reflective writing about oneself and others may have provided a more nuanced view of the participants' awareness of themselves and others. This was also articulated by the participants in this study who stated that the intervention activities forced them to really think about who they were and reflect, which at first was quite difficult, but as the study progressed the reflective piece became more intrinsic in the process. Cousik (2015) explained that teachers who are knowledgeable about themselves and others "are sensitive to cultural diversity and its effect on school performance (p. 64)," a finding that was voiced by participants in this study who expressed a willingness to include students' cultures into classroom practice. Thus, the findings are suggestive that the reflective piece of this intervention study coupled with the written segments of the study may have assisted participants in becoming more reflective in their practice, which is consistent with the literature surrounding reflective practice, writing, and autobiographical writing (Cain Fehr & Angello, 2012; Cousik, 2015; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Sassi et al., 2012; Zimmerman, 2011).

The framework I created as a result of the findings in this study, participants' comments about the sequencing and effectiveness of the interventions, the use of Critical Race Theory, and the extant literature was meant to provide a tool for educational researchers and educational leaders to use as a guide to inform and guide others in the field of education whose employees would benefit from diversity awareness. It was my intention to provide a framework that could be used to narrow the gap between teachers' and students' knowledge and understanding of one another to create learning environments that value all cultures and enable success for all learners (Gay, 2000).

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Appendix A
Gatekeeper Request

January 2018

Dear ...,

My name is Susan Dube. I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Program at Rowan University. In furtherance of my dissertation, I am conducting research regarding the role of cognitive frame on pedagogical practice of teachers in culturally diverse school districts in New Jersey. I am seeking your permission to have the teachers in your district participate in the research during the weeks of ___ and _____. If you allow the teachers to participate in the research study, they will be asked to participate in a number of interviews/conversations, to complete a graphic elicitation, and be observed by the researcher. The interviews should take approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete and would be conducted in person at a mutually convenient time and place for participants and the researcher. Follow-up conversations could take place by phone and/or email communication, if necessary.

Names and other identifying information will not be included in the study to ensure that participants are not placed at risk for their participation in the research study.

The data collected in this study will be used to inform pedagogical practices for teachers of culturally diverse students. Moreover, the findings of the data will be used to highlight pedagogical practices that support culturally diverse populations.

Thanking you in advance for your assistance in my educational endeavors to improve pedagogical practice for culturally diverse student populations. Please contact me at dubes1@students.rowan.edu if you should have any questions regarding the study.

Sincerely,

Susan Dube

Appendix B

Text of Recruitment Letter to Participants

Dear Teacher,

I am a graduate student enrolled in a doctoral program in Educational Leadership at Rowan University. As a research study for my dissertation, I am exploring the influence of cultural identity awareness of teachers of culturally diverse learners. Participants have been asked to be part of this study to allow the researcher to explore this topic.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in two in-person 30-40 minute interviews, two 30-minute observations, six intervention sessions, and to answer follow-up questions through email. You must be 18 years or older to participate and will not be compensated for participation in the study.

To ensure confidentiality, the responses to the interviews and intervention activities will be assigned pseudonyms. Demographic information will be used solely for data analysis purposes. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you will be free to withdraw from the study at any time and any data that has been collected will be destroyed.

I greatly appreciate you taking the time to assist me in my research endeavors. The data provided in this research study will provide valuable information regarding cultural identity of teachers of diverse learners. If you have any questions regarding any aspect of the study or the totality of the project, please feel free to contact me at dubes1@students.rowan.edu. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, please contact Rowan University.

Thanking you in advance for your assistance and cooperation in this research endeavor.

Sincerely,

Susan Dube
Doctoral Candidate
Rowan University

Appendix C

Informed Consent for Participation in Intervention Study

Please peruse the consent document prior to deciding to participate in this study.

You have been requested to participate in a research study entitled “Self-reflection among teachers of culturally diverse learners: An intervention study exploring the influence of cultural identity” which is being conducted by Susan Dube, a doctoral student at Rowan University. This study is being conducted by researchers in the College of Education at Rowan University. The Principal Investigator of the study is Dr. Kathryn McGinn Luet. The purpose of this this research will explore the influence of cultural identity on teachers of culturally diverse learners.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The interview, observation, and intervention data will only be used for analysis purposes. In order to participate in the study, you must be at least 18 years old. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in in-person two 30-40 minute interviews, two 30-minute observations, six intervention sessions, and to answer follow-up questions through email. There will be ten participants in the study.

Risks: Minimal risk is involved from participation in this research study. Security of the data is paramount for the researcher; thus, data will be secured by the researcher to ensure confidentiality of the data collected. If you choose to take part in the study, your identity will be obscured through the use of pseudonyms that will be assigned for each of the participants. Any information provided by participants will only be used in this research project that will be presented in summary form without participants’ names.

Participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason without consequence. If you desire to withdraw from the study, any previously collected data will be destroyed and not used in the study.

Benefits: Participants may not benefit directly from participation in the study, but the information you provide may advance discussion regarding the influence of cultural identity awareness of teachers working in culturally diverse classrooms.

Extent of Confidentiality: All responses to intervention activities, interviews, and other communication with the researcher will be kept confidential. Your participation in the study will not be disclosed by the researcher.

The data collected in this project will be developed into a written dissertation. The researcher will not disclose your name in any discussion, presentation, or written documents related to the research.

Freedom to Withdraw: Participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason without consequence. If you desire to withdraw from the study, any previously collected data will be destroyed and not used in the study.

By signing the document below, you give the researcher permission to use the data collected during the study from your interviews, intervention activities, and observations. Participation in this study does not imply employment with Rowan University or the principal investigator.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Kathryn McGinn Luet Rowan University College of Education James Hall ,201 Mullica Hill Rd, Glassboro, NJ 08028, 856-256-4500 x53809. If you have questions related to your rights as a research participant, please contact the **Rowan University** Glassboro/CMSRU IRB at 856-256-4078.

ROWAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

AUDIO/VIDEOTAPE ADDENDUM TO CONSENT FORM

In addition to agreeing to participate in a research study conducted by Susan Dube and Dr. Jane Bean-Folkes, we are asking for your permission to allow us to include audiotaping as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for review of transcripts for

- review of transcripts;
- analysis by the research team.

The recording(s) will include any identifiers that you utilize during the interview. However, written transcripts will use pseudonyms in place of all names and identifiers.

The recording(s) will be stored on the researcher's computer in a secure, password protected file. Transcripts will also be stored as secure electronic files. All recordings will be destroyed upon publication of the study, and retained for no more than 6 years.

The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM WHETHER OR NOT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE.

Research Agreement

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and **I have received a copy of this description.**

Please check below in regard to the recording of your interview:

- Agree to be recorded
- Do NOT agree to be recorded

Name (Printed) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are operationally defined as specified below.

Achievement gap – any significant or persistent disparity in the academic performance or attainment of students in relation to the academic performance of their peers (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).

Androcentric – focus on male viewpoint

Cognitive frame - the conceptual map or schema one uses to determine what actions one needs to take when faced with an unfamiliar phenomena or situation (Bensimon, 1989, 2005).

Color-blindness – not seeing color of culturally diverse populations masking dysconscious racism (Ladson-Billings, 2009)

Critical Race Theory – a school of thought that holds to the premise that race lies at the core of American society and that racism is a component of that society (Delgado,1995)

Critical reflection – “reflection within moral, political, and ethical contexts of teaching” (Howard, 2003, p. 197).

Culture - goals, beliefs, and attitudes held by a particular group of people which include similar physical characteristics (Gurung, 2009)

Cultural capital – the assets (education, language, etc.) that one possesses that allows them to navigate a stratified society

Cultural competence - awareness of one's own beliefs, knowledge, and skills (Aronson, Venable, Sieveking, & Miller, 2005; Fowers, & Davidoff, 2006; Moore, Madison-Colmore, & Lott Collins, 2005).

Culturally diverse school districts – school districts which report high percentages (over 65 percent) of subgroup populations on the New Jersey School Performance Report

Deficit thinking/deficit cognitive frame - refers to the cognitive frame in which the individual allows his/her beliefs and actions to be guided by disapproving attributions of a certain group of students based upon race, socioeconomic status, and disadvantages associated with lower socioeconomic status (Bensimon, 2005; Walker, 2011)

Democratic leadership – leadership that values and promotes collaboration and a free flow of ideas

Dysconscious racism – a lack of awareness of social inequities (King, 1991).

Economically disadvantaged – refers to students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch programs in public schools under the national School Lunch program.

Equity thinking/equity cognitive frame – refers to the cognitive frame in which an individual value students' culture, build learning experiences that enrich students' culture, and provide opportunities for success for all students within the classroom (Bensimon, 2005; Walker, 2011).

Eurocentric – a focus on European culture to the exclusion of others

Familial capital - refers to the “cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition (Yosso & Garcia, 2005, p. 164)”

Hegemonic behaviors – behaviors that promote dominance of one social group over another

Lived experiences - what happened to teachers in their past, as well as their daily life and experiences, and their social and cultural realities (Milner, 2008)

In-service – currently practicing

Microaggression - structural beliefs ingrained within the dominant culture and often remain unchallenged (Pérez Huber, 2011)

Othered/othering – systematic disadvantaging by society of one group compared to dominant group due to their membership within the subordinate group (Tatum, 1997); for the purpose of this study, the othering discussed is based upon race or ethnicity and/or socioeconomic status.

Parochialism – a narrow outlook on things focused on local area

Racial microaggression – “the consistent and subtle forms of racism” (Pérez Huber, 2011, p. 386) that have negative effects on those upon which it is inflicted.

Racist nativism – “the ways contemporary xenophobia functions and manifests” (Pérez Huber, 2011, p. 380) within the immigration and education systems in the U.S.

Racist nativism microaggression – “explain how race and perceived immigration status are used, in particular, to subordinate Latina(o) students” (Pérez Huber, 2011, p. 388).

Reflexivity - a self-critical approach to process information and create knowledge

Resistant capital – are knowledge and skills that are “fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (Yosso & Garcia, 2007, p. 166)”

Situational leadership – leadership style that changes to meet the needs of the situation at hand

Social capital – networks of people and community resources (Yosso, 2005)

Transformational/transformational leadership – leadership style that identifies a need for change and works to create a vision to guide the change in a collaborative fashion; the ultimate goal of transformational/transformational leadership is change

Visual microaggression – everyday subtle and unconscious visual images that function to subjugate People of Color; the visual assaults are “based on race, gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname” (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015, p. 225).

Appendix E

Comparison of Classroom Practices

Classroom Practices	
Equity Frame	Deficit Frame
<p>High expectations for student achievement</p> <p>Build upon students' cultural capital and funds of knowledge which improves opportunities for success</p> <p>Teachers acknowledge their own cultural identity</p> <p>Provide challenging curricular activities; teacher models, clarifies, and scaffolds curriculum</p> <p>Classroom is student-centered; Students are empowered and lead activities and routines on a daily basis</p> <p>Students have a sense of belonging to the classroom community; students and teacher encourage peer support</p> <p>Students and teacher intervene to address inequities that occur (teasing, peer silencing, etc.)</p> <p>Students choose activities and ways in which to demonstrate mastery of concepts</p> <p>Teacher affirms students' identity through use of language students connect to</p>	<p>Low expectations for student achievement</p> <p>Teachers make assumptions about students based on negative attributes of groups not students' ability</p> <p>Teachers may not acknowledge their own cultural identity</p> <p>Activities are less rigorous and do not challenge students' thinking</p> <p>Classroom is teacher-centered; students occasionally lead activities and routines</p> <p>Some, not all students, have a sense of belonging to the classroom community; teacher may sometimes encourage peer support</p> <p>Inequities may not always be addressed</p> <p>Little, if any, choice is offered to students</p> <p>Teachers' use of language does not connect to students' identity</p>

Appendix F

Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI)

Developed by

Gertrude B. Henry

This self-examination questionnaire is designed to assist the user in looking at his/her own attitudes, beliefs and behavior towards elementary children of culturally diverse backgrounds. There are no "right" answers, only what you believe. Please be sure to answer each item by checking strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. The intended users are elementary educators (classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists, specialists) involved in direct services to elementary children of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Definitions:

The word Culture as used in this inventory encompasses the five areas identified by Aragon (1973) as follows:

1. values and beliefs
2. communication
3. social relationships of mother/child, woman/man, uncle/niece, etc.
4. basic diet and food preparation
5. dress or common costume

The word Ethnic as used in this inventory pertains to the racial and ethnic identification of people.

Directions: Each statement should be read with “I believe” as the first two words and then a response checked that applies to your belief with regard to each statement.

“I believe...”

1. my culture to be different from some of the children I serve.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

2. it is important to identify immediately the ethnic groups of the children I serve.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

3. I would prefer to work with children and parents whose cultures are similar to mine.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

4. I would be uncomfortable in settings with people who speak a different dialect from myself.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

5. I am uncomfortable in settings with people who exhibit values or beliefs different from my own.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

6. Other than the required school activities, my interactions with parents should include unplanned activities (e.g., social events, meeting: in shopping centers), or telephone conversations

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

7. I am sometimes surprised when members of certain ethnic groups contribute to particular school activities (e.g., bilingual students on the debate team or Black students in the orchestra).

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

8. cultural views of a diverse community should be included in the school's yearly program planning.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

9. it is necessary to include on-going parent input in program planning.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

10. I sometimes experience frustration when conducting conferences with parents whose culture is different from my own.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

11. children are responsible for solving communication problems that are caused by their racial/ethnic identity.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

12. English should be taught as a second language to non-English speaking children as a regular part of the school curriculum.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

13. when correcting a child's spoken language, one should role model without any further explanation.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

14. that there are times when the use of "non-standard" - English should be accepted.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

15. in asking families of diverse cultures how they wish to be referred to (e.g.. White, Anglo) at the beginning of our interaction.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

16. that in a society with, as many racial groups as the U.S.A., I would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by some children.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

17. that there are times when racial statements should be ignored.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

18. a child should be referred for testing if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences and/or language.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

19. that translating a standardized assessment from English to another language to be questionable since it alters reliability and validity.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

20. translating a standardized achievement or intelligence test to the child's dominant language gives the child an added advantage and does not allow for peer comparison.

___ strongly agree ___ agree ___ neutral ___ disagree ___ strongly disagree

21. parents know little about assessing their own children.

____ strongly agree ____ agree ____ neutral ____ disagree ____ strongly disagree

22. that the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is NOT the responsibility of public school programs or personnel.

____ strongly agree ____ agree ____ neutral ____ disagree ____ strongly disagree

23. it is my responsibility to provide opportunities for children to share cultural differences foods, dress, family life, and/or beliefs.

____ strongly agree ____ agree ____ neutral ____ disagree ____ strongly disagree

24. Individualized Education Programs meetings or program planning should be scheduled for the convenience of the parent.

____ strongly agree ____ agree ____ neutral ____ disagree ____ strongly disagree

25. I make adaptations in programming to accommodate the different cultures as my enrollment changes.

____ strongly agree ____ agree ____ neutral ____ disagree ____ strongly disagree

26. the displays and frequently used materials within my settings show at least three different ethnic groups or customs.

____ strongly agree ____ agree ____ neutral ____ disagree ____ strongly disagree

27. each child should be involved in a regular rotating schedule for job assignments (e.g., different classroom helpers are assigned daily, weekly or monthly).

____ strongly agree ____ agree ____ neutral ____ disagree ____ strongly disagree

28. one's knowledge of a particular culture should affect one's expectations of the children's performance.

____ strongly agree ____ agree ____ neutral ____ disagree ____ strongly disagree

Appendix G

Initial Interview Protocol

Introduction

I would like to begin by thanking you for your time today. Currently, I am enrolled in a doctoral program in educational leadership and am completing my dissertation which requires me to conduct a research study. I have chosen to explore the role of identity awareness on the cognitive frame of teachers and its influence on pedagogical practices in classrooms in New Jersey with culturally diverse student populations. This interview will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes and will be tape recorded. A transcript of the interview will be provided to you for verification of the transcript contents.

Initial Interview Protocol

Background/Demographic Information

Q1. Tell me a little bit about yourself; how long have you been teaching? Have you always taught in this district?

Q2. Talk to me about where you grew up, your family, the types of schools you attended, and the teachers you encountered.

Q3. How is school community in which you teach similar to or different from the one in which you grew up? Tell me about the racial makeup of the children you went to school with.

Cultural Identity Awareness (Self and White Privilege)

Q4. Do you remember when you first became aware of race? Please describe your early memories about race.

- a. Describe your parents' attitudes about race.
- b. Who are some key individuals who influenced your worldviews?
- c. Describe your level of awareness of race in high school and college.
- d. How did your teacher education program influence your views of race?

Q5. What does it mean to you to be White?

Q6. What does White privilege mean to you?

Q7. Has the diversity in your classroom made you think about your own ethnic background and social status? If so, how? Please explain.

Cultural Identity Awareness of Students and Pedagogical Practice

Q8. Please describe the school and student population that you teach.

Q9. Do you address students' culture in the classroom? Why/why not? And if so, how?

Q10. How do you see your life experiences playing into your teaching practice in the classroom?

Q11. What determines the teaching methods you choose to use in your classroom as you work to meet the needs of your student population?

Q12. What expectations do you have for your students' academic achievement? or Do you hold your students to high expectations? Why or why not?

Q13. Are there ever instances when you lower your expectations? Please explain.

Q14. Do you have different expectations for different students in your classes? Please explain.

Interview Questions adapted from

Austin, J., & Hickey, A. (2007). Writing race: Making meaning of White racial identity in initial teacher education. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 31(1), 82-91.

Fasching-Varner, K. (2013). "Uhh, you know," don't you?: White racial bonding in the narrative of white pre-service teachers. *The Journal of Educational Foundations*, 27(3), 21-41.

Johnson, L. (2002). "My eyes have been opened:" White teachers and racial awareness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53 (2), 153-167.

Appendix H

Final Interview Protocol

Introduction

I would like to begin by thanking you for your time today. This is a follow-up interview from our first interview session, as well as our other meetings. This interview will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes and will be tape recorded. A transcript of the interview will be provided to you for verification of the transcript contents.

Cultural Identity Awareness (Self and White Privilege)

Q1. How, if at all, has participation in this study altered your attitudes and awareness about race?

- a. What activity/activities were most valuable to you and why?
- b. Were there any activities that weren't valuable?

Q2. What does White privilege mean to you?

- a. Have you ever experienced White privilege? Please provide specific examples.
- b. How have you benefitted from White privilege? Please provide specific examples.
- c. Have you ever felt marginalized? Please provide specific examples.

Q3. How, if at all, has participation in this study made you think about your own ethnic background and social status? Please explain.

Q4. After participating in this study, in what ways, if at all, have you changed your thinking about diverse students in the classroom?

Cultural Identity Awareness of Students and Pedagogical Practice

Q5. After participating in this study, is there a difference in the way you see your life experiences playing into your teaching practice in the classroom? If so, please explain.

Q6. After participating in this study, is there a difference in what determines the teaching methods you choose to use in your classroom as you work to meet the needs of your student population? If so, please explain.

Q7. After participating in this study, do you have different expectations for the students in your classes? Please explain.

Interview Questions adapted from

Austin, J., & Hickey, A. (2007). Writing race: Making meaning of White racial identity in initial teacher education. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 31(1), 82-91.

Fasching-Varner, K. (2013). "Uhh, you know," don't you?: White racial bonding in the narrative of white pre-service teachers. *The Journal of Educational Foundations*, 27(3), 21-41.

Johnson, L. (2002). "My eyes have been opened:" White teachers and racial awareness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53 (2), 153-167.

Appendix I

Teacher Observation Protocol Rubric

Teacher Pseudonym: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Category	Advanced (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Developing (1)	Evidence/Justification For Rating
Setting Academic/Behavioral Expectations	There is a great deal of evidence that academic and behavioral expectations are explicit Routines have been established so students know exactly what is expected of them; students largely initiate routines Consequences were consistently enforced Classroom focus was on learning the entire time	There is ample evidence that academic and behavioral expectations are explicit Routines have been established so students know exactly what is expected of them Consequences were largely enforced Classroom focus was on learning for a majority of the lesson	There is some evidence that academic and behavioral expectations are explicit Routines are employed inconsistently or not all students follow the routines Consequences were enforced occasionally Classroom focus was on learning during at least half of the lesson	There is little or no evidence that academic and behavioral expectations are explicit Routines are not employed Consequences were not enforced Classroom focus was not on learning during the majority of the lesson (students were off-task, teacher had to address behavioral issues, time was not used effectively)	
Making Challenging Curriculum Accessible	Teacher models, scaffolds, and clarifies curriculum by:	Teacher models, scaffolds, and clarifies curriculum by:	Teacher models, scaffolds, and clarifies the curriculum	Teacher models, scaffolds, and clarifies the curriculum	

	Encouraging collaboration between students and modeling among students (e.g., think alouds); largely student initiated; Clearly outlining expectations; Close monitoring of student learning	Encouraging collaboration between students and modeling among students (e.g., think alouds); Outlining of expectations; Monitoring of student learning	with: Some effort to encourage collaboration between students and modeling among students; Indistinct outlining of expectations; Some monitoring of student learning	with: Little effort to encourage collaboration between students and modeling among students; Little or no outlining of expectations; Little or no monitoring of student learning	
Using Students' Strengths as Instructional Starting Points	All activities are planned to allow students a measure of success at first encounter with the material Then, moving on to more challenging material that is supported in a collaborative environment by teacher and students Students largely initiate collaboration	Most activities are planned to allow students a measure of success at first encounter with the material Then, moving on to more challenging material that is supported in a collaborative environment by teacher and students	Some activities are planned to allow students a measure of success at first encounter with the material Some effort is shown at moving on to more challenging material that is supported in a collaborative environment by teacher	Few or no activities are planned to allow students a measure of success at first encounter with the material Little effort is shown at moving on to more challenging material	
Creating Cooperative	Teacher encourages	Teacher encourages	Teacher sometimes	Teacher rarely	

Environment s	peer support and students largely initiate peer support Teacher and/or students intervene when classroom inequities occurred (teasing, peer silencing) Activities are geared toward creation of a sense of belonging to the classroom community; students are empowered and lead activities and routines on a daily basis	peer support Teacher intervenes when classroom inequities occurred (teasing, peer silencing) Activities are geared toward creation of a sense of belonging to the classroom community; sometimes students are empowered and lead activities and routines	encourages peer support Teacher sometimes intervenes when classroom inequities occurred (teasing, peer silencing) Some activities are geared toward creation of a sense of belonging to the classroom community;	encourages peer support Teacher rarely intervenes when classroom inequities occurred (teasing, peer silencing) Few activities are geared toward creation of a sense of belonging to the classroom community;	
Demonstrating Cultural Competence	There is a great deal of evidence that cultural competence is demonstrated: Teacher provides hands-on learning experiences whenever possible	There is ample evidence that cultural competence is demonstrated: Teacher provides hands-on learning experiences, upon occasion	There is some evidence that cultural competence is demonstrated: Teacher rarely provides hands-on learning experiences Teacher	There is little or no evidence that cultural competence is demonstrated: Teacher does not provide hands-on learning experiences Teacher does not allow	

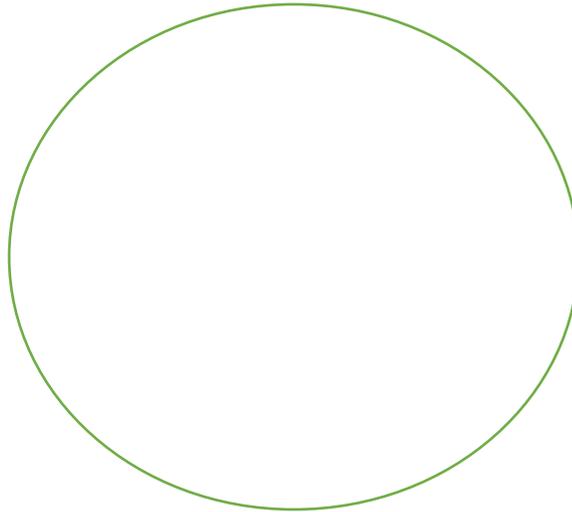
	<p>Teacher allows students to choose modalities for demonstration of mastery of concepts</p> <p>Teacher provides different formats for assessments other than standard paper and pen tests/quizzes, etc.</p> <p>Teacher affirms students' identities through the use of language</p> <p>Teacher builds on students' funds of knowledge</p>	<p>Teacher sometimes allows students to choose modalities for demonstration of mastery of concepts</p> <p>Teacher sometimes provides different formats for assessments other than standard paper and pen tests/quizzes, etc.</p> <p>Teacher sometimes affirms students' identities through the use of language</p> <p>Teacher sometimes builds on students' funds of knowledge</p>	<p>rarely allows students to choose modalities for demonstration of mastery of concepts</p> <p>Teacher rarely provides different formats for assessments other than standard paper and pen tests/quizzes, etc.</p> <p>Teacher rarely affirms students' identities through the use of language</p> <p>Teacher rarely builds on students' funds of knowledge</p>	<p>students to choose modalities for demonstration of mastery of concepts</p> <p>Teacher does not provide different formats for assessments other than standard paper and pen tests/quizzes, etc.</p> <p>Teacher does not affirm students' identities through the use of language</p> <p>Teacher does not build on students' funds of knowledge</p>	
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Appendix J

Identity Chart Graphic Elicitation

(Adapted from De La Mare, 2013)

The purpose of this exercise is to elicit information about your cultural identity. Create a pie chart by dividing the circle into categories that are the most salient to your identity, using identities that you see the most. Identities that you select may include but are not limited to the following: race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, social class, and ability. Below your pie chart, please provide an explanation of why you selected those particular identities.



Appendix K

Autobiographic Poem Protocol

1. Read the poem provided below: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou.
2. After reading the poem, participants will partake in a discussion about the theme of the poem and how it might connect to their students.
3. After participating in discussion with other participants, the participants will be asked to compose a written reflection in which they will be asked (1) to find a connection between the readings and their lives, (2) how they became conscious of their race, and (3) how awareness of their race may impact their interactions with their culturally diverse students.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

By: Maya Angelou

The free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wings
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of the things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill for the caged bird

Sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn-bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Appendix L

“I Come From” Poem Protocol

(Adapted from Alvarez McHatton & Vallice, 2014)

The purpose of this activity, adapted from *Talking Diversity with Teachers and Teacher Educators: Exercises and Critical Conversations Across the Curriculum*, is to facilitate discussions regarding power and privilege by fostering self-reflection of our “three selves: one holding onto where we came from, one living in the present, and finally, the one we wanted to be” (Alvarez McHatton & Vallice, p. 177). Additionally, the focus of the activity is to reconnect life experiences from early childhood to consider how said experiences influence one’s current beliefs and assumptions with regard to their students.

Part A:

Teachers will create an “*I Come From ...*” poem with each stanza beginning with *I come from ...* using the following questions to list words or phrases to facilitate their reflection:

1. What was in your backyard?
2. What did your kitchen look like? What was in it?
3. What smells were part of your home life?
4. What kinds of sounds did you hear in your house/neighborhood?
5. What kinds of foods did you eat?
6. What are some sayings or reprimands that were often repeated in your home?

Part B:

Participants will be asked to compose a written reflection

- Discussing how one’s personal experiences growing up may affect how one interacts with their students and their families
 - Emphasis will be directed on the way in which personal experiences of students and their families affect their perceptions and interactions with school
 - Examine the possible differences in experiences of teachers and students and the impact upon interactions with school

Appendix M

Accessing School-Valued Discourses Checklist

(Lazar, Edwards, & Thompson, McMillon, 2012)

Directions: Place a check mark next to all of the statements that apply to you.

- 1. In the United States, it has always been legal for my ancestors to learn to read and write.
- 2. In the United States, it has always been legal for my ancestors to attend high-quality schools.
- 3. My grandparents could take college preparatory courses in school if they wanted to.
- 4. My grandparents and great-grandparents could live in whatever community they could afford to live without concern about whether they would be discriminated against because of their race.
- 5. My grandparents could expect to attend a school that would not discriminate against them because of their race.
- 6. I grew up in a community where I could expect to find books in stores (grocery, pharmacy, bookstores).
- 7. I grew up in a community where there were excellent libraries with up-to-date books.
- 8. The school I attended had a library and a librarian.
- 9. If I struggled with reading in the school I attended, I could expect to be helped by well-qualified teachers and/or reading specialists.
- 10. In my school, I could expect to read about the achievements of people of my race.
- 11. In my school, I could expect to see lots of books that featured characters that looked like me.
- 12. In my school, I was usually given books that fit my reading ability.
- 13. Growing up, I could be successful in school and still fit in with my friends.
- 14. Growing up, I never had to worry about being put in the bottom reading group because of the color of my skin.
- 15. While reading aloud at school, I never had to worry about the teacher correcting the way I spoke as long as I read all the words.
- 16. My caregivers and extended family used print in ways that were similar to how I was expected to use print at school.
- 17. I had teachers who recognized my talents and knowledge.
- 18. I had teachers who cared about me and worked to make sure I excelled.

School-Valued Discourses Protocol for Group Discussion

(Adapted from Lazar et al., 2012)

Upon completion of the School-Valued Discourses Checklist, participants will be asked to create a written reflection of the role of White privilege in their access to literacy and the denial of other groups' access to literacy

- Reflect on literacy and language practices within your home as a child (at the dinner table, at bedtime, etc.). What rituals took place within your home that used literacy and language?
- Compare the role of literacy within teachers' homes and students' homes, to the extent possible