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CONVERSATIONS WITH CHRIS: DISCUSSING RACIAL DIVERSITY IN A
PROFESSIONAL BOOK CLUB

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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DEDICATION

This journey was only possible because of the incredible support of many people and because of my faith. *I can do all this through Him who gives me strength* (Philippians 4:13, *NIV*). This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and to my family and friends who have supported me.

I am grateful to my husband Travis who has loved me, believed in me, and supported me on all of my best and worst days throughout this process. Thank you for encouraging me to see this dream through, for standing by me, and for sacrificing along with me every step of the way. I could not have asked for a greater partner or a better friend for this journey. Your unwavering support has meant everything to me. I am also especially grateful to our babies Link and Liesel and to Paisley, my sweet girl, who sat at my feet and kept me company while I worked.

Thank you to my family— Jennifer, Jere, Charlene, Ray, Brooke, Jeff, and Savannah—who gave me reasons to smile, things to look forward to, and a place to laugh and cry. Thank you for understanding and supporting this process.

Thank you to my friends Catherine and Gina who sat in classes with me, pushed my thinking, supported my work, and let me vent when I needed to. Thank you, ladies, for the laughter, the meatballs, and the elevator birthdays. I have loved being in this process with you.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my students. If it were not for you, I would never have realized this dream. You inspire me to learn more and to do better for you each day.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative action research study was to understand and describe the experiences and the effects of one high school teacher's membership in a professional development book club focused on issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices through the following actions: confronting personal biases, discussing and reflecting on personal experiences and beliefs, questioning and critiquing personal beliefs and teaching practices, interacting with other professionals and with the readings in a supportive environment in which we celebrated and supported articulations of social justice or positive change. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and the understandings gained from the teacher's experiences were used to develop a plan of action with and for him for his continued personal and professional development in this area.

The teacher experienced several positive changes in his willingness to discuss race/racism with students, rejected his previous use of colorblindness, and broadened his view of the potential teachers have to impact students. The significance of this study is that it demonstrated the positive effects of the teacher's participation in this particular book club on racial diversity and provided insight into how this format provided a safe space for him to engage with new ideas, reflect on and confront his own beliefs and biases, and adjust his teaching practices to match his evolving ideas about racial diversity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIG .... Academically or Intellectually Gifted (Program)

CLD.. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (students)

CRP .... Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

CRT... Critical Race Theory

IRB .... Institutional Review Board

PD .... Professional Development

PLC .... Professional Learning Community

RHS... Region High School (pseudonym)

SHS .... South High School (pseudonym)

SST.. Student Study Team

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Several years ago, I entered a doctoral program with the aim of becoming a better teacher for my students. I understood, as a teacher, that I needed more tools to meet the ever-changing needs of my students, especially as the school I worked in was becoming more diverse and as my students were coming to me with more challenges in terms of their learning. As I began this program in 2011, I was unsure of what I would learn exactly, but as the years moved on, I was challenged in ways I had never imagined I would be. I became a different and better person, one who learned to think outside of my experiences and to value and privilege my students' cultures, experiences, beliefs, and ways of knowing. I took courses that forced me to look at myself as a teacher and as a person and to reflect deeply on the things I believed about teaching and about other people. I was challenged to confront my biases and prejudices and to make real and lasting changes in both the ways I thought about and responded to others and in the way I taught my students. As I went through this process, I was able to connect with my students in ways I had not before and I was able to use their abilities and strengths to bring a more diverse and rigorous curriculum to my students. As I studied these issues in the Language and Literacy program, I started to think about ways that I might bring this same experience to the many wonderful teachers I knew and worked with who were not able to go through a program like this one.

At the same time that I was going through all of these changes, the school I worked in started diversity training as a part of our professional development plan. The teachers' responses to this work were largely negative and made me realize how important and difficult this kind of professional development is. While the initial training we did at our school was not entirely successful, I began to wonder how a school might provide teachers access to this training in a way that would be more effective. I wondered if school-based professional development in this area could be as illuminating as what I experienced at the university.

I thought about the challenges our administration faced throughout the diversity training and the things that teachers were responding to negatively. I started to recognize that teachers needed smaller groups and safe spaces to have these conversations with their peers around material about which they were free to have honest and open conversations. As a result of these reflections, I began considering a variety of approaches that might make teachers more likely to invest in this type of work, ultimately choosing the professional book club as my focus because of the support and intimacy it could offer. I believe it is important for teachers to study issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices, and my desire to work toward finding a form of professional development that could effectively address these issues is what brought me to this project.

Pilot Study

I completed a pilot study in the fall of 2014 which led me to this dissertation. In my pilot study, I interviewed five teachers at Region High School (pseudonym) twice and observed three diversity training sessions there over the course of three months. I was

compelled to do this study because of the language that teachers started using at RHS when a yearlong professional development plan on diversity was revealed to the faculty. The participants of the pilot study were a diverse group of teachers, including men and women, African American, White, and Egyptian participants who had a wide variety of teaching experience. My interviews and observations of three training sessions led to the following key findings: (1) the participants' responses and attitudes about students of color and including issues of diversity in their teaching seemed to break along gender lines, (2) the participants' responses seemed to indicate that the faculty at RHS needed diversity training and that they were open to it, (3) the diversity training was not effective for the participants in this study regardless of their comfort with or knowledge of diverse populations of students. The following components of the diversity training sessions limited its effectiveness: the whole-faculty setting lacked intimacy and accountability, the activities and materials were not responsive to the particular teachers' needs, and the trainer's authoritative stance limited possibilities for growth. This final finding, that the diversity training was not effective for the participants, was a large part of how my pilot study influenced this dissertation study. This realization was what first ignited my interest in professional development on this topic and, ultimately, it was what made me consider alternative formats for this training such as a professional book club.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided my dissertation study:

1. How do teachers describe their relationship to diversity?

2. How do teachers talk about students of color in the book club?

3. How do teachers talk about their book club experiences?

4. How do teachers describe their beliefs and ideologies about racial diversity throughout the study?

Rationale for the Study

In order to address issues of racial diversity in schools, I believe all individual teachers must do the work of confronting their biases. According to Carter and Reardon (2014), "a deeper understanding of inequality and potential remedies [for structural inequalities] may require better understanding of how the actions of the advantaged perpetuate inequality" (p. 16). I believe that my research serves to fill a piece of this gap by investigating the use of a professional book club which challenged a practicing teacher to examine himself in order to understand how his beliefs and attitudes contribute to the structural inequalities that students of color experience in schools.

The occurrence of deficit perspectives, "the general idea that the (supposedly) meritocratic educational system itself is not to blame and the denial that it (un)consciously hinders social mobility, as it is the individual (or specific subgroups) that does not succeed within the system," have become pervasive in schools today (Clycq, Ward & Vandenbroucke, 2014, p. 798). These deficit perspectives come from "negative beliefs and assumptions regarding the ability, aspirations, and work ethic of systematically marginalized peoples" (Irizarry, 2009, para. 1) and are used by educators to blame students and their parents and home lives for any real or perceived academic struggles while "structural inequalities within the educational system and the broader society are ignored" (Clycq, Ward & Vandenbroucke, 2014, p. 798). This study combined ideas from the literature on deficit thinking with that of professional book

clubs and diversity training to create positive change toward equitable teaching practices in Chris's classroom.

The significance of this study was also found in the need for more studies of teacher talk about diverse groups of students. Researchers have called for more widespread studies on this topic:

> A great deal more research—across a wider variety of different school settings, student populations, and teacher demographics…is needed to draw comparisons and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content, nature, and effects of informal teacher talk about students perceived to be racially or culturally "different." (Pollack, 2012, p. 888)

I believe that it is important to study teacher language about students because it can enable researchers to better understand what this talk represents and how it affects diverse groups of students in schools. I also hope that the findings of this research will lead to more informed paths toward interrupting negative talk about students. This dissertation contributes to the lack of research on teacher language by providing detailed information from the participant about how he talked (Pollack, 2012) about students of color throughout the book club.

Finally, this study also contributes to the literature on professional book clubs on critical issues as a professional development tool for teachers, which is limited. While book clubs are talked about often in general terms as a form of professional development and are used frequently with students both in and outside of classroom contexts, few studies on book clubs for teachers taking a critical perspective exist. Therefore, I have helped to fill this gap in the literature through this dissertation by facilitating a

professional book club that addressed issues of racial diversity with a practicing high

school teacher in the southeastern United States.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe the experiences and the

effects of the participant's membership in a professional book club focused on issues of

racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices

through the following actions: confronting personal biases, discussing and reflecting on

personal experiences and beliefs, questioning and critiquing personal beliefs and teaching

practices, interacting with other professionals and with the readings in a supportive

environment in which we celebrated and supported articulations of social justice or

positive change. The understandings gained from the teacher's experiences were used to

develop a plan of action with and for the participant for his continued personal and

professional development in this area.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This dissertation was aimed at understanding and describing the experiences and the effects of Chris's membership in a professional book club focused on issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices through the following actions: confronting personal biases, discussing and reflecting on personal experiences and beliefs, questioning and critiquing personal beliefs and teaching practices, interacting with other professionals and with the readings in a supportive environment in which we celebrated and supported articulations of social justice or positive change. One of the key ways in which this dissertation filled a gap in the literature is through the use of a professional book club for teachers taking a critical perspective. Therefore, an overview of the existing research in this area was important for this study because it helped me understand how professional book clubs for teachers have or have not been effective in previous studies. Understanding the body of literature on professional book clubs for teachers also allowed me to apply the knowledge gained through the existing research to my study. This body of literature informed my decisions about the design and facilitation of the professional book club in my dissertation research.

Professional Book Clubs for Teachers

Research on the topic of professional book clubs for teachers using critical perspectives (Freire, 1970; Freire, 1974; Giroux, 1998) is limited. Therefore, in order to understand more thoroughly the effectiveness of book clubs as a professional

development tool for practicing teachers, I read a collection of diverse research materials. The articles provided insights to the benefits and outcomes of book clubs for a variety of school settings and focuses, and their outcomes and findings often overlapped. The literature fell into five categories: book clubs (a) as an effective form of professional development, (b) as a safe place to challenge beliefs and biases, (c) as a place for productive discussions, and (d) reasons for success and (e) recommendations for future professional book clubs.

Several articles discussed the effectiveness of book clubs as a form of professional development (Gardiner & Cumming-Potvin, 2015; Burbank, Kauchak, & Bates, 2010; Mensah, 2009; Kooy, 2006; George, 2001; Reilly, 2008). These authors found that book clubs provided effective professional development opportunities that teachers found valuable. The authors of these studies also found that book clubs were productive spaces for teachers to take the time to think about and reflect on their beliefs, biases, and current teaching practices. They also found that teachers who participated in book clubs were able to integrate the new ideas gained through their book club participation into their classroom practices. These findings were supported by other studies (Pelletier, 1993; Selway, 2003; Benton & Schillo, 2004; Parker & Bach, 2009) in which book clubs were found to be effective professional development opportunities that allowed for productive discussion among teachers. These authors discussed the reasons for the book clubs' success and made recommendations for future book clubs.

Book clubs as effective professional development. Burbank, Kauchak, and Bates (2010) completed an exploratory study in which they studied two book clubs simultaneously, one with practicing teachers and one with preservice teachers. The

researchers found that both groups "highlighted the utility of book clubs" (p. 63). Participants in the preservice teacher group reported that their participation was "critical to their development as educators" while practicing teacher group members also reported that the conversations from their book club were spilling over into their professional conversations with teachers outside of the book club.   The authors recommended that book clubs be used as a professional development model for other teacher groups as a way of creating spaces for dialogue about and reflection on professional issues, and they suggested that multi-level book clubs involving preservice and practicing teachers may prove most beneficial. Similarly, Gardiner and Cumming-Potvin (2015), in their study on the use of a multiliteracies book club with seven Australian public primary school teachers from five different metropolitan schools within one school district in Western Australia, found that participants voiced a preference for book clubs over other, more "institutionally organized" professional development (p. 22). The researchers found that the teachers' participation in the book club caused the participants to "problematize transmissive professional learning and the need for inquiry-driven and situated processes" (p. 23).

Mensah (2009), in her study of 23 preservice teachers, also suggested that book clubs served as productive spaces for the professional development of preservice teachers. Similarly, Kooy (2006), in his study looking at the professional identity development of six novice secondary English teachers, found that the book club allowed the teachers to explore their identities as women and as educators and that "blending narratives, teachers, and talk in book clubs provides space, time, and opportunity, to co-

create new 'stories to live by,' new knowledge and identity for developing their (newly

minted) professional lives" (p. 672).

Book clubs as a safe space to challenge beliefs and biases. Gardiner and

Cumming-Potvin (2015) found that book clubs were valuable as professional

development opportunities because they "scaffolded a space for these teachers to evolve

and reframe situated perspectives, in response to critical and diverse conversations with

peers" (p. 21).   Participants in another study reported the following benefits of using a

book club as a professional development model: "opportunities to think about and reflect

on current practices; a vehicle for increasing teacher dialogue…and as a platform to

discuss pressing, professional issues in a nonthreatening way" (Burbank, Kauchak, &

Bates, 2010, p. 63).   Similarly, Mensah (2009) found that the findings of her study

focused on five themes: relevancy, revelation, responsiveness, reflection, and reformation

which "suggest that the overall structure and theoretical foundations of the book club

promotes teacher learning about complex issues in urban science education and issues of

diversity and equity" (p. 1055).   Mensah also found that the book clubs provided valuable

spaces for preservice teachers to "confront, talk and share their views and values about

diversity, teaching and learning" and forced them to consider the broad implications of

diversity in curriculum planning for science classrooms (p. 1051-2).   Furthermore, the

students were able to confront their own beliefs and biases and reflect on their own

practices while becoming more open to issues of diversity.

Participants in these studies were able to integrate the learning from the book club

into their teaching practices.   Researchers found that the book club "fostered sustained

opportunities to negotiate new practices and understandings, which could be integrated responsively into their classrooms" (Gardiner & Cummings-Potvin, 2015, p. 23).

George (2001) facilitated a book club for six teachers at a middle school in order to encourage them to include more adolescent literature in their curriculum as well as use book clubs as part of their classroom instruction. As a result of their participation in this book club, the core participants "had an opportunity to reflect on their beliefs and practice, to actively engage in the learning process, and to incorporate different works of literature and instructional strategies into their classrooms" (p. 6). Teacher participants were able to take what they gained from their experiences in the book clubs back to their classrooms by implementing book clubs and using the adolescent literature they read with their students. Student interviews showed that there was a positive impact on student engagement and learning as a result of these changes. According to George (2001), the results of this study showed that book clubs are a "model for professional development that does have an impact on curriculum, instruction, and most importantly, student attitudes" (p. 6).

Similarly, Reilly (2008) found that the use of a book club provided an effective forum for learning that was integrated into practice for four teachers in a master's level course on literacy. Reilly (2008) found that the teachers were able to create an effective system that reflected five conditions that are present in complex learning systems: internal diversity, redundancy, decentralized control, organized randomness, and neighborhood interactions. The teachers' learning "had shifted to a more complex rendering where the group—a social collective—had learned new ways to implement interventions, to interpret their students' responses to the interventions, and to revise

instruction based on their interpretations" (Reilly, 2008, p. 212). These teachers were able to create a complex learning experience that resulted in valuable professional development which helped them to integrate new ideas with classroom practice.

Book clubs as places for productive discussions. Pelletier (1993), in her book club study as part of a professional development model for a school district, found that the book club offered a safe space for the teachers to explore current professional literature while promoting "collegial discussion and debate" (p. 16). One participant in her study reported that "'there is more power in the book by our discussion of how it relates to our classrooms'" (p.16). Pelletier (1993) found that the group's discussions were more valuable than typical classroom talk because "it had more depth and the group helped each other by offering suggestions when a teacher brought an idea forward" (p. 14).

Selway (2003), who co-facilitated a book club study with 27 teachers with a social worker, found that the honest and deep discussions within their book club meetings "allowed for empathy and understanding" (p. 16). She also found that the participants were able to "weave a pattern of our personal experiences and the impact the ideas we are discussing have on the students in our school" (p. 17). Selway (2003) noted that the book club opened up spaces for important discussions and that "the caring and concern evidenced and the questions raised are powerful" (p. 17). Open and safe discussions of challenging topics such as language, race and ethnicity within this professional book club helped the participants relate to their students in new ways by making them more comfortable talking with their students about these issues in more open and direct ways.

In a book club study with 11 elementary faculty members, Benton and Schillo (2004) found that the book club created a community of learners which fostered collegial sharing and increased teacher empowerment. The participants' discussions created "a growing sense of connectedness with the topic of teaching reading, their own learning lives as readers, and their common and unique ideas about students' learning and their school" (Benton & Schillo, 2004, p. 32). They also found that all participants reported that the discussions had been safe and comfortable spaces for a sharing of ideas and that they had gained "professional confidence and expertise" through the low-key environment (Benton & Schillo, 2004, p. 33). In addition, the participants were able to "articulate ways to improve classroom instruction" and all members "applied ideas and encouraged others to use concepts derived directly from the text and group discussions" (Benton & Schillo, 2004, p. 34). According to the researchers, all participants experienced some level of transformation in their teaching practices as a result of their participation in this professional book club as they were able to incorporate suggestions from the text such as the use of more nonfiction and private reading spaces into their classroom practices.

Finally, a study by Parker and Bach (2009) examined a professional book club on gender variant and transgender issues. The researchers found that the "book group meetings offered a space for open dialogue on a subject rarely discussed in education" (Parker & Bach, 2009, p. 100). The conversations in this study allowed participants to explore gender variant and transgender issues and relate what they learned through the texts to their lives. The participants engaged with the texts and group discussions in

meaningful ways that allowed them to explore complicated issues that arose from the literature by discussing them through the frame of the story they read.

Reasons for success. Pelletier (1993), who did not describe the topic of the book club in her study, found that the book club was successful in part because of the facilitator's leadership, the members' commitment and the integration of the book club into the teachers' schedules. She also found that the environment for discussion was integral in the group's success. Selway (2003) found that the success of her book club was attributed to their discussion of difficult issues supported by the professional literature and personal experiences and added that "the reading and discussions have had an impact on the way the book club participants relate to their students" (p. 19).

Recommendations for future book clubs. Finally, Pelletier (1993) found that "opportunities where teachers can think about the ideas themselves, first hand, from the books is beneficial to teachers' thinking and reflection" and suggested that more studies should be done on the lack of active, engaging professional development in schools. In addition, Benton and Schillo (2004) suggested that the book club is a clear model for implementation in professional development programs. Parker and Bach (2009) suggested that more book clubs on issues of gender diversity be used for "preservice, new, and experienced teachers" and they provided a list of texts and guidelines for future book clubs on the same topic (p. 100).

Deficit Thinking

Deficit thinking about students of color, based on "the general idea that the (supposedly) meritocratic educational system itself is not to blame and the denial that it (un)consciously hinders social mobility, as it is the individual (or specific subgroups) that

does not succeed within the system," has become pervasive in schools today (Clycq, Ward & Vandenbroucke, 2014, p. 798). These deficit perspectives stem from "negative beliefs and assumptions regarding the ability, aspirations, and work ethic of systematically marginalized peoples" (Irizarry, 2009, para. 1) and are used by educators to blame students and their parents and home lives for any real or perceived academic struggles while "structural inequalities within the educational system and the broader society are ignored" (Clycq, Ward & Vandenbroucke, 2014, p. 798).

The literature on deficit thinking in education is quite varied, but all of the articles I read concluded that more work must be done at the individual and school levels to eliminate the presence of deficit thinking that pervades schools in the United States today (Scott, 2014; Grenville & Parker, 2013; Pollack, 2012; Brown, 2010; Aldana, 2016; Walker, 2011). This literature fell into three categories: (a) teacher talk about students, (b) tracking, and (c) recommendations for addressing deficit thinking.

Deficit thinking is a result of the stereotypes, biases, and assumptions that people hold about groups of people (Irizarry, 2009). The recognition of these stereotypes, biases and assumptions is a deeply personal journey that has been documented by several researchers in an attempt to demonstrate the importance of doing this kind of self-reflection, especially for teachers (Scott, 2014; Grenville & Parker, 2013; Pollack, 2012). In additional research on deficit thinking in education, several researchers have found that despite quality teacher training programs and efforts on the individual and school levels to create more inclusive and equitable school environments, deficit perspectives continue to contribute to the perpetuation of inequities in schools for students of color (Brown, 2010; Aldana, 2016; Walker, 2011).

Teacher talk about students. Pollack (2012) used narratives from his work as a teacher and researcher to tell the story of how he became aware of his own deficit thinking about students and the ways in which the use of deficit narratives in schools "(1) reinforce educators' deficit thinking about, and deferential behavior toward, students of color; (2) contribute to a school culture characterized by low expectations for students of color; (3) contribute to an abdication of responsibility and a diminished sense of agency among teachers; and (4) contribute to the workplace socialization of beginning teachers and newcomers" (p. 93). Pollack (2012) recounted the narratives he was told by cooperating and mentor teachers as he entered the teaching profession, recognizing that he was once thankful for this "insider information" that would help him work with students, although he now sees these narratives for what they were: deficit narratives.

According to Pollack (2012), "teachers' everyday conversational narratives about students and families can reveal deeply held beliefs and assumptions in ways that other types of discourse cannot" (p. 94). Stories that express sympathy or care for students of color and/or poverty while making a case for providing these students with less demanding work or holding lowered expectations for their performances have "a negative influence on the educational opportunities and learning experiences of students seen as 'at risk'" (p. 95). While these stories, as told by teachers, "may not explicitly state overt racist views, they clearly reveal an uncritical, taken-for-granted acceptance of historically based systems of social, economic, and educational inequities and the failure to see how these structural inequities affect school outcomes for students of color" (Pollack, 2012, p. 95). Pollack (2012) noted that it is through the use of deficit narratives that "schools can simultaneously reflect and reproduce racially based social inequalities" (p. 96).

16

Brown (2010) looked at how five recently graduated preservice teachers enrolled in a well-reputed education program at a university in the Midwestern United States "understand, use and talk about the signifier of risk and the category of the 'at-risk' student" (p. 1079). Brown (2010) found that all of the teachers in this study believed that teachers must identify students who are likely to perform at lower levels than their peers, but they also acknowledged that "engaging in this kind of risk discourse carries with it its own risks that may lead teachers to close off, rather than open the possibility of providing all of the students under their care with a quality and equitable learning experience" (p. 1084). These preservice teachers cited student and family factors most frequently when accounting for low academic achievement and they employed some deficit thinking as they focused on "normalized student characteristics as well as the kind of support offered and quality of cultural experiences brokered by families" (Brown, 2010, p. 1085). Despite their desire for jobs in diverse settings and their appreciation for a program that challenged deficit thinking, the teaching candidates in this study "still managed to hold on to the assumption that 'at-risk' students exist" and that it was part of the teacher's job to identify such students in schools (Brown, 2010, p. 1085).

Finally, Walker (2011) completed an interpretive qualitative study of ten elementary, female teachers at five different elementary schools in Texas who all attended an undergraduate teacher preparation program at a public university in Texas. The teachers were nominated for the study by their principals as teachers who were successful in their work with African American students. They also taught predominantly African American students in urban K-5 public schools and had at least three years of teaching experience. Although all of the teachers demonstrated some level

of culturally responsive teaching methods through the materials they chose and the investments they made in relationship building and community involvement, Walker (2011) found that they also relied on several deficit perspectives throughout their interviews, such as poor home environments and a lack of parental involvement and support, in their attempts to account for low academic achievement among African American students.

      Tracking. Inequalities in school programs are evident through tracking, or academic leveling, in schools. Oakes (1985) asserted that "tracking is not in the best interests of most students" and added that "poor and minority students seem to have suffered most from tracking" (p. 191). Schools take students who are in need of quality education and give them "the fewest schooling experiences that are likely to promote their learning in all the areas we see as important—academic, social, personal, and even vocational" (Oakes, 1985, p. 193). In many ways, as students are tracked into various levels as early as the third grade, their access to quality education is limited and therefore, their paths to (or not to) eventual socioeconomic inequalities experienced as adults are also determined.

      Scott (2014) used a retrospective case study to tell the story of Celise, an unidentified, African American, gifted fifth grade student, narrated through the voice of her mother Vivian.   Celise was born with dark skin that immediately caused "concern" for her mother who said that she knew that she would have to "affirm [Celise] on a daily basis; tell her she was beautiful and smart, that her skin was beautiful" (p. 47). As Celise entered school, Vivian believed that she showed signs of giftedness and hoped that Celise would be placed in the gifted programs at school. However, Celise was denied entry into

gifted programs despite high scores on tests and consistently high achievement in school throughout kindergarten, first, second and third grades. Teachers in these grades often limited the books she could read and applied deficit thinking to her performance during teacher-parent conferences. It was not until the fourth grade that a teacher recognized Celise's abilities and recommended her for an enrichment class for gifted students.

Aldana (2016) used critical ethnography to better understand the institutional culture of Divinity High School (DHS), an all-male Catholic high school with a largely Latino (80%) student body. Aldana (2016) found that the school's culture emphasized brotherhood and social justice themes, but teacher deficit perspectives and tracking practices contradicted the school's college preparatory program for all students. Due to the school's tracking practices, "there were divisions between which students deserved a rigorous classroom experience and those who required more discipline" (Aldana, 2016, p. 195). Furthermore, data collected from student and teacher interviews "demonstrated that teachers felt there were two kinds of students—the high achievers who were college-bound and those who would be lucky to get accepted into college" (Aldana, 2016, p. 195-6). For students who were tracked into the non-AP courses, "the consequences of low expectations resulted in a marginalized student experience" and these students "internalized their failure and attributed their behavior to be the central cause of their poor academic experience;" therefore, "some teachers, who often focused more on these students' behaviors instead of their learning, reified cultural deficit ideologies of Latino students" (Aldana, 2016, p. 196). Overall, Aldana (2016) found that this school's culture "failed to develop structures to combat deficit ideologies or systematic approaches for listening to the most marginalized students" (p. 196).

Recommendations for addressing deficit thinking. Several studies (Pollack, 2012; Aldana , 2016; Grenville & Parker, 2013; Scott, 2014; Brown, 2010; Walker, 2011) found that teachers should be engaging in critical self-examination of their beliefs and biases in order to address their deficit thinking about students. Pollack (2012) argued that, in order to address deficit thinking, preservice and beginning teachers need to engage in critical listening to, and reflection on, informal teacher talk about students as a means of surfacing underlying beliefs and biases about racial/cultural 'others' and for developing a critical consciousness of the ways in which informal deficit-based teacher discourse can act in unseen ways to rationalize and perpetuate existing educational disparities (p. 97). Likewise, the findings of Aldana's (2016) study pointed "to the critical importance of teacher self-examination and classroom study…the need for educators to identify their own deficit ideologies and oppressive classroom conditions that run counter to the academic and social mission of the school" (p. 197-8).

Scott (2014) found that her study of Celise's story served as an example of what can happen when deficit thinking is applied to an African American student and she recommended several actions that teachers should take to create change, including recognizing and addressing their own biases, using a multicultural curriculum, preparing students for "colorism encounters," being mindful of the materials they use, and utilizing parents as resources (p. 52).

While Scott (2014) told the story of a student's experience with deficit-minded teachers, Grenville and Parker (2013) used narrative inquiry to focus on Grenville's journey through her own self-reflection on her use of deficit thinking as a teacher. Grenville, a master's student, teacher, and research assistant to Parker, was working on a

project when she began noticing the deficit thinking of many of the teachers they observed through their research on poverty in dozens of elementary schools in Ontario. This work prompted her to identify the assumptions and stereotypes she held and to search within herself "for critical answers" that created tension within her from past experiences and her current research on poverty in schools (Grenville & Parker, 2013, p. 16). Grenville noted that "it was easier for me to identify how others made assumptions and stereotyped than it was for me to identify these within myself" (p. 16). However, she made the decision to deal with her deficit thinking in order to become a better teacher. Her research with Parker on students of poverty in elementary schools revealed that she "needed to step outside myself and look critically at my own teaching, as well as how I treated and perceived my colleagues" (Grenville & Parker, 2013, p. 17). Ultimately, Grenville and Parker (2013) found that teachers must identify and interrogate the beliefs that underlie their deficit thinking in order to become effective teachers of students of poverty.

In addition to critical self-examination, Brown (2010) suggested that teacher education programs should focus on providing more information to preservice teachers about student academic achievement as an additional tool against deficit thinking, instead of relying solely on providing them with information on effective teaching methods for multicultural education and social justice for this purpose.

The findings of Walker's (2011) study showed that the teachers did not meet all of the necessary elements of cultural competence (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; National Center for Cultural Competence, 2008), "indicating a need for ongoing professional development" and that teachers, "in addition to examining their own cultural

biases and prejudices…need to learn more about how to use the students' culture as a basis for learning throughout the curriculum and across disciplines" (Walker, 2011, p. 593).

While each of these studies took a unique look at deficit thinking represented in schools and teachers, they all concluded with very similar recommendations for change. Each of these authors found that the use of deficit thinking was detrimental to the educational opportunities of students of poverty and/or color and that teachers must engage in critical self-reflection of their own stereotypes and biases in order to directly challenge any deficit perspectives they may hold.

Diversity Training in Education

As student populations in schools across the United States continue to become more and more diverse, educators have begun to question how to best equip teachers to work effectively with their students. One issue that has been at the heart of the conversation on diversity training for educators is how to best prepare preservice teachers to work in diverse classrooms after they graduate. Many universities across the country have begun to address this issue through curriculum changes and faculty professional development programs. While preparing preservice teachers to work effectively with diverse student populations is an important issue, it is equally important to train practicing teachers on issues of diversity as well. Teachers who work in diverse classrooms must be provided with professional development opportunities that equip them with information and strategies to best serve their students.

Diversity training has taken on many different forms in educational settings over the years, from curriculum changes and training programs for instructors of preservice

teachers at the college level (Gentry, et al., 2015; O'Hara & Pritchard, 2008; Keehn & Martinez, 2006) to multiple-year diversity training programs and one-day professional development sessions for practicing teachers at the K-12 levels (Schniedewind, 2005; Aujla-Bhullar, 2011; Flory, et al., 2014). Although the literature demonstrated some differences in how the training was developed and carried out, all studies shared the intent of creating opportunities for educators to increase their self-awareness and sensitivity to issues of diversity so that they can best serve culturally, linguistically and racially diverse populations of students.

Schniedewind (2005) asserted that "professional development opportunities in diversity education provide an important arena for practicing teachers to expand their consciousness about race, racism, and whiteness and to gain support to apply that awareness to their practice" (p. 280). Research on diversity training in educational settings has demonstrated how diversity training has led to change and has outlined recommendations for future diversity training in educational settings.

Diversity training leads to change. Gentry, Lamb, and Hall (2015) argued that "teachers who understand diversity and the various cultures represented in their classrooms know their students best and have the potential to be more responsive to students' cognitive and affective learning needs" (p. 1). In this study, the authors measured the changes in personal and professional diversity beliefs before and after a college course on diversity which took a transformative approach. Gentry, Lamb and Hall (2015) found that the 2013 fall class experienced a significant increase in their professional diversity scores following their experiences in the course while they also experienced significantly lower scores on their personal diversity. The authors named

23

classroom environmental factors such as outspoken students who dominated discussions as a possible cause for students to revert back to personal beliefs that provided them comfort in the sometimes hostile environment.

O'Hara and Pritchard (2008) analyzed the results of a professional development program for teacher education faculty at a California State University campus aimed at increasing the faculty's abilities to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLD) to design coursework for their students around the topics of English Language Learners, special populations and technology. O'Hara and Pritchard (2008) measured 38 of the participants' self-reported knowledge and use of the information they received during the years-long professional development through the use of pre and post surveys. The data collected through these surveys showed that the participants increased their knowledge from moderate to moderately high on all subjects and increased their use of that knowledge significantly from low/moderate to moderately high. O'Hara and Pritchard (2008) found that all participants "believe they gained a deeper understanding of these topics and began to incorporate them into their work with credential candidates," and the data supported the researchers' "belief that the content of the faculty professional development program was effective in improving both the knowledge and the use of the relevant elements" for faculty (p. 56). The authors credited a number of factors, including faculty ownership, respecting time, and stakeholder support, with the program's success.

Keehn and Martinez's (2006) study on the impact of a professional development series on adjunct teaching faculty took place at a large public university in the southwestern United States. The professional development series was designed as part of

an already established diversity initiative within the interdisciplinary studies department that was aimed at preparing preservice teachers to teach diverse populations of students. In order to ensure that the department's large adjunct faculty members were prepared to train preservice teachers to work with diverse students, they were asked to participate in a professional development series that consisted of two phases: one on introductory information and self-refection and one on sensitivity to others. Keehn and Martinez (2006) chose eight White, female participants for this study by grouping the 41 adjunct instructors by the amount of participation they showed throughout the two-year development schedule. They then randomly sampled from each of the groups: high (2), medium (3) and low (3) and collected data through interviews, syllabi, and student questionnaires.

Overall, Keehn and Martinez (2006) found that seven of the participants increased their attention to diversity and for each of these participants, the degree to which they changed correlated with their participation in the professional development activities. In other words, the participants with low participation made little or no changes in their attention to diversity while the medium and high participants all increased theirs. According to Keehn and Martinez (2006), these findings demonstrated that participation in the professional development sessions positively affected the participants' attention to diversity in the courses they taught, as evidenced through their "description of their instructional goals related to diversity as well as their incorporation of multiple instructional approaches, learning experiences, and assignments related to diversity" (p. 24). The authors stressed that while the instructors' growth correlated with their

participation in the training sessions, even low participation "had some positive effects on instruction" (Keehn & Martinez, 2006, p. 24).

Schniedewind's (2005) study presented the narratives of five teachers from a school district in the mid-Hudson area of New York that committed to diversity education in the mid-1990s and offered courses and other supporting follow-up diversity education experiences in the decade since the system-wide program began. As a result of the diversity education the teachers received through their school district, Schniedewind (2005) found that these teachers provided active support for their students of color by opening up spaces to talk about color and racism. They did this by addressing White privilege and stereotyping with their students by using teachable moments, by planning activities, and by modeling the use of language about color. The teachers also confronted institutional racism in their schools by challenging the curriculum, encouraging administrators to contest White privilege, and reaching out to parents who were unable to visit the school.

Ultimately, Schniedewind (2006) concluded that the ongoing critical benefits of the long term diversity education provided in this school district benefitted these teachers by creating opportunities for "rich interaction where teachers, while very mutually supportive, were not afraid to question each other" (p. 287). Together, these teachers created spaces in which they were able to encourage each other "in their roles as change agents and visionaries" and they used these spaces to "renew their vision of more equitable classrooms, schools, society, and their resolve to strive toward it" (Schniedewind, 2006, p. 287).

Aujla-Bhullar (2011) analyzed the effects of a professional development (PD) day she organized and facilitated at an elementary school in Calgary, Alberta that had a student population of 500, including 300 English Language Learners. The PD day, called "Deconstructing Diversity," included an interactive activity in which teachers, support staff and administrators worked in small groups to compare and contrast their own identities, listened to two guest speakers from the community, and visited two local religious sites that were significant to their community and the students in their school.

Following the PD day, Aujla-Bhullar (2011) provided surveys with open-ended questions to eight participants in the professional development, seven of whom returned completed surveys. The results of the surveys indicated that there was a "strong need for additional PD initiatives around diversity, multiculturalism, and community knowledge" (p. 270). The participants reported that they appreciated the activities which relieved some of the apprehension they previously held about particular groups in the community. The participants felt that some participants in the PD had held back for fear of offending others or disrupting the learning process with their questions. Participants also said that they felt a strong need for ongoing professional development that was given more time for discussion and questions.

Finally, Flory, et al. (2014) examined urban teachers' responses to culturally competent professional development in order to understand which elements of the training were most effective. According to Flory, et al. (2014), the results indicated that there were four factors that were critical to effective diversity training, especially in urban settings: diverse and credible training staff, culturally competent curriculum, flexible

implementation expectations, and follow-up support following the professional development sessions.

The participants reported that a lack of racial diversity among the professional development staff "could create instant cultural distance and cause them to approach the experience with skepticism" (Flory, et al., 2014, p. 287). While more than 50% of participants reported that repeated diversity training led by White, middle class trainers created negative impressions about the effectiveness of the presented materials in urban settings, they also said that this could be "counter-balanced to some degree if they [the trainers] have sophisticated knowledge and extensive experience in urban schools and communities" (p. 287). The authors also found that the participants felt that the materials presented during diversity training needed to be "contextually relevant to their students" and that they preferred an informative and engaging tone during diversity training sessions (Flory, et al., 2014, p. 288). In addition to these findings, participants also reported that they needed content-specific strategies for incorporating the strategies and materials into their classes and that more support was needed beyond the one-day training session to create effective implementation of the ideas presented.

Recommendations for future diversity training. Gentry, Lamb, and Hall (2015) maintained that "reflective teachers review personal and professional diversity beliefs daily and compare those beliefs to the needs of their students" (p. 9). While they did find professional diversity growth in their study, the authors stressed that one course is not the whole answer to the question of how best to prepare preservice teachers for work in diverse classrooms. However, they did recommend an additional class on diversity as a "catalyst for improving more entrenched personal diversity beliefs" and

stressed that any coursework on diversity should just be the beginning of one's work toward diversity awareness and education (p. 9).

Keehn and Martinez (2006) concluded that while many approaches to diversity education could be taken, "a strong and systematic program of professional development appears to hold promise" and that colleges of education must place importance on this as they continue to prepare preservice teachers for work with diverse student populations.

Aujla-Bhullar (2011) asserted that "the teacher can become an agent of anti-oppression as they reflect and engage on equity intitiatives" and that "the role of the teacher is forefront to examining how effective diversity initiatives are addressed; however, this is challenging given the difficulty in accessing equitable and safe environments to engage in dialogue and self-reflection" (p. 274). Although Aujla-Bhullar's (2011) study findings indicated that professional development is a strong path toward increased knowledge of diversity issues, movement toward a deeper knowledge and understanding of these issues "requires continued effort and support, especially with regard to the time allotted for PD in the school setting" (p. 275). Similarly, Flory et al. (2014) suggested that teacher-driven professional development that is responsive to the specific needs of particular schools is most effective and that one-day training sessions are not sufficient to create effective, long-lasting change. Follow-up sessions must be offered to support teachers following culturally competent professional development.

The literature on diversity training for educators covered a wide range of educational settings, training approaches and timespans. While all of the literature shared concerns over the effectiveness of practicing and/or preservice teachers' work with diverse student populations, most of the literature also pointed to the importance of the

participants' comfort with and investment in the entire professional development process and a need for long-term, ongoing professional development on issues of diversity that provides continued support. More research is necessary to explore other forms of potentially effective professional development on issues of diversity in schools.

Conclusion

The literature indicated that book clubs provided effective spaces for teachers to challenge their beliefs and biases, engage in collegiate discussion of difficult issues, and integrate new learning into classroom practice. The authors of the literature on book clubs also supported the use of book clubs as an active, engaging form of professional development in schools over more traditional, transmission-based forms of professional development.

The literature on deficit thinking showed that informal teacher talk (Pollack, 2012) can reveal deficit thinking and that deficit narratives in schools were damaging to marginalized students. The findings of the research also indicated that deficit thinking in teachers often led to tracking students of color into lower academic levels which marginalized their schooling experiences. Researchers recommended ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers that would provide them with the time and the tools to engage in critical self-reflection on their deficit thinking. They also recommended that teacher education programs provide more information to preservice teachers about academic achievement.

Finally, the literature on diversity training demonstrated a need for continued development in this area. While all of the studies contained examples of growth among participants who were able to reflect on their beliefs and integrate new learning into teaching practices, the authors called for continued work in this area. They suggested

that teacher candidates be provided with more coursework on diversity issues in schools and that practicing teachers be provided with systematic, ongoing diversity training that provides them with the time and safety to confront, challenge, and change negative diversity beliefs.

This review of the literature on book clubs, deficit thinking, and diversity training demonstrated the productivity of book clubs, the need for continued research on the dismissal of deficit thinking among teachers, and the need for extended time and spaces for diversity training in schools. This dissertation study tied together all three of these areas by using a book club as a form of professional development focused on issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices through the following actions: confronting personal biases, discussing and reflecting on personal experiences and beliefs, questioning and critiquing personal beliefs and teaching practices, interacting with other professionals and with the readings in a supportive environment in which we celebrated and supported articulations of social justice or positive change. The understandings gained from the teacher's experiences were used to develop a plan of action with and for Chris for his continued personal and professional development in this area.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In this dissertation study, I used a qualitative, action research design to understand and describe the experiences and the effects of Chris's membership in a professional book club focused on issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices in order to answer the following questions: (1) How do teachers describe their relationships to racial diversity? (2) How do teachers talk about students of color in the book club? (3) How do teachers talk about their book club experiences? (4) How do teachers describe their beliefs/ideologies about racial diversity throughout the study?

Study Design: Action Research

I used a qualitative, action research design. Although the exact origin of action research is somewhat unclear, most of the literature on action research claims that it originated in the 1930s through the experiments of social psychologist Kurt Lewin who is credited with coining the term 'action research' around 1934 (Adelman, 1993; Noffke, 1994; Masters, 1995; Boog, 2003; Mills, 2014). Lewin, along with his students, conducted quasi-experimental tests in manufacturing and domestic settings in order to prove that productivity and order were best improved through "democratic participation rather than autocratic coercion" (Adelman, 1993, p. 7). Throughout his experiments in

the late 1930s and the 1940s, Lewin used action research to improve and develop cooperative social relationships within and between groups and was particularly interested in working with minority groups to help them seek equity through action research (Adelman, 1993). Lewin found that action research was way of giving weight to "reflective thought, discussion, decision and action by ordinary people participating in collective research" on shared concerns and classified his work into four categories: (a) "Diagnostic action research designed to produce a needed plan of action"; (b) Participant action research in which the community members who were to be implementing the plan of action must be involved with the research from the start of the process; (c) Empirical action research which "was primarily a matter of record keeping and accumulating experiences in day-to-day work, ideally with a succession of similar groups"; (d) Experimental action research which "called for a controlled study of the relative effectiveness of various techniques in nearly identical social situations" (Adelman, 1993, p. 13-14).

In the United States, John Dewey and his work within the progressive education movement is the most commonly cited origin of action research in education (Noffke, 1994). Efforts to improve the nature of education continued in other countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia as well, and each of these efforts "directs attention toward action research as an effort toward the development of more participatory education, yet there are differences which in turn highlight divisions over the scope and nature of action research practices" (Noffke, 1994, p. 11). As a result of the numerous ways in which action research was used and developed over the years, a great variability exists in the ways in which different groups define action research, its process and its purpose.

Although the use of action research diminished in many Western countries in the late 1970s and 1980s, it started gaining popularity again around 1985 and is now a "fully fledged, respected social research practice" (Boog, 2003, p. 431).

Mills (2014) defined action research as "any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environments to gain information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (p. 8). Action research in education is ultimately focused on improving the lived experiences of students within schooling systems and, therefore, is taken up by educators and stakeholders to address issues that they have identified within schools.

The purpose of action research is to gather information "with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive change in the school environment, and improving student outcomes and the lives of those involved" (Mills, 2014, p. 8). Action research can be particularly relevant because it is research that is done by teachers for teachers and because "the findings of your action research inquiries will, over time, contribute to the predictability of your teaching environments" (p. 15). My dissertation study is an action research study because I used a professional book club to focus on issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices through the following actions: confronting personal biases, discussing and reflecting on personal experiences and beliefs, questioning and critiquing personal beliefs and teaching practices, interacting with other professionals and with the readings in a supportive environment in which we celebrated and supported articulations of social justice or positive change and planned for the future based on our work together. Action

research was the best qualitative design for this study because my study was aimed at making a change.

According to Mills (2014), action researchers should follow the Dialectic Action Research Spiral in which they identify an area of focus, collect data, analyze and interpret data, and develop a plan of action. In this study, I used a professional book club to focus on issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices. I collected, analyzed and interpreted data through interviews, before, during and after each book club session, and through journal entries. I was able to go through this Dialectic Action Research Spiral each time we met so that we could adjust to Chris's needs and interests. The action research design and feedback cycle also helped me develop a plan of action for continued growth and change with and for the participant.

Emic Approach

I took a descriptive, emic approach to this action research study. An emic approach "attempts to capture participants' indigenous meanings of real-world events" and is the "adoption of an indigenous orientation or perspective, representing those who are part of a study, in contrast to the adoption of an external perspective toward a research topic (etic)" (Yin, 2015, p. 11, 308). Willis (2009) stated that the "emic approach looks at things through the eyes of the members of the culture being studied" (p. 100). The emic approach allowed me to gather information and understand Chris's experiences in the professional book club so that I could describe generally what happened and how it happened within the book club. My participation in the book club with Chris allowed me to gain the insight necessary to describe Chris's thinking and experiences throughout the study.

My choice to do an emic study impacted my design in the sense that my approach was to seek an understanding of the teacher's experiences rather than Truth and, therefore, the interviews, book club sessions, and journal prompts were aimed at gaining information that would help me understand how and what Chris thought about a variety of issues and what changes he was experiencing. This approach also allowed me to stay open to Chris and what he wanted/needed and to involve him in the direction of the study as it occurred. The design was descriptive and therefore did not involve an a priori theory. An emic approach to this action research project required that I come to the data open to any possible patterns I might see so that the coding could lead me to themes that might be useful for my understanding of Chris's experiences and attitudes instead of looking to prove something specific through the data.

The emic approach provided several advantages. One advantage was that it allowed me to understand and examine the experience Chris had within the book club from his perspective in order to understand in what ways his understandings of diversity issues changed throughout the process. Likewise, it also helped me understand from Chris's perspective how he might apply these new understandings to his language about and treatment of students of color.

A great amount of detailed data was collected through interviews with Chris, observations and transcripts of the professional book club sessions, and the examination of Chris's journal entries. Therefore, another advantage to this emic approach was that it allowed me to look for ideas emerging from the data that gave some insight into how and why Chris thought/talked about students of color in certain ways and what impact, if any,

the participation in this professional book club had on Chris's attitudes without applying a particular theory or concept for which I analyzed the data from the start (Yin, 2015).

By taking an emic approach and coming to the study without an a priori theory or concept driving the study, I was more open to gaining a wider understanding of what was happening and how, which also led me to some understanding of what made an impact on Chris's experiences in terms of transformation. Therefore, this approach also allowed me to stay more open and responsive to Chris's wants and needs throughout the study.

Disadvantages of this approach included that it did not allow me to make any claims of absolute Truth, which could alienate readers who value a more modern, etic approach to research in which researchers have a chance to confirm or disconfirm a relationship to an a priori concept or theory. Other limitations included an inability to make claims about the efficacy of the book club materials and activities and the fact that this study only allowed me to know what Chris was willing to share with me, which limited my understandings and findings within this study.

Epistemic Orientation

I came to this project as a postmodernist because I believe that knowledge is socially constructed and that multiple constructed realities can exist simultaneously (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I believe that there are no fixed realities or identities. I agree that it is not possible to find "truth or knowledge in some external reality 'out there,'" but, instead, that there is "social construction of social reality, fluid as opposed to fixed identities of the self, and the partiality of all truths" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 204).

These beliefs influenced the way I interpreted the data. I took into account that the experiences and attitudes Chris shared were a result of the social, cultural, and

economic interactions he has experienced. These beliefs helped me understand Chris's

experiences in this professional book club, allowing for a representation of his socially

constructed realities within and limited to the duration of the study. I explored Chris's

experiences through his own descriptions in order to understand his realities as a way of

moving toward the development of effective professional book clubs to shift ideologies

about students of color in practicing high school teachers.

Site Selection

The site used for this study is South High School (pseudonym) which is located in

the southeastern United States. This site was selected using what Patton (2002) refers to

as critical case sampling and convenience sampling. Critical case sampling is the use of

critical cases that "can make a point quite dramatically or are, for some reason,

particularly important in the scheme of things" (Patton, 2002, p. 236). South High

School is a critical case because of its student body population which, at the time of the

study in 2016 included 2361 students, 1235 boys and 1126 girls. Of these 2361 students,

22 were Asian, 1498 were African American, 55 were Latino, three were American

Indian, 14 were two or more races, three were Native Hawaiian, and 766 were White. I

gathered the 2016 data from the school after this study had been approved and had begun,

but I determined its status as a critical case using the 2012-2013 data that was publically

available before the start of this study.

As of the 2012-2013 school year, SHS's population included 2344 students, 64%

of whom were African American, 32% White, 1% Asian, 1% Latino, and 1% were of

more than one race. Within this population, 59% of the students were receiving free and

reduced lunch. 33.5% of students receiving free and reduced lunch scored proficient on

standardized tests while 69.6% of students who did not receive free and reduced lunch

scored proficient, representing a negative correlation of 36.2%. This rate is 7.2% below

the state average ("Education Rankings," 2016). South High School presented largely

minority racial demographics (nearly 70%) and had an opportunity gap (Darling-

Hammond, 2001) that was situated in economic disparity. These characteristics were

important factors for what made a critical case in this study, and, therefore, South High

School was a critical case site.

Convenience sampling, as defined by Patton (2002) is "doing what's fast and

convenient" (p. 241). While this is not the most valued sampling strategy, it was a part of

the site selection for this study because I had knowledge that the problem I wanted to

study, a need for racial diversity training among teaching faculty, was occurring in this

school. I gained this knowledge through discussions with faculty within the school

district and with university faculty and fellow doctoral students who had worked within

this school district. Additionally, I also had knowledge of this site through friends who

were district faculty members which also qualifies as convenience sampling in this case.

Participant Selection

Recruitment. At the beginning of the recruitment phase, I talked with the

principal at SHS. He was very welcoming and offered to help in any way he could. He

also agreed to extend three hours of professional development credit to the participants of

the study. Teachers at South High School were provided with a description of the

professional book club, its purpose, and related details and they were invited to join the

group at the beginning of September 2016. The teachers received this invitation through

the school's principal who forwarded my invitation to them because I did not have direct

contact with the teachers through the district. Initially, Chris and one other SHS teacher volunteered for the study.

After they volunteered to participate in the book club, I evaluated the number of participants and determined that I should extend the invitation to the other two high schools in the district. I spoke with the principal of one of the additional schools on the phone and had a meeting with the other, and both principals agreed to extend the invitation to their teaching faculty on my behalf and to offer professional development credit to participants. No additional teachers volunteered to participate. I also extended the invitation to SHS teachers two additional times in September and again at the beginning of October before accepting that no more teachers were going to join the group. Ultimately, the second participant missed the first book club session and, despite my efforts to encourage her to stay in the group, she decided to withdraw from the book club due to scheduling conflicts with extracurricular activities that she was responsible for in the school. Therefore, there was only one participant in this study.

Participant description. Chris is a White, male teacher in his 40s who speaks Standard English. He is a married father of four children, three of whom attended schools in the district in which this study took place. Although Chris was in his first year at SHS at the time of this study, he had been a practicing teacher for 18 years. Chris held a variety of degrees, including a Bachelor's degree in English and Master's degrees in Special Education and General Education. He also held teaching licenses in special education (pre-k through 21), administration (K-12), and English and math (6-12). Chris was employed as a special education teacher at the time of this study.

Chris has worked in several different schools, including middle and high schools, in several states that stretch from the Southeast to the Midwest. In addition to working as a special education teacher, Chris has also worked as an English teacher, a math teacher, and has interned as an administrator. He also served as the department chair of the special education department in his previous school. Chris also talked about his interest in pursuing a doctoral degree on several occasions throughout our book club sessions.

Chris described his teaching philosophy as one that had changed a lot over the years. He said that he used to follow a behavioral model that focused heavily on reward and punishment, but that, at the time of the study, he relied on a relationship-based model. He emphasized the role of strong, positive student-teacher relationships as the basis for all of his teaching practices.

Text Selection

After reviewing and reading several texts, I selected Tyrone Howard's (2010) *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America's Schools* for this professional book club study. I chose this text because it fit several of the criteria I was looking for in a text: it directly addressed a wide variety of issues related to racial diversity, it challenged deficit views of students of color, it talked about culturally responsive pedagogy, and it offered specific examples of what successful culturally responsive teaching looks like in schools. I also selected this text because I felt that it was a good choice as an introductory text to these issues while still offering a challenge to readers. The text includes seven chapters: Chapter one: Achievement gap: Contextualizing the problem; Chapter two: Changing demographics; Chapter three: Culture; Chapter four: Culturally responsive pedagogy; Chapter five: The role of race in

41

learning; Chapter six: Developing cultural competence and racial awareness in classroom teachers; Chapter seven: Examples of school success for culturally diverse students.

Data Collection

I collected data through interviews, observations, field notes, and teacher journals throughout this study. I conducted entrance and exit interviews with Chris in order to collect data from him about his expectations of the book club in the beginning and his reflections on the process in the end. I transcribed these interviews in order to use them for coding and analysis. I audio recorded and transcribed all book club meetings as well. I kept a field notes journal throughout the study in order to record my observations, thoughts, reflections on and responses to the interviews and book club meetings and to reflect on the study in progress. Finally, I collected data through Chris's reflection journal entries in order to gain a deeper understanding of his experiences with the reading and the material we were studying. Through these data sources, I was able to study the participant's experiences as a member of the book club.

Interviews. I conducted two interviews with Chris. I interviewed the two initial participants once before the book club began and I interviewed Chris again after it was over and I had completed much of my analysis. In each interview, I asked the participants questions that connected with my research questions (see appendix A). Through these interviews, I was able to gain insight into Chris's ways of thinking about issues of diversity and students of color as individuals at the beginning of the book club and to understand how he described his experiences at the end of the book club. These interviews were conducted in person and varied in length. The entrance interview with Chris was 20 minutes in length, while the exit interview was 90 minutes long.

Club meeting observations. The book club meetings were scheduled by consensus of the group before the second participant left the book club. After that, Chris chose the following meeting dates for each of the five book club sessions: October 18, October 25, November 1, November 15, and November 28. The meetings were one or two weeks apart and each book club meeting lasted for approximately 90 to 110 minutes. I recorded (audio) each of the five book club meetings and transcribed the recordings. I made a plan for each session, but I was flexible with that plan so we could always follow Chris's lead in the study and several of the planned activities did not occur due to the natural flow of our conversations (See Appendix C). I was able to gain an understanding of how Chris was making meaning of the readings through his discussion of the material presented in the book during our meetings.

Teacher journals. Teacher journals were collected from Chris at each session throughout the project. I provided Chris with a paper journal to use for this project, but I also offered him the choice to use any other form of journaling he preferred. Chris chose to use the paper journal I had provided, and I took photos of his entries at the beginning of each session.

These journal entries were a place for Chris to respond to both the readings and discussions from the book club and to engage in reflective thinking about how these things intersected with his teaching and ways of thinking. I offered Chris some general questions to help him focus his writing in the journals for each session (See Table 3.1), but I encouraged him to create his own entries as well. Chris chose to write his own reflections each week which were directly tied to the readings. Not only did these weekly journal entries help me identify passages that were important to Chris and to see some

Table 3.1: Response Journal Prompts

Session	Readings	Response Journal Prompts

Session One: October 18, 2016	Forward by Geneva Gay, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools* (p. xvii-xxii)	1. Respond to any topic of choice from this reading
		2. On page xvii, Geneva Gay writes:
		"A critical issue too often absent from these debates is a thorough analysis of race, racism, and culture as causes and potential solutions. At first glance it would appear that these are obvious factors in closing the achievement gaps, given that students of color experience higher levels of underachievement that their majority racial group peers. Sometimes the obvious is difficult for educators to see and concede, especially when it involves sensitive issues such as race and racism."
		    a. Do you think this is obvious to educators?
		    b. How do you perceive that this issue is understood by educators in your school?
		    c. How do you respond to this personally based on your experiences?

Session Two: October 25, 2016	Introduction and Chapters 1-2, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*	1. Respond to any topic of choice from this reading
		2. On page 29-30, Howard discusses deficit-based thinking about certain populations of students.
		    a. Can you think of examples of deficit-based thinking that you experienced as a teacher or as a student?
		    b. What impact does deficit-based thinking have on our students?
		    c. What can we do about it?
		3. Throughout the book, Howard stresses the changing demographics in US schools and, on page 40, he asks whether or not teachers are prepared to teach in diverse

		schools.
		<ol type="a"> - Do you think teachers in the US are prepared to teach in diverse schools? - Do you feel prepared to teach students who come from "cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social class backgrounds" different from your own? - What kinds of training have you received or would you like to receive in preparation for teaching diverse student populations?
Session Three: November 1, 2016	Chapters 3, 4 and 5, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*	- Respond to any topic of choice from this reading - On pages 60-64, Howard discusses the ways in which culture plays a role in successful teaching. He asks several questions that can be used to guide teachers through the process of understanding their students' cultures. His last question asks,<ol type="a"> "What, if any, contradictions or tensions seem to exist between the cultural practices and traditions that my students bring to the classroom and the practices and traditions that I operate on?" - Chapter 5 is all about the role of race in education.<ol type="a"> - What is your response to Howard's discussion of the role of race in education? - How do/don't you see this in your own experiences as a teacher or as a student?
Session Four: November 15, 2016	Chapters 6 and 7, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*	- Respond to any topic of choice from this reading - On page 114, Howard asserts that critical self-reflection and the development of cultural competence can help teachers "to recognize whether they consciously or subconsciously hold deficit-based notions of culturally diverse students, distorted views of low-income communities, and negative perceptions of students' families."

| | | a. Do you agree with this?
b. What would this process look like for you?
3. In the final few sentences of the book on page 150, Howard writes "Our work must help parents, students, teachers and administrators to recognize and use the best strategies, skills, supportive practices and policies, reliable research, and ideological stances that provide transformative interventions for improved academic outcomes and life chances. Not only do the lives of young people depend on our work as transformative educators, but so do all of our collective fates."
   a. What is your response to this statement?
   b. How do you see yourself in the work he describes? |
| Session Five: November 28, 2016 | Excerpts from Sonia Nieto's *Affirming Diversity* and Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children* | 1. Respond to any topic of choice from these readings
2. How does each of these articles provide you with tools for further developing cultural competence and effective teaching for diverse students?
3. What do you need moving forward to continue this work? |

repetitions of patterns represented in our discussions, but they also helped me triangulate my data and support my findings.

     Researcher's log. I wrote in my researcher's log during and after each interview and book club meeting observation. Through this log, I was able to capture my in-process thinking and to create a space for reflective thinking throughout this study. In this log, I was able to capture my initial thinking about possible patterns emerging and to record my thoughts in-process about how I could best respond to the needs that Chris was demonstrating in each session. I also used this log to record communication that Chris and I shared after the recorder had been turned off in our sessions.

Obtaining Human Subjects Approval (IRB)

     I submitted this project to USC's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the Office of Research Compliance and received approval to move forward in June 2016. According to their office, this project was not subject to the Protection of Human Subject Regulations in accordance with 45 CFR 46 et. seq. and no further oversight by USC IRB was required. I also obtained permission for this study from the school district through an application process during the same month and received consent to move forward. Finally, I collected a signed consent form from each participant during their entrance interviews (see Appendix B).

Organizing and Managing Data

     Data collected throughout this study was kept in multiple, password-protected formats, including Google Drive, computer files, audio recorder files, and on multiple flash drives. I organized the data by participant and data method, storing all information

under pseudonyms. I primarily worked on paper to conduct my coding and concept maps which were copied and kept in locked files in multiple locations.

Data Analysis

I began my coding with in vivo coding, a coding process that uses the exact words of participants as codes that allowed me to "prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). I used the participant's words as codes to gain insight into and understanding of his experiences and attitudes. After coding Chris's words, I went through the data again and applied descriptive coding which, according to Saldaña (2013), is used to "summarize in a word or short phrase…the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (p. 88). Descriptive coding allowed me to capture the topics that were being discussed which were then examined alongside the in vivo codes that represented the participant's words and, in some ways, represented the content of the data. I also used values coding which, according to Saldaña (2013), is used to apply "codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldviews" (p. 110). I constructed the values codes during the first rounds of coding and used this coding to better understand the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the participant in relation to issues of racial diversity as represented during the study. After these first rounds of coding, I used a concept map (Saldaña, 2013) as a form of code mapping to play with the relationships I found among my data and to define categories into which the data might be collected.

After my first rounds of coding, I used thematic analysis which allowed me to search "through the data for themes and patterns" that shaped the data (Glesne, 2011, p. 187). Thematic analysis allowed me to look through my first rounds of coding to

investigate how similarly coded data "changes or varies in relationship to other factors, for example across events or times" (p. 187).   In this phase, I reduced my codes from 20 codes that emerged from coding all of the transcripts and book club data to nine which were relevant to my research questions. I color coded these codes and then I went back through the transcription of each session in order and wrote an analytic memo in which I outlined my thinking about the emerging patterns. I collected the relevant in vivo codes from each transcribed session for each code and wrote about their significance. The use of thematic analysis ultimately helped me understand and describe the following relationships, themes, and patterns that arose from my data: community expectations, limited (or not) potential for teacher impact, discussing race/racism (fear/depends on relationships), building relationships, beliefs/perspectives (of teachers), colorblindness, race/diversity beliefs, resistance, chapter 5—anger.

After I arrived at the themes, I went back to concept mapping and again used this process to group themes and patterns together and to organize the ways in which I planned to discuss them in the findings chapter. I also used this process as a time to decide which codes were pertinent to the research questions for this study. Ultimately, the themes that emerged were categorized in the following ways to address the research questions: relationship to diversity, talk about students of color, talk about book club experiences, and beliefs about racial diversity which includes the codes: community expectations are powerful, limited potential for teacher impact, discussing race/racism and resistance, and colorblindness and anger.

The Researcher: Positionality

Positionality is defined by Maher and Tetreault (1993) as a concept which explains "that gender, race, class, and other aspects of our identities are markers of relational positions rather than essential qualities" (p. 118). These relational positions might impact relationships with others in various ways across multiple contexts. It is important to reflect on one's positionality in relation to a study because "knowledge is valid when it includes an acknowledgment of the knower's specific position in any context, because changing contextual and relational factors are crucial for defining identities and our knowledge in any given situation" (Maher & Tetreault, 1993, p. 118). Reflecting on one's positionality allows the researcher to anticipate how their positions in relation to the project or participants might impact the information they are able to gather or the rapport they are able to build with participants. It is important to consider positionality because "researchers cannot control positionality in that it is determined in relation with others, but they can make certain choices that affect those relationships" (Glesne, 2011, p. 157). My positionality, therefore, affected my research, but by reflecting on my positionality I became more aware of my positions and how they might affect this study so that I could work to minimize their impact.

I came to this study as a White, female, American, English-only speaking, middle class, doctoral student, researcher, and secondary English teacher from the Southeast who had no prior relationship with the participant. Each of these identities impacted my positionality within this research project.

First of all, my identity as a White American impacted my role as researcher in this study in several ways. I believe that my Whiteness made Chris, who is also White,

feel comfortable to speak about issues of racial diversity with me. Throughout the book club sessions, the participant said things such as, "you know" or "you've seen what I'm talking about" which indicated that he felt a shared experience with me that was in some ways built on our shared racial identity. This identity could have impacted my credibility with some participants as a result of the subject matter in the sense that I could have been viewed with suspicion or contempt as a White researcher attempting to facilitate learning about issues of racial diversity. Based on the participant's talk about the African American author's discussion of race in the book we studied, saying that he felt attacked "by another Black author," I believe that my race made him more comfortable to discuss these issues.

My gender could have had a similar impact in that women might have been very comfortable sharing with me, while men might have been less open or less likely to embrace me as the facilitator of the group. In this case, the participant, a man, seemed to fully embrace me as the researcher. I did not sense any tension around my gender. However, he did talk at one point about the limitations of my abilities to connect with parents because I am not a mother.

My identity as a monolingual English speaker who uses mostly Standard American English strengthened my interactions with the participant because we shared a similar language system. I monitored my language in the beginning of the research process so that I could reflect the signals I got from the participant in order to build rapport with him. This process was very natural because our language was naturally very similar.

My status as a doctoral student and as a researcher impacted the participant's involvement as well. The participant viewed these statuses as indicative of a particular level of knowledge on these topics, which was indicated by his questions which sometimes positioned me as the expert. It also led him to believe that I was looking for particular answers or results within the study, which I had to make clear was not the case at the beginning of the study. This status could have led the participant to worry that I was judging him or his teaching practices or beliefs. Therefore, I was careful to encourage and support him throughout the book club sessions. Furthermore, my roles as doctoral student and researcher might have been intimidating to potential participants who might have felt less willing to share as a result, but, in this case, it was intriguing and exciting to the participant who expressed interest in pursuing a similar degree and doing research of his own. My status as a high school teacher helped me in this study because it allowed me to connect with the participant through similar experiences and general understandings of what it means to be a high school teacher.

The way in which I presented this study to the participant and the rapport I built with him within the context of this study was essential to the quality of the information he shared with me. I was explicit about my intentions to understand rather than judge or critique. In addition, I was explicit about the ways in which I protected the participant's identity to the best of my ability and maintained confidentiality by using pseudonyms in my coding, not discussing the participant's membership in the book club with others at the school, and by carefully storing the data collected.

Beliefs and biases. As a researcher who has commitments to social justice and who has strong feelings about the ways in which we should demonstrate care for all

students, I had to work diligently throughout the project to keep an open mind to any possibility that presented itself in the interviews, book club meetings, data coding, and analysis. These commitments also required that I monitor myself throughout this study in order to make sure that I did not allow my judgments or assumptions about the participant's attitudes or actions to drive the study and that I constantly reflected on my work. In order to limit the impact of these elements on the study, I had to be diligent about ensuring that the participant's experiences were being described as he described them and in his own words when possible through the use of face validity (or extended member checking) (Lather, 1986). I conducted member checking in part at each book club session and in depth in Chris's exit interview three months after the book club ended.

I came to this project as a result of both my professional and learning experiences over the past several years. My thinking about and design of this project were influenced by my beliefs which stem from critical race theory (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Freire, 1974), and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Critical race theory (CRT) comes out of the critical legal studies movement and "places race at the center of the discussion of the achievement gap in education" (Howard, 2010, p. 98). CRT positions race as the central aspect of academic inquiry and asserts that race is essential and central to understanding the inequities in American society (Apple, Au & Gandin, 2009). While I did not position myself a critical race theory scholar for this project because I find that problematic as a White researcher, I did choose racial diversity as the focus of this book club in order to address race directly as a

central factor in education. I wanted to be able to talk with Chris directly about how race

plays an important role in educational opportunities and outcomes in the United States. I

also wanted Chris to examine his own beliefs and biases about students of color and

confront how he addressed racial diversity in his teaching practices.

Critical race theory is a lens through which researchers can understand the ways

in which racism has become "normal and natural" in the U. S. and how race continues to

be a driving factor in structural inequalities today (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 12). This

theory has guided my thinking about structural inequalities in general and it helped me

situate race at the center this study. CRT influenced my decision to study Chris's

language about and attitudes toward students of color. It also influenced my text

selection for this study.

Much like critical race theory, critical pedagogy interrogates oppression. Freire

(1974) advocated for a critical pedagogy as a way of freeing people from oppression,

arguing that "only by developing a permanently critical attitude can men overcome a

posture of adjustment in order to become integrated with the spirit of the time" and thus

capable of making decisions to change their reality (p. 5). According to Freire (1970), it

is important that education does not follow the "banking" method but that it instead

focuses on a critical consideration of reality. In critical pedagogy, teachers' efforts must

"coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for

humanization" (Freire, 1970, p. 75). Ultimately, critical pedagogy "engages the

knowledge of lived experience through the dual method of confirmation and

interrogation" and cultivates a link between knowledge and power "to give students the

opportunity not only to understand more critically who they are as part of a wider social

formation, but also to help them critically appropriate those forms of knowledge that traditionally have been denied to them" (Giroux, 1998, p. 106). Critical pedagogy has influenced my dissertation design in similar ways to critical race theory. My belief in the idea that students of color should be, must be, engaged in critical readings of the world/word (Freire & Macedo, 1987) and the realization that many teachers in my school were not engaging in this practice was one of the first things that led me to this project. Furthermore, my belief that teachers must also engage critically with their own beliefs and language and with professional literature also informed this study.

In order to achieve critical pedagogy in education, dialogue is central (Freire, 1970). Dialogue is powerful and without it "there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education" (Freire, 1970, p. 93). Effective dialogue does not seek to impose one view or way of thinking on a group of people; instead, effective dialogue takes all perspectives into account (Freire, 1970). I believe that dialogue is an essential part of education. Freire's ideas about dialogue influenced my decision to use a professional book club in this study because I believe that true education and transformation is only possible through a shared dialogue, in this case, about issues of racial diversity in general and students of color in particular. The dialogue that Chris and I shared in the book club helped to support positive change toward more equitable teaching practices and provided a space for Chris to engage in a critical examination of his beliefs and the ideas we were studying.

In addition to talking about race and confronting his beliefs, I wanted Chris to consider culturally responsive teaching methods. Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), according to Ladson-Billings (1995), is "a pedagogy of opposition (1992c) not unlike

critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment" (p. 160). Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). In order to achieve these goals of culturally responsive pedagogy, "students must experience academic success; students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (Ladson-Billlings, 1995, p. 160). CRP shares many commonalities with CRT and critical pedagogy in that it provides opportunities for students to center cultural or racial knowledge to consciously identify, examine, and critique structural inequities in society.

My belief in culturally responsive pedagogy has become a filter through which I analyze data and consider the ways in which research participants respond to questions about teaching diverse populations of students. CRP has influenced my design of this project because I see it as one way of addressing the opportunity gap (Darling-Hammond, 2001) and structural inequalities in schools. Literature supports the idea that when teachers know better they do better, so if teachers can utilize teaching methods and materials that support and enhance the schooling experiences of students of color, it is possible that their academic and social achievement will be increased (Gay, 2010). I believe that it is through this critical lens, and CRP's commitment to social justice and the eradication of deficit-based thinking, that students of this and future generations will be empowered to create real change that could severely limit or even end structural inequalities in schools and communities. For this project, CRP influenced the way I

thought about the design of my book club sessions and the plan of action I created with and for the teacher around his continued growth of knowledge on issues of diversity. I also chose a book that addressed CRP for this study so that Chris and I could discuss this as one option for creating more equitable teaching practices.

Validity, Credibility, and Trustworthiness

According to Maxwell (2013), validity is used in research to separate credible accounts from those that are not credible, not to establish an absolute Truth. He defined validity as a way of referring "to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account" (p. 122). Trustworthiness, according to Saldaña (2013), is "knowledge of acceptable procedures within a field" (p. 255). Glesne (2011) suggested that researchers "can increase credibility or trustworthiness" through a variety of accepted research procedures.

I made claims of validity, credibility, and trustworthiness by gathering rich data through a variety of sources (triangulation) by transcribing interviews and book club meetings and by taking detailed and descriptive notes of observations and in my field notes as well as analyzing Chris's journal entries. Additionally, I used thick, rich description of the participant and setting, researcher reflexivity to account for my biases, and peer debriefing to add credibility to this study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I also used Lather's (1986) concepts of face validity and catalytic validity. I used face validity (or extended member checking) to bring my first layers of coding and analysis back to the participant so that I could use his responses to inform my analysis. This process occurred largely during and after each book club session and again during our exit interview several months later when we reviewed my final analysis. Catalytic analysis occurred in

this study as Chris reported a growth in his understandings or a change in his ideologies as he examined his own beliefs and biases in order to understand the world (and the experiences of students of color) in new ways throughout the research process. Through these processes, I attempted to establish validity, credibility, and trustworthiness within this study. The findings of this study are not generalizable because it is a qualitative design.

Conclusion

Over the past 11 years, I have experienced wonderful opportunities for growth in my doctoral program and I witnessed ineffective diversity training in the school I worked in. These experiences have led me to seek out ways to bring similar opportunities to practicing teachers in high schools. The language that teachers use about students of color in schools, in my experience, demonstrates a great need for professional development on issues of racial diversity for practicing teachers. It is through this experience and the knowledge gained from my pilot study that I came to this study hoping to make a difference in the lives of students of color through working with teachers to create change toward more equitable teaching practices. I was also able to gain an understanding about how Chris experienced this professional book club in order to continue to develop it as an effective form of professional development for other teachers in this area.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Overview

This study took place in 2016, a year in which multiple police shootings of African American suspects had been in the news and the presidential election became politicized in terms of racial tensions. Chris referred to both of these circumstances at times throughout our conversations. These events seemed to influence his responses to the book and to play a role in the decisions he made about discussing race with students.

In general, Chris's demeanor during the book club sessions was consistent. Chris was typically static in terms of his physical movement and he tended to talk in exploratory ways that typified stream of consciousness. Chris's talk allowed him to process new ideas out loud which presented many layered thoughts about race and racism as well as oppositional thought at times.

Throughout the book club, Chris commented to me that he was "thinking about things that I wouldn't otherwise be thinking about" as a result of the book club (Chris, personal communication, November 1, 2016). While Chris talked about the changes he experienced throughout the book club, there was also one area, community expectations, where he seemed to maintain his views throughout our discussions. The findings of this study are responsive to the research questions and, therefore, the following sections will be discussed: Chris's description of his relationship to diversity, Chris's talk about

students of color throughout the book club, Chris's talk about his book club experiences, and Chris's beliefs and ideologies about racial diversity as stated throughout the study.

The main themes that emerged in the data regarding Chris's beliefs and ideologies about racial diversity were community expectations, the potential for teacher impact, discussing race/racism with students and resistance, and colorblindness. In each of these areas except for community expectations, Chris experienced some change in the way he talked about these ideas. After teaching a lesson that addressed racial diversity for the first time, for instance, he said that he was "thinking about a lot of things I wouldn't be because of the book [*Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*]....I would never have done that article with my kids without it" (Chris, personal communication, November 15, 2016). The following sections outline the natural pattern that emerged from our discussions which followed the contents of the book.

In the next section, I represent four main themes. These themes reflect the coding and analysis I completed across book club transcriptions, response journal entries, and personal communications.

Relationship to Diversity

Chris expressed a variety of beliefs about diversity throughout the book club sessions and his interviews. In his entrance interview, Chris defined diversity and talked about how he viewed diversity within schools. In sessions two, four, and five, Chris discussed his beliefs about diversity in school settings and about how he related to diversity personally.

Entrance interview. In the entrance interview, Chris answered several questions about diversity. When asked to define diversity, Chris said that it was "either

economically or racially…um...mixed students and teachers" (39-41). Chris related his role as a teacher to diversity by talking about the role of diversity in education:

> Well, I think it's [2], you know I think it's especially with the district I just came from, especially on the economic end... it's often ignored and the role that poverty plays in education. Um [2] I think far too often teachers sit back and they're just like 'Well, they don't have a lot of money' but they don't realize what all trickles down, what that little Johnny is going home wondering if he's going to have electricity. He doesn't care about doing your math homework. So, um, you know I think that is very much ignored in the schools. (Entrance Interview, 44-54)

In this initial meeting, Chris related diversity to poverty more than anything else. He emphasized the role of economics in his definition of diversity and in his subsequent discussion of how diversity relates to education. Chris continued this pattern when he was asked to describe what poverty looked like in the schools he has worked in:

> I would probably say that the most diverse school I worked at was the one I just came from. I spent four years at a school in [another state]. Um…it was basically a third Hispanic, a third African American and a third White. [laughs] So, um, it…there was definitely economic and the racial differences in every classroom. They were from very poor areas and then we also fed from a very wealthy area, so, um [2] as I said, economically and racially there was a big spread between the schools. (Entrance Interview, 57-68)

Although Chris talked about racial diversity in his description of the schools he has worked in, he also emphasized the role of socioeconomic diversity, calling the challenges

that schools face in regards to poverty "interesting" (70). He used an example from his

own classroom to describe how poverty has influenced the way he approaches students:

> I think one of the first things they do especially knowing you know the
>
> economics…economics side of it, I don't take things away from kids. If you've
>
> got kids that have nothing [laughs], it doesn't make sense to take it away. But also
>
> really you know being sensitive especially with what's happening politically now,
>
> to you know the feeling and the emotions of some of the kids. You know there's
>
> the set rules are rules, um, but I always give my kids a chance because they are
>
> teenagers, so I'll say to them 'put it up or you know what I gotta do' um rather
>
> than just 'okay, you're getting a referral.' Um, because for a lot of them that's [2]
>
> that's it—that's all they have. Also in, just having that understanding of what they
>
> may be going home to. (Entrance Interview, 83-104)

Chris continued to talk about the role of poverty in diversity throughout the entrance

interview. He talked about how his interactions were informed by this factor and the

difficulties of meeting the needs of all students when, in his experience, "the parents that

didn't have as much, there was no expectation for their kids to go to college or their kids

to do anything besides kind of the you know minimum wage jobs that they were holding"

while the students who came from more affluent homes approached college differently

and said things like "'What do you mean college? I'm going to college.' It's just, it just

wasn't an option [that they wouldn't go]" (Entrance Interview, 118-126). Chris's

definition of diversity touched on race but focused primarily on economics in this first

meeting. He was focused on poverty in schools as a major factor in the role of diversity

in schools and saw the challenges of meeting the needs of students who were coming

from such different socioeconomic backgrounds as a major obstacle. Chris's focus on poverty aligned with the only diversity training he recalled being a part of which was "a 20-minute video on poverty. And that…and that was it…that was our diversity training" (176-181). This training was offered at one of the schools in which Chris previously worked. Although his definition of diversity was nearly singularly focused on only one factor, Chris was passionate about the role of poverty in schools throughout this discussion and his description of the way he tried to address that with his students demonstrated that Chris was a thoughtful and caring teacher who sought to provide a welcoming environment to all of his students.

Book club sessions. Throughout the book club sessions, Chris talked about several different beliefs about diversity, including his critique of several school practices in regard to students of color, his lived experiences with racial diversity, and his view of moving forward toward cultural competence, the development of cultural knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes that embrace the cultural lives of the community he served (Cross, et al., 1989; National Center for Cultural Competence, 2008).

Critique of school practices. One of the major patterns that emerged throughout several of our sessions when Chris talked about issues of diversity was his critique of certain practices within schools that he viewed as inequitable practices toward students of color. As part of this conversation, Chris talked about the issue of discipline in schools:

> I was thinking about it [discipline practices in schools] with, again, my whole lens being on the community, I wonder with [2] the part that race plays into it especially in the modern or our current climate of if you've got White teachers with Black students and little John is getting in trouble at school, how much of the

parent is going to be 'Well, that's just the White teacher picking on my kid?' and

not to put all the emphasis on that and the parent, but because I've seen it first

hand when teachers do that...where they can't get past that on their own and they

start, you know, uh, you know, Johnny who's White will be standing on a desk

singing and 'Oh, just sit down.' And then a little Black boy drops his pencil and

gets sent to the principal's office. (Session Two, 1683-1694)

Chris talked about both the fear of how a White teacher's discipline of an African

American student might be perceived by African American parents and the

disproportionate punishment of African American students, particularly boys, by White

teachers in schools. As part of his master's program in administration, Chris saw

firsthand how inequities in schools affected Black boys. In one of the schools he worked

in, the school's population was approximately 96% White, "so 4% of minority students.

You would think only 4% of the referrals would come [from this group]...I would

probably go with 75% were from the minority students and I know they weren't acting

out like that" (Session Two, 1929-1935). Chris made it clear that he believed that

students of color are disproportionately punished in schools based on their race:

I think, you know, far too often I've seen kids especially you know Black male

students get written up for stupid stuff and I have no doubt that that is just because

of preconceived notions and just, well, they were going to do something worse

because they're Black. (Session Three, 2241-2248)

Chris critiqued the inequitable discipline practices he witnessed in schools across several

sessions, which demonstrated his belief that these practices are detrimental to African

American students in schools. Chris's experiences and concern about disproportionate

punishments of Black boys by White teachers compared to that of White boys is supported in the literature on this topic (Heitzeg, 2009).

In addition to Chris's critique of the disproportionate punishment of African American students in schools, Chris also critiqued the schools' surface celebrations of diversity:

I think far too often we're just like, 'Oh, you know, I think we're going to do, you know, a Cinco de Mayo celebration. There we go. We've covered our Hispanic population and, oh, it's African American history month? Alright, we're good. Put the, put the stamp down on that one, we've covered that one.' Um, but it almost became a joke of the school that her [the only African American teacher in the school] Martin Luther King, Jr. project was—was she would have 6th graders color a picture of Martin Luther King, Jr. and she would post it on the wall. [laughs] That was her acknowledgement of African American history month and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King was color a picture of him and put it on a wall. Not talk about it. (Session Three, 1741-1829)

Chris demonstrated a belief that celebrations of a variety of diverse cultures should have more depth than a surface acknowledgement such as a once-a-year party or coloring a picture and putting it on the wall. Chris's talk about these celebrations expressed his belief that cultural celebrations should be taken more seriously by schools and that more effort should be put into developing more meaningful celebrations of diversity in schools.

In chapter five, Chris reacted strongly to a section where students talked about instances when they experienced racism from their teachers. Students of color talked about their teachers saying things such as "this would be a better place if you and your

people just went back to where you came from" to them in schools (Howard, 2010, p. 105). Chris's reaction to these student stories was strong, leaving him "speechless":

> I [4] it's very rare that I'm speechless—I was just, I, I could not imagine. And now, having a teacher tell a student that—that student's done. If they're in high school, they're done with high school. That teacher just successfully ended that student's high school career. Because they're going to generalize that to the rest of their teachers and as soon as they can drop out, they're going to drop out because they're not wanted in that school...It's like, my God, how can anybody do that? That did—out of everything I read, that just really hit me. Of, 'why don't you and your people go back—or this country would be a better place if you and your people would just go back where you came from.' Wow. Wow. Totally marginalized. (Session Four, 1744-1783)

Chris was greatly affected by this section of the book and it shocked him that a teacher would say those things to a student. Chris's reaction to this section demonstrated his caring nature toward students and highlighted his negative response to overt racism in schools. He went on to talk about a more personal example of this when he discussed a colleague of his who taught in the school he came from last year:

> It's—this—this has been slowly, the whole racis—racism thing has been slowly building all school year. The [3] there's a couple of things going on with the one class besides just, but I think she's attributing most of it to African American and I'm like, well, you also have a very high special ed. population in that classroom. It's like 14 out of the 26 kids are special ed. [laughs] Yeah. [laughs] I think it's more they're special ed. than…African American. (Session Four, 1015-1027)

Here, Chris talked about how a teacher was looking at the problem in her classroom, in which several African American students called her racist after they were punished, as a problem of race rather than focusing on other factors that were present in the room. Chris was able to relate a personal example to the section he read in which teachers were acting out at students in racist ways. In this sense, Chris critiqued the shared experiences and hypothetical experiences of racism in schools in the book as well as the examples of racism he experienced in schools, which he found offensive. However, Chris did not identify the special education students as another element of diversity within this setting even though we had discussed the fact that African American boys are tracked into special education at disproportionate rates (Harry & Anderson, 1994). He continued to define diversity through racial and socioeconomic terms.

Lived experiences with diversity. Chris grew up in two different places—one in the suburbs of a large, Midwestern city and the other in a very small, rural community in the southeastern United States. These experiences gave Chris a variety of perspectives on diversity. Until Chris was 11 years old, he lived in a very small community in a rural town in the southeastern United States. He and his extended family lived on an unpaved "L-shaped" road and acted as a closed community. He said that everyone on "the L" took a communal approach to life, collecting each other's mail, disciplining each other's children, and so on. Later, after his parents split, Chris moved to a large, suburban area outside of a large, Midwestern city where things changed drastically. Chris talked about the culture shock he experienced from having to lock the front door of their house for the first time to understanding the cultural clashes between diverse groups of people in his

new environment. Chris described about how his family talked about race when he was growing up:

> And, you know, and then thinking about growing up, as funny as this sounds, race was never an issue where I grew up. Well, everybody was White. But I mean, it wasn't…nobody talked about it. Nobody…But in [the city we moved to], the suburbs, it became a major issue. It just—with my dad. A lot with my dad because my dad—my dad met my mom in [the city]. Um, and then they divorced and that's when he moved. But, he right away said, 'You know, you're going to have some Black friends at school.' And he goes, 'You may want to think twice before bringing them back.' He said the neighbors wouldn't approve. And he was absolutely right. So I mean, and again, just looking at that, that kind of got me thinking of who I was and it's like, wow. I've had [2] gone from one extreme to another. (Session Four, 2547-2569)

Chris was taught at a young age that adults of different races did not always get along and he internalized that understanding based on the experiences he had in the suburban location he spent the remainder of his childhood in. He also received mixed messages about discussing race as a child. Chris learned in one setting that there was silence around issues of race, while he learned in another setting that talk about race was divisive. When he heard messages about race from his father, it was always in reference to some form of separation. Chris observed a lot of racial tensions in the neighborhoods he grew up in both the South and the Midwest:

> Across the street from my uncle [in the South], now okay, so you have preacher's house. We lived here [pointing to a spot on the desk], my grandparents lived here

and then my uncle lived there. [laughs] So across the street from him…it would have been probably five years after we moved back to [the Midwest]. A Black family bought the house and moved in and didn't disrupt anything, which I thought for sure. [laughs] You know, I told my dad—the house is going to get burned down. I said it's either going to get burned down [kids interrupt] but it—it was such a different experience because of my family buys a house from a Black family. That does not happen in [the Midwestern city]. Once a Black family moves in, [pffff] they're gone. There's no White family moving back into that area, but it's progressive and tolerant [sarcastically]. (Session Four, 2570-2611)

In his youth, Chris became accustomed to the idea that Black people and White people did not share communities. In fact, his experiences as a child led Chris to believe that White people would not stay in or move back to a community in which Black people lived. This belief, developed in his childhood, was important because of the way that Chris talked about these issues in our sessions.

When Chris talked about the gentrification of the Midwestern city he grew up around, he was critical. He pointed out that this practice was disruptive to many lives:

I mean, the mayors of [this city] have been congratulating themselves because of their re-gentrification of [the city]. In essence, what they've done is go into these poor neighborhoods, torn down the projects, put in these million dollar condos and displaced people. And so, areas, I mean, granted, areas twenty years ago you wouldn't have stepped foot in in [the city] are now the old yuppy areas. But I'm just sitting back thinking, well, [3] where did they go? [laughs] So, if the mayor—

if the mayor's stance is to do a re-gentrification of the entire city, where are the

poor and the minorities going to live? (Session Four, 836-851)

Chris demonstrated here that he understood the motivations behind the mayor's decision

to gentrify areas of the city, but he was also critical of this decision to displace so many

people. He was concerned about the real and lasting effects that these changes would

have on the people who were being displaced.

In addition to being critical of the gentrification of this city, Chris was also critical

of the practice of White flight, or White families moving out of communities when they

become racially diverse, in many of the communities there:

But it is, I mean literally, the school I went to high—where I went to high school,

it was 83% White when I went to high school there. Ten years later when my

buddy's brother graduated, it had flipped to like 72% Black because a couple of

Black families had moved into the neighborhood and everybody left. I mean, my

father still lived there until maybe 10 or 15 years ago and I remember seeing, just

being struck, 'cause we drove to his house one time, and there must have been 15

houses in his neighborhood up for sale. And I said, 'dad, what happened?' And he

said 'oh, a Black family moved in.' Poof, gone. (Session Four, 882-896)

At an early age, Chris learned from his dad that interracial neighborhoods did not exist in

White suburbia. He was taught that when a Black family moved into a White, middle

class neighborhood, White families moved out. Chris's use of a term such as "gone" to

describe neighborhoods where this happened demonstrated negativity about all-White

neighborhoods being changed by Black families moving in, which Chris seemed to learn

from his father. Chris discussed this phenomenon again in the next session:

70

But even with that said, the neighborhood that my wife grew up in was, well, look, she went to school with Muhammad Ali's kids and she said they were the only Black kids in her high school. And now, because a few Black people moved in and everybody [phew] and now it's like 75, 80% Black, and that was just over the course of about 10, 12 years. So when the neighborhoods go up there, it's very fast because as soon as some Black people start moving in, everybody starts putting their house up for sale and it's gone. It's just a way of life. No, it's, and as I've said they've lived with it. It's White flight. [3] The phenomenon is White flight. (Session Five, 539-557)

Chris's use of the words "go" and "gone" in describing the neighborhoods was interesting in the above excerpts because he phrased it in terms of the neighborhoods being "gone" instead of saying that the White people were gone from the neighborhood. In this sense, Chris seemed to reflect what he learned about diverse neighborhoods as a child while critiquing those very ideas.

Chris grew up watching White flight happen in the neighborhood where he lived in the Midwest, but he also saw a different example from the "L" he grew up in in the South. Although Chris learned this phenomenon as a child and continued to see it happen in this Midwestern city as an adult, he did not condone this practice in his talk about it in our sessions. He often sarcastically referred to this city and its relationship to diversity as "progressive" and mocked the initiatives they were using to "improve" the city. He also described a time when he had to help his wife understand when a White family bought a house from a Black family:

I mean I remember—my uncle still lives in that little neighborhood. In the little

town that's—it doesn't even have a name yet. The L—it's big now. It's growing

up. They've got their own high school and middle school now. But, um, I

remember the house across the street from him was owned by a Black couple.

And my wife—this would have been, jeez, 20 years ago now—and we went down

there and my uncle—the new people who had bought the house were at my

uncle's house when we were there and they were White and my wife was floored.

She was like, 'White people don't buy houses from Black people.' And I'm

like—'Oh, they do down here.' [laughs] It was just so ingrained that once the

Black people start moving in [pshew] everybody's gone. [laughs] It's progressive

up there [in the city]. [sarcastically]. (Session Five, 559-575)

Chris's views about diversity were varied throughout his life. He was taught as a child to

"think twice" before bringing a Black friend home from school because the neighbors

"wouldn't approve" in one community, but saw no problems arise when a Black family

moved into the small community in the South. As an adult, he expressed criticism for

practices that separated communities along racial and economic lines, such as

gentrification and White flight, and he often mocked these practices in our discussions.

 Moving forward. Toward the end of our book club sessions, Chris turned his

thoughts to moving forward. He questioned what it would take to move toward cultural

competence (Cross, et al., 1989; National Center for Cultural Competence, 2008) and

multiculturalism (Gay, 2010) and he reflected on his own views of diversity. He noted

that it would be much easier to talk about race if people grew up doing so and suggested

that it is important to provide students with opportunities to do so in schools:

Another thing I thought was really cool was the Black and Brown club. Now my

only question is was it open to White students? [2] Or I don't even know if there

were any White students at the school—they didn't mention it at all [in the book].

Just a thought because what a great way to [3] you know, I think, by the time they

hit adults it's almost too late but if you were to have something like this in

elementary and middle school and really, you know, I don't want to say make the

White students more aware, but make the White students more aware from all the

way up, I think it makes, um, chapter five would be a lot different had they grown

up seeing that rather than just being, you know…(Session Five, 1290-1302)

Chris demonstrated here that he believed in early opportunities for students to discuss

issues of diversity in order to make it a subject that is easy for them to approach as adults

in the future. Chris talked about the challenges facing today's adults, particularly

teachers, in becoming multicultural. He noted that becoming a multicultural person

would require far more than some people would be willing to do:

They put on here about the reading and the studying, but I think it's gotta go so

far beyond that. There's only so much you can get from books, so much you can

get from studying other cultures. If, like that principal, if you don't immerse

yourself into it and then, to me, it's all really for nothing. But I think at the same

time, it would make your job easier. (Session Five, 1747-1763)

Chris demonstrated in this excerpt that he believed in the benefits of teachers immersing

themselves in the cultural lives of their students, but he also understood the depth of that

process. While his discussion of this subject showed his belief in multiculturalism

(Banks, 2007), it also established the seriousness with which he approached the issue.

Chris also reflected on his own impressions of diversity in this final session. First, he reflected on his own ideas of what it means to be American, as he was prompted to do by the book:

> I also...the what is American? And everybody always has the fancy answers, but I really never thought of it before. But it very much is the White identity of what an American is. I mean, you even look back to the posters of Uncle Sam and Rosie the Riveter, and [3] it kinda always has been. They speak English and they are White—preferably blonde hair and blue eyed. And so it brings in the whole, especially with the political climate, I put on here the need to assimilate. Should that be the expectation? (Session Five, 1518-1537)

Here, Chris was reflecting on his own conceptions of what it means to be American and he began to question whether or not assimilation should be the expectation. As Chris talked about this issue, his focus quickly turned to the tension he felt with the subject of assimilation:

> See, this is where I get—this is where I get—I don't know. [2] You know, it's [sigh] but that assimilation is what the businesses expect for...So by not assimilating, are you keeping yourself out of a good job which keeps you trapped within... [4] Well, and it kind of and it took me back to the Common Core. So then, it comes in and I guess—my big question—the business world expects students, and more importantly their employees—to act in a certain manner and to speak in a certain manner. To represent the company in a certain manner. [sighs] How do you teach the students with this [what the book promotes], but also with that expectation? (Session Five, 1539-1566)

In this conversation, Chris questioned the validity of assimilation. He wondered whether assimilation was a negative expectation for students because it devalued their own cultures and he wondered if it was a positive expectation because it supported their potential success in a business world that expects it. He used the example of a time in Los Angeles when there was a "huge backlash" because the schools wanted to "recognize Ebonics" to demonstrate his point. Chris described the public's reaction as largely negative and said that "you would've thought people's first born children were being slaughtered in the streets" (1570-1573). While Chris saw the value of recognizing Ebonics because it does "open" people up, he also noted that he thought there has to be a balance:

> I think the kids have to—they have to be able to codeswitch. They have to be able to switch between 'Oh, this is when I'm hanging out with my friends or I'm writing things on Facebook' to 'Okay, now I'm going to a business meeting at 9 o'clock.' They have to know there's a difference. I don't—you know—does, and they have to be definitely exposed to the, you know, the White European model, 'cause that's—let's face it—that's how the world works. Yeah, so by teaching--allowing them to use Ebonics and teaching, you know, like that, are we doing them a disservice in keeping them? I don't know. (Session Five, 1574-1589)

Chris's beliefs about expecting students who do not demonstrate Eurocentric characteristics to assimilate were at a tension point in this conversation. Chris struggled to reach a decision about what was best for students. He acknowledged the value of honoring students' cultural ways of being but also expressed concern that not exposing them to Eurocentric models could put them at a disadvantage in the business world. In

the end, Chris did express a belief in teaching students to codeswitch in order to navigate the complex worlds in which they will need to be able to exist in order to be successful.

Chris's relationship to diversity was varied and complex. As a child, Chris was exposed to a variety of settings in which he learned several things about diversity. He lived in an all-White community for the first 11 years of his life before moving to a more diverse, suburban area where he saw firsthand the tensions between diverse groups of people. He received varied messages about race when his family did not talk about it at all early on and when he was told to "think twice" before bringing a Black friend home from school because the neighbors "wouldn't approve." He also witnessed gentrification and White flight as a young person. In his talk about race, Chris often talked around issues and left things out of his statements. He left sentences hanging or would say things such as "you know" to fill in the gaps of what he implied in his discussion of race. Chris's inability to articulate fully what he meant when he talked about race could be connected to the fact that, until he was 11-years-old, his family never discussed race and, therefore, Chris did not develop a strong sense of how to discuss race openly.

As an adult, Chris first defined diversity as a racial and economic issue, but he focused primarily on the socioeconomic elements in his discussion of diversity as it related to schools. He talked about his relationship to diversity as a teacher through the lens of poverty and described the ways in which he tried to be responsive to his students' needs as they related to poverty. Chris's emphasis on poverty related directly to his only experience with diversity training, which was a 20-minute video on poverty.

Toward the end of our discussions, Chris critiqued school practices that disadvantaged students of color, such as the inequitable disciplining of Black students

76

and surface level cultural celebrations. He also critiqued social practices such as gentrification and White flight for the negative effects they have on people of color and people of low socioeconomic status, often mocking these practices and sarcastically calling them "progressive." He reflected on his upbringing and on his own beliefs about diversity, some of which he said that he had not thought about before. He reconsidered what it meant to be American and debated the expectation of assimilation in schools. Ultimately, Chris affirmed a belief in the benefits of teachers becoming multicultural people who immerse themselves in the lives of their students and in teaching students how to codeswitch so that they have a greater potential for success in the business world. While his definition of diversity stayed consistent throughout the study, Chris said in his exit interview that "through this my opinion has changed" (Exit Interview, 134). He emphasized that before the book club he "was more of the mind to ignore it" whereas he now felt "willing to look at it [race/racism] and say, well, you know, if you bury your head in the sand, it's just going to fester and get worse, so let's take this head on" (136-145).

Talk about Students of Color

Chris talked about students of color throughout sessions two, three, four, and five as a result of the material we read and discussed. He also talked about students of color in these sessions because his teaching position at the time of this study allowed him to work with mostly students of color. In session three, Chris talked about a student he taught who had shown interest in applying to a particular college. Chris described how he attempted to help the young man:

I've only been here 11 weeks, but—big difference, like today during 4th block, I

had a kid coming up to me talking about Morris college, an African American

student and 'Oh, I think I want to do business administration.' So he and I spent

about an hour going through the Robert Morris page—or the Morris College page

and what are the admissions requirements and he saw the cost, and I was like,

'Oh, you don't worry about that because there's ways to pay for it.' And, you

know, just, I don't know. And he came from our alternative school. So he's

supposed to be the big, bad kid [laughs]. (Session Three, 75-86)

In this example, Chris dismissed this student's reputation as "the big, bad kid" from the

alternative academy. Instead of buying into that reputation or judging the student for his

past actions, Chris mentored the student and encouraged him to pursue admission to this

college. Chris demonstrated care and concern for this student's desire to go to college

and took time to help the student work through the details. Chris also talked about his

students huddling around his desk during class with pride:

And whatever, so I look up and I've got like two Hispanic students, two Black

students just all huddled around my desk [laughs] and just all doing what they

need to do. And I'm like, 'You guys, you know, you can go back to your seat.'

They're like, 'No, we'll stay here.' (Session Four, 363-367)

Chris talked about this scenario with pride. The relationships he built with his students

were extremely important to him, and this anecdote was evidence of that. For Chris,

proximity, or the fact that the students would rather stay huddled around his desk instead

of going back to their seats, represented a strong relationship and a desire to be in close

proximity while they worked. Chris was proud that the students preferred to be near to

him instead of at their desks. When Chris talked about his students of color, he always spoke in these terms, demonstrating care and a strong desire to support and encourage his students and to establish strong relationships with them. These examples were representative of the way Chris talked throughout our sessions about the students of color he taught.

Chris talked about students of color whom he did not teach in a variety of ways. In session two, Chris responded to a section of the book that discussed the "achievement gap," namely with preschool children:

> The thing that struck me is that African Americans have the highest preschool rates but [2] and then they were talking about the preschool programming and I was just wondering if just—the thought that came to my mind was about the quality of the programs, the preschool programs, that they're attending. And that's, that was just something that came to my mind…I was like well, it should stand to reason that if they're the highest population in the preschool or at preschool age they should be demonstrating more growth than everybody else. And, you know, obviously they're not. I think they said they were performing at the level of the poorer White which I found that really interesting. There's, there's a disconnect somewhere, [3] and I don't know what the disconnect is but there's a disconnect somewhere along the line. (Session Two, 317-353)

Chris talked about this example from the book with concern. He did not know what to make of the data, but he conveyed a desire to understand why the growth was not higher for African American preschool students.

Chris continued to talk about students of color in general terms at a few other points throughout our book club sessions. At one point during session three, he returned to the example of another teacher who was called a racist by some her African American students:

> I said 'You can't combat—if their first thing when they get in trouble is 'you're a racist.' It's probably something coming from home, and it's probably just a self-defense mechanism to keep them out of—from getting in trouble. But I said, but, I said, 'see you've just gotta forget about that and move on to where you will—where you're getting your wins.' (Session Three, 1955-1962)

When Chris talked about this situation initially, he described the students as using their race as a "defense mechanism" to avoid getting in trouble. He evoked elements of a deficit view of the students and their parents through his willingness to blame the students' perceived behavior on something they learned at home as a way of abdicating the teacher's responsibility. While he used this language to describe this situation in this session, his language changed after he read chapter five which challenged deficit thinking. After reading that chapter, Chris suggested that one of the reasons that the teacher was having such a difficult time with the students in this case was because she believed that she was "having so much trouble with this class because there are so many Black kids in there."

Chris also questioned the role of assimilation with Middle Eastern and Latino male students who have come to the United States from other countries and suggested that they could be difficult to deal with in educational settings because of their cultural beliefs:

I've seen it first hand, was the attitudes particularly of like Middle Eastern males, towards just females in general, especially teachers, um, well, it's just been—the female teachers I've worked with have had a lot of difficulty with [2] you know, sp—again, specifically, you know, that, kind of the Islamic, Middle Eastern males [2] and they would just flat say, 'You're a woman. I don't have to listen to you.' [2] But again that's cultural and again, so as I'm reading this, that's kind of popping into my mind of when you've got that kind of value coming in, where do you go with that? [laughs] That was just 'You're not a male, so we do not have to do anything you say.' We would—we would see it a little bit. I saw it a little bit, especially with some of our younger female teachers with some of our Hispanic students, especially ones that were like first generation here. Whereas, and they would just say—'mom's place was in the home and the woman's place is taking care of the family. Why are you teaching me?' You know, 'we don't need to listen to you—dad's the one that does the discipline.' Especially, and as I said, that was, again I'm just making a broad generalization, but typically I found with the special—that first generation here in the country still carrying a lot of those, you know, from predominantly Mexico—those beliefs. And it's—I—I—that was kind of ringing through. See and it's—I don't know, and again I was just, again going with the extreme with kind of that Middle Eastern attitude of—and there's no kind of wanting to assimilate. It's—this is how—we're not going to, you know, conform to American standards so, I just, I—again, I just very, that was kind of ringing through as I was reading through, especially about the female— you know, the—talking about the middle, predominantly the middle class, White

81

female teachers. So, it is, and I just think with, especially current political times, the stream of many Middle Eastern immigrants is not going to be cut off so I, again, it's just, something I, you know, running through the back of my mind because, when you've got a group that's not any interest at all in assimilating with the new country's norms and values [2] you know. (Session Three, 1611-1723)

Chris described the cultural beliefs of students of color from other countries as harmful to the school environment in the United States if the students were not willing to assimilate. In this sense, the students were "othered" (Jensen, 2011) as people who did not belong if they would not act, think and behave like "Americans." However, Chris's talk about this subject changed throughout our sessions as well and he eventually questioned the value of assimilation in session five when he said, "And so it brings in the whole, especially with the political climate, I put on here the need to assimilate. Should that be the expectation?"

Chris talked about one other situation with students of color whom he did not teach. In this situation, Chris described a time when students of color were added to his daughter's gifted class:

So, we're sitting in a meeting. This is when, let's see, it would've been my second year at that school because she was just coming up in the 6th grade. And they were talking about how they had put some minority students in the AIG [Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program], which is what they called gifted—AIG. Uh, they had put minority students in the AIG program so that it looked like there was some balance. [laughs] [2] Oh, that killed me. Um, yeah, it was a disaster. It was a complete disaster. The gifted kids did not get what they

needed because you had probably bright kids, but they were being pushed too

hard. So they started acting out as if they were—the best way I can [inaudible]

They were acting like special ed. kids in a normal classroom. [laughs]. (Session

Four, 1619-1632)

Chris described this experience in negative terms. Using phrases such as "that killed me"

to refer to "minority" students being added to his daughter's gifted class to "balance it

out" suggested that Chris did not believe these students deserved to be placed in this

gifted program. While he said that they were "probably bright," he also described them

as "acting like special ed. kids in a normal classroom" which presented a deficit

perspective of these students of color. These contradictory descriptions of these students

demonstrated Chris's obvious disapproval of the students being added to the class to

make it "look like there was some balance" in the program. His description of the

experience as a "complete disaster" demonstrated that he viewed the experience as

completely negative. Chris's talk about students of color in this situation as "bright" but

not bright enough for this course and his comparison of their behavior to that of special

education students disparaged both these particular African American students and all

special education students.

Chris's talk about students of color in our sessions was varied. When he talked

about students of color whom he taught, his talk was positive. He described situations

with students in which he was supportive, encouraging, and invested in building

meaningful relationships with them. He often spoke of his students of color through the

lens of what was possible for them and dismissed others' negative impressions of them.

When Chris talked about students of color whom he did not teach, he tone was concerned

in some instances but distanced in others. In some of these situations, Chris demonstrated deficit thinking about students of color. In the final session, however, Chris also talked about how teachers sometimes act on stereotypes and mistreat their students:

> I'm wondering, and it's really got me thinking. Different cultural expectations and particularly [sighs] and let's face it, well, it's—it's what? 80% of teachers are White female. White, middle class, female teachers. If you've got these African American students, especially boys, is there a fear built in already because of stereotypes, stigma? So, they do something—is the punishment or the reaction of the teacher more harsh because the expectation is there? So now, in your mind, this kid's a trouble maker. So, 'Oh, let's boot him to the front of the SST [Student Study Team] list and let's get that rolling.' (Session Five, 1799-1810)

Chris demonstrated concern here that students of color might not get equitable treatment in schools due to teachers' stereotypes of them. Chris's discussion of this issue showed that he was concerned about the potential for this practice in schools and he wondered how these experiences might affect students and their perceptions of school. While his talk about students of color was varied, sometimes positive and sometimes negative, he tended to talk with care for students of color that he knew whereas his talk about students of color whom he did not teach tended to be more distanced and deficit based, particularly when he was describing situations in which Chris perceived a White person was being disadvantaged. In both his description of the ways in which White, female teachers were mistreated by Middle Eastern and Latino boys and his description of the White students not getting what they should have from a gifted program after "minority"

students were included, Chris demonstrated deficit thinking about students of color. However, when he talked about hypothetical students or the achievement of students of color, his tone was more concerned and compassionate. As he progressed through the book club sessions, Chris's talk about students of color whom he did not teach became more positive and his discussions of ways in which students of color might be marginalized by inequitable practices in schools demonstrated his concern about and disapproval of these practices.

Book Club Experiences

       Before the book club. In my entrance interview with Chris, he seemed excited about the book club. He was the first teacher to contact me as a volunteer to participate, and he talked about the experience with enthusiasm. He said that, "of course, in my mind, I've got the old ladies sitting around and drinking tea…[laughs]" but also spoke about the experience with hope when he said "I'm really interested. I'm one, you know I'm a dinosaur, but I'm always looking for new things to incorporate in, so I'm hoping to get some stuff out of this that I can bring into my classroom" (Entrance Interview, 237-238; 230-234). Chris also emphasized that he "just hop[ed] that the people involved will take it seriously" (240). Ultimately, though, Chris said that he was motivated to join the book club because he was "just always trying to find something new to do in the classroom 'cause I know…as I said, I've been doing this for a while, but I'm always looking for new ways to kind of do it better" (243-247). Chris seemed very excited about the book club in the entrance interview. His emphasis on gaining something from the experience that he could take back to his classroom suggested that he was serious about and open to learning from the experience.

After the book club. At the end of session five, Chris talked very favorably about his experience. He reflected on the experience, saying, "I don't in any way, shape or form regret having done it. I think it was an awesome experience for me" and that he "thought the format was great" (2014-2015; 2054). He also said that he "really did" get a lot out of his experience in this book club (2155-2156).

When reflecting on what he got out of the book club, Chris reflected on two main areas at the end of session five: teaching the lesson on White privilege and colorblindness. When he talked about teaching the lesson on White privilege, Chris said that he "never would have done that before" and that he "never would have thought about it" (1992-1994). He also added that he felt "very comfortable addressing it in this school" whereas he might not have felt that way in another school (2001). When talking about colorblindness, Chris said "and I guess I fell into that whole colorblindness" but that he was "more aware" after his experience and that "it's opened my eyes to a lot of things" (1947; 1999; 1996). Chris also agreed that he experienced growth when he re-read chapter five:

> B: Did you feel like you had growth by forcing yourself through that chapter?
>
> C: The second time? Yeah. (Session Five, 2072-2074)

Chris also talked about the limitation of the experience and said that he wished "we had a few more people" but also expressed that he understood that "you've got to have people that are willing to reflect and really—it can't be forced on them" (2017; 2028-2029). Ultimately, Chris speculated that race was the major factor in White teachers' hesitance to join the book club when he said, "you know, let's face it, most

White people don't want to address race because they don't want to be called a racist"
(2022-2024).

Finally, in his exit interview, Chris continued to talk about the benefits of the book club experience. He said that the book club had been very "valuable because it got me thinking about what I was doing and why I was doing it" and that it "kind of made me push my own boundaries" (Exit Interview, 576-579). He also emphasized that reflection had played a "huge" part in this process for him because it "keeps me thinking about what I'm doing" (691-692). Ultimately, Chris said that he had experienced a lot of change as a result of his participation in the book club. He was "pleasantly surprised with everything that came out of it" and felt that he had "learned a lot from this...I told you I wanted to get something out of it and I definitely did, so I'm appreciative of that. I, uh, a lot of my perspectives have changed" (1320-1328). He also said that the book club had been "much more valuable than a lot of the professional development stuff that I've done" (564-566).

Diversity Beliefs and Ideologies

Community expectations are powerful. Chris introduced the idea of community expectations in our first session in which he noted it as something that he saw as "missing" from the book based on his reading of the forward. Chris's discussion of community expectations wove throughout the first three sessions, and he brought up this topic on several occasions throughout our conversations in relation to other things such as student achievement and ease of communication with parents/school administration. Chris expressed a belief that community expectations are "a big part" of students' performances and perspectives and of school success. Throughout our sessions, he stated

that he was not sure that teachers have the ability to compensate for community expectations of students if they are negative or low. For Chris, community expectations play a large role in the success of the school/students and raising low community expectations is a major roadblock in the path to success for students in such communities. In one school, he saw this demonstrated by negative talk about students in the community:

> 'Well, those kids are from that school so why do you expect them to be any different?' But that's just the pervasive attitude, so I've seen where the community can just kill any ambition. (Session 2, 1070-1079)

Chris also included parents in his description of community expectations, noting that they often carried negative expectations for students in areas where community expectations were low. In one example, he described the parents' response to the 8th grade graduation at a middle school he worked in:

> Our parents would come out—'Well, this is probably the only graduation we're going to see.' [3] [laughs] Yeah. Yep. We'd be packed. We'd have to give tickets for the 8th grade graduation because we'd have so many parents show up. We had a waiting list, everything. Because the parents just expected that that was it [2] and we'd talk about you know, we'd sit down and talk about transition planning and they'd be—'They're going to work! What do you mean? I don't know if they're going to finish high school or not, but they're going to get a job.' (Session 3, 396-408)

Throughout Chris's discussion of community expectations, he talked about the community as one homogenous group. He did not talk about communities as groups

comprised of multiple participants with varying opinions. He described the members of each community as likeminded groups working toward the same goal in his stories about both positive and negative community expectations:

> But just top down, there were…the expectations were the kids are going to school, from the community, from the school, everything. (Session 1, 432-433)
>
> I mean the first time it didn't really hit me that as a whole there weren't a lot of expectations, not just from the community that we pulled from but from the city as a whole so it was, it was just a pervasive feeling that my middle school was not good enough [laughs]. (Session 1, 117-119)
>
> So it was not just community but it was within the district…from central office down. (Session 1, 141-143)

Chris talked about community expectations as a homogenous set of expectations that did not vary among community members or groups. This static, universal association of a community's expectations spoke to a possible deficit view of communities and/or community expectations. The text we studied, *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools* (Howard, 2010), did not address deficit views of community expectations and, therefore, did not challenge Chris's way of thinking on this topic. Chris's articulations of community expectations as one, common set of beliefs held by all members and groups within a community did not change throughout the book club experience.

In some early examples, Chris discussed the ways he experienced community expectations in three of the schools in which he has worked. Chris referenced two kinds of experiences he had that demonstrated two extremes of the impact of community expectations on schools/students: one in a high school in which the community and

district expectations were extremely high and one in a middle school in which the community and school district expectations for students were so low that he left after one year. In the first of these cases, Chris experienced positive community expectations, which he believed influenced the students' performances in positive ways:

> Just top down, there were…the expectations were the kids are going to school, from the community, from the school, everything…Well, I won't forget when I was there, we went to, um, one of our professional development days. They took us to one of the elementary schools because they wanted us to see where our kids fed in from. So all of the elementary that fed in and the one that struck my mind is there were little foot prints leading into the school and there was just a sign there that said 'these are your first steps to college.' So, from the minute they walked into that school in kindergarten [they knew the expectation]. (Session 1, 432-484)

In this example, Chris aligned the positive community expectations that all students would go to college with the positive outcome, which he reported as a graduation rate of over 90%. However, Chris found that in his other experiences, negative community expectations had a negative effect on student attitudes and performances. For instance, in one school, Chris found that it was difficult to motivate students who were constantly receiving negative messages:

> That was a big one at my previous school—how to overcome that. Where the community just thinks that the kids are failures and all they're gonna do is never leave town. You know…the parents would actually say 'My kids are no better than me, so why do I want them to go to college' or things of that nature. And that

community side of it is, to me, like a big part…what the community expectations are. You know the kids are going home and, you know, there's absolutely no talk about college or about finishing high school…how motivated are the kids to or how motivated are the kids to… so a lot of them, their plans were they were just going to work at the gas station or they were going to work at the Piggly Wiggly. And that was it and that was what was expected of them. (Session 1, 28-57; 76-81)

Chris went on to describe a second school in which he encountered similar attitudes:

I've had two experiences where those community expectations were so low for the kids and actually at the high school I worked at I had a parent come in and berate me for encouraging his child to go to college and afterward the principal told me that 'Well, you've got to know the expectations of your parents before you go filling their heads'…'My child is no better than me.' (Session 1, 350-357)

Chris's experiences, both negative and positive, demonstrated to him that the power of community expectations is great and that they are hard to overcome either way. His experience taught him that positive community expectations lead to positive student outcomes while negative community expectations lead to negative student outcomes.

In both of these experiences, Chris found that the community expectations influenced the district's expectations and became a part of the schools' cultures. Based on these experiences, Chris held a belief that community expectations impact student achievement in a way that might not be overridden by a teacher's influence. He expressed multiple times in this interview that he did not know whether teachers could have a positive impact on students who were raised in a community with low

expectations for their achievement. He also expressed that overcoming low community expectations is an overwhelming task that might not be possible, especially if the expectations are generational and longstanding. Chris named low community expectations as a major factor in a lack of student success and repeatedly insisted that teachers most likely could not overcome this factor. Chris used parents' talk about their children as a way to present particular perspectives that evoked elements of deficit perspectives which Chris then agreed with. In doing so, Chris allowed the parents, as part of the community, to take the blame for any real or perceived performance issues on the students' part. Here, Chris did not allow for the agency (Biesta, Priestly, & Robinson, 2015) of the teacher or student to overcome this community expectation, although he did also give the community credit when the expectations and student performances were high.

Over the first three sessions, Chris's talk about community expectations did not change, which could be seen in the comparison of the content of his comments from sessions one and three. Chris continued to see community expectations as a fixed set of expectations that did not vary among community members.

Limited potential for teacher impact. Throughout the first three sessions, Chris's talk about teachers' potential impact on students and communities shifted slightly. When he first discussed community expectations in session one, Chris repeatedly stated that he was unsure about teachers' abilities to impact students within communities that held low expectations of them:

B: So do you think that there's something that we can do in the classroom to compensate for those community expectations?

C: See, I don't know. I don't know. (Session One, 58-60)

B: … But it is interesting, like, what is the power of that versus what is the power of each teacher in their classroom…

C: yeah

B: and can we have conversations about that that are powerful enough to combat what they are experiencing [in the community]?

C: I don't know (Session One, 92-97)

In this early conversation, Chris demonstrated that he was doubtful about whether or not teachers could overcome community expectations in order to positively impact students. He described this issue as something that he saw the schools he worked in previously struggle with in the past, saying that the issue was "a big one…how to overcome that." Although Chris said that he maintained extremely high expectations for students and worked hard to design lessons to benefit them, he expressed early on that he felt his ability to impact his students may be limited.

In session two, Chris continued to talk about the potential for teachers to impact students in positive ways despite low community expectations. His talk about teacher impact was more decisive in this session as he talked about the limited potential of teachers to impact students:

B: Do you think that we as teachers have the ability to override that in any way, like, if—if…

C: I think we do, but I think it is very, it's got—you've got to pick your wins. You're not going to change an entire thought process overnight, and I think [2] you know, more and more with teachers being minimalized with programs in the

93

classroom…put the kids on here, we'll put an aide in the classroom—it's just as good as a teacher. Um, [2] you know, I just, but I think if you can get at those small wins. Yeah, or, you know, you just get those one or two kids who start believing in themselves. (Session Two, 1645-1656)

Here, Chris demonstrated a belief in the power of teachers to influence and impact their students in positive ways. However, he did qualify this belief by saying that the power is limited and that teachers must accept small wins. He suggested that the power to influence students was restricted by many outside forces and that teachers must be willing to accept that their influence might not be pervasive for all students.

In our third session, Chris talked more about teachers' abilities to impact students positively in more general terms by addressing how teachers' motivations impact their teaching. He talked about the overwhelming numbers of teachers he worked with who were just "collecting a paycheck" and who had "no investment at all." He described these teachers as negative influences in a school:

B: And you think that that kind of teacher negates the high expectations, positive perspective teacher?

C: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

B: So, it becomes a wash?

C: yeah…and I think, unfortunately, there's probably more teachers that [2] are collecting a paycheck at this point than [1] truly care about the kids. (Session Three, 543-550)

In this exchange, Chris characterized the positive effects of a teacher with high expectations and a positive view of their students as meaningless against the power of a

94

teacher with the opposite perspectives. As our discussion continued, Chris began to

challenge his own stance and his response changed:

> C: I—I could be wrong. [laughs]

> B: I'm not saying you're wrong, I just—

> C: It's a scary—

> B: It is! I mean, it's—it's—it essentially says, like, I, because from what you have
> said to me, I perceive you to have high expectations for your kids and to have…

> C: yeah

> B: high levels of faith in their abilities and to want to push them and support them
> and connect with them and what you're saying then is that the teacher, you know,
> theoretically across the hall who has low expectations and a negative perspective
> can cancel out all of that good you've done for those kids.

> C: [sighs] I didn't [3] I don't know. When you put it that way, I don't know. I
> don't know…because, see, and I think it could—I think it all depends on the kid.

> (Session Three, 552-564)

As he worked through his feelings about this issue, Chris moved back to a limited

potential for positive teacher impact stance, stating that the ability of a teacher to have a

positive impact depends on the student. As the conversation continued, Chris was able to

talk more specifically about the sphere of influence of teachers by naming a particular

experience in which he felt he had made a difference for a student. In the experience he

described, a student came to his classroom from another teacher's classroom because she

was uncomfortable in the other classroom where "kids were yelling, teacher was yelling,

[and] things were being thrown." He said that the student came to his room looking for "an escape" from the other environment:

> C: Just today I had one of my students come in for a half hour. Teacher wrote her a pass because she said she wanted to come see me, and she's like 'Yeah, I just don't want to be in that class because she's horrible.' [laughs]
>
> B: oh no!
>
> C: and I'm like, 'Well, get your work out and do it' and she did. (Session Three, 570-574)

In this example, Chris demonstrated that he saw ways in which he was able to positively impact students even when they were having negative experiences in other classrooms because of issues they had with other teachers.

Although Chris was unsure about whether or not teachers have the potential to positively impact students in our earliest conversations, his stance on this fluctuates throughout the first three sessions. He moved from being uncertain to expressing a belief in the limited power of teachers to positively impact certain students under the right conditions in the second session. Chris challenged his own ideas about teachers' abilities to overcome negative influences in the third session after he first said that negative teacher influences outweigh positive teacher influences. Later, he expressed the limited power belief from session two and was able to provide specific examples of how he was able to positively impact students on a daily basis despite their negative experiences with other teachers. Chris did not talk about teachers' potential to impact students in positive ways in the final two sessions. During member checking in his exit interview, Chris reiterated that teachers have a limited power to impact students. However, he also added

that their power, although limited by time and other factors, is "powerful" when they are able to impact a student.

Discussing race/racism and resistance. Chris's perceptions about teachers discussing race in classrooms changed throughout our book club sessions. Chris's talk about discussing race and racism in schools was present throughout all of our conversations. He discussed his ideas about who should discuss race and when and how it should be handled with students and as a faculty. Chris's description of these issues demonstrated a tension in his beliefs about what is appropriate when it comes to talking about race in schools and a resistance to the idea in general. The change Chris experienced in his beliefs about discussing race in classrooms was evident over the course of our five sessions, and that change is demonstrated by describing his beliefs by session.

Session one. In session one, Chris expressed several ideas about whether or not teachers should discuss race in schools. Early in our conversation, Chris talked about how teachers might feel about discussing race with students:

> I was reading everything he [Howard] was talking about with addressing race in the classroom and I'm just—I don't know how comfortable a lot of teachers would be doing that, especially in current political…if you have a White teacher trying to address Black culture [3] [sighs] And I just, I don't know how comfortable a lot of teachers would be [2] you know, without, you know being labeled a racist or… (Session One, 255-266)

In this quote, Chris expressed doubt that many teachers, particularly White teachers, would feel comfortable discussing race with their students. In this and many other

examples, Chris talked about "teachers" or "beginning teachers" and how they might feel about discussing race in classrooms. In this sense, he seemed to distance himself from the subject. He talked about the many fears teachers might experience about discussing race with students:

> I could see maybe like a first year teacher that is very unsure of themselves [laughs] being very hesitant to even wanting to open that door. And I think it is, especially if you're in a district that is predominantly White with teachers serving a minority population, I can see the teachers being very reticent about trying to address anything. [laughs] I just don't. I think that before that could happen, there would have to be extensive [laughs] training and assurances given, you know, that teachers are protected (Session One, 276-291)

Chris went on to elaborate on the specific fears that might contribute to teachers' hesitance to discuss race with their students, including fear of being labeled a racist and fear of losing their jobs.

> If you had parents coming in to say that they addressed this, they're a racist, how much is this district going to stand behind them in this current political environment? Because they're not going to want protests outside of the school and …So, I don't know. (Session One, 304-309)

In addition to the fears he mentioned, Chris also began to allude to another form of resistance in session one as he suggested that talking about race might be futile:

> Well, and I think and I think for part of it, too, and when you flip on the news and you see the looting, you see the rioting, it just reinforces a lot of people's

opinions. You know, why are we going to address anything? They're just going

to burn it down and loot it anyway. (Session One, 1185-1192)

Chris resisted discussing race with students at many points, but this instance was different

because it addressed larger societal issues. He seemed to be suggesting that teachers

could not solve these larger societal issues by discussing race in classrooms and,

therefore, he questioned why "we" would even try. In this sense, Chris alluded to his

belief that teachers have a limited potential to impact students and, in this case, extended

that belief out to a limited potential to impact societal issues as well. Chris's talk about

the rioting in response to police brutality against Black males presented a prejudicial

view of the Black community held by "a lot of people." When he said that their protests

"reinforced" others' ideas about them, he demonstrated how prejudice contributes to the

prevalence of deficit perspectives. He also used this thinking about Black communities

to justify his resistance to discussing race with students.

In these early examples, Chris talked about reasons why teachers might not

choose to discuss race with students, but he also talked about himself as an exception to

this. He explained that his confidence as a teacher and the relationships he had with his

students would allow him to discuss race with them, saying "I really think it depends on

the teacher and the relationship. Like, I would have no problem with my kids" (Session

One, 271-272). When asked if he had conversations with his students about race or

current issues relating to race/racism, he said that he "will if it ties in with what we're

doing. I definitely will if it ties in with what we're doing" (Session One, 312). He went

on to elaborate, saying that his students were "not really" bringing these issues up in his

class: "not so much. Um, they've had a couple questions but it hasn't really dominated

anything" (Session One, 314-6). Although Chris seemed confident in his ability to discuss race with his students, he chose not to because his students had not brought the subject up, despite recent events such as police shootings of African American suspects and protests occurring across the United States in response. Chris felt that these events did not impact his students even though he taught a predominantly African American student population in his special education classroom, which is a common occurrence (Harry & Anderson, 1994).

In this conversation, Chris expressed a few layers of beliefs about discussing race/racism. On one hand, he suggested that teachers experience fear—fear of being called a racist, fear of not being supported by the administration, fear of losing their jobs—as a result of having conversations about race and racism in the classroom. On the other hand, he expressed the belief that he could have these conversations with his students because of the relationship he had built with them. On some occasions, he seemed to include himself in the fears while, at other times, he seemed to distance himself from them based on his teacher-student relationships and said that having these conversations with students "depends on the teacher." He appeared to express some conflict between these two positions. It seemed as if he was struggling between being afraid to discuss race with his students and feeling confident that he had built relationships with his students, a factor that he has identified as imperative to this work, that were strong enough to allow him to do so. In addition to this conflict, Chris also appeared to be struggling with whether or not teachers should discuss race with students at all. He expressed some level of dismissal of this topic, saying that the recent race

demonstrations/riots in response to police brutality across the nation sometimes

reinforced stereotypes and resulted in a "why are we going to address anything" response.

Chris also said that he did not have many of these conversations in his classroom

but that he would if it "ties in with what we're doing." When asked if the kids bring

these ideas up in his class, he said that they sometimes ask a few questions, but that they

did not really bring it up. Overall, Chris said that he did not have conversations about

race or racism in his classroom.

Session two. In session two, Chris continued to talk about discussing race in the

classroom. In this session, he revisited some of the same ideas from session one. First,

he talked about the idea that teachers should only talk about race if "it needs to be" talked

about. He said that he had not really talked about race in his classroom because it hadn't

been necessary:

> I really haven't, but it hasn't been an issue in my classroom…In the past I have
>
> when it's needed to be addressed directly. We haven't come across a situation
>
> where it needs to be. (Session Two, 1208-1214)

When asked, Chris recalled that he chose to discuss race in the classroom during the OJ

Simpson trial because it was "very, very racially charged." However, Chris said that he

had not felt the need to discuss race with his students lately in relation to recent police

brutality incidents and related protests because "I think over this past summer, um, that

hasn't been so much affecting here." In this case, Chris was determining when race

should be discussed based on his perceptions of how students might be affected by recent

events.

Another idea that resurfaced in this session from session one was the hesitance that teachers might experience in relation to discussing race with their students. Chris again discussed first year teachers and how their inexperience might cause them to avoid this subject:

> They're younger teachers. They are unsure of themselves as teachers to begin with so to ask them to kind of then break out, 'Hey, let's talk about race.' [laughs] You know, I think that that—you need someone who's very comfortable with themselves and comfortable with their students. (Session Two, 1238-1247)

Just as he did in session one, Chris noted that many teachers, especially newer ones, would be unlikely to discuss race although he would have no problem with it:

> You know, as I said, I would, in the past I've had no problem discussing race and tackling it head on if, you know, it became a situation either through the community here or in my classroom. Um, but I would definitely tackle it head on again. You know, it's just, I—I don't think it's something that can be, you know, we can't ignore it but at the same time, I don't—I don't necessarily know about going to look for troubles with it. (Session Two, 1249-1260)

Essentially, Chris demonstrated a continued belief that race should only be talked about when it becomes necessary. He talked about his ability to discuss race with students as an exception that existed primarily because of the relationships he built with his students. However, he also mentioned that he did not think teachers should go looking "for troubles with it" and that, because of his experience and qualifications, he was "willing to go into areas I probably shouldn't" and "take more risks than probably a regular

teacher—an average teacher—should" (1293-5). In this excerpt, Chris's talk about

discussing race in schools indicated that he thought it was problematic and risky.

In this session, Chris asserted that he would talk about race/racism in his

classroom if it became necessary and referenced having done so with the OJ Simpson

trial which concluded in 1995. However, he resisted the idea that the police brutality

incidents and the demonstrations related to them which had occurred in recent years

should be talked about because it "hasn't been so much affecting here" and therefore did

not need to be discussed with his students. While he said that he would discuss race with

his students, he also expressed fears again about being labeled racist and said that he did

not know "about going to look for troubles with it [discussing race]." He was again

expressing some conflict between being willing to "tackle" race with his students and

being afraid (or not seeing a reason) to do so. In addition to his fear, Chris's final

comments about being willing to go into things he "shouldn't" and take risks that average

teachers should avoid, seemed to indicate that he did not think race should be discussed

and that it was a risk that should be avoided.

Session three. In session three, Chris continued to resist the idea of discussing

race/racism with his students, citing several ways in which this is a "risky" practice that

should be done only "if necessary." Early in session three, Chris talked about the

Common Core State Standards, a program that was not in place in the state in which he

taught, as one that he did not support. However, he raised a concern about talking about

race with students in conjunction with the Common Core:

I get back to and I don't know, the one thing that I kept coming back to was the

[2] um, how to do all of this within the confines of the Common Core, you know,

103

and I'm reading all of this and they're talking about the cultural responsiveness and it seems almost counter to the Common Core. (Session Three, 912-916)

While Chris was critical of the Common Core and did not work in a state that participated in the program at the time of this study, he still discussed it as a barrier to being able to incorporate issues of race/racism into his curriculum. He felt that the Common Core "was developed with what businesses want in mind" in order to provide students with the skills that companies would be looking for in future employees. From Chris's perspective, this presented a clash with culturally responsive pedagogy because "it just seems to be a little bit of a conflict, the whole—'the disruption of the idea that Eurocentric or middle class forms of discourse language, knowledge, discourse, cultural interpretations are normative.' That is the common core [laughs]" (Session Three, 1499-1505). Chris's comments suggested that, in his opinion, teaching the Common Core excludes the discussion of racial diversity in classrooms because the Common Core values the Eurocentric ways of being that the business world still privileges.

These sections of text demonstrated Chris's resistance, especially because he said at several points throughout our conversations that he was "not a big fan of the Common Core" (921). Although Chris seemed to want to do what was right and good for his students on one hand, he did not seem to agree wholeheartedly that culturally responsive pedagogy was what was best for them. He demonstrated resistance by saying that culturally responsive pedagogy did not match Common Core goals as a way of saying that discussing racial diversity might not be a good idea or even a possibility for teachers within the Common Core. Therefore, Chris seemed to be simultaneously critiquing the Common Core for its exclusion of culturally responsive elements and using

the Common Core as a reason why teachers should not incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices.

In addition to his resistance based on the Common Core, Chris also suggested that discussing race in schools was a risk because teachers are not always supported in this by their administrators:

> I can say firsthand that I know where it came from because they would, when we would start discussing issues like that, 'Why are you doing that? Why are you bringing that, you know, why are you—that's just going to open the door to problems.' Administrators. Top down. From superintendent's office to the building level. (Session Three, 629-637)

Chris saw the administration as having a key role in the discussion of race in classrooms. In this session and others, he discussed the importance of having the support of the administration in addressing racial diversity with students so that teachers feel as though they will be supported in this decision. At the same time, though, Chris continued to assert in this session that race is a "nonissue" in his classroom, saying that "I would like to think it's probably a nonissue with them…um, because I know they feel pretty comfortable [2] telling me anything" (674-678). However, he also suggested that ignoring racial issues can create major problems, saying "I think once you ignore it, it just kind of goes underground and festers" (2192). Again, Chris seemed to be struggling between two ideas about discussing race with students. On one hand, Chris expressed the belief that race should be discussed at certain times when he determined it was necessary in his classroom but that teachers were presented with major obstacles like a lack of administration support and the competing goals of the Common Core standards when

they chose to do so. On the other hand, he expressed a belief that discussing race was a "nonissue" in his classroom. Chris seemed to be at a tension point with some of these competing ideas.

Suddenly, toward the end of this session, when asked if he would be willing to try teaching a lesson centered on racial diversity issues, Chris agreed, saying "oh. Absolut—oh, I'm going in head first. [laughs]" (2296-2298). He selected a class and said that he would consider using the lesson in other classes if it went well:

> I'm gonna—I'm gonna, well, I'm gonna do it with my first block class. Um, I've got one—I've got a Caucasian student and one, two, three, four—one, two, three, four, five [2] African American students, one Caucasian and an Indian. So, I'm gonna start with that and we'll see how it goes and I may just carry it through for the whole day. (Session Three, 2300-2309).

Chris's decision to try a lesson dealing with issues of race was cautious as he chose one class to try it with before committing to trying it with all of his classes, but his willingness to try was exciting. Although he seemed a bit nervous about it, I encouraged his decision, saying "I'm very excited about that because I think it—I think it could be really cool" (2299). I wanted to celebrate his decision because I knew that he had expressed a lot of internal conflict about this throughout the previous sessions. I felt that it was important to celebrate the courage that his decision represented.

The biggest change in this session was that Chris agreed to try a lesson in which he would discuss race in his classroom. As a result, he seemed to overcome on some level, or at least confront, the fear and risk of addressing race in the classroom that he discussed in the first two sessions in order to try it in his classroom in this session. He

106

did seem a little hesitant in some ways, saying things like "I'm going in head first" and talking about how he does not always think things through before he does them, but he still agreed to try it and he invited me to help him work on some ideas for his lesson, saying "if you've got any articles you can recommend..." (2311). We shared some e-mails about the materials over the two days following this session in which I made some recommendations for stories, articles, and poems he might use for this lesson.

Session four. At the beginning of this session, Chris burst into the room, exclaiming that he had "done it." He tried the lesson with his students, pairing the poem "Theme for English B" by Langston Hughes (1951) and the article "What My Bike Has Taught Me about White Privilege" by J. Dowsett (2014). After reading each piece, the class had a discussion about them.

Chris was very proud and excited as he told me about teaching the lesson, which he said "went beautifully" (636), but he also described some hesitation about selecting the readings for the lesson:

> I was teetering. [walks to desk as he talks] I've got this…[laughs]. Also, I have
> the—"The Baddest Dog in Harlem." I was going back and forth. I'm going back
> and forth and I said, 'You know what? I'm doing it [the White privilege piece].
> I'm just going to do it.' 'Cause I thought the best—the "Theme for English B"
> tied in better with that. (Session Four, 681-692)

Although he was hesitant about selecting that piece, he also expressed an additional level of comfort in selecting it:

> As funny as it sounds, I felt the most comfortable doing that one after reading the
> other ones. And I think, because, well, and I told, you know, like, one of the

things we talked about and I talked about with them was like, I've got an uncle

who's a police officer. My father is a retired [city] police officer. So, like, I get

pulled over. I've never had any kind of nervousness or anxiety…or fear. [2]

Because that's what happens. Uh, and I know they have very, very different—and

we talked about that, how their experiences were different when they get pulled

over or when they're hanging out with their friends on the street corner. Or [2]

um, so that I guess my comfort level, I felt more comfortable with the White

privilege than I did with talking about the Ferguson shooting especially with the

recent, oh, [2] you know, everybody's been exonerated in everything. (Session

Four, 211-231)

For Chris, there seemed to be a balance he was trying to strike in his selection of reading

materials for this lesson between finding a piece that would truly allow the students to

engage in conversation about issues of race and finding a piece that he would be

comfortable discussing based on his own experiences. In this instance, he chose to use an

article written about White privilege because, based on his own description about his

experiences with police officers, he experiences it. Chris's careful text selection

demonstrated his desire to design a lesson that would be productive and successful for all

involved.

Chris also talked a lot about the students' responses to the lesson, saying that they

"reacted positively" and were very respectful throughout the lesson. Before they began,

Chris told his students "that they couldn't get nasty with each other. They had to remain

respectful, and that whatever they said, it wasn't going to hurt my feelings" (98-102).

Chris felt that his students followed these guidelines very well and that they participated

well in response to the material. Chris noted that "more people volunteered to read" (111) during that lesson than usual and that they were more eager to read aloud than they typically were:

> 'Cause I had read the first paragraph and immediately one of my other girls, who usually reads read the second one and then I started reading the third [paragraph] and one of my African American boys in the back [said], 'Oh no, I'm reading that Mr. T.' I'm like, 'oh, okay. Go ahead and read it.' (Session Four, 444-449)

In this lesson, Chris reported experiencing strong and enthusiastic student engagement which was demonstrated in part by the students' participation in the reading. He added that "everybody was participating. Everybody had an opinion" (348-350). The students were also deeply engaged in the material, according to Chris.

Students responded strongly to the White privilege article in ways that "surprised" Chris. When discussing the article, students brought up and discussed issues such as how names matter and whether or not White privilege exists. Chris described how the students debated the importance of names:

> It was interesting. One of my students—one of my male students, African American male—um, talked about something that they talked about in the book which was the Black-sounding names and they were what, I think, twice as likely for a White sounding name to get called for an interview than a Black-sounding name? And then I had—one of my students, she has a very, well, she called it a White-sounding name, and she said 'I've got five brothers and sisters and we all have White names' and I looked at her and she said, 'My mom said specifically so we could get jobs later in life.' She's African American. 'So my mom gave us all

White names so that we could get jobs later in life." I was like…and that kicked off a whole conversation 'cause I've got very ethnic sounding names in my classroom. She thought that she had an advantage. She definitely thought that she had an advantage because of her name. And she goes, you know 'people aren't going to meet me—' she goes, you know 'my momma always said when you turn in an application, you turn in a resume, they're just looking at that sheet of paper…so I feel I have an advantage over some people because of my name.' (Session Four, 157-197)

The students were able to discuss this issue openly and to debate it respectfully, which impressed Chris, who proudly noted that "nobody crossed the line. Nobody was offensive" during the conversation (251-253). He went on to describe the students' discussion of White privilege:

But what was interesting was after we got done reading, I had about five—well, let's see—I did it with my 4th block where I've got about 11 kids. Four—one, two, three, four—I had four say they did not believe that White privilege was a thing. Uh, two African American, two Hispanic… [2] They didn't think there was a thing as White privilege. And I had one of them immediately, an African American female, say 'Oh yeah, there is.' And, so we discussed that and it was just very, very interesting. (Session Four, 111-118)

Before the class read this article, Chris explained to the students that he "grew up with it, so I don't…I'm not going to say I have a comment one way or the other as to whether it exists or it doesn't exist. I'm gonna, you know, leave that for you guys" (Session Four, 402-405). Chris described the students' discussion of White privilege as "interesting"

and said that he was "blown away" and that he "did not get the responses I had anticipated" (392-394). He felt that the students would have had much different responses to the article:

> I thought—would've thought more across the board they would have been like 'Oh, yeah, there's White privilege.' …Um, I—but again, I just, the fact that, and the fact that with the election last week that I had two Hispanic students go 'Oh, no. No, there's no White privilege.' I'm like, huh? That kind of threw me for a loop. [laughs] There's 11 in the class. Four said they didn't. The others believed it did, yeah. (Session Four, 399-423)

According to Chris, the students were able to discuss these issues respectfully, and it was clear through his words and body language that he was proud of them. He was especially proud of their reactions to "Theme for English B" which he had paired with the White privilege article. He said that the students "really reacted positively to the poem which I was very happy with," and added that the students just "jumped in, did it…" and it "went beautifully [laughs]" (623-636). According to Chris, the students enjoyed the poem very much:

> They really—a couple of them said, 'Why can't we read poetry like this in class?' And I was like…and they were like, 'Yeah, that was really cool. It was--I get it. I understand it.' But they, uh, they really liked it but they were just more commenting from "Theme for English B" of why can't we read stuff like this in English class, so I…and I get a lot of English teachers aren't willing to…[laughs] do that. (Session Four, 297-317)

In addition to enjoying the poem, the students were able to connect deeply with the poem which helped them create a meaningful conversation around it:

> C: The line—the line that caught them was the…it's 'I am Black…' It's at the bottom. Oh, "Being me will not be White but it will be part of you." [laughs] And that's—that struck them more than anything else.
>
> B: Did they identify with that statement?
>
> C: Yeah. Yeah. And that, you know, a kid talked about how, you know, some of the stuff they do they don't have any buy in to but they just do it because it's what they're told to do. Especially at school. Yeah, so it was—I thought it was kind of cool. (Session Four, 522-535)

Chris's descriptions of this lesson were all positive and indicated that he was proud of the lesson and the students' ability to take on such important topics with maturity and respect. He learned about his students' beliefs and what they were capable of through this lesson, which was demonstrated through his surprise at their responses to the issues discussed and his repeated statements about how his students "did amazingly well" (650). Overall, Chris seemed pleased with the lesson and claimed that it was a success, saying that "nobody attacked anybody else. Even the ones that didn't agree, they just disagreed. So it was…It was really kind of cool. We'll see if I get parent phone calls tomorrow. [laughs]" (255-263). Chris seemed to enjoy the lesson and what it showed him about his students and, although he seemed to hang on to a twinge of concern about parent complaints, he seemed confident in the lesson's success.

As he did in other sessions, Chris credited the relationships he had built with his students as the thing that allowed him to do this lesson. He emphasized the importance

of student-teacher relationships when it comes to talking about race because, in Chris's opinion, his ability to discuss race with his students "is a result of the relationships…If I didn't have the relationship that I have with them, I could never have done that. Ever" (2002-2007). In addition to the importance of relationships, Chris brought up another idea that he referenced in earlier sessions—his ability to discuss race with students while other teachers might not be able to—while he talked about whether or not he would extend this lesson and continue to discuss race with his students:

> I can do that with my kids and feel comfortable doing it with my kids because of the relationship I have with them. 'Cause I could think of right off the top of my head two or three other teachers even in my department that, had they tried this with their class, the administrators would've been up there; there would've been a riot. You know, I'm, I don't know, as I said, I'm a firm believer, and I probably mention it every single time, it's just that relationship. (Session Four, 494-508)

In some ways, Chris seemed to talk about himself as an exception here, arguing that he could do this with his students while other teachers could not, but he also raised the issue of relationships and the important role that they play in having open discussions with students.

As a result of the relationships he built, Chris planned to continue discussing race with his students. When asked if he would repeat this lesson in his other classes, Chris said that he would, although he would be thoughtful about the text selection for each group:

> I'm going to absolutely do it with my 1st block class. I'm going to repeat the lesson [laughs]...Well, and I think—I think it will go very well with them too, just

113

knowing the personalities in there—there's a higher maturity level. My 3rd block,

uh, we'll do 'The Baddest Dog' [laughs]. (Session Four, 553-555; 733-739)

Chris continued to be mindful of the students in each of his classes as he considered

which texts to select, adjusting his choices based on their maturity level. His cautious

approach demonstrated that Chris was thoughtfully engaged in this process and was

trying to provide meaningful content that would be responsive to the students in each

class. His caution also demonstrated that he was taking his time and stepping into this

practice carefully and on his own terms. This approach seemed to be building his

comfort and confidence in discussing race with his students. Chris was also planning to

continue working with these topics in some way, although he seemed unsure of what that

might look like in this session:

> I'm going to have to think on it. I'm definitely--I don't know if I'm going to
>
> extend *this*, or [2] if I'm going to—I don't know. I haven't decided. So I'm
>
> gonna—yeah, I'm gonna…Again, I don' t know if it's going to be an extension of
>
> this or if it's going to be something else…(Session Four, 480-486)

Although Chris was unsure of what he might do to continue discussing race with his

students, he was thinking about how to do so which was a positive thing. His decision to

move forward and to consider ways of continuing this work was a success.

In addition to discussing race with students, Chris also talked about the need for

discussing race as a faculty in this session by describing a situation his close friend was

experiencing in another school. He shared that his friend's "African American students

have called her a racist several times" throughout the year and that this had been

"ignored" by the school's administration team (984-986). He described the situation as

114

dangerous and said that the problem was "expanding" because the school was ignoring it (955). Chris, referencing the book we read, pointed out that ignoring a situation like this would not work and would only succeed in making the problem worse:

> It is growing. [laughs] Yeah. So now parents are starting to call in wanting—whenever, you know, especially an African American student gets written up. They're demanding to know why, what steps were taken…And it--Yeah, very much that—so it's—it's—now it's starting to take on a life of its own because it's being ignored…And I think, you know, there's certain things maybe that need to be swept under and schools maybe don't need to approach, but if race is becoming an issue, it definitely needs to be addressed. (Session Four, 997-1357)

Chris talked about discussing race among a school faculty in much the same way he previously talked about discussing race with students, focusing on doing so only when it becomes necessary. While he seemed to have moved past that belief in terms of discussing race with students through his lesson, he reverted to that belief when he talked about discussing race among a school faculty. The way he talked about this situation indicated that Chris was still tackling the concept of discussing race with other people and that he was still struggling to merge multiple, competing ideas on this subject: his success with discussing race with his students versus his long-held belief that race should only be discussed when it is necessary.

Finally, in this session, Chris had a moment when he suddenly saw the material in the book we read, the discussions we had been having, and some of his past experiences come together. He talked about a class he took for his master's degree with a professor he called "Doc" who "was this—he had to be about 55-60-year-old former Colonel in the

U.S. Army. Black guy" (1909-1910). Chris described Doc as the "best damn professor" and said that he "ended up taking another course of his the next semester that I didn't have to take because I wanted to take his class" (1912-1913). Chris said that Doc was "amazing" because of "just his perspective on everything" (1917-1919). According to Chris, Doc advocated for the same kind of self-reflection that *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools* (Howard, 2010) suggests teachers should engage in order to become better teachers for students of color:

It just, I mean, a lot of, like, what they're advocating in the book. We had those discussions in class. Now, it was a class for counselors not for teachers. He didn't cut anything and I remember the first day of class, he sat there, walked in and about probably seven or eight of the African American kids dropped out of the class because he said, 'If you thought this was going to be an easy class…' and he started hammering them with Black history questions. And he said, 'you're going to sit here and talk about Black pride and you can't even name or talk about what these people did to get you here?' So, yeah, it was…but he was real. It was…he said, he goes, 'you will be uncomfortable in this class 'cause if I didn't make you uncomfortable, I didn't do my job.' He definitely made us uncomfortable [laughs], but I went back for a second semester, yeah. He made us address those issues. And that's what I said, it—it just—it just—it all just came full circle for me just now, [laughs] thinking about Doc. It's—it was exactly what he said. This was…that was—and that was his whole thing was, and it was kind of putting it in a counseling realm, the same thing that they're trying in here with teachers is, get past these prejudices and get past…That self-reflection piece, and he was

116

constantly pushing us with that. Constantly pushing us with that. And, as I said,

he hammered the Black students, then he would just look dead at us and be like,

'You ever been to a Black church?' [4] Uh, no. I have now! [laughs]. (Session

Four, 1928-1988)

In this description of his experiences with Doc, Chris described being pressed about his

understanding of various cultures while also being asked to reflect on those issues. He

talked about it all "coming full circle" in this memory of Doc as Chris realized that these

experiences were connected. The power of his favorable memory of Doc seemed to pull

Chris toward a deeper understanding of how this work on addressing racial diversity in

schools was important and uncomfortable, but possible.

In this session, Chris discussed the lesson he tried in which he talked about

race/racism with his students and it seemed to help him see this issue from a new point-

of-view. Although he continued to express some concern/fear about doing this, he also

talked about it with pride, focusing on how the kids loved it and how impressed he was

with their ability to discuss this subject. All in all, Chris was very excited about this

experience. His body language was proud—he was animated and smiling—and he was

very excited to tell me about the lesson. I was also impressed with his eagerness to try it

with another class of his. Chris went from saying he would only talk about race/racism in

his class if it was necessary to designing and teaching a lesson around it, and he was

obviously excited by the results.

In the other parts of this session, Chris also talked about the importance of talking

about race at the faculty level in terms of his former colleague's experience at another

school. In this session, although he was excited about his experience in the classroom

and seemed to move away from this idea with students, Chris talked about discussing race as a faculty only when it is necessary. He added that when it became necessary, race must be discussed as a faculty because ignoring it would only make it "explode."

Later in the session, he also remembered his former professor who discussed similar ideas in a course he took for his master's degree and he remembered him as his favorite professor. He talked about how he loved the course and how much it pushed him. He came "full circle" with that experience and the book we discussed which seemed to lend some credibility to discussing race/racism with students in his eyes.

Session five. In session five, Chris continued to reflect on the lesson he taught the week before. He began to talk in this session about how White students could benefit from this type of lesson:

> [sighs] What I thought, and, you know, I thought about this a lot even after I did the lesson—the one on White privilege. I think more than with a minority classroom, I think that would be a phenomenal tool for an all-White classroom. And, as I said, probably even more so than with a minority classroom, although as I said, I was very shocked by the results I got. And, for some of my minority students saying there's no such thing as White privilege…huh! That's interesting 'cause that's not at all what I expected. But, you know, I think just opening their minds and their perspective to something different. But again, I think just as you could have problems from minority parents, I could see probably even more so [3] out of the White parents. [laughs]. (Session Five, 1632-1649)

Here, Chris reflected on the need for White students to engage in these conversations on race along with their peers. In saying that White students might benefit from these

conversations "even more so than with a minority classroom," Chris seemed to be

pointing out the importance of White students thinking and learning about non-White

cultures, experiences, and perspectives so that "their minds and their perspective" could

be opened to "something different." Two things seemed to be happening here: first,

Chris seemed to be thinking deeply about the fact that discussions about race are not only

for students of color, but they are also for the widening of all students' perspectives and,

second, Chris seemed to be separating these groups in the way he described these

discussions which seems to suggest that the students would be having these discussions

separately. I did not feel during the conversation that Chris was advocating for a

segregated conversation about issues of race. Instead, this statement seemed to be rooted

in a process of thinking about how all students might benefit from these conversations in

a variety of ways. Chris's discussion of these issues also seemed to suggest a hint of re-

emerging fear toward the end of the statement when he referenced the "problems" that

parents might raise as a result of having these conversations in the classroom.

Chris continued to reflect on his lesson by thinking about when and where these

conversations should start. He advocated for an early start to integrating racial diversity

into the curriculum:

I don't think it's something that can start in high school. It's—that's gotta be like

kindergarten, first grade…until it's so normalized by the time you hit middle

school and high school. Again, I would guess that it's something that needs to

start at a very young age and kind of work its way so that by the time kids get to

the middle school, high school, it's so normalized, it's just part of, you

know…and I think [2] telling minority students there's White privilege…well,

119

duh. [laughs] So I think that's something you've got to incorporate into [the curriculum]. (1918-1921; 2037-2047)

Here, Chris professed a belief that conversations about race should start with students as early as kindergarten and first grade so that students would be comfortable having them by the time they are in middle school and high school. This statement demonstrated a belief that students should be having these discussions in classrooms and that it should start early in order to be effective. While this belief suggested that Chris may have become an advocate for discussing race in schools regularly, his fears about this practice continued to re-emerge in this section.

Chris seemed to go back to a place of teetering between advocating for talking about race in his classroom and the fears and risks of doing so—much more so in this session than he did in the previous one. He talked again about several of his previous reasons why teachers might not do this work: a lack of relationships with their students, a lack of administrative support, a fear of being labeled a racist, and a lack of need to discuss race explicitly.

He talked first about the necessity of strong relationships, saying "...But even just to have those difficult racial conversations. If you've got no relationship with your kids, it could turn ugly very, very fast" (357-361). Chris maintained throughout the book club sessions that strong, positive relationships between teachers and their students are the key to any success in the classroom, and he specifically extended that belief to a teacher's ability to discuss race with students. Chris believed that strong relationships were also imperative if faculties were going to talk about race with their students and each other as well:

Um, on page 143 [in the book], I put rarely explicit discussion among school staff about race. And what really hit me was the one they were talking about the principal who was, I guess, I think it was the principal who was talking about if she failed one of her Black students, she was failing the whole community. And I thought that was kind of cool. And I think in order to get the schools really comfortable discussing race, that's gotta be something that's top down. (Session Five, 1146-1153)

In order for teachers to feel comfortable discussing race in any environment, Chris believed that the administration must initiate and support that practice. He believed that principals should not "force it on the whole faculty at the beginning" (1234-5). Instead, Chris argued that principals should build a movement among the faculty because there is a "huge difference between the principal saying we're going to do this and in a PLC [Professional Learning Community] or in the faculty lounge, if I ever went in there, the teachers talking about it and talking about how great it is" (1242-44). Chris believed that strong relationships were necessary for principals to build trust among their faculties to have discussions about race:

C: You build up relationships, you build a strong foundation and then you can bring this in.

B: With the faculty just like you do with the students.

C: They're no different. As I said, I think if you, if a principal were to just drop it on the staff, I don't see it going over well. But if you've got that contingent of teachers that are really a hundred percent behind it... (Session Five, 1259-1285)

Chris believed that administrative support was a fundamental necessity for teachers to feel comfortable discussing race with their students. He said that the fact that the district and principal had allowed me to conduct this study in his school was what made him comfortable with trying the lesson he taught:

> 'Cause I knew that he would have my back because he's obviously all for it if he's having you come in for this. So, that was never a concern of mine. If you didn't have that kind of support from the top down, I don't know—how comfortable I would've—even with the relationship I've got with my kids, I don't know how comfortable, like, in my previous school, I never would have done this. (Session Five, 1166-1174)

Here, Chris demonstrated a continued fear about what would happen if parents complained about curriculum that incorporated discussions of racial diversity. His expressions of fear extended to other areas as well:

> Oh, and that's, and I think if you don't have the support of the leadership to do it, there's—it's career suicide to do try. I'm just being honest. You know, because I—as I'm thinking, just projecting out, parents call and complain, suddenly you're out of a job. What school's going to touch you when you were fired for being a racist? (Session Five, 1224-1231)

Chris's fears about parent complaints extended here to fears of being fired and labeled a racist. He used strong terms like "career suicide" to describe discussing race with students in an environment where the administration did not support it. Chris also said that teachers might not want to discuss race in their classrooms or with each other because "you know, let's face it, most White people don't want to address race because

122

they don't want to be called a racist. I've been called a whole lot worse in my life, so I don't care. [laughs]" (2020-2026). Just as Chris's fears of the power of conservative, White communities re-emerged in this section, so did his assertions of exceptionalism. Chris again argued that he was able to enter conversations about race with students because of the relationships he built with them, while teachers who had not developed these relationships might not be able to do so. He talked about how the risk of teaching his lesson on White privilege was overcome by the confidence he had in the relationships he had with his students:

> No, but actually bringing it into practice in the classroom 'cause I think it can open up, especially in today's political environment, it can open a lot of doors, and as you could see that I was willing to jump in head first. But, I could see teachers that maybe didn't—don't have the relationship with their kids that I have trying to do that and it just backfiring and blowing up. You know, they say you know 'Oh, we'll do this for the day' because it's a lesson plan and they don't have to think anything further on it. Okay, and you know the teachers I'm talking about. (Session Five, 1197-1209)

Chris reiterated his belief in the power of relationships to create opportunities for success in classrooms. He also talked about the commitment of the teacher to the material in this section, noting that these kinds of lessons should not just be a lesson "for the day," suggesting that it should instead be a thoughtful integration of lessons into a curriculum about which the teacher is reflectively and thoughtfully constructing.

Chris also talked about whether or not teachers should be discussing race explicitly as a faculty in this section, again applying the stance that talking about race

should be done only when it is necessary, as he had in past sessions. In this session, he also seemed to imply that teachers might not ever need to talk explicitly about race as a school under certain circumstances. This conversation stemmed from a part of the book that named five practices that were consistent among successful schools that served culturally diverse students:

> A close examination of each of these schools revealed that there were five specific practices and ideological stances that appeared to be most critical in the success of these schools: (1) visionary leadership, (2) teachers' effective practices, (3) intensive academic support, (4) the acknowledgement of race, and (5) parental and community engagement. (Howard, 2010, p. 130)

Chris's response to this part of the book revealed that he believed that schools could achieve the fourth characteristic, the acknowledgement of race, in ways other than explicit discussion of race:

> Teachers using best practices, uh, support, acknowledgement of race, and, uh, parent and community involvement. What I was left with is, if you've got the leadership, the practice, the support the parents and community…I would just be interested to see whether they got the same results whether or not they acknowledged race. Because I'm thinking if you've got those four things in place at your school, your school's going to be rocking. I really don't. I think if you've got those four key components in place regardless of what your racial makeup of the school is, the school's going to be awesome. Maybe I'm being naïve...I don't know if I'm being naïve, but [2] I don't know. But I think. I don't know. And I guess I don't want to say number four---that, you know, one, two, three and five,

but I guess if you've got those four components, you're automatically bringing in number four. 'Cause if you've got visionary leadership and you're using best practices and, you know, the teachers are supported and there's support and parents and community are involved in the school, I don't know how you can then work in that kind of involvement and not understand where your students are coming from. Because the community is there in your school. I think if you've got the other four components, you're automatically going to have number four [acknowledgment of race]. (Session Five, 761-806)

Chris extended this statement by talking about the ways in which community involvement, number five in the book, can incorporate the acknowledgement of race without having to discuss race explicitly in the school. He said that teachers and principals could attend school and community events in order to acknowledge race:

If you're doing that it's going to automatically kind of…You're going to understand the community that you're dealing with. You're going to understand the kids that you're working with. But I think, if you don't have the visionary leadership, if you don't have those other components, you're probably not going to have the acknowledgement of race anyway... Yeah. And so, there is like an engagement with culture and with race by doing that, but it's not an explicit conversation. You know, I don't know how much it needs to be acknowledged explicitly because if everything else is in place, that's going to be acknowledged anyway. (Session Five, 828-861)

Chris argued here that if teachers were truly engaged in their communities, then the explicit acknowledgement of race would become unnecessary. In this sense, he seemed

125

to be demonstrating resistance again as he argued for discussing race only when it becomes necessary.   This argument along with the re-engagement with the fears he raised about discussing race in previous sessions suggested that Chris was still struggling with competing ideas about when and if teachers should discuss race in classrooms and as a faculty.

While Chris did come back to some of his previous concerns about teachers addressing race in schools in session five, he also talked about the importance of doing so. He talked about the importance of White students in particular engaging in conversations about race and "opening their minds and their perspective to something different" (1645). He also stressed the importance of starting these conversations early in schools so that students would be very comfortable talking about these issues throughout their lives. In this sense, Chris was advocating for the integration of racial diversity in curriculum planning. The fact that he was, at the same time, talking about the risks involved with discussing race in classrooms and schools demonstrated that he was still working through these issues. While he struggled with balancing the risks and fears associated with discussing race with students with his belief that race should only be discussed when it becomes necessary in the first two sessions, he later struggled between the ideas that race should be discussed intentionally and thoughtfully with all students beginning in early grades with that of the risk and limitations by outside forces as well as the idea that deep community involvement might eliminate the need for teachers to discuss race as a faculty altogether.   His ideas about discussing race in schools were changing throughout the sessions and the continued tension and conflict among his ideas

continued to demonstrate that he was confronting his beliefs and growing and changing through the book club experience.

Chris talked about the changes he experienced in his ideas about discussing race and racism with students in his exit interview:

Um, but I think my comfort level is a little bit higher, but I think my understanding of [3] kind of that—the ramifications of not addressing it. Um, I never thought from that end before. I had never thought of it as, well, by ignoring it, it's kind of just building in exactly what it is. So, I think my understanding, you know, and my, um, I guess my knowledge level has increased. (Exit Interview, 171-175)

Chris talked about the "damage" ignoring discussions of race and racism does to students and described his change in this area:

It's not that I was, that I would shy away from the whole, you know, racial discussions, but it was just, I think probably a fairly typical teacher of 'well, we'll just leave that out of the classroom. It just doesn't have a place here in the class.' And my—my mindset on that is completely changed. It's easy to ignore it, but you don't realize the damage you're doing by ignoring it. (Exit Interview, 699-707)

Overall, Chris felt that he experienced growth in his knowledge of and comfort level with discussing race/racism with students. He continued to emphasize that students should be talking about race in kindergarten so that they become comfortable doing so at an early age. Chris also talked about how he had continued to use materials and plan lessons

around race/racism since the book club and shared some of his plans to continue that work into the 4th quarter of the school year.

       Colorblindness and anger. The theme of colorblindness emerged across three of the book club sessions with Chris. In session two, Chris did not name colorblindness explicitly, but he did talk about his students in ways that espoused colorblind ideology:

> Because I've never, like, with my kids I've never, my students, I've never looked at them as any different. Whether you're Black, you're Hispanic, you're White, male, female, it's, you know, it's what you've got to do to graduate. I, you know, I don't really care what color you are. And, you know, I'd hope my students don't perceive me any differently. (Session Two, 1088-1101)

Chris claimed that he did not care about his students' race and that he did not see them "as any different" based on their race. Chris was using colorblindness here to demonstrate that he saw all students as the same and therefore equal and only focuses on what each student needs to do to graduate rather than on their individual characteristics. Chris did not talk about the uniqueness or the value of his students' racial diversity. He continued this pattern when he talked about discipline in this session, saying "I've always said kids thrive when there's rules, there's expectations, and there's consequences. They—they thrive on those conditions, and I don't care if you're White, you're Black, you're Hispanic..." (1741-1745). Chris avoided recognizing differences of any kind among students of different races. He was eager to be seen as someone who did not see race. He also demonstrated this pattern when he talked about the way he saw the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. He talked about this movement as a time when leadership in the Black community, in his opinion, was different than it is now:

128

I was just wondering to myself how much of that was a result of the Civil Rights Movement—the community having different expectations than they do now. What came to my mind, I wonder how much came out of that militant Civil Rights Movement attitude of, 'you know, there really is no difference, so let's show them that.' The expectations of the community were different. (Session Two, 1039-1054)

Throughout our conversation in session two, Chris maintained a colorblind stance toward his students and people of color in general. Chris repeatedly and persistently asserted his colorblindness. In these instances, he appeared to be using colorblindness as an equalizer—as a way of saying he did not see students' color, therefore proving that he must not be treating them any differently or expecting anything different from them based on the color of their skin. He was proud of it and was using it to demonstrate that he did not use race as an influence in his classroom.

In the book we read, Howard (2010) wrote that colorblind approaches are dangerous because they "contribute to internalized racism, reinforce racial hierarchies, and contribute to the development of deficit models about students of color" in addition to "reproducing racial and cultural hegemony in school practices" (p. 124). As Howard began to tackle "the role of race in learning" in chapter five and through the end of the book, Chris had a strong reaction. He began session four by explaining his reaction to this topic:

I, uh, must apologize. I read—I had to re-read [chapters] five and six because the first time I read it I got really pissed off because I read it from the exact lens that they said don't read it through [laughs]. So, I'm sitting there reading and getting

129

more and more and more pissed off. And then, so I put it aside and then I said, 'You know what? I gotta go back' because I was closed off to just about everything. Because, you know, they are just attacking me because I'm a White teacher. So, I re-read it [laughs] and… I felt—I was a little bit—yeah. I still felt [2] I don't know, maybe it's just my own personal—a little attacked. [laughs]. But, it wasn't nearly—I was reading a little bit more objectively. I wasn't sitting there all pissed off because I'm a horrible White racist teacher. Especially because I more—one of my things and my thing with my kids is my relationships with them [laughs] And as I said, I think it was because I pour so much of myself into my kids that at first it was just—took me aback. It pissed me off. [laughs]. So, yeah, as I said I went back and re-read chapters five and six. (Session Four, 22-68)

Chris's strong reaction to the book's discussion of race continued to come up throughout session four. He went back to this reaction several times throughout the session, noting several times that he "was done! It [the book] was going in the fireplace" and described his own reaction to the chapter as "visceral" (1885; 2233). Chris also predicted that other teachers reading this book might have similar reactions:

I think a lot of them will get to chapter five [pshew] and done. They won't even get to the self-reflection piece in chapter six 'cause they're going see that, 'Well, they're just calling me a racist bastard and…screw it. It's just another Black author telling me I'm a bad White man.' And they'll kick the book. (Session Four, 2327-2335)

These excerpts demonstrated that Chris was challenged by this chapter and the ongoing discussion of race in the book. His use of terms such as "racist" and "bad White man" and "racist bastard" demonstrated that Chris felt personally attacked by the book's presentation of this material. He was shut down after his first read of this chapter and his first reaction was to burn the book in his fireplace. He did, however, take a step back to re-read the chapter from a new, more objective stance in order to try to understand more fully what the chapter was trying to accomplish:

> I guess I was just reading it from the lens that they said not to read it from. [laughs] Which is I felt like—I just felt like they were attacking White teachers. And I know I was reading it with that lens and I was looking for it and so every, every little, and I'm not going to say misstatement on his part, but every, you know what I mean? Every time…It was just like, okay, there it is, he's attacking White teachers again...he's attacking White teachers again. He's attacking White teachers again. So, as I said, I got—I get tired of it because, as I said, I pour so much into my kids. Um, the second time I read through it, I was able to distance myself a little. (Session Four, 823-836)

Although Chris felt attacked and was "taken aback" by his first read of chapter five, his willingness to revisit the chapter showed that he was engaged in a conversation with the text. He was clearly challenged by the material, but he was also open enough to come back and re-engage with it.

Chris seemed to benefit from the second reading of chapter five in the sense that he seemed to begin to recognize its purpose:

I, the second time reading through, the first time I was just like 'screw this book. I'm never picking it up again. I'm done with this book. This book is stupid!' [laughs] Here's the one…what got—what really struck me was when, especially the second time reading it, I thought about—it didn't happen here—but last year I was department chair for special ed. for my school, so I worked all summer. So I would see teachers coming in and out all summer and when PowerSchool would open up so that they could see their case lists. They wouldn't know these kids and I just remember how many teachers were saying things like 'Oh, my God. I have so many Black kids' or 'I've got…' and it's like, wow. And it just really struck me as I reread in chapter five and six…and it's like, yeah, that's what they're talking about. [laughs] (Session Four, 753-777)

Chris began to reveal the fact that he could see what Howard (2010) was getting at in his discussion of the role of race in education, and he acknowledged that he had seen these things in the schools in which he has worked. He recalled another interaction with a close friend of his who was a teacher in his previous school. This teacher had been called a racist by her African American students several times, and he recalled a conversation he had with her about this situation:

Even [my friend] who, you know, I've mentioned her before. But I'm saying, with just replaying a conversation last night after reading—I can't remember if it was five or six that I read where she just made the comment a couple weeks ago, 'Well, I'm having so much trouble with this class because there are so many Black kids in there.' It's like, [2] So I said, 'because your perception is that you're

132

going to have problems because there are Black kids in there?' Or is it…?

(Session Four, 779-790)

Here, Chris seemed to see this conversation differently than he did at the time it occurred. He was connecting experiences he has had in schools with the information presented in chapter five about the important role that race plays in learning environments. Chris was able to move from a defensive position to one of reflection, allowing him to find examples of the points Howard (2010) makes about race throughout chapters five and six in his own experiences in schools. Chris's willingness to engage with the text and to re-read these chapters helped him to recognize the importance of their messages:

> I don't—as I said, it just—it really got me playing, as I said, through my head of just different [2] things people have said to me throughout the years and it's like, God, I can't—and I can't tell you how many times I've heard—when teachers open up that class list and they look down the list of names, and it's like, 'Oh, great. I've got…' [3] and I'm like, huh, okay, maybe... maybe there is something a little bit to this [laughs]. (Session Four, 800-804)

Chris was obviously angered by these chapters of the book which made him feel attacked as a White teacher. He felt as though the chapters were blaming him or condemning him as a racist simply because of his Whiteness. However, he did go back and re-read the chapter with new eyes and seemed to have a better experience the second time. He seemed to experience a shift and to start to believe for the first time that maybe there was something to the point the author was making about race after all—maybe it does need to be addressed because it is a real thing that is affecting students of color in schools all the time. His strong reaction, although unexpected, did seem to force him to confront

133

himself and the subject matter in a way that led to some level of a shift on the matter. Just as Chris's reaction to the book's discussion of race in schools softened through his second reading of the chapters, so did his commitment to colorblind ideologies.

Colorblindness was directly addressed and condemned in parts of chapters five and six of the book, and this seemed to impact Chris's use of colorblindness as a way of dealing with racial diversity. Instead of saying things like he "doesn't care" what race his students are like he did in session two, Chris began to reflect on the ideas about colorblindness represented in the book:

> The other one that I found really interesting was the colorblindness. Page 100 (Howard, 2010)—it makes worse, it marginalizes. 'The educators ignore race or adopt colorblind approaches while failing to realize that the greater avoidance of the topic denies students an essential part of their being and only increases the likelihood of race becoming an explosive topic.' I just thought that was very, very interesting. (Session Four, 1340-1349)

Not only was Chris looking closely at what the book had to say about colorblindness, but he was also examining his own beliefs about it. He went on to discuss colorblindness through the example of how his friend's school was handling the situation with her African American students calling her a racist:

> Just, and again, just what's going on in my former school. You see it blowing up because everyone's ignoring it. And I think, you know, there's certain things maybe that need to be swept under and schools maybe don't need to approach, but if race is becoming an issue, it definitely needs to be addressed. (Session Four, 1351-1357)

In this situation, Chris saw the school as adopting a colorblind approach because they were unwilling to discuss the issue. Chris saw this approach as ineffective but noted that it is often what teachers are advised to do:

> And then, you know, and as I said, just, uh, the thought of the colorblindness, it's like, 'cause that's what we're always—don't see the students for, you know, their race, just see them for who they are not what they are. And, you know, this was just kind of, just kind of turns that on its head. That's where I put in, uh, [clears throat] I think that, and I think that there's a lot of people that [clears throat] pretend to be colorblind. (Session Four, 1365-1373)

Chris made an important point here that teachers are often advised by others in schools to avoid seeing/acknowledging race. He referred to this refusal to acknowledge race as teachers "pretend[ing] to be colorblind." His use of the word "pretend" indicated that he saw falseness in this approach to race and he seemed to distance himself from colorblindness through this statement.

Chris's interactions with the book's stance on colorblindness seemed to push him away from adopting colorblind approaches and toward respecting the danger that they pose to students of color. Chris talked about how he experienced a shift in his beliefs about colorblindness and his understanding of the dangers it poses to students:

> But I think [2] you know, I guess it's just opened me up and I'm kind of looking a little bit more around me with how people are interacting and I don't—I would like to believe that I'm having genuine interactions with my kids and I think, based on the reaction I get from them, I can [2] I can safely say they're pretty comfortable with me. Um, but, I think on the other hand, [3] there's—there's that

135

teachers are going to act with the colorblindness but they've got that lens of

'Well, they're just Black kids. How do you expect them to act? That's just how

they're raised.' And that's [3] you know, I guess I never thought of it from the

lens of, you know, just how dangerous for their future that is. (Session Four,

1472-1485)

In this excerpt, Chris not only indicated that his perspective on colorblindness shifted, but

he also began to align colorblindness with racism. Although he did not explicitly state

this, his connection between those who adopt a colorblind stance and those who hold

deficit views of students of color implied that he was starting to see a similarity between

these two ideas.

In session five, Chris continued to reference colorblindness and he continued to

align himself with the book's stance that colorblind perspectives are harmful to students.

In his discussion of the lesson he taught on White privilege, Chris revealed that he "never

would have done this" at his previous school:

Just because they're kind of that—the colorblind and, you know, as I said, right

now you've got African American students screaming racism and they're

sweeping it under the carpet instead of addressing it. So, as I said, I don't know

how comfortable I would've been. (Session Five, 1174-1182)

Chris shifted from his adoption of colorblindness in session two to a critique of it here as

he provided this example from his previous school. He expressed that colorblind

approaches to race are dangerous to students and a threat to teachers' freedom to discuss

race with their students. As this session continued, Chris reflected further on the change

he experienced in this area, saying "and I guess I fell into that whole colorblindness... I

think that it's more—more that I'm more aware" after the book club experience (1947 ;1999). In his exit interview, Chris credited his willingness to talk about race in the classroom and "drop...the defensiveness" with his ability to address his use of colorblindness:

> I think it all ties back into that—the willingness to talk about it and address it and I think it's...as I said, I'm—I think it's understanding now after doing the readings and everything—the understanding of the repercussions of not addressing it. You know, they're so devastating for the kids that...and I think that's what has moved me from that colorblindness. Now, I'm not in any way saying that I'm the pinnacle of what you should be [laughs]...I'm still at the baby steps. (Exit Interview, 729-735)

Plan of Action

At the end of the fifth session, I talked to Chris about what work he would want to do on his own to extend his focus on racial diversity beyond the book club experience. At first, Chris seemed unsure of how he might approach this. He said, "See, I don't know because I've never thought about it before and I guess I fell into that whole colorblindness—so I guess, I just—I don't know" (1945-1947). After a few minutes of thinking, Chris decided that he would like to work on "incorporating it into the classroom" through lesson plans and "being engaged, or engaging in the classroom work with it" (1950). We talked about how he might continue to use texts as part of his reading curriculum to engage his students in conversations and in writing about topics that are relevant to their lives and that allow them to talk about important racial issues arising in their personal lives or in society in general. I provided Chris with a variety of

texts (See Appendix C) that he might use with his students as he continued to plan new lessons.

Chris also talked about continuing conversations about issues of racial diversity in schools with colleagues. At the time of this study, Chris was in his first semester at SHS. He had not built a lot of relationships with teachers at this school yet, although he desired to continue working toward that over time. He said that he thought that he would be able to develop relationships with teachers to have the conversations "as the year goes on, probably and as I get to meet more people" (1975-1977). He also emphasized that his willingness to seek out people to have these conversations with is "a lot different than it would have been 10 years ago" but that he was "definitely" willing to do that with work with his coworkers (1958). Chris talked about how he saw the process of building relationships with teachers to have these conversations:

> But, I think, you know, if you can get—as I said, I think it all boils down to a
> couple of people who are on fire about it, dragging it in and dragging people in,
> especially people who are viewed as leaders. (Session Five, 1960-1965)

Chris made it clear that he was interested in seeking out a group of teachers with whom he could begin this conversation over time in his building as he is able to meet more teachers and to build more substantial relationships with them.

Due to these factors, Chris and I decided that his plan of action would include these two goals: to integrate culturally responsive pedagogy into his classroom practice and to work toward seeking out colleagues to have conversations with about issues of racial diversity in his school. In order to support his goal of incorporating more lessons that address racial diversity into his curriculum, I gave Chris several texts that he might

use and I offered my support if he needed it. I continued to check in with Chris regularly after the final book club session.

In our exit interview, Chris reported that he had been talking to other teachers about his experience in the book club and about the topics we discussed. He had talked with a new teacher who had been moved into the classroom next to his and with a former colleague at another school. Chris said that he felt that his conversations with colleagues would continue to grow as his relationships grew with teachers over time and "now that I'm starting to get to know teacher personalities." He also reported that he had been incorporating more culturally responsive teaching practices into his classroom through his selection of materials and discussion topics. Chris had used several short stories written by African American authors in his lessons, continued conversations about race/racism with his students, and started involving his students in curriculum decisions. Chris also talked about his desire to continue to grow in his understanding of racial diversity and to continue to incorporate these new ideas into his teaching practices. In addition to having conversations with other teachers and incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy into his classroom practice, Chris also expressed a desire to "broaden" his reading on this topic. We agreed to stay in touch and to continue to discuss his progress and share ideas regularly.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Implications

Study Overview

This qualitative, action research study was designed to understand and describe the experiences and the effects of Chris's membership in a professional book club focused on issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices through the following actions: confronting personal biases, discussing and reflecting on personal experiences and beliefs, questioning and critiquing personal beliefs and teaching practices, interacting with other professionals and with the readings in a supportive environment in which we celebrated and supported articulations of social justice or positive change.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do teachers describe their relationship to diversity?

2. How do teachers talk about students of color in the book club?

3. How do teachers talk about their book club experiences?

4. How do teachers describe their beliefs and ideologies about racial diversity throughout the study?

Summary of Findings

Relationship to diversity. Chris described his relationship to diversity in a variety of ways. Early on, he defined diversity mostly through economic terms and

stressed the role of poverty in school diversity. Chris's upbringing in two very different

settings, one of them rural and the other urban, provided Chris with a variety of early

experiences that affected his relationship to diversity. Both of the neighborhoods he grew

up in were all White and, while race was not talked about for the first decade of Chris's

life, it became a topic when he moved to an urban setting. Chris's father warned Chris

that their neighbors would not approve if he were to bring a Black friend home from

school, so he should "think twice" before doing so. It was also in this setting that Chris

became familiar with social and political practices such as gentrification and White flight,

which he later became critical of as an adult.

Chris also described his relationship with diversity through his role as a teacher.

Although he defined diversity largely through economic terms, he also critiqued several

school practices related to race, such as inequitable discipline practices and surface

cultural celebrations of race and ethnicity. Chris also had a strong, emotional reaction to

students' stories included in the book which showed how teachers had acted in racist

ways toward their students.

Chris advocated for schools integrating conversations about racial diversity earlier

and more often and said that he supported practices such as teaching students how to

codeswitch while he also questioned the value of assimilation practices in schools. Chris

talked about several ways in which his professional relationship to diversity had changed

through this process. However, Chris did not believe that his personal relationship to

diversity had changed throughout the book club and he said that he had "always been

pretty open" personally.

Talk about students of color. Chris talked about students of color whom he taught in positive terms. He described them with hope, pride and enthusiasm and displayed these characteristics in the many stories he told about encouraging and supporting his students of color. In addition to talking about his students in this way, he also rejected the harsh judgments others sometimes placed on his students of color based on their academic or behavioral performances.

When Chris talked about students of color whom he did not teach, he talked about them in two ways. On one hand, Chris showed concern for their well-being and achievement when he discussed the performance disparities between African American preschoolers and their peers when they were described in the book. He also showed disapproval of teachers acting on racial stereotypes to marginalize their students of color and concern for the inequities this might cause for students of color in schools. However, Chris also talked about students of color whom he did not teach in a distanced and deficit-based way when he described African American students using their race as a "defense mechanism" to stay out of trouble when a White teacher was disciplining them. He extended this thinking when he talked about students of color being added to his daughter's gifted class so that it "looked like there was some balance" as a "disaster." In this instance, Chris criticized the placement of these African American students in a gifted program for "balance" while also stating that they were not "bright" enough to handle the course.

Talk about book club experiences. Early in our conversations, Chris was excited about joining this book club. He expressed the desire to get something out of the

book club for classroom use and the hope that members of the book club would take the experience seriously.

At the end of the book club sessions, Chris's response to the experience was positive. He said that he did not regret joining the book club and that he "got a lot out of it." At the end of session five, Chris talked about experiencing many changes through the experience. He said that he "never would have done" the lesson he taught on White privilege without the book club. He said that the experience "opened my eyes to a lot of things" and that he was "more aware" and that he "fell into that whole colorblindness" mentality before the book club. Finally, Chris also expressed that he wished that there had been more participants, but said that "it can't be forced on them."

Diversity beliefs and ideologies. During our book club sessions, Chris expressed the following diversity beliefs and ideologies: community expectations are powerful, limited potential for teacher impact, discussing race/racism and resistance, and colorblindness and anger.

Community expectations are powerful. In our discussions, Chris connected student performance to community expectations on a regular basis. He talked about community expectations being responsible for both student success and failure in different schools in which he has taught, and he said that he believed that community expectations "can just kill any ambition."

Chris often talked about communities as one, homogenous group in terms of their expectations for students. He often used quotes from parents that presented deficit perspectives of the students which he agreed with, allowing him to reproduce a deficit view of communities. He blamed the community with low expectations for student

143

failures and credited those with high expectations with student success, and he did not attribute much impact on student performance to other factors such as teachers.

Limited potential for teacher impact. Early in our conversations, Chris said he "didn't know" whether or not teachers could impact student performance or overcome the community expectations they were exposed to growing up. His doubt continued throughout several sessions, but he eventually revised this to say that teachers could have a limited impact on student performance. He said that teachers must accept their limited potential for impacting students and "pick your wins." He also claimed at one point that teachers with negative perspectives of teaching or of their students "absolutely" negated any good that teachers with positive perspectives of teaching or of their students might have on their students. When I asked him about this, Chris adjusted back to the limited potential for impact stance and said that he "didn't know" and that "it all depends on the kid." While Chris experienced some variation in his talk about the potential for teachers to impact students, he ultimately talked about this potential as limited but powerful when it occurs.

Discussing race/racism and resistance. Throughout the first three sessions, Chris talked about discussing race/racism in classrooms as risky and as something that should be done only "if necessary." He resisted the idea of talking about race with students, citing fears about lack of administrative support, being called a racist, and losing his job, and he also talked about how he saw a misalignment between culturally responsive pedagogy and the Common Core.

While he resisted for these reasons, he also talked about his current and past classroom practice in this area. Chris said that he had not talked about race in his

144

classroom recently because it had not been necessary. He also recalled a time when he did discuss race in his class during the OJ Simpson trial in 1995. However, he said that he had not talked with his students recently about the police brutality cases across the United States because it "hadn't been affecting" them. At the same time that Chris claimed that race should not be discussed unless it was necessary to do so, he also said that he could talk about racial diversity with his students because of his confidence and because of the relationships he had built with them. He also said that other teachers, especially new teachers, might not be able to do this work successfully.

At the end of the third book club session, Chris agreed to teach a lesson that addressed issues of racial diversity. He talked about this experience in session four. Chris described this lesson as a positive experience and was visibly excited when he talked about it. He was "surprised" by his students' positive responses and said that they handled the lesson "beautifully." He was very proud of the lesson and he thought "it was pretty cool." Chris credited his relationships with his students with his ability to teach this lesson successfully, and again talked about this as a reason he could do this while other teachers might not be able to.   At the end of session four, Chris said that his experience with the book club and teaching this lesson all "came full circle" when he remembered one of his favorite professors from graduate school who advocated for this kind of work in addressing diversity.

In session five, Chris continued to praise his students' performance during that lesson and he was still proud of the lesson. He also talked about the importance for White students to engage in curriculum that incorporates racial diversity so that they can

"open up" and gain new perspectives. He advocated for an early start to this work so that these conversations would be natural for students as they got older.

Chris also reverted to some of his resistance from earlier sessions in our final session when he talked again about the risks and fears associated with discussing race with students. While these fears re-emerged, Chris also talked about the powerful role strong student-teacher relationships play in making discussions about race possible in classrooms. However, he also talked about teachers immersing themselves in their students' cultures so that they would not have to talk about race explicitly. While Chris was resistant to discussing race/racism with his students early on, he agreed to do so and was very proud of the results. He carried that pride through the end of our sessions even though his fears about this practice re-emerged, along with some resistance to the idea. In our exit interview, Chris talked about the ways in which he had continued to talk about race/racism with his students since the book club and his desire to continue to integrate more culturally responsive teaching practices into his curriculum.

Colorblindness and anger. In our first sessions, Chris expressed colorblind ideology when he said things such as he "never looked" at his students' races or saw them as "any different." Chris used colorblindness as an equalizer. He saw this ideology as a form of protection against harming the students.

As he read *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools* (Howard, 2010), which challenged colorblindness directly in chapters five and six, Chris's reliance on colorblindness waned. When he first read chapter five, Chris felt personally attacked and said that he wanted to "burn the book" and never pick it up again. However, he forced himself to re-read the chapter with a different "more objective" point of view which

146

allowed him to see the purpose of the chapter. As a result, Chris began to question and then to reject colorblindness because of the damaging effects this practice has on students.

Discussion of Findings

The way Chris demonstrated empathy toward students' stories in the text and questioned prior beliefs about assimilation, colorblindness, and codeswitching reflected the findings of Selway (2003) who found that the discussions held in book clubs "allowed for empathy and understanding" (p. 16). Selway (2003) found that book clubs opened up spaces for important discussions, and that "the caring and concern evidenced and the questions raised are powerful" (p. 17). She also talked about the way that book clubs helped teachers talk about difficult topics and relate to students in new ways, which Chris was able to do through the student stories in the book and through the lesson he taught.

The ways in which people grow up tend to influence their beliefs and actions as adults. In Chris's case, he continued to rely on some of the beliefs about race from his childhood. For instance, Chris did not discuss race in his classroom, just as he shared that his family did not talk about race for most of his childhood. Reading Howard's (2010) book and discussing the ideas he presented helped Chris confront his beliefs about not discussing race and allowed him to change that belief and his teaching practices related to it.

In their study on diversity training, Gentry, Lamb and Hall (2015) found that participants often experienced growth in professional diversity beliefs but not in personal diversity beliefs and suggested that more professional development might be needed to develop personal diversity beliefs. This literature connected to Chris's experience in

which he was able to acknowledge several areas of growth professionally throughout the study while resisting the idea that he had experienced personal diversity growth during his exit interview. While Chris began to experience some changes through challenging his biases, he held on to some deficit views of students of color, especially those whom he did not teach.

Chris's experience held other consistencies with the literature on deficit beliefs. In addition to expressing some deficit thinking about students of color whom he did not teach, Chris talked about community expectations through a deficit narrative. Pollack (2012) found that teacher talk about students can reveal deficit beliefs and that deficit narratives support an "abdication of responsibility and a diminished sense of agency among teachers" (p. 32). Chris's talk about the limited potential for teacher impact in communities with low expectations for students aligns with Pollack's findings. In both of these cases, Chris talked about the limited potential teachers have to impact students as a result of their communities' expectations and released teachers from their responsibility to work toward change with their students and within their schools.

The literature on deficit views (Scott, 2014; Grenville & Parker, 2013; Pollack, 2012; Brown, 2010; Aldana, 2016; Walker, 2011) supported the idea that the use of deficit thinking was detrimental to the educational opportunities of students of poverty and/or color and that teachers must engage in critical self-reflection of their own stereotypes and biases in order to directly challenge any deficit perspectives they may hold. Chris was able to engage in critical self-reflection and challenge his beliefs in this book club, especially when it came to colorblindness, discussing race/racism with students, and a number of other issues including assimilation and teaching students to

codeswitch. Chris completely reversed his stance on colorblindness and began designing lessons with the intent of addressing race/racism in his classroom. In his exit interview, Chris reported that he continued to increase his use of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010) in his classroom several months after the book club ended. This continued practice suggested that the changes that Chris experienced through his critical self-reflection were lasting changes that continued to evolve after the conclusion of the book club.

In particular, Chris's negative talk about students of color being added to a gifted program aligned with the literature on deficit views (Scott, 2014; Grenville & Parker, 2013; Aldana, 2016) which found that students of color are often tracked and kept out of gifted programs and advanced courses because of factors such as their behavior. These authors also found that teachers must be reflective, interrogate their own beliefs, and study their classrooms in order to be effective teachers of students of color. In Chris's case, he talked about students of color being added to his daughter's gifted class as a "disaster" because of the effect it had on her ability to move through material at a faster pace. He also described the students of color in this class as "acting like special ed. kids in a regular classroom." Although Chris's descriptions of students of color in his classroom were much more positive, his reaction to students of color being added to his daughter's class was negative. This response demonstrated that Chris might experience continued growth in this area, as the literature suggested, if he participated in further diversity training on racial diversity in which he continued to engage in critical self-examination of his beliefs, biases, and teaching practices.

Walker (2011), in his study on deficit views, found that there was "a need for ongoing professional development" and teachers "in addition to examining their own cultural biases and prejudices…need to learn more about how to use the students' culture as a basis for learning throughout the curriculum and across disciplines" (p. 593). Chris began this process in our book club, but he said that he was interested in continuing to learn and grow in this area and suggested that a longer book club might have been helpful in supporting more growth. However, he was able to implement what he learned in the book club into his teaching practice and he has since seen an increase in students talking to him about race and racism in his classes, which he saw as a positive change. Schneidewind (2005) found that, like Chris, teachers who participate in diversity training provide spaces for students to talk about diversity issues in their classrooms.

According to Kahn and Martinez (2006), even a low level of participation has positive effects on teaching practices. Chris was engaged in this book club for five weeks and experienced several positive changes. However, Chris suggested (and I believe) that a longer engagement with issues of racial diversity might have shown deeper and longer-lasting change. Literature on diversity training (Kahn & Martinez, 2006; Aujla-Bhullar, 2011; Flory, et al., 2014) supports this idea. These authors of several studies found that there was a correlation between participation in diversity training and changes to teaching practices, that professional development initiatives around diversity need to be given time and require continued effort, and that ongoing, engaging, relevant training in this area must provide specific strategies for teachers. Chris found the book club as an engaging format for professional development on racial diversity and talked in his exit interview

about the fact that the subject matter was relevant and new to him, which made it stand out to him among his other experiences with professional development.

Using the book club as a professional development tool on racial diversity was effective in many ways for Chris. He talked positively about his book club experience and described several areas of growth that he experienced as a result of his participation in the book club. Chris's response to this format and the changes he experienced are supported in the literature on book clubs as professional development. Several studies (Gardiner & Cumming-Potvin, 2015; Burbank, Kauchak, & Bates, 2010; Mensah, 2009; Kooy, 2006) found that book clubs were an effective professional development tool because they opened up time and spaces for teachers to challenge their beliefs and teaching practices and provided support for teachers to implement an integration of ideas and practice. These studies demonstrated that teachers who participated in book clubs were able to relate to students in new ways, put their new knowledge into practice and were more comfortable talking with students about topics they had discussed in their book clubs. Gardiner and Cumming-Potvin (2015) also found that book clubs were more effective as a form of professional development than more traditional transmission professional development, which supports the use of book clubs as a form of professional development on racial diversity. Throughout the book club, Chris challenged his beliefs, wrestled with the new ideas being presented in the book and began to integrate new ideas into his teaching practice. He started talking to his students about race/racism and was able to relate to them in new ways as a result.

While the findings of this study were supported in the literature on professional book clubs, deficit thinking, and diversity training, this study also contributed to this

literature in a variety of ways. First, this study combined ideas from the literature on deficit thinking with that of professional book clubs and diversity training to create opportunities for positive change toward equitable teaching practices in Chris's classroom. Although the findings are not generalizable, the changes Chris experienced in this five-week study contributed to the literature in all three of these areas by providing information about how those changes came about and under what conditions they occurred.

This study also added to the literature on teacher talk (Pollack, 2012) about students of color by providing a highly detailed description of the ways in which Chris talked about students of color. Finally, this research also contributed to the literature on professional book clubs using critical perspectives as a professional development tool for teachers, which is limited.

Implications for Practice

The implications for practice that arose from this study include the following topics: book clubs as a professional development tool, teachers need time, celebrating positive change, and response journals.

Book clubs as a professional development tool. In this study, Chris described experiencing growth in several ways as a result of participating in this professional book club. He described himself as "more aware" as a result of his participation and acknowledged that he had revised his view of colorblindness through this process. He also talked about teaching a lesson that addressed issues of racial diversity which he "never would have done" before this professional book club experience. Although these results are not generalizable, Chris's growth might help readers to make connections in

their own practice as they read about his journey. Professional book clubs have the potential to be a useful tool for professional development around issues of race but their success depends on the individual teachers involved, the school they work in, the presentation of the material studied, and the levels of support and safety within the group. The growth Chris experienced in a relatively short book club experience suggests that this format has the potential to be a powerful one for professional development on racial diversity. This kind of professional book club might be most effective if it were a longer book club or one offered frequently within a particular setting.

Teachers need time. Practicing teachers need time to grow and change their teaching practices, especially when it comes to racial diversity. Chris approached the issues raised in the book in his own time and on his own terms. I wanted him to set the tone and pace of our discussions, and our conversations reflected that. I was careful to give Chris the time and space he needed to take in the messages from the book, to process them, and to integrate them into his teaching practice. When he was ready, he decided to teach a lesson that addressed racial diversity and he was proud of that experience, but he also needed time to get to the point where he was comfortable with that and to think about the important ideas he was confronting in the book. As he did so, he came to think differently about colorblindness and assimilation practices in schools and he addressed race with his students.

All teachers need time to confront these ideas and their own practices in a safe environment in order to make lasting changes. The paths to understanding and expanding perspectives are complicated. People are always struggling between what they have been taught directly and indirectly and what they observe in the world for themselves. When

an outside force introduces a new perspective, as occurred for Chris in this book study, it is not a simple thing to blend that new perspective into existing ways of knowing, believing and acting. Chris's openness to this ongoing process was impressive and it led to his growth, but his re-emerging fears about discussing race with students in our last session suggested that he needed additional time to continue this process of growth we had started in the book club. This experience reinforced the idea that teachers need multiple, prolonged exposure to new ideas in order to experience long term change (Harro, 1982).

Celebrating positive change. At several points throughout the book club, I celebrated positive changes in Chris's articulations of social justice or teaching practices. When Chris said that he wanted to teach a lesson that addressed race, for instance, I told him that I was excited about it because I thought it could be "really cool." Each time we talked about this lesson, I told him how excited I was that he had tried it and how proud I was of the way he had approached the lesson. We celebrated this and other things along the way, and each time we celebrated together, I felt that Chris became more comfortable in the process. The celebrations of positive change allowed us to focus on the positive elements of our time together and encouraged Chris to continue his growth. I think it is important for teachers, administrators, and professional development leaders to celebrate positive change at all levels of education and especially when working with teachers to address racial diversity to create change toward more equitable teaching practices.

Response journals. At the beginning of this study, I was excited about the response journals and the potential they had to provide additional information about what participants might be thinking about before, during and after book club sessions. I

offered specific questions for each week, but I left the response options very open. Chris always completed an entry, but they did not provide additional or new thinking that he had not already expressed in the book club sessions. While this provided triangulation for my findings, in future professional book clubs for professional development, I would suggest that facilitators offer more direct instruction on the kinds of entries/reflections they are looking for or ask the participants to respond to one of the response questions provided in addition to their own thinking in order to gain more insight through the response journals.

Limitations

The limitations to this study are the length of the study and the number of participants. While Chris said he experienced growth as a result of this book club, the length of the study limited the amount of change he experienced. A longer study might have provided more ongoing support to promote continued change in Chris's teaching practices.

Likewise, the fact that there was only one participant in this study was a limitation because it kept Chris from being pushed by additional points of view and perspectives. More participants could have helped me see whether the changes that Chris talked about might have occurred within more people and to understand how and why their experiences might have been similar or different.

Future Research

Future research should be done on professional book clubs as a form of professional development on racial diversity. Future studies should expand upon this study by including more participants in order to allow for a greater variety of perspectives

and to provide an opportunity to see how multiple participants might respond differently to this format.

Professional development on racial diversity is difficult and complex (Aujla-Bhullar, 2011; Parker & Back, 2009), and the sensitive nature of this work can make it difficult to attract participants. In future studies, it might be beneficial to work with smaller groups over longer periods of time or to offer a professional book club on racial diversity in the same setting multiple times a year. Providing participants with multiple opportunities to join over an extended period of time might help them feel more comfortable with the idea of addressing racial diversity, especially if they hear positive things about the training from their colleagues.

Lengthier studies would also add to this research by providing information about what happens in a professional book club over longer periods of time and what changes participants might experience as a result of having more time to move from addressing beliefs to changing teaching practices. Lengthier studies would also allow for growth in more areas through the reading of multiple texts which would present multiple perspectives on issues and/or discuss a greater variety of issues in general.

Additionally, future studies on this topic should experiment with the success of groups that choose their own text versus those that are assigned a text. In this study, I chose the book for Chris to read because of our time constraints. His strong, negative initial reaction to chapter five was surprising to me. Future studies in which participants are asked to choose a book together would add to this field by providing information about how participants might respond differently to books they are assigned versus those they have chosen for themselves.

Research on how to identify when teachers are ready for professional development on racial diversity and on how to prepare practicing teachers for this kind of professional development would extend this work as well. Chris often pointed out that people cannot be forced into this kind of work if they are not ready for it. Therefore, future research on how to prepare teachers or identify teachers who are ready could be useful in preparing for and providing effective professional development on racial diversity.

Finally, future research should address deficit views of communities and community expectations. In this study, Chris described community expectations as one set of commonly held beliefs within a region and held to his belief that community expectations were the main influence on student performance. The book we read did not address community deficit perspectives and therefore did not challenge Chris on this belief. Therefore, future research should address deficit views of communities.

Conclusion

Over the past six years, I have learned a great deal about myself and my beliefs and biases through my doctoral program and I have had the opportunity to grow as a teacher as a result. This experience along with a variety of professional development experiences I have had on diversity in my high school led me to wonder how schools might incorporate effective professional development on racial diversity for practicing teachers. I believe there is a great need for professional development on issues of racial diversity for practicing teachers. It is through my doctoral program, my experience with diversity training in a school, and the knowledge gained from my pilot study that I came to this study hoping to make a difference in the lives of students of color through a

157

professional book club for high school teachers focused on issues of racial diversity with the overall aim of change toward equitable teaching practices through the following actions: confronting personal biases, discussing and reflecting on personal experiences and beliefs, questioning and critiquing personal beliefs and teaching practices, interacting with other professionals and with the readings in a supportive environment in which we celebrated and supported articulations of social justice or positive change.

This professional book club study was effective for Chris. He experienced several changes, including a reversal in his beliefs about colorblindness and in his willingness to talk with students about race in class. Chris was able to grow significantly in a relatively short professional book club, which gives me hope that continued research in this area might continue to create growth opportunities for more practicing teachers. I plan to take what I have learned from this study to continue research on professional book clubs as an effective form of professional development for teachers in this area.

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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Entrance Interview Protocol

1.   How do you define diversity?

2.   How does diversity relate to you and your work as a teacher?

3.   What do you think diversity looks like at your school?

4.   In what ways do you address diversity in your classroom?

5.   What factors would you say contribute to the academic and behavioral

       performances of students of color in your classroom?

6.   What levels of success are you seeing from students of color in your classroom?

7.   Have you been a part of diversity training of any kind in the past?

8.   How are you feeling about the professional book club that will start next week?

9.   What predictions can you make about the book club?

10.   What do you hope to get out of the book club?

Exit Interview Protocol

1. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?

2. What is your teaching philosophy?

3. How do you define diversity?

4. How does racial diversity relate to you and your work as a teacher?

5. How comfortable are you addressing diversity in your classroom?

6. Have you continued to discuss issues of racial diversity with your students beyond the book club experience?

7. Have you continued to integrate reading materials that represent or discuss racial diversity into your lessons?

8. In our last session together, you said that you thought students should start having these discussions about diversity in early school grades so that it would be easier for them to talk about them as adults, but you also talked about teachers discussing issues of racial diversity as "risky" and as "looking for trouble." Do you think teachers should integrate issues of racial diversity into their curriculum?

9. How do you define community expectations?

10. What role do you believe community expectations play in the success of students?

11. Do you believe that teachers have the ability to overcome community expectations and impact student success? In what ways?

12. How would you describe your experiences with the book club sessions?

13. In your entrance interview, you said that you hoped that you would get something from the book club that you could use in your classroom. Do you feel that the book club met that expectation?

14. What were the aspects of the book club experience that you found most useful?

15. What did you learn from the book club sessions?

16. Have you changed as a result of the book clubs or the materials we studied? In what ways?

17. (If so) In what ways have these changes affected your personal views and/or your professional views?

18. Have you discussed the topics we covered in the book club with any colleagues?

19. Would you like to continue to study this subject matter?

20. (If so) What would that involve/look like?

21. Is there anything you would like to add about your growth or experiences in this study?

APPENDIX B – INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Behavioral Research Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Addressing issues of racial diversity through teacher book clubs

Principal Investigator (PI): Brennan Davis, College of Education
University of South Carolina

Purpose

This study is being conducted at University of South Carolina and South School District. The estimated number of study participants to be enrolled in the focus group is ten or fewer. **Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.** In this research study, the investigator will examine teachers' experiences in a professional book club. The purposes of the study are to describe how teachers talk about their relationships to diversity and their experiences in this professional book club aimed at confronting personal biases, discussing and reflecting on personal experiences and beliefs, questioning and critiquing personal teaching practices, interacting with other professionals and with the readings in a supportive environment. By utilizing a professional book club to explore issues of diversity in schools, this study aims to support change toward equitable teaching practices.

Study Procedures

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be asked to allow the researcher to audio record your comments during the four book club meetings and in two interviews. During the interviews, you will be asked questions about your relationship with diversity, your experiences with students, and your experiences in the book club. You will also be asked to write in a reflective journal before and after each meeting. Your identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms in all transcripts and written reports about this study. Schools' and individual's identities will remain strictly anonymous and confidential.

Benefits

Potential benefits of your participation in this study include personal and professional growth in the areas of diversity and equitable teaching practices that could lead to improved and equitable teaching practices and student interactions/relationship-building

in classrooms. As a participant in this research study, no direct benefit is guaranteed for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

Risks

As in all research, there is some potential of risk to you as a participant. The greatest potential risk to the participants and the school is a breach of confidentiality. In order to minimize the risks to the participants and school, pseudonyms will be used on/in all recordings and files, data will be saved using password protected files, and all interviews will be conducted in private spaces. Data that is collected will not be discussed by the PI with other faculty members at the school, and one participant's data will not be discussed with the others by the PI.

Study Costs

Participation in this study will be of no cost to you.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study. You will receive free study materials as part of this study.

Confidentiality

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. You will be identified in the research records by a pseudonym or number. Information that identifies you personally will not be released without your written permission. However, the study sponsor, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at University of South Carolina, or federal agencies with appropriate regulatory oversight [e.g., Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), etc.) may review your records.

The results of this study will be presented as the PI's dissertation to the University of South Carolina. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. If audiotape recordings of you will be used for research or educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised. At any time, participants may indicate that they would like a comment removed from the digital recording and the researcher will delete their comment from the recording. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings. Personal identities will be disguised with pseudonyms.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. There is no penalty for not participating in this study. If you decide to take part in

the study you can later change your mind and withdraw from the study. You are free to only answer questions that you want to answer. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Your decisions will not change any present or future relationship with the University of South Carolina or its affiliates, or other services you are entitled to receive.

The PI may stop your participation in this study without your consent. The PI will make the decision and let you know if it is not possible for you to continue. The decision that is made is to protect your health and safety or because you did not follow the instructions to take part in the study.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Brennan Davis or one of her research team members at the following phone number (xxx) xxx-xxxx. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (803) 777-7095.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to take part in this study you may withdraw at any time. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by signing this form. Your signature below indicates that you have read, or had read to you, this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, that you have had all of your questions answered, and that you consent to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

_____ _____
Signature of participant   Date

_____ _____
Printed name of participant   Time

_____ _____
Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

_____ _____
Printed name of person obtaining consent   Time

APPENDIX C—SESSION OUTLINES

Book Club Session Outlines

Howard, T. (2010). *Why race and culture matter in schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classrooms*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

<u>Session One:</u> **Building Trust** (previous reading: Forward by Geneva Gay)
- Snacks/Name tags
- Open with introductions and discussion of the project and what brought us here.
- Ice breaker
- Establish codes of conduct
- Discuss the forward: responses
    - p. xvii…do you agree that this is "obvious" to teachers?
- Banks: levels of diversity understanding (self-rating)
- Review of reading for next session, including reflection prompts.

<u>Session Two:</u> **Getting Started** (previous reading: Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2)
- Snacks/Name tags
- General Discussion: Checking in on the school year…highs/lows? (building community)
- Book Discussion: responses
    - Pg. 29: deficit based thinking
    - Pg. 40: meeting the challenges for changing school populations—are teachers prepared?
- Topics to introduce as they fit the discussion:
    - Summer slide: video clip (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahhj3wxxkdM)
    - Colorblindness: define and discuss—video— (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4LpT9TF_ew)
    - Memoir excerpt: Bad Boy (Myers, 2001) pgs. 21-31; 55-58 (deficit vs. cult comp)
    - School data on racial diversity, G/T courses, etc. (if available)
- Review of reading, responses, surveys for next time

<u>Session Three</u>: Digging In (previous reading Chapters 3, 4, 5)
- Snacks/Name tags
- General Discussion: Checking in…highs/lows? (building community)
- Book Discussion: responses
  - Pg. 64: What contradictions exist between your culture and that of your students?
  - How do you feel about Howard's discussion of the role of race in education?
- Topics to introduce:
  - Review student surveys
  - Pg. 69: chart—where do you fall?
  - Revisit colorblindness: video (https://www.ted.com/talks/mellody_hobson_color_blind_or_color_brave?language=en)
  - Student voices---Bad Boys (Ferguson, 2001) excerpt pgs. 1-3; 29-34/video (?)
- Review of reading, responses for next time

<u>Session Four</u>: Putting it Together (previous reading Chapters 6 and 7)
- Snacks/Name tags
- General Discussion: Checking in…highs/lows? (building community)
- Book Discussion: responses
  - Pg. 114: Self-Reflection—do you agree? What does this look like?
  - Pg. 150: Call to action—how do you feel about this? Where do you see yourself in this work?
- Topics to include:
  - What is your school doing/not doing?
  - What do you need moving forward?
  - Putting yourself in your students' shoes: Wheel of diversity prompt (Johnson, 2005)
- Review of reading, responses for next time

Session Five: Planning (previous reading: excerpts from Sonia Nieto's *Affirming Diversity* and Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children*)
- Snacks/Name tags
- General Discussion: Checking in…highs/lows? (building community)
- Article Discussion: responses
    - How does each of these articles provide you with tools for further developing cultural competence and effective teaching for diverse students?
    - What do you need moving forward to continue this work?
- Plan of action:
    - What will you do as individuals moving forward to continue this work?
        - For yourself?
        - At your school?
    - Book Club
        - What was helpful?
        - What would you suggest be added?
- Banks: Rank themselves again
- Thank them, offer continued support, etc.

Plan of Action: Text List

Flake, S. (2011). *You don't even know me: Stories and poems about boys*. New York, NY: Jump at the Sun.

Gallo, D. (2007). *First crossing: Stories about teen immigrants*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

Howe, J. (Ed.). (2006). *13: Thirteen stories that capture the agony and ecstasy of being thirteen*. New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Myers, W. D. (2012). *145th Street: Short stories*. New York, NY: Ember.

Trelease, J. (Ed.). (1993). *Read all about it!: Great read-aloud stories, poems, and newspaper pieces for preteens and teens*. London, UK: Penguin.