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Children See Race; Teachers Should Too: Challenging Bias, Stereotypes, and Prejudice Through Children's Literature

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Through Children's Literature

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the impacts of antibias culturally responsive literature on kindergarten children and teachers through qualitative action research conducted in one classroom over the course of twelve weeks. It examines how young children in this kindergarten classroom use what they have learned from and about antibias culturally responsive literature in their daily play, writing, conversations, and interactions. I clarify the process through which kindergarteners transform in relation to the understanding of their and others' cultures. In the research, two types of strategies were used: (1) critical research and (2) narrative inquiry. Data was collected from whole group discussions set in Socratic seminar style, interviews with a sample of students and teachers, observations with field notes, and instructional artifacts. This dissertation builds upon the argument that although young children develop biases, prejudices, and discriminatory behaviors early, using antibias culturally responsive literature, those things can be combated.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Ms. Jenkins sits in front of eighteen kindergarten students, holding *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz (1999). She prefaces the book by asking the children to observe their skin color; hold the color they think they are tight in their minds. Some of the children close their eyes tightly. Ms. Jenkins explains she wants them to think about their color, or race as she reads the story. After the reading, Ms. Jenkins tells the children no one is White or Black, we are just different shades of brown, as stated in the story. Now she has them turn and talk to their partners about the color from the book they think is similar to their own. Thus, begins a conversation about diversity in this kindergarten classroom. York (2016) explains education will never produce good results for all children without change in its structure when that education is in a society laden with racism, prejudice, and discrimination. While society is rapidly changing and diversifying, early childhood curriculum is not experiencing change and diversification as hastily.

Growing up as a biracial child of poverty, seeing people who look like me in my classroom literature was rare, if at all. When I attended college, I was immediately immersed in cultures differing from my own. There, the understanding of the value of one's culture deepened. In my education cohort, I experienced being the only biracial student (whom most saw as Black), often feeling out of place, until meeting Dr. Tasha Laman. Dr. Laman, first introduced culturally responsive literature through children's

book. She reiterated the importance of recognizing cultures through what and how we teach with emphasis on what we read, often reading books with people who looked like me. The seed for my passion of equitable education reflective of the mosaic that is our society had been planted, leading me to the problem of practice I faced on a consistent basis. Antibias culturally responsive education has been a struggle for the United States education system. I define antibias education as an activist approach to educational curricula based on values, principles, and methodology attempting to challenge prejudice while respecting and embracing differences Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2012) defines antibias education as one that plays an integral part in the building of emotional and social elements of a child as well as the emotional foundation that lead to the development of cognitive capacities. Culturally responsive education is "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 17-18). Together, antibias education and culturally responsive pedagogy creates an avenue to battle bias, stereotypes, and prejudice while promoting appreciation and celebration of one's own culture, as well as that of others. Literature is a steppingstone to achieving the antibias culturally responsive classroom.

Each of us is born into a culture. We grow up in that culture. We live, eat, breathe, and believe that culture, often without realization. "Even though our culture may be invisible to us, it shapes the way we view the world, process information, learn, communicate, and interact with others" (York, 2016, p. 77). Who we are affects how we teach therefore it is critical we understand who we are. Culture, in this study, referred to how people live, their beliefs, values, how they see themselves, how they interact with,

and learn from others (York, 2016). While theories on antibias culturally responsive literature have been around for decades, less focus is put on the impact of implementing such literature in early childhood. Some people may ask why antibias culturally responsive literature? Why now? Whitney Houston said it best, "I believe our children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside" (Houston, 1985). When we teach our children to understand and appreciate their own culture and the culture of others, we are working towards a future with less bias, discrimination, and prejudice. Through antibias culturally responsive literature we can create classroom environments embracing of the many cultures in our communities, nation, and world.

Problem of Practice

"I'm so glad I was born a little White girl. I would never want to be brown because brown people aren't pretty and smart" Jane, a little blonde, blue-eyed, Caucasian kindergartner explained to her seatmate, Julie. Julie looks over at Jane with slight confusion on her face, tilts her head and smiles. She replies, "I'd love to be a brown person. They do amazing things. Remember we talked about Dr. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks? They were brown and smart, and I really like brown people." This conversation occurred on a school field trip bus between two White, affluent, female kindergartners. On the bus with these two children were other kindergarteners of various cultural backgrounds and their teachers. The teachers said nothing. Here was a teachable moment, yet teachers were unsure of how or did not want to respond and the moment passed. Situations like this, filled with teachable moments about race, stereotypes, and biases, are often left untouched by educators around the nation.

The need for culture embracing antibias literature in early childhood stems from our ever-growing diverse society. Former president Jimmy Carter once characterized the United States not as a melting pot, rather a beautiful mosaic comprised of different people, beliefs, yearnings, hopes, and dreams (Carter, n.d). Kindergarten is where foundations are established, leaving these classrooms on the forefront of the battleground for an antibias society. Beginning at an early age, children are cognizant of differences in language, color, gender, and physical abilities. At age two, children begin to describe themselves and other people by physical characteristics such as skin color (York, 2016). By ages three and four, children begin to develop positive and negative associations with the color of their skin (York, 2016). Five and 6-year-old children begin to identify stereotypes and use insults such as name calling 80% of the time during a disagreement (York, 2016). The negative stereotypes and bias about diversity in our society can ultimately undermine a child's natural development and cause them to interact negatively towards others. Kindergarten classrooms are on the frontline of confronting bias and stereotypes in society.

Since 1964, Congress enacted many civil rights acts barring discrimination in educational programs receiving federal funds. These acts are "Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibiting race, color, and national origin discrimination); Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (prohibiting sex discrimination); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (prohibiting disability discrimination); Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (prohibiting disability discrimination by public entities); and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (prohibiting age discrimination)" (Office of Civil Rights, 1999). Though these statutes are a step-in eliminating

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discrimination in education, the curriculum in the United States still does not fully acknowledge the cultures and diversity prevalent in its classrooms; leading to a lack of acknowledgment of diversity in the literature we choose to share with our youngest learners.

The problem of practice impacting the classrooms of today is understanding the impact of antibias culturally responsive literature on kindergarten students. While examination of antibias culturally responsive education has made substantial contributions to education, there is minimal evidence about the impact of antibias culturally responsive literature on children in kindergarten, as it relates to self-awareness, awareness of others, and empowerment to stand up to bias. There is also limited evidence as to the impact of antibias culturally responsive literature on the teachers in charge of implementation. Research on the impact of antibias culturally responsive literature on kindergarten students must also examine the pedagogical beliefs and practices of teachers (Jones, 2013). Classrooms around the nation are becoming increasingly diverse, yet the curricula in early childhood are not responding rapidly enough to the diversification. If early childhood teachers do not choose literature that acknowledges diversity and cultures in the nation, we will continue to hear conversations full of bias, prejudice, stereotypes, and lack of respect for others, like the one Julie and Jane shared. This qualitative action research will explore the implementation of antibias culturally responsive literature within a kindergarten classroom and its impact on children and teachers during a 12-week period.

Theoretical Framework

In the early 1990s, pedagogical theorist Ladson-Billings (1994) coined a term to sum up teaching pedagogies grounded in cultural understanding. She called this term, culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching recognizes a student's individual culture while embracing the impact their culture plays in who they are and how they learn (Ladson-Billings, 1994). More recent pedagogical theorist, like York (2016) and Kissinger (2017) have dived into the fight for antibias culturally responsive education in early childhood classrooms. Antibias culturally responsive education is an approach that falls under the multicultural education umbrella. Through multicultural education, the educator battles bias in the education system. Research has found when children are more familiar with cultures, they develop more positive attitudes toward others (York, 2016). Literature on the topic details how early childhood often ignores the development of children's awareness to cultural things such as gender roles and race, believing the shear mention of these topics will steal a child's innocence. Boutte (2016) positions there is no such thing as an educational process that is neutral, and it is the responsibility of schools to educate all children. Inclusivity of children's culture is a step toward the education of all children.

According to Sparks, LeeKeenan, and Nimmo (2015), the theories and the developmentally appropriate practices based on those theories reflect the norms and practices of the dominant culture. Even in diverse settings, the socialization of the dominant culture pushes other cultural viewpoints to the back burners. Antibias culturally responsive literature is how we begin to equip our students with the tools needed to combat discrimination (Lee, 2009). Our classrooms represent our perspective of the

cultures we find important or "normal." The holidays we choose to include or not include mirror our thoughts about cultures. This type of education challenges the educational norms that echo the dominate culture in our society. Hilliard (2009) positions the only way to combat bias and discrimination in education is to understand the matters of structure that our education is built upon. Once we have learned how this structure impacts our children, then we can move towards dismantling and rebuilding the structure of our education system.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2016), many early childhood educators approach building relationships of children from diverse backgrounds in a color-blind manner. However, ignoring race, gender, class, or any other descriptive manner can potentially lead to harmful negative messages to children of color, leaving them feeling as if teachers do not recognize a major component of their identity: their race (NAEYC, 2016). If positive change is the goal, early educators must be proactive in using antibias approaches to address issues of bias and bigotry in their classrooms. A significant resource to culturally relevant approach is children's literature.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative critical research case study was to investigate the impact of utilizing antibias culturally responsive literature on kindergarten students through the course of a 12 weeks. This research sought to understand the beliefs children have towards various aspects of culture, how those beliefs influence their education, and how they change after 12 weeks of antibias culturally responsive literature. Through this exploration, the goal was to help the participants gain an understanding of culture as it

relates to self-awareness, developing acceptance towards others, recognizing bias in self and others, and feeling empowered to confront aforementioned bias (York, 2016). This research was used to understand the tools needed to prepare kindergarten children to contest discrimination and bias, while working towards a society where all people are on equitable footing (Au, 2009).

The pseudonym X was used for the elementary school. X Elementary in South Carolina served as the site for this research for several reasons. First, X is the school in which I teach. Secondly, X has a diverse cultural student body. X is a Paideia model school, meaning we teach in a Socratic style with the use of seminars, coached projects, and student-led conferences. Finally, the teacher composition is semi-reflective of the student population. X Elementary kindergarten classrooms utilized the Reading and Writing workshop models established by the Teacher's College at Columbia University in New York, as mandated by the district. The reading and writing workshop emphasize the use of literature to model skills. The lesson topics and curriculum are prescribed by district. The district does allow the selection of the literature to be left to the teacher. X's Paideia approach allows for more flexibility to include learning about cultures both inside and outside of the classroom community using various forms of literature.

Importance of Study

The Masai warriors of eastern Africa greet one another by saying "Kasserian Ingera" which means "and how are the children" (Boutte, 2016). The traditional response to the greeting, even by those without children, is "All the children are well" (Boutte, 2016). This greeting means when the children are protected and taken care of, peace and safety will triumph (Boutte, 2016). To ensure all our children are well, education should

be equitable and reflective of the diverse society. Antibias culturally responsive literature serves as steppingstone in the foundation of an inclusive society where all members are equitable. The need for change in our society, relating to bias, discrimination, racism, sexism, and gender, begins in the education of our young children. Who we are as adults is built upon what we learn, hear, see, and live through in our younger years. Young children learn about the world around them through conversations, observations, and experimenting daily. I intended to learn how children process the idea related to cultures and use antibias culturally responsive literature in their daily school lives.

Through personal experience, research, and courses, I came to grasp the critical need for understanding and implementing antibias education in early childhood education, utilizing culturally responsive literature. Each year brings in a new set of children I will in some way influence. I believe it is my duty to help children to understand other people's diverse backgrounds and learn to see the value in diversity. It is also my duty to reflect upon my practice to ensure it is one exemplary antibias culturally responsiveness.

Despite some assumptions of children's inability to stereotype or discriminate at an early age, children are cognizant of differences in language, color, gender, and physical abilities. They can develop discriminatory behaviors toward others. Therefore, it has become critical to employ antibias literature to foster a child's fullest potential by aggressively addressing equity and diversity in the classroom environment. Using literature reflective of the community's rich diversity can assist students in active engagement in their learning, while simultaneously transforming the educator who leads those students.

Research Questions

Through conversations with parents, children, and colleagues throughout my time at this school, I came to understand several things about the school community. Often when conversations of racism, genderism, or any kind of ism arise, in the classroom or among colleagues, an awkward aura falls upon the group. Some are unsure how to respond. Some respond with insensitive, heavily biased comments. Others have welcomed the opportunity to explore these conversations. Having discussions with colleagues and students, the lack of understanding of culture (their own or others) became apparent, thus leading to the research questions of this dissertation. After different experiences, conversations, readings, and looking at the needs of the school, I developed the following research questions:

1. What biases, stereotypes, or prejudices do kindergarten students bring into the classroom regarding race, gender, family composition, class, ability, and language?

2. How do children transform their thoughts and perceptions regarding diversity before and after the implementation of antibias culturally responsive children's literature?

3. How do kindergarten children's discussion of antibias children's literature reflect their understanding of race, gender, family composition, class, ability, and language?

Methodology

Action Research

   Action research is defined by Herr and Anderson (2015) as an inquiry done by or with insiders of an organization, but never done to or on them. It is an ongoing reflective process done in collaboration with others, with the intent to intervene in and understand practice. Action research differs from traditional research in that it is cyclical, constructivist, practical, systematic, and situational (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Action research is done by teachers, administrators, and other practitioners in their own instructive setting. It is often called practitioner-based research and is one where the researcher's role is often heavily influential in the entire process, unlike traditional research.

   This study included a qualitative action research design. Action research, according to Meriam and Tisdell (2016), is a form of research that seeks to understand how an experience is understood by those impacted; in the case of education, how schools, students, teachers, parents, and administrators are impacted. Qualitative research is done to bring about change needed, and the research topic is based on gaining information in order bring about change. This research intends to bring about change in how conversations focused on stereotypes, bias, and prejudice come about in my own kindergarten classroom

Rationale for Action Research

Action research requires or demands some form of intervention, whereas traditional research frowns upon intervening in the setting. The aim was to intervene in the setting's implementation as the classroom teacher. Efron and Ravid (2013) describes qualitative research as one designed to study the situations and events unfolding naturally in a school setting. The purpose of qualitative research is to understand how an educational experience is understood by those impacted (school, teachers, parents, and administrators). Through this research, the goal was to understand the impact that antibias culturally responsive literature had on my students and myself. I wanted to see how the literature influenced the way we thought of, spoke about, and interacted with the aspects of diversity and culture. The qualitative approach to action research applies to my study because it sought to comprehend how my students, and I made sense of antibias culturally responsive literature in kindergarten. The study was focused on improving my practice through intentional teaching and comprehension of why I do what I do.

This qualitative action research examined the impact of using literature to initiate conversation about bias in kindergarten conducted in one classroom over the course of 12 weeks. This research seeks to understand how literature depicting and discussing race was selected and introduced, the impacts those literature selections had on the beliefs of children, and teachers regarding culture, how those beliefs influence conversations in the classroom, and how the beliefs changed after using antibias culturally responsive literature during the school year. This research could also be used to understand the tools needed to prepare kindergarten children, teachers, and parents to combat discrimination

and bias, while working towards a society where all people are on equitable footing (Au, 2009).

Paradigms

This research was centered on how antibias culturally responsive children's literature impacted discussion, as well as the thoughts of kindergartners before and after instruction. After conducting research on different paradigms of a qualitative action, it was decided critical research with elements of narrative inquiry would be appropriate for the topic.

Critical research is defined by Efron and Ravid (2013), as a study seeking to expose repression, domination, and inequities while bringing about social change. To understand the importance of antibias culturally responsive education in kindergarten, one must recognize the biases, prejudices, and inequities of the U.S. education system and society. According to Mertler (2017), critical research can serve as a mechanism to develop equal and fair educational opportunities essential for children to become the best members of society they can be. The basis for critical research is the centricity on a social agenda. This research sought to identify the connection between education and inequities, simultaneously working to confront biases at an early age through the utilization of antibias culturally responsive literature.

Clandinin, Pushor, and Murray Orr (2007) describe narrative inquiry as research that seeks to understand the way people create meaning in their lives as a narrative. Through narrative inquires teacher-researchers can understand how their personal narratives emerge and influence their practices, as well as how their students' narrative change through the study. In Murray Orr's (2007) dissertation, she "brought questions

about what it meant to teach children in ethically responsive and responsible ways to her research and to her imagined life as a teacher educator" (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007). One aspect of this research is to understand the way a teacher's personal narrative as an educator utilizing antibias culturally responsive literature was impacted. Narrative inquiry in this research allowed participants to share their lives in school and understand how it changes with antibias culturally responsive literature. This research allowed the students' narratives regarding each topic to emerge.

The use of critical research with elements of narrative inquiry gave the ability to explore how a phenomenon in a single setting recognized and promoted social justice issues through observations and participation in the daily classroom life of kindergarten students. These paradigms merged to allow an understanding of how antibias culturally responsive literature influenced kindergarten students and teachers.

Methods of Data Collection

Meriam and Tisdell (2016) posit methods to collect qualitative data determined by three factors. Those factors are the purpose and problem of the study, the theoretical base driving the research, and the sample selected by the researcher. The data collection effort, according to Efron and Ravid (2013), is focused, deliberate, planned, and systematic. Qualitative action research is designed as narrative; therefore, its data are words. These words, according to Mertler (2017), can be collected using a variety of methods. A qualitative action research study includes the assemblage of interviews, observations with field notes, instructional artifacts (Jones, 2013). This action research employed semi-structured interviews and observations with field notes from seminars and whole group discussion.

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Interviews are conversations between the researcher and the participants of the study. Interviews are posed as questions and can be conducted in groups or individually. This action research study utilized semi-structured interviews of a sample group of students. The sample was selected through the random sampling method. Interviews are done to establish a dialog with the purpose to embody the authentic experiences of the participants (Crouch, 2012). Semi-structured interviews are based on prepared open-ended questions. While the researcher has developed a base for the questions, they are open-ended leaving room for follow-ups or alternate questions. Interviews were conducted individually with the instructional assistant, and in small groups of four to five students.

Observations refer to viewing a setting with purpose and allow one to see the body language, gestures, and nonverbal behaviors of the subjects. Efron and Ravid (2013) describe semi-structured qualitative observation as one designed to generate data revealing the issues developed prior to the observation. Before observing, a researcher should understand and define their role. My role was one of a participant observer, where I was engaged in the setting I observe (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Due to my role as the classroom teacher, a semi-structured observation was best because it allowed for the flexibility of attending to other happenings in the classroom while observing the setting and students. Meriam and Tisdell (2016) list six things to observe; the physical setting, participants, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors, and one's own behavior. Students were observed throughout the day, with particular emphasis on the six seminars and twelve whole group anchor chart creations. From the observations, field notes were consistently taken throughout the course of the school year.

Participants

The participants in this study were kindergarten students, ages 5 and 6-years-old and their teachers. The socio-economic, racial, gender, and cultural composition of the participants vary. There were 24 students total in the classroom. This classroom also had two teachers, the lead teacher (myself) and the instructional assistant/co-teacher. I identify as a middle to lower class, biracial female. My instructional assistant identifies as a middle-class, African American female. By the end of the study, only 20 original participants remained.

Analysis

Qualitative data analysis brings meaning and order to the mountainous data collected, according to Efron and Ravid (2013). Data were collected from teachers and students who are all members of the classroom community. Tools such as photographs, videotapes, and audiotapes were used after receiving written consent from the involved participants. Field notes were used to organize the observations collected. The interviews and observations field notes were all transcribed into typed text. After transcription, the data had to be organized and reviewed for predetermined categories. While looking at the data, themes were developed. The data was synthesized and explored for emerging patterns. The findings from data analyzation are described in detail in subsequent chapters. Meriam and Tisdell (2016) emphasized the criticalness of a researcher to understand the data collection process and data analyzation should happen simultaneously. Throughout the entire research, the data was analyzed as it was collected.

Validity and Transferability

Validity is the term referring to the "degree to which the study, the data collection tools, and the interpretation of data accurately represents the issue being investigated" (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 70). In relation to qualitative research, validity is the trustworthiness of the data. Trustworthiness is built by investigating transferability, reliability, confirmability, and dependability of the qualitative data (Mertler, 2016). There were multiple methods used in this research to ensure validity.

This research uses triangulation as one method relating to the trustworthiness of the data. Triangulation is the method of connecting multiple sources of data to establish their trustworthiness or verification of the uniformity of the facts while trying to account for inherent biases (Mertler, 2016). Using interviews, observations, and artifacts as multiple methods to gathering data, the researcher could validate information gained. Member checking is the method of verifying data and the interpretations by the respondents. Member checking in this research addressed the interpretive validity by allowing the researcher to share the interviews and observation transcripts with the participants. This gave the participants the ability to make sure their words were accurately interpreted. Member checking was done with students and the instructional assistant.

One of the most important methods of ensuring the trustworthiness is acknowledging my personal preconceived ideas and monitoring my own biases. This is disciplined subjectivity and requires reflexivity. Efron and Ravid (2013) states reflexivity is "an on-going self-reflection regarding the setting, participants, and the topic" (Efron & Ravid, 2013). Before, during, and after the research confronting and addressing my own

thoughts on the impact of antibias culturally responsive literature on kindergarten students was an integral part of maintaining validity. In this research, there were many steps taken to address validity. These will be addressed in more detail further on in this dissertation.

Once validity was established, transferability was the next step in this research. Transferability is the application of this research to another setting. It is possible for the research to be transferred by other kindergarten teachers. Despite the racial, ethnic, socio-economic level or gender composition of the classroom, teachers pass on their values to the students they teach through the decor and displays, as well as the themes discussed. Even in a classroom where everyone appears to be the "same", York (2016) tells us it is essential and possible to have an antibias culturally responsive classroom culture. Other kindergarten teachers can use this study to reflect upon their own literature selections. They can review what and how they teach, as well as the cultures they unintentionally leave out. It is my hope to replicate this action research study each year, with improvements based on the new students.

Insider in Collaboration with Other Insiders

Positionality is the process of looking at yourself in relation to the participants and setting in your study. Herr and Anderson (2013) state positionality is asking yourself who am I. Positionality describes a researcher's view of the world and their position as it relates to an explicit research task. Understanding one's position and its impact on the research is vital. Every researcher has a perception, a thought, a bias and these impact (directly or indirectly) how we conduct our research. It is of upmost importance we address these thoughts and biases to ensure disciplined subjectivity.

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Based on the continuum by Herr and Anderson (2015), my position is one of an insider in collaboration with other insiders. This positionality allowed me to be reflexive in my practice. As an insider in collaboration with other insiders, I collaborated with the students, colleagues, and administrators throughout the process on a topic beneficial to parties involved. Through collaboration with these insiders, I gained insight into the whole child inside the classroom. It also afforded me the opportunity to have my peers review my research and offer continuous feedback.

Impact of Positionality on Study

Lapadat, Motus, and Fisher (2005) dives into detail regarding their roles as a researcher. They posit that every aspect of the research process is saturated by the positionality of the researcher. As a teacher researcher in my own classroom, my positionality influenced my research daily, beginning with my topic selection. Through conversations with colleagues, interactions with students, and my own personal experiences, I have become deeply interested in culture, diversity, prejudice and the impact it has on children. In some of my undergraduate and graduate courses, professors emphasized confronting and understanding your own biases. Dr. Boutte would frequently remind us how our own biases impacted our thoughts towards the students we taught and how we taught. The first step is to acknowledge the bias. Then we must work hard to change them. Efron and Ravid (2013) states the need for researchers to acknowledge personal values and the impact those values have on the interpretations.

Being an insider to this research could influence the response both students and co-teacher provide during interviews or influence the way the children act/react to situations in our classroom community. It does, however, afford me the ability to observe

the children naturally. After establishing open communication, relationships, and classroom safety at the beginning of the year with my students and parents, being an insider allowed conversations to flow organically. An insider in collaboration with other insiders gave the unique perspective of a member of the classroom community while working with those who are impacted by the study. The parents of my students are used as insiders to gain knowledge about their child. Herr and Anderson (2015) describe a case where the teacher views the parents as insiders. This is the view I wish to have of the parents in my classroom. Parents as insiders afforded me information about my students' culture and background I would not gain through observations. Parents are insiders because of the vested interest in the participants, their children.

Significance and Limitations

In the United States, teachers are faced with the obligation to teach more racially, culturally, ethnically, linguistically, diverse learners daily. The National Center for Education Statistics (2017) finds the percentage of students who are not White and enrolled in public education is increasing, while the percentage of White students enrolled is decreasing. Due to the rapidly changing school composition, the need for antibias culturally responsive literature is also growing. York (2016) highlights the relevancy of antibias culturally responsive education for all children as it builds a base for the social skills and knowledge needed to live and work in an expanding culturally diverse community. Classroom environments are becoming increasingly diverse, allowing children the chance to increase their awareness and appreciation of the similarities and differences that exist between one another.

The beautiful mosaic that is our country is reflected in our classrooms. The literature we select often does not show appreciation of that mosaic. This study is a significant contribution to my school because X Elementary School is abundant with diverse cultures which should be valued in the classroom through the selection of literature. The impact of this research will guide me in being more intentional with my literature selection, and overall teaching.

Intended Audience

The intended audience for this study was X Elementary and the community feeding into the school. Eventually, the intended audience would expand to the school district and surrounding districts. It is particularly meant for kindergarten teachers because the foundation for education is built in early childhood. A major audience of this research was myself. I hope to use this research to grow as an educator.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was only being able to observe the participants in my own classrooms due to my instructional duties and responsibilities as the teacher. I was not able to examine the use of antibias culturally responsive literature in other classrooms. No evidence of observations of other teachers might imply the use of antibias culturally responsive literature in other kindergarten classrooms. Another limitation was the potential for students to transfer during the school year. This reduced the sample size and therefore limited the ability to generalize the data across the population.

Organization of Dissertation

This study was designed to investigate the impact of antibias culturally responsive literature in a kindergarten classroom. It was the motive of the researcher to use the data found to encourage the utilization of antibias culturally responsive literature in kindergarten classrooms across the district. The subsequent paragraph briefly details the organization of the rest of the dissertation for the reader to fully understand how the study and data related to education, potentially leading to transferability of the study to another kindergarten classroom.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature responsive to antibias culturally responsive literature. Efron and Ravid (2013) explain the purpose of the literature review is to summarize and synthesize previous research pertinent to one's inquiry. The literature review of this dissertation relied upon research conducted by several pioneers in antibias culturally responsive education such as York (2016), Ladson-Billings (1994), and Boutte (2016).

Chapter 3 details the methodology used for this action research. This chapter includes the design of the research and the research questions. Chapter 3 specifies the setting of the research. It also details the population and sample, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. The overall purpose of chapter three was to explore the design of the research based on the research questions. It delved into the participants and their backgrounds as it relates to the research.

Chapter 4 is centered on the findings of the research. It included examples, key findings and more detailed explanation of the data analysis. Chapter 4 summarizes the data collected and how that data answered the aforementioned research questions.

The final chapter, chapter five, concludes the research. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of this research. This chapter ties theories to the results of this study. It includes recommendations and next steps. This chapter interprets the results founded in the research.

The succeeding chapters in this dissertation illustrate the story of a teacher-researcher in search of the impression of antibias culturally responsive literature on her kindergarten classroom. Through this research, knowledge was gained, lessons were learned, and bonds were built while obtaining essential data. The subsequent chapters depict the journey of one teacher to improve her practice and provide an equitably inclusive education for the students in her classroom community through intentionally selected culturally responsive literature.

According to Kissinger (2017) biases comes up in our daily interactions and doing antibias work with young children is challenging, yet necessary. The following chapter relies upon the research done by several pedagogist like Kissinger. Prior research and the research detailed in this dissertation go hand in hand to reiterate the necessity for antibias culturally responsive literature in an early childhood class.

Terms Defined

For the purpose of this study, two terms must be defined. The term antibias drives this study and played a major role in which books were selected and which books were not selected. Louis-Derman and Sparks (2012) defines antibias education as on that strengthens the possibilities for educators to foster the development of the whole child, as well as an integral part of the foundations for the emotional and social competence of a child. York (2017) defines antibias as teaching all to respect, appreciate, and interact

positively with people who are dissimilar or different from them. Culturally relevant education is also a term used in this dissertation, used interchangeably with culturally responsive education. Ladson-Billings (1999) defines culturally relevant education as a form of teaching that engages students in cultures typically excluded from mainstream education.

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

Almost daily children are exposed to bias, prejudice, and stereotypes directed toward them or toward others. According to Whitney (1999) all children will experience bias, aimed at them or others at some point in their lives. Through this exposure children involuntarily take on and internalize these negative ideas about themselves or others. Kissinger (2017) states bias emerges in daily interactions with adults to adults, adults to children, and children to children. The problem in education is that those biases are rarely, if ever, addressed with the youngest learners, nor are they provided counter narratives. In U.S. schools, students are being bullied based on their race, language, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic level, or gender identity, even their family make-up. Educators, no matter how well intentioned they are, often feel younger students are unable to comprehend and lack the conversational skills needed to have meaningful discussions about race, sex, gender, language, or disabilities. They do tend to focus on the typical family make-up. Some people have the notion that children are too young and having conversations about -isms will steal their innocence. According to Whitney (1999) children are attracted to stereotypes and use them to organize their world. She continues by saying that educators present stereotypes through the books they present.

The United States is rapidly differentiating. The U.S. 2010 Census predicted by the year 2020 more than half of US children will be children of color (York, 2016). U.S. schools reflect increasing diversification. As children enter schools, they will inevitably encounter someone who is different from them as it relates to race, language, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identify, and family composition. York (2017) says there are two things that are certain in life: change and diversity. The U.S. will continue to diversify, and its youngest citizens will continue to interact with diverse peoples. As they interact with diverse people, biases, prejudice, and stereotypes emerge. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development states environmental systems influence human developments (as cited in Santrock, 2009). These systems are the microsystems, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (as cited in Santrock, 2009).

For the sake of this study, the focus will be on the micro, meso, and macro systems of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), from their microsystems (family, peers, and neighborhood) children are first introduced to thoughts and beliefs about people who differ from them. Parents have their beliefs about people and pass them on to their children. Teachers also pass on their beliefs about differing people. This is shown through who is represented in the classroom environment, who is left out, chosen books, and even the teacher's interaction with students. This introduction can be intentional or unintentional. The mesosystems (experiences) can either confirm or negate the biases, prejudice, and stereotypes learned, Bronfenbrenner (1979) conditions. Technology, media, and politics impact the views children develop toward different people. Finally, the macrosystem (the surrounding

culture) can pass on negative ideas about people who differ from them in a variety of ways. Culture brings with it the history of its people. That history brings the negative (and positive) ideas regarding race, sex, gender, ability, language, etc. According to Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010), our society and the systems of that society is integrated with bias and deeply rooted in history.

Children who learn to reject bias will become adults who reject bias. Children can learn these skills in classrooms environments and through materials, activities, and literature. Driving this study was the question of how children's literature aides in the transformation of children's perception and thoughts regarding diversity before and after diving into antibias literature. This study also sought to understand how engaging in antibias culturally responsive children's literature impact the way the kindergartners interact with each other in their daily play, conversations, and even during workshop time. Finally, the study wanted to understand the impact antibias culturally responsive children's literature has on the teachers who are utilized the literature.

Organization of Chapter 2

This chapter focused on the literature surrounding antibias education, culturally responsive education, the development of children's biases, as well as exploring prior research and similar studies. Before viewing literature on the selected topic, understanding the purpose of the literature view in general and how it related to this topic was critical. Following the purpose is an explanation of the strategies used to review the literature. Next, the theories, theorists, and principles give the foundation for the study and the problem of practice. The theoretical framework pursued the comprehension of the

connection between children and race, gender identity, socioeconomic levels, abilities, language, and family compositions. It also defines antibias culturally responsive education and details what children's literature looked like in kindergarten. Subsequently, this chapter provides the historical context in which bias, prejudice, and stereotypes relate to the education of children. Understanding the development of children's ability to recognize differences is followed by the historical perspective. Succeeding the historical perspective is the ways in which social justice is impacted by the study, followed by the review of related research. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary of research and literature, as well as its relation to this action research study.

According to Machi and McEvoy (2016), the purpose of a literature review is to provide a written argument in support of a thesis' position through case building utilizing credible evidence. They go on to say the complex literature review is done with the intent of uncovering a research problem for further study. The purpose of this complex literature review is to present the current research on antibias culturally responsive literature in early childhood. It also argued that antibias culturally responsive literature impacted the conversations and interactions of kindergartners over the course of 12 weeks. The materials gathered define antibias education and culturally responsive education and the terms surrounding them. These materials also helped to establish the foundation for the significance of using children's literature in antibias culturally responsive education. The materials used for this review emphasized the development of and the need to combat bias, stereotypes, and prejudice in young children.

For this literature review, a variety of sources were used to find related literature and research to the topic of using children's literature in kindergarten for antibias

culturally responsive purposes. Search engines Google Scholar, Encore, JStor, and ERIC were utilized to find online journals, other case studies, and related articles. From these search engines peer-reviewed journals and education journals were found. In this study, books by authors well-known for their work in antibias or culturally responsive education and children's literature were used. Suggested textbooks were found and utilized as well. All books used were purchased from Amazon.

Theoretical Framework

Beginning this section on theoretical framework is the statistics and information regarding diversity in the United States. This section highlights the theories surrounding racism, genderism, classism, ableism, family composition discrimination, and language bias in relation to young children. Each ism or bias is impactful to the education development of kindergarten children. This segment also detailed the development of antibias education and culturally responsive pedagogy. Following the development of antibias culturally responsive education, this piece examined the impact of employing it in the classroom. Finally, this section discussed the significance of children's literature to the antibias culturally responsive education.

United States of Diversity and Isms

The United States was, is, and will continue to be a diverse nation. According to Kenneth Prewitt, former director of U.S. Census Bureau, the United States will eventually become the first nation in history to be compiled of every nation from around the world. This means diversity will continue to spread and interactions with differing people will be inevitable. The United States, once characterized as a melting pot or salad

bowl, is a mosaic comprised of various cultures, races, and ethnicities. The U.S. Census states by the year 2060 the U.S. will be a plurality nation, meaning there will be no majority race (US Census, 2012). York (2016) states the U.S. is ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse and the diversity will not diminish. The U.S. officially recognizes six different races. There are at least 50 languages spoken in homes across United States. In 2015, 40 million people were considered ably different. The family compositions are continuously changing; for example, 2 heterosexual parent homes, single parent homes, 2 parent same sex homes, foster homes, and adopted families.

History shows the role immigration has played in the shaping of our nation. According to York (2016) there are approximately 28.4 million immigrants, born in foreign countries, living in the United States. Refugees and asylum seekers also add to the diversity of the United States. As more and more people come to the U.S., the more the nation becomes varied. Copple (2003) says in the world today we encounter a profusion of languages, cultures, races, religions, and perspectives. She also states that teachers are interacting with a wider variety of children and their families. West (2003) contends within the twenty-first century traditionally underrepresented groups will become the majority in the United States. Although the US is diversifying, diversity remains concentrated in certain areas of the nation. This concentration leaves some children to grow up in homogenous communities where they are more likely to adopt and pass negative biases, fears, prejudices, and stereotypes from their ancestors (York, 2016). However, just because some children grow up in homogenous community does not mean they should not be exposed to the diversity of the world, nor does it mean they will not benefit from antibias culturally responsive education.

Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) defines an ism as the "institutional advantages and disadvantages people experience due to their membership (or perceived membership) in certain social identity groups" (pg. xii). They go on to describe isms as either covert (indirect, subtle, and hidden) or overt (direct, explicit, and spelled out). The more assorted society becomes the more impactful these isms will be on children. The purpose of the research was to help children recognize and combat those isms prevalent in society through children's literature. According to Wilkie (2014), skin color, gender, and age are what people typically think about when discussing biases. She continues by stating individuals can unconsciously harbor prejudice toward differences such as height and weight, marital status, or even hobbies. Wilkie (2014) says all those factors can affect everything from education to jobs.

Children See Race; Teachers Should Too

Race is one of the most difficult concepts to define. Race is wrapped in history and has a seemingly metamorphosing definition. It was once considered a part of one's biology; however, contemporary scholars, according to Cornell and Hartman (2007), have since dismissed the notion that race is biological. If not biologically, how else could race be defined? Ramsey (2003) defines race as groups that share visible physical attributes. Cornell and Hartman (2007) articulates that while race lacks a biological basis, its social categorization still wields monumental power. According to DNA sequence pioneer Venter (as cited in Kolbert, 2018), the idea of race is not genetically based. Ladson-Billings and Gillborn (2004) describes race as a complex idea that people use even when it does not make sense. They go on to say race is more fixed and embedded in

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our lives than in previous times. The definition of race is "a human group defined by itself or others as distinct by virtue of perceived common physical characteristics that are held to be inherent" (Cornell & Hartman, 2007, pg. 25).

Beginning at early ages, children are able to identify differences in the color of people's skins. Kissinger (2017) asserts when working with children it is vital to both accurately and scientifically define skin color. While there is an incomplete picture of racial identity development, research has focused on children's racial awareness and attitudes for a long period of time. Carter and Curtis (2008) contend that beginning at the age of two children notice and name differences in skin color. They also state that by age five children can begin to understand the scientific explanations for differences regarding race, as well as the range of racial similarities and differences. York (2016) tells us that most studies focus on White children's awareness, with less emphasis on children of color. For White children, the learning and use of racial labels begin sometimes before they are able to classify alike and different. For children of color this development usually occurs after development of alike and different. White children often see their race in a pro-White manner and can have negative outlooks toward other races. When children of color develop positive attitudes about their race they do not tend to come with negative attitudes toward other races.

Racism has a profound effect on White children and children of color in different ways. Boutte (2016) positions children of color hear and learn devaluing messages early in life. Husband (2015) positions there is little known about how early childhood children think about White privilege. York (2016) states racism influences the development of children of color causing them to over-identify with White people, feel separated and

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alienated, confused, rejected, shame, as well as anger and rage. Over-identification with White people is usually the first impact of racism and involves young children preferring lighter skinned characters or the downright denial of their brown skin (York, 2016). Children of color often feel as though they do not fit in at school and school devalues their race, leading to feelings of alienation (York, 2016). Children of color feel overwhelmed and undervalued, affecting their ability to think with clarity. Children of color also experience daily rejection in schools and daycares. When children of color experience racism they come to develop shame about who they are, leading to anger and rage. Bakhtin (1981) notes that one's ideological self develops as one interacts with existing ideologies, discourses, and people in their environment. According to Bakhtin (1981), a person's identity struggles between their inner ideology and the outward discourse in the world around them. Thus, as children of color struggle with the way they see themselves and the way they believe others see them.

According to York (2016), developing a sense of racial identity is often difficult for multiracial children. They question who they are racially. White children are able to escape and not think about racism, yet this is impossible for children of color. Many early childhood educators approach building relationships of children from diverse backgrounds in a color-blind manner. However, ignoring race can potentially lead to harmful negative messages to children of color, leaving them feeling as if teachers do not recognize a major component of their identity: their race.

No Such Thing as Girl Colors

"Oooo, you're using a pink crayon. Pink is a girl color. Right Ms. Jenkins?" says N (Black, male), laughing as J (Black, male) uses a pink crayon. Ms. Jenkins responds, "There is no such thing as a girl color." This conversation is not new in kindergarten. Other conversations involved who can wear a dress in dramatic play or who can play with the cars in block center because these are for boys. Whether they realize it or not, these conversations are rooted in gender roles.

When most people think about gender they immediately think about the superficial constructs of man and woman. However, open conversations regarding gender, genderism, and gender identity are becoming more complex. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) define gender simply as biologically being anatomically male or female. This definition is closer related to sex than gender. Gender Spectrum (2017) explains gender as an interrelationship between body, identity, expression. Gender identity is defined as the awareness and acceptance of one's own gender and is inclusive of gender role. Gender roles are "the behaviors, attitudes, and appearance that a particular society or culture defines as "masculine" and ascribes to males or as "feminine" and ascribes to females" (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010, pg. xii). Genderism is the social and/or cultural belief that there are only two binary genders, masculine and feminine, linked to one's sex at birth. Roberts and Hill (2003) asserts while sex is biologically determined, gender is a social construct with attitudes, roles, and activities typically assigned to one sex. They continue by stating that early childhood is critical to learning about gender. According to Kissinger (2017) the idea of gender binary leads to stereotypical concepts of gender roles. Ramsey (2015) says gender roles and the stereotypes that come with

them are usually unconscious, however resistant to change and passed on generation after generation.

What role does gender play in kindergarten? Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) posits that gender is the first core identity children develop. By age two children define themselves and others as boy or girl. By age three children have already established ideas of what behaviors and activities are connected to gender. As stated by Carter and Curtis (2008) children notice gender by two, are strongly influenced by dominant culture attitudes towards gender by three and define their own gender identity by five years old. Gender role expectancy varies depending on families, cultures, and societal expectations, all of which have the potential to change. Sometimes children will be born with features of both genders (intersex) or their anatomical make-up does not coincide with the gender he/she identifies with (transgender). While children develop the basic idea of gender early on, mitigating factor influence their development of gender roles as well as identity. Young children still struggle with the idea of what it means to be a boy or girl. Children will stereotypically categorize what is means to be male or female by associating things such as length of hair, strength, clothing, and choice of toys to one or the other. Children, without intentional redirection, will take the gender binary idea of society. According to Kissinger (2017) this gender binary idea promotes homophobia and sexism. Other people's attitudes about gender behavior influence children. If children act differently from societal "norms" they may experience emotional conflict. Often teachers will unintentionally convey stereotypical messages concerning gender behavior reinforcing the gender binary concept. Before the age of five children are grappling with the issues of gender conformity or non-conformity and can develop bias, prejudice, and stereotypes.

Choi and Wilson (2018) conducted a study to understand the implications of gender diversity and child welfare. Their empirical study found that the gender identity of children was impacted by discrimination and in turn effected their wellbeing. Ramsey (2015) expresses that as they grow, children construct their gender identity and concepts from messages in their environment, either overt or covert. Biersteker and Herman (2003) found children exhibited pre-prejudice behaviors based on societal views toward gender. What is difficult in gender role and stereotypes is the rigidness and self-perpetuation surrounding gender roles. Arising before kindergarten, gender segregation grows in schools as children often choose to play with same-sex peers. This can lead to affirmation of gender roles and stereotypes. It is clear young children develop stereotypes regarding gender and gender roles when left unchallenged.

This research study sought to see how children's conversations regarding gender and gender roles change from the beginning of the study to the end of the study employing children's literature. The research study is done to understand the implications engaging in antibias culturally responsive literature has on dispelling stereotypes and prejudices in young learners. As society continues to change, people must be able to understand and respect diversity even as it relates to the concept of gender. As per Marshall, Robeson and Keefe (2003), gender schema and gender roles are often more explicit in public school. The Teaching Tolerance Project (2003) says young children gain their earliest ideals about gender from visible traits such as hairstyles, clothing, and voice pitch. Chrisman and Couchenour (2003) claims strict gender roles can limit friendships and affect our feelings.

Class in the Classroom

"People who have at least some financial security are often unaware of the role affluence plays in our lives" (Ramsey, 1999, pg. 86). According to Santrock (2009) lower-income families have less access to resources such as tutoring and other educational activities. Nearly 30 years ago, when the idea of antibias education first emerged, economic status in the classroom was of little focus. Ramsey (2015) states while young children rarely notice indices of economic class such as education, they do note concrete clues such as clothing, homes, and material items. Kissinger (2017) notes how teachers can be heard saying things such as "What a nice new jacket" or "Your family's new car looks cool" without realizing the impact such comments have on the children they teach. She goes on to argue when these comments are made teachers are fortifying the message that our worth is equated with what we wear. Classrooms can often inadvertently send messages of superiority based on housing, clothing, jobs held by families, transportation, and even toys. Kissinger (2017) says educators often use food such as rice or beans as a sensory activity, however many children in our communities and around the globe go hungry.

Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) posit inequitable opportunities, life experiences, and privileges based on economic levels have a deep reaching effect on young children. Wellhousen (2003) says children live in wide variety of homes, including temporary shelters or shelters for women and children of violence. Children of poverty are at greater risks for chronic illnesses due to lack of immunization, low energy due to poor nutrition or environmental poisoning, or homelessness. These issues, however, are not from lack of trying. Many poor people work hard but remain poor. Millions of

children across the United States live in low-income or working-class families at risk for these issues. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) note that while there is a large number of children living in poverty, classism is often overlooked and misunderstood. Children notice messages about the value of work such as the negative connotations with being a garbage collector versus the high praise often given to doctors. Children also develop the notion material things equate love and approval. Wilcox (as cited in Kissinger, 2017) says in 2004 advertiser spent more than $12 billion per year to reach youth and children view at least 40,000 commercials. According to Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) wealthier families or families in professional/management work directly or indirectly send messages of both superiority and entitlement. In contrast, families with lower-paying jobs can often be heard saying they hope their child can have a "better life", sending the message their job is less important to society. Ramsey (2015) says young children learn stereotypes, particularly about lower-income or poor people. She continues by saying children in preschool assume rich people are more likeable and happier than poorer people. Several schools across the nation are socioeconomically segregated. Owens, Rearden, and Jencks (2016) conducted a study to address the ever-growing issue of economic segregation in the nation's schools. They found from 1990-2010 the income segregation increased, some of it due to the income segregation of districts. Even when schools aren't segregated, children can be seen dividing themselves along economic lines.

Not Disabled, Just Ably Different

"Children's awareness and understanding varies across type of disability" (Ramsey, 2015, pg. 162). Children first recognize orthopedic ability-differences because of the noticeable associated equipment, and they are least aware of cognitive or psychological ability-differences, according to Ramsey (2015). Kissinger (2017) suggests young children are naturally curious about differences in abilities and they will ask questions. Sometimes children will display discomfort or even rejection. Living in an able-centered world, children with ability-differences often need support with handling rejection, discomfort, or questioning from their abled peers. The United States is designed to reinforce ableism and inadvertently passes ableism on to children who then bring it to the classroom. Ableism, as defined by Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010), is the attitude, action, or practice of individuals or institutions, backed by societal powers, undermining human and legal rights, accessibility, or economic opportunities of people with disabilities.

We Are Family

Central to the growth of children is the structure of their family. Children live and grow in families, culture, and communities. Family compositions varies and can change over the course of a child's life. According to Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) only some children live the post-World War era of what was defined as a "normal" family; father, mother, biological children, employed, private home. Children can come from single-parent homes, blended and extended families, adoptive families, foster families,

conditionally separated families, same-sex families just to name a few. Despite the variety of family compositions, early childhood classrooms remain heteronormative. Ramsey (2015) says heteronormativity places heterosexual relationships as the basis for the ideal family. She goes on to say preschool aged children are relatively flexible in their idea of family constellations, however they quickly learn from parents, peers, teachers, media and society that all family have one daddy and one mommy. This notion leaves out the children who has same-sex parents, an incarcerated parent, a single parent, who live in a foster home or children's home, or even those who are raised by extended family. Kissinger (2017) argues family is strongly linked to the development of young children's identities. Unfortunately, teachers can bring in stereotypes and biases regarding family compositions and unintentionally transfer them to the children they teach. Children then see those families who are not "normal" as inferior and sometimes even wrong.

Let's Talk About Language

The United States has always been a place where an abundance of languages is found. With new waves of immigration, the plethora of languages are expanding, meaning children whose home language is not English will be entering classrooms. While every child in the U.S. needs English, it should not come at the expense or disrespect of their home language. According to Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) throwing English Language Learners into a completely English class does more harm than good. It stunts their ability to become dual-language speakers and negatively impacts their chances for success academically. York (2016) argues language is how we communicate, it's the tool we used to organize and express ourselves. Through language,

one finds their sense of identity. Often when teachers are uncomfortable with students who do not speak English as their first language, children will pick up on those cues and ignore or refuse to interact with those children. Children can become frustrated and shut down when they feel as though their home language is not of value. Delpit (2009) says when forced to monitor their language children tend to become silent.

Call it What You Want, Just Call it Important

For the sake of this research, the terms multicultural, antibias, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive education will be used interchangeably. Pelo (2008) says antibias education is how teachers begin to call attention to the ways people are different and the same, while honoring the individual and the group identity. Antibias work is challenging, brings up unexpected ideas and questions, states Kissinger (2017). Through antibias multicultural classrooms children become proud of who they are, recognize bias, and speak up for injustices (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). Guiding antibias work are four goals Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) asserts applies to all children regardless of backgrounds and influences. These four goals are for each child to demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, and positive social identities, to express comfort and joy with human diversity, recognize unfairness with the language to describe it, and the empowerment and skills to act upon injustices. Ramsey (2015) postulates the purpose of multicultural education is to engage children in the understanding and challenge of injustices dividing and diminishing their world. Antibias, multicultural, culturally responsive approach to education centers on fighting bias, stereotypes, and prejudices in our youngest learners while teaching them to value who they are and giving them the

communication skills necessary for social justice work. Ramsey (2015) asserts children's

literature is a valuable source in challenging stereotypes and supporting positive identify

development. According to York (2016), antibias education is intentional and relevant to

all ages and all areas of the curriculum.

If Books Could Talk

Reflecting on the books in your classroom library, if they could talk what message

would they deliver regarding race, family composition, gender roles, language, ability,

and economic status? Research has shown books, when selected intentionally, can be

mirrors, reflecting the child, and windows, showing what others are like. Stacey York

(2016) states, when children are more familiar with cultures, they develop more positive

attitudes toward others. The books read to, with, and by the children in a kindergarten

classroom are significant tools to use to combat prejudice and intolerance. Ramsey

(2015) says regardless of their content, books reflect a certain value. "Quality children's'

books that represents authentic stories and images of all kinds of diversity are at the heart

of antibias work in early childhood classrooms" (Kissinger, 2017, pg. 158). Children

need to see themselves in the stories they hear, read, and see around their classrooms.

According to York (2016) these books support children with identifying with and feeling

proud of their home culture.

A major piece to utilizing children's books for antibias education is the selection

of those books. York (2016) claims when selecting books, it is vital one pays attention to

the illustrations, avoiding stereotypical images. She suggests avoiding cartoon or animals

to depict human diversity, as well. The Council on Interracial Books for Children

suggests checking the illustrations, the story line, lifestyles, relationships between people, the self-image it projects, background of the author/illustrator, their perspective, loaded words, and even the copyright date when selecting books for the antibias classroom. It is necessary to mention children's literature is not exclusive to books. Literature can include photographs, lyrics to songs, magazines, or even video clips. These materials still lead to discussions regarding identity development and injustices and careful considerations must be taking when selecting these materials as well.

Child Development: The Historical Perspective

Throughout history, the development of children and how to rear them have been a topic of philosophers. Ancient civilizations such as Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans developed rich conceptions of children's development (Santrock, 2009). Santrock (2009) defines development as the pattern of change beginning at conception and continuing through the life span. Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky, Bandura, and Bronfenbrenner are a few theorists who have studied and developed theories regarding the development of children. This section looked at the development of the child from the views of these theorists, as well as how those theories connect with construction of isms in children.

York (2016) argues theorist Erik Erikson was one of the most influential theorists to child development. Erikson (1950) was the first to propose the idea of children being more than biological organisms. He described them as products of the expectations, prejudices, and prohibitions of society. Erikson's theory suggested humans develop in psychosocial stages, listing eight stages over the life span (Santrock, 2009). For this research the focus will be on Erikson's first five. Erikson's first four stages are trust

versus mistrust (first year), autonomy versus shame and doubt (one-three years), initiative versus guilt (three to five years), and industry versus inferiority (six years to puberty). According to Erikson's theory, in the first 20 years of life people will confront crises that impact their development. Beginning in the first year of life people develop the expectation the world will be a pleasant place to live. York (2016) says this stage is an important step because this is when children learn to trust in the world. Following the development of trust, children recognize they are in control of their own behavior. In the third stage, children are entering preschool years, encountering a social world. In this stage, children are learning to take responsibility for their own bodies, behaviors, toys, etc. (Santrock, 2009). The fourth stage is the stage where children's experiences begin to shape their feelings of inferiority. According to Santrock (2009), at each stage the individual confronts a crisis that must be resolved. When the crisis is successfully solved the development is healthier. Taking Erikson's theory and applying it to this research, the students in this study fell in between the third and fourth stage. This indicated the children were dealing with taking initiative and gaining experiences, while feeling guilty and inferior. Imagine how a child, who is already battling this crisis, may feel when they walk into a classroom where their cultural identity is underrepresented.

Erikson's theory focused on the unconscious development of the child, whereas Piaget and Vygotsky's theories focused more on the cognitive and socio-cultural cognitive aspects of development, respectively. Piaget (1954) says children actively construct their understanding of the world. Piaget argues children actively seek out knowledge and organizes that knowledge into schemata. According to Piaget, children possess multiple complex schemata and schemata is often modified. Utilizing Piaget's

concept that children are active seekers of knowledge and they form schemata based on experiences, this research study worked to impact the schemata of bias, stereotypes, and prejudices.

Vygotsky's socio-cultural cognitive theory says children's development is influenced by their social and cultural environments (Ormrod, 2009). Vygotsky (1978) places heavy weight on the impact of culture on the development of children, stating the environment children grow up in influence how they think and what they think about. Bigler and Liben (2007) states current contemporary research shows cognitive processes predispose children to prejudices and stereotypes based on society. If the environment children are in influences the thoughts they create, it can be assumed children surrounded by isms such as racism and genderism will develop ideology reflective of that environment. It can also be said if they are in classrooms where they surrounded by counter narratives then students will have new schemata to modify their existing ones that formulate the isms, like classism. Kissinger (2017) says if we practice and have more compassion for each other, the more effective we will be in creating the desired world for our children.   Taking on Vygotsky's theory and applying it to this research study, it was the intent of the study to use children's literature in a kindergarten classroom to impact what they think about diversity, perhaps providing a counter narrative to what they get from society.

Social cognitive theorist Albert Bandura (1971) asserts people acquire a variety of thoughts, behaviors, and feelings through the observations of others and often adopt the behavior themselves. Take a moment to think about behaviors such as smoking, talking fast, how you rear your children. Then think about your own parents or teachers or role

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models and ask yourself if your behavior mimics that of those people you spent your life around. Children learn from the people they are around and will adopt behaviors of those people. The views regarding race, gender roles and identity, language, economic class, family composition, and ability can be adopted by children.

Similar to Bandura, Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed children develop based on what they learn from surrounding. While Bandura looked at it from the social aspect, Bronfenbrenner took a more ecological approach. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory states the multilayered environmental systems influences development. As mentioned in the introduction of this literature review, Bronfenbrenner's micro, meso, and macro systems are utilized in this study. Through these systems, one can see the role family, media, school, neighborhoods, and peers play in the development of children and their thoughts regarding others. These theories all have one vital thing in common: regardless of what their foundation is, at some point in child development children are influenced by the world around them.

Understanding the process of development, whether it be socio-cultural or ecological, is vital to understanding how isms form and thus is crucial in the argument for antibias culturally responsive children's literature in early years. Meltzoff says, "One of the most amazing things and troubling things about human beings is this idea that we automatically form social categories into us and them" (York, 2016, pg. 28). Evident in the development of children is the impact of the environment.

The History of Multicultural Education

In America bias, stereotypes, and prejudice have always existed. Biases, stereotypes, and prejudices are passed from generation to generation. Without intervention, they will continue to be passed down. Education itself has been around since the beginning as well. Education, according to Gorski (1999), in the United States often left out a group of people (i.e., African Americans and girls). Beginning in the sixties, a shift in society began to emerge and those who felt left out of the curriculum began to speak up and fight back. According to Gorski (1999), the root of multicultural education can be traced to the civil rights movement of many oppressed groups. During that time, activists fought for curriculum change reflective of the growing diversity of the nation. The sixties and seventies saw K-12 education scrambling to include some of the marginalized groups. The eighties are when progressive education activists developed a body of scholarship on multicultural education (Gorski, 1999). Multicultural education leans heavily on scholars such as Woodson (1922) and DuBois (1935, 1973) who pushed for education to challenge the negative stereotypes of African Americans. However, as it progressed the focus of multicultural education began to encompass other minority groups. The eighties saw the emergence of multicultural education theorist such as Gay (1980), and Nieto (1986). These theorists sought to make changes to curriculum that continued to oppress certain groups of citizens. Other scholars, such as Delpit (1992), Ladson-Billings (1995), and Derman-Sparks (2007), have also influenced culturally responsive and antibias education's progress. These theorists build upon each other, as well as the ideas others, to analyze what happens when education is not biased.

Throughout its history antibias education sought to help children develop the skills needed to critically think about the impact of bias, stereotypes, and prejudice on society.

Changing Society through Literature

"I hate diversity workshops. Real change comes from having enough comfort to be really honest and say something very uncomfortable." – Michele Obama (Obama & Rogak, 2009, pg. 50).

Collins (2018) wrote an article for Teaching Tolerance depicting incidents of hate such as students hanging nooses while flying the confederate flag or children sending Snapchat messages threatening to beat, lynch, and burn the body of fellow classmates. Boutte (2016) describes a children's chant beginning with "if you're White, you're alright" and ends with "if you're Black, get back" Turn on the news, there is no shortage of stories depicting children being separated from their families (Wagner, Rocha, Ries & Wills, 2018) or the ongoing battle for equal rights for same sex couples (Judd, 2018). Black men and boys three times more likely to be killed by police force (Howard, CNN, 2016). Those who kneel during the national anthem are called "sons of bitches" (Trump, 2017), yet those who support White nationalist ideals are considered "very fine people" (Trump, 2015) Left and right the injustices are prevalent in this society. Nothing will change unless we change it and changing it requires conversations about it. Ramsey (2017) argues that social media, news about disasters and injustices are rapidly disseminated. She goes on to say a demographic shift leads to tensions both intergroup and outside groups.

Kissinger (2017) asserts no one escapes bias and the primary tasks of early childhood is to create learning environments with culturally relevant materials to counter those biases. The social justice issues of our nation trickles into the classroom. Children bring who they are and the issues they face into the classroom. This leaves our classroom as a platform to confront and combat biases, stereotypes, and prejudices. According to Ramsey (2017) young children are constructing their own idea of privilege, powers, inferiority. Continuing, Ramsey (2017) says multicultural education is how we engage children in understanding, confronting, and challenging the division caused by injustices. The foundation of this research was to help children reshape their thoughts of others using antibias culturally responsive children's literature. These children will eventually grow up to become adults in society. If children can have the necessary conversations about race, gender, language, family composition, and disabilities now, they will become adults who are able to have uncomfortable conversations. Wanless and Crawford (2016) says educators can look for ways to infuse social justice connections. They go on to say children literature can serve as a springboard meaningful conversations and teachable moments. Wanless and Crawford continue by suggesting children's literature can help children use a social justice lens to analyze and discuss both historical and current events. The very premise of this study was to confront social justice issues concerning the isms of our society through children's literature. Multicultural literature, according to Youngs (2015), can be used a tool to counter racism and negative stereotypes.

What Does Other Research Say?

Although research on antibias education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and multicultural education is extensive, the research on antibias children's literature impacting kindergarten students is limited. The very lack of research surrounding the topic of antibias, culturally responsive literature in kindergarten is why this research study was necessary. Kim (2016) conducted a qualitative case study to focus on the creation of alternative texts by kindergarten students, after they read multicultural pictures books. This study took place in a Korean kindergarten classroom and sought to emphasize the need for multicultural education to support the understanding of diverse cultures. After reading the stories, the children were asked to discuss the story as a whole group and then create alternative texts. The findings of this study concluded utilizing multicultural books served as a vehicle for children to voice their perspectives and developed critical awareness of cultural/racial diversity.

Kim, Wee, and Lee (2016) conducted a more detailed case study of the impact of multicultural literature in a South Korean kindergarten classroom. In South Korea, the society is often considered racially and ethnically homogenous. The purpose of this study was to determine how kindergartners responded to picture books with African/African American characters and to understand how reading multicultural books aided with in the development of emerging notions of race. This case study found in the beginning children had standardized images of Africans (no shoes, smelling like dust, hungry). The children even favored lighter skinned Africans and African Americans in their drawings. At the conclusion of the study, researchers, teachers, and parents noted a change in students' perspectives and attitudes toward racial and cultural diversity.

Gayle-Evans (2004) conducted a two-part questionnaire, mailed to one thousand kindergarten teachers in Florida, which has a fast growing, diverse population.   The purpose of this study was to assess kindergarten teachers' implementation of multicultural education in classrooms. The study sought to see how teachers found ways to prepare young learners to become aware of and comfortable with people who may look, speak, or dress differently from them. Gayle-Evans (2004) found 72.74% of respondents utilized multicultural literature in their classroom. While this study looked at what teachers did in their classrooms for multicultural education, it did not look at the impact of the literature on kindergarten students.

Youngs' (2015) study focused on the effects of multicultural literature on children's perspective of race and how educators implemented the literature. Prior to any intervention, Youngs (2015) noted students felt very strongly about African Americans and held biases towards them. At the conclusion of her study, Youngs noted children's responses had changed and they exhibited less bias towards children of color. This study found multicultural literature led children to see themselves and experience cultural pluralism.

The prior studies had one common theme: understanding the impact of multicultural education in early years. Gayle-Evans (2004) was more focused on what teachers did to implement it, Youngs (2015), Kim (2016), and Kim, Wee, and Lee (2016) focused more on the impact of literature on the development of children's perceptions of race. Most research on children's literature as it relates to multicultural education focuses on race. Multicultural education is not solely based on race. Multicultural education covers all aspects of cultures. \ Nieto (1994) says multicultural education is a concept

encompassing of a wide spectrum of strategies and ideas. Antibias culturally responsive children's literature and its impact on the perceptions on kindergarten children is still a growing, but necessary area. Youngs (2015), Kim (2016), and Kim, Wee, and Lee (2016) has shown positive effects of literature about race on negating stereotypes, yet there is more work to be done to understand the impact of literature dealing with gender and gender roles, language differences, the ably different, and family composition on kindergarten students' thoughts. Expanding the research is why this research study was needed.

Summary

The modern era of child development began in the 1800's with critical developments and continued to evolve to this day with influences from theorist such as Erikson and Bronfenbrenner. Understanding the development of the child is a crucial piece of understanding how and when their thoughts towards others are shaped. Pelo says, "early childhood is the time in our lives when we develop our core dispositions-the habits of thinking that shape how we live" (Pelo, 2008, pg. ix). Whitney (as cited in Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010) says we must teach our children the skills to treat other people with respect because children are not learning to treat each other in such ways. She goes on to say children are living in taunting, humiliating communities that are teaching them to despise themselves or that they are inferior. The researchers, philosophers, and theorist presented in this literature review discuss how children develop, how prejudices and biases are formed in children, and the changes that can occur with antibias, culturally responsive intervention. Children develop ideas about

people who are ably different, speak different, have different parent make-ups, or gender roles. They develop biases and stereotypes typically passed on from their environment. Current research also shows children develop images and thoughts about themselves, either negative or positive. Ladson-Billings (1995) says students must possess critical consciousness to challenge the status quo of current social order. Children learn to reject bias through modeling, classroom materials, and classroom activities (York, 2016). Antibias culturally responsive literature is vital to helping children build the skills needed to combat the biases, stereotypes, and prejudices they experience and/or develop.

While there is limited research, the need and the impression antibias culturally responsive literature makes is evident. Based on prior research, children's thoughts and perceptions regarding others can change from stereotypical to understanding. This research study sought to confront the issue of the development of biases in young children utilizing antibias, culturally responsive children's literature. In the battle for multicultural education lies limited research on how antibias children's literature influences children's thoughts in regard to other's race, gender identity, family composition, economic status, ability, and language. The intent of this study was to examine where children's beliefs start and how those beliefs change over the course of 12 weeks, through interaction with antibias culturally responsive literature.

Chapter 3:

The Qualitative Study

This chapter describes the details of the study. Chapter 3 describes the type of study, the research behind the study, as well as the steps and procedures undertaken during the course of the study. This chapter outlines the study, the tools for data collection the researcher used, and the participants. Finally, Chapter 3 very briefly discusses the analysis of the data, including the tools used for analysis.

Problem of Practice

"You are not a boy! You are a girl! You don't stand to pee like boys do!" S, a kindergartener who identifies as male, screams at B who identifies as male or female, depending on the day. B runs off, ignoring the comment. A nearby teacher who witnessed this conversation, was unsure of how to handle the situation so she said nothing. Similar situations occur in classrooms, lunchrooms, or playgrounds with more frequency than one would like to admit. Just as often, teachers fail to address or lead open conversations, particularly with the youngest learners, on a variety of topics from gender identity to race to ability. The lack of conversations with students or the assumption they are too young to have discussions leads to misunderstandings, prejudices, and negativity directed at students from differing backgrounds. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends" (Maguth & Taylor, 2014, pg. 23). Far too often

education remains silent and oblivious to the richness of differences in our classrooms. When educators remain silent students suffer. Silence and disregard of racism, sexism, classism, and ableism, along with other forms of systemic oppression in our classrooms is prevalent and remains a problem in education. Schools are becoming hostile environments for student who do not meet the standards of society; not falling into categories that society deems "normal." Students notice differences frequently; many teachers are the opposite and claim not to notice them at all. This selective blindness is actually more detrimental than beneficial.

It can be heard throughout the halls; kindergarteners are too young to learn about various forms of oppression; they won't understand what culture is or it's too deep a topic for them. However, in their youngest years, human beings are developing their thoughts, opinions, and understandings of themselves and others. At five- and six-years old children are developing their identity and identity of others. Without positive images of people, children will often develop negative stereotypes, biases, and prejudice. Valenzuela (1999) calls education lacking cultural inclusion, subtractive schooling. Subtractive schooling gives learners negative messages undermining the worth of their culture, language, beliefs, abilities, and families. Our youngest learners are capable of understanding the value of their culture and who they are as human beings. The problem is educators very rarely give them the credit they are due. Educators of young children must move just beyond the ABC's and 123's and towards antibias, culturally responsive education.

Significance of Study

According to the National School Climate Survey (2015), conducted biennially, 57.6% of LGBTQ students felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation and 43.3% felt unsafe because of their gender expression. The statistics regarding racism, classism, ableism, and other oppression in schools are just as alarming. Oppression effects even kindergarten students. Understanding how children's perceptions change after weeks of antibias, culturally responsive literature is significant because they are our future.

According to research teachers' strong views can be considered biased, depending on the situation; the values and beliefs teachers bring are shaped by their own experiences or lack thereof. Teachers often lack experience with incorporating cultures differing from the dominant in the curriculum, thus causing issues to arise. Fox and Gay (1995) asserts the cultural conditioning of teachers play a major role in instruction and when they do not share the same ethnic or cultural backgrounds then these incompatibilities become obstacles (pg. 6). Educators enter schools with their own prejudices, biases, and stereotypes of their students and must learn to confront them. Remaining blind to diversity does nothing but perpetuate the narratives of the Eurocentric ideals.

Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) reminds us "it is important to remember that it is not human differences that undermine children's development, but rather unfair, hurtful treatment based upon those differences" (pg.4). In the United States, the education system is based on the society in which it is found. The United States' society tends to uphold a Eurocentric view which bleeds into the education system, negatively

impacting children who do not represent Eurocentrism. It is vital children receive counter narratives and realize the value of their cultures. This study highlighted the impact that happens when children see themselves in respectable, empowering ways in literature.

Research Question

There were three research questions driving this study. The first question sought to discover what biases kindergarten students brought to the classroom regarding race, gender, family composition, ability, class, and language. Secondly, this study's intent was to understand how the perceptions of kindergarteners change before and after the implementation of antibias, culturally responsive literature as it relates to race, gender, ability, family composition, class, and language. The final research question looked into how children's discussions reflected their understanding of each topic.

Research Design and Intervention

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) said very rarely does someone start on a trip without a plan and this applies to a research study as well. They go on to say when conducting a research study, one needs an idea of what they want to know, as well as a plan for carrying it out. The research design section of this dissertation describes what kind of research was conducted, as well as the context and setting of the study. Herr and Anderson (2015) described the spiral nature of an action research study, where a plan is implemented, and the effect of that plan is documented. This section of Chapter 3 also describes the intervention done in the research study.

Action Research

Mertler (2017) defines action research as a systemic inquiry usually conducted by a teacher or someone invested in the teaching and learning process. He continues by saying the purpose of action research is for the teacher to gather information about their school and students. Action research requires or demands some form of intervention, whereas traditional research frowns upon intervening in the setting. My objective was to be an integral part of my research setting, as I served as the teacher and the researcher. According to Herr and Anderson (2015), action research is a spiral process. Action research starts with developing a plan of action, then implementing the plan, observing the effects of the plan, and then reflecting on the whole process. Action research fits this research topic because I aimed to use it immediately to make an impact on my classroom and school. The plan and implementation of the plan for this study is described in subsequent parts of this chapter. Throughout the plan, I collected data on the effects of this research, as well as reflected on my own thoughts and experiences. These steps made action research a natural fit for this study.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research was the type of action research best suited for this topic. Efron and Ravid (2013) describe qualitative research as one designed to study the situations and events unfolding naturally in a school setting. The purpose of qualitative research is to understand how an educational experience was understood by those impacted (school, teachers, parents, and administrators). Qualitative research is done to bring about change needed. The research topic in this paper is based on gaining

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information in order bring about change. Qualitative research often uses surveys, interviews, and observations to gather data. These were data collection types used in this research, with the exception of surveys. Finally, after reviewing the table Craig Mertler (2017) uses in *Action Research: Improving Schools and Empowering Educators*, with thorough questioning of whether to use a qualitative or quantitative approach, it was determined qualitative approach complimented this research. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Due to my part researcher and teacher, I was the main instrument of data collection and I was the one analyzing the data, therefore qualitative research was most fitting.

Paradigms

Based on extensive research, a combination of paradigms seemed to best fit this study. A combination of critical research, narrative inquiry, and observational studies were used in this subject. Sometimes qualitative research requires an overlap of paradigms. This qualitative action research took aspects of three types of qualitative design to implement the research.

Critical Research

Critical research is done to critique, challenge, transform, and analyze power relations, while intending people to act based on the findings of the study. Mertler (2017) says critical research serves as a mechanism for social justice advocacy through educational contexts. This research wanted to identify what the children's perceptions were in the beginning and to change negative perceptions through antibias literature.

Critical research also encompasses theories that analyze social class, sexuality and gender concepts, race, and other aspects of society. Critical research was suited for this study because the study focused on race, gender, family composition, language, ability, and class. Critical research also looks at the larger systems of society, culture, and institutions that shape educational practice, according to Mertler (2017). This research looked to address kindergarteners' perceptions which are heavily influenced by the systems of society.

Narrative Inquiry

"The oldest and most natural form of sense making is that of stories or narratives" (Jonassesn & Hernandez-Serrano, 2002, p. 66). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) contend narratives are how people share our lives. They go on to state the key to narrative inquiry is the use of stories as data. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2016) humans are storytellers and lead storied lives. Every child has a story or stories based on experiences, knowledge, and opinions; teacher do as well. The narrative inquiry aspect of this research allowed for the researcher-teacher to see and hear the everyday actions of the students, as described by Connelly and Clandinin. Clandinin, Pushor, Orr (2009) says narrative inquiry concerns itself with personal and social conditions. This research inquired how social conditions like race and gender ideas impact the discernments of kindergartners.

Observational Study

This research used an observational study paradigm because of the integral part the researcher plays in the research. According to Mertler (2017) the practitioner-researcher must still be a trusted person in the particular setting. As the primary teacher in

the classroom, I have developed a relationship with each of my students. My students are comfortable with sharing their thoughts with each other and with me. Mertler goes on to describe the participant observer as a researcher who is observing and participating in the setting. As the primary teacher, I was able to observe my kindergarten students and interact with them in various aspects of the school day.

The combination of critical research, narrative inquiry, and observational study was used for this study because each element was necessary to compile the data for the study. Using a combination of paradigm was determined by the theoretical framework outlined in chapter two. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) says sometimes types of qualitative research overlaps and that was the case with this research.

Intervention to Address Problem of Practice

Action research is one done with the intent of intervening. As a form of intervention, the teacher-researcher engaged students in antibias literature. Young children will face forms of oppression. Young children can also comprehend issues regarding race, gender, family composition, ability, class, language. The experiences and influences in the lives of young children determine the biases, stereotypes, and prejudices they develop. Children can then take those biases and project them onto their peers, leading to instances of bullying. For instance, Meyer (2012) states bullying is closely connected to homophobia and sexism. Without intervention, young children will continue to develop biases and stereotypes regarding diversity. The use of antibias literature over the course of 12 weeks served as a form of interference in the development of prejudices. The teacher-researcher engaged students in literature surrounding one topic (race, gender,

family composition, class, ability, and language) for two weeks each. Below is the timeline for the study:

Tentative Timeline

- Weeks 1–2 (February 4th–8th & February 11th–15th seminar on February 19th): Race (teacher-researcher will be out February 14th and 15th, students will be out February 18th)

- Weeks 3–4 (February 25th–March 1st & March 4th–8th; seminar on March 8th): Class

- Weeks 5–6 (March 11th–15th & March 18th–22nd; seminar on March 22nd) Family Composition

- Weeks 7–8 (March 25th–29th& April 1st–5th; seminar on April 5th): Gender

- Weeks 9–10 (April 8th–12th & April 22nd–26th seminar on April 29th) (Teacher will be out April 12th & April 26th) Spring Break for students and teachers will be April 15th–18th): Ability

- Weeks 11–12 (April 29th–May 3rd & May 6th–10th; seminar on May 10th) Language

Along with engagement in intentionally selected antibias literature, the teacher-researcher and students engaged in Socratic seminar biweekly, based on one of the selected literatures. The intent of Socratic seminar was to achieve a deeper understanding of the values and ideas of a text. Students examined, analyzed, and discussed what they have come to understand about the topic. The biweekly Socratic seminars were teacher-

researcher facilitated with structured questions. The students discussed the questions as a whole group, agreeing and disagreeing with one another, while defending their opinion. These seminars serve as a form of intervention as it allowed students to direct their thoughts, share their opinions, and provide deep arguments on each of the selected topics.

Constructs

According to Mertler (2017) a qualitative research design is used strictly to gain knowledge, understanding, and then answer a research question. He goes on to say it does not manipulate any variable. This study involves qualitative research seeking to answer three questions without the manipulation of any variable. While there is no variable manipulation, there are variables to be measured. These measurable variables, as Mertler describes them, are factors that possibly affect the outcome of the study. The variables of this study are the literature chosen by the teacher researcher. This literature has the potential to change the students understanding and beliefs of race, gender, family composition, language, class, and ability.

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Context and Setting of Study

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The context and setting of the study detail the where and when of the research. This research study took place in an elementary school located in a Columbia, South Carolina. The classroom at the center of the research was a kindergarten class. The classroom had 24 students and two teachers (lead teacher and instructional assistant). Students and teachers had been together since the end of August. This study took place from February to May with the schedule considering days of teacher-researcher absences and student holidays.

Physical Setting

Dimmed lights and music played in the background. There were various anchor charts for different subjects. There was a variety of flexible seating (floor cushions, rocker stools, yoga mats, yoga balls, stools, and ottomans). All materials were organized and at the reach of the children. The physical setting is designed for independence and collaboration.

Role of Researcher

As the primary teacher and the researcher, I was naturally deeply immersed in the setting. Due to my role as the teacher, my position was one of an insider in collaboration with other insiders. This positionality allowed me to be reflexive in my practice, while engaging in collaborative work with my students and my coworkers on a topic beneficial to all involved parties. An insider in collaboration with other insiders allows me to collaborate and share ideas with my coworkers

<div align="center">

The Sample

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Merriam and Tisdell (2016) content a typical sample is usually selected because of its reflection of the average person, situation, or interest. They go on to say a unique sample is based on atypical or rare attributes. There are multiple types of sampling, however the one selected for this research project was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was selected based on time, money, location or availability. Convenience sampling was utilized for this research based on the time and availability of participants. The students were available to the teacher-researcher for nine months. Students were placed in the classroom prior to the school year beginning.

After conducting pre-kindergarten assessments, the kindergarten teachers divided the children into five classes. The students were divided by race and ethnicity, as well as their score on the assessment. Prior to entering kindergarten, students were brought into the school (by caregivers) to be assessed by kindergarten teachers. The assessment included name writing, letter recognition, letter sound production, and shape and number recognition, counting, and reading level using the Fountas and Pinnell BAS assessment. Each assessment was administered individually. After the all assessments were done, the five kindergarten teachers created index cards with the students' race, gender, assessment score, and any other information (speech, parent concerns, or observed behaviors) written on the card. After the cards were developed, the teachers sorted the cards by gender first, then race, and then assessment scores. The cards were then divided (as evenly as possible) between each of the five teachers. Any student that arrived after the final testing date were placed in a class by the database specialist. These students were then assessed within their first few days at school, just for teacher knowledge.

The participants in this sample and the teacher-researcher developed a relationship with each other due to the nine months they spent together. The relationship between the students and teacher-researcher was one of mutual respect. Students learned the process of seminar discussion utilized in data collection. Students participated in school-wide and content seminar outside of this research study. The rules were established at the beginning of the year. The classroom community promoted shared dialogue and teaching, as well as the opportunity to agree and disagree in polite ways. This sample related to this research study because of the relationship they have with one another, as well as their heterogeneous mixture, and abundance of cultural diversity.

Participants

        The participants in this study were 23 kindergarten students. These students' ages range from five to six years. In this class there were ten students who identify as female and thirteen who identify as male. Two males and two females were Caucasian, for a total of four Caucasian students. There were six African American students who identify as female and eight who identify as male. In this classroom there were two Middle Eastern students; the student identifying as male is from Lebanon and the student identifying as female is from Yemen. One student, identifying as male, is Hispanic/Latino. There were two students who identify as more than one ethnicity in this class as well. One student, female, was Caucasian and Filipino; the other, male, was African American, Native American, and Cuban. There were two Arabic speakers and one Spanish speaker in the classroom. Capturing the students' family compositions was a little more difficult. There was one student whose parents are divorced. At least five students (number) come from single parent homes (typically mother is head of household). At least 10 students (number) also come from two parent, heterosexual families. Still other students were from homes where the grandmother is the head of household. None of the students were adopted or in foster care. There was at least one student from a military family. The participants also came from differing religious backgrounds and fell into different "levels" of class (poor/lower class, middle class, and upper class).

        According to Mertler (2017), protection of the participants is of the upmost importance in the study. For the protection of the participants and the school, the students were described by their initials. The school was given a pseudonym as well. The

researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative. Parents were given consent forms prior to the beginning of the research project. Due to the fact the students are underage, an assent form was provided as well.

Attrition

Attrition refers to the rate of decline over time. Participation attrition refers to the loss of participants in a longitudinal study (Kristman, Manno, & Côté, 2005).. When a study goes on for an extending period, there is a possibility for participants to dropout. Participant dropouts can skew the data of any research study. In the case of this research study participant attrition can refer to the lack of participant participation in seminars or the transiency of the student population. Another form of attrition is the parents' options to opt out of having their students being interviewed or having their responses and artifacts included in the study. These forms of attrition in this study is unpredictable.

Like any human being, there are some topics that will be deeply interesting to the kindergarten students. However, there will be topics students are less interested in as well. The lack of interest in a topic could lead students to not be fully engaged in discussions. Another possible attrition to this study was the high rates of transiency in the school. The school serves a population of students who tend to move throughout the year. Due to transiency, there was a possibility not every student who began the study would finish it or there would be new participants added toward the middle and end of the study.

Data Collection Measures, Instruments, Tools and Procedures

Data collection, simply put, is gathering and organizing all the information floating around. Actually, it is more of documenting the information versus "collecting."

There is a multitude of tools that could be used in a qualitative study. These tools include observations, interviews, surveys, and journals. Tools are vital to the qualitative research process. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) point out there are little consequence of the research if no one knows about it or other practitioners have no understanding of the research. An important step in having others understand the research are the research procedures. A detailed research procedure section allows other practitioners to understand the process undertaken to complete the research study. This section detailed the steps of the research procedure for this research study.

Prior to each topic, the teacher asked the whole class "What do you know about race, gender, family composition, ability, class, or language?" Each topic was focused on for two weeks with one week built in for Spring Break. For one week, the teacher read a variety of books based on one topic. For the second week, Monday through Friday, the teacher selected one book based on the topic to create pre and post seminar activities around. The activities include an intentional read, connections to other books, and connections to self. On Friday mornings of week two, students participated in seminar with questions based on the story they studied that week. After the seminar, students completed a post-seminar writing or craft artifact. The teacher collected the artifact for data. Also, on Friday afternoons, the teacher asked the students "What did you learn about race, gender, family composition, ability, class, or language?" This was done in a whole group again. This process repeats itself for each topic.

Tools

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) data collection tools are determined by the theoretical orientation of the researcher, the purpose of the study, and the selected sample. There is an abundance of possible tools to use in a qualitative study. This research used a combination of interviews, observations, seminars, artifacts, and a reflective journal. These techniques collaborated to understand how student perceptions change from the beginning of the study to the end.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews fall between structured and unstructured interviews. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue the questions in a semi-structured interview are flexible with the questions serving as a guide. Several interview questions were determined beforehand, however other questions came through the conversation between researcher and students. The semi-structured interview questions were based on open-ended questions and conducted in small groups of four to five students. Interviewing is a research tool used when it is not possible to observe behaviors, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them, according to Meriam and Tisdell (2016). When conducting an interview, the type of questions matter. "Different types of questions yield different information" (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, pg. 117). When developing interview questions, the researcher should consider what they are hoping to gain.

The interview questions for this project were developed by the researcher. During center time, the teacher spent an average of twenty minutes interacting with and observing students as they played and socialized. The teacher took anecdotal notes to

notate when students incorporated any conversations of the topic during their play. The teacher also conducted informal interviews during this time. On Friday of Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12, the teacher selected a group of students (based on the small group rotation chart used during literacy centers) to interview. This was an open-ended focus group interview. Each interview lasted no longer than fifteen minutes depending on the level of interest of students in the conversation. The interviews were audio-recorded for transcription purposes. Audio recording and transcription were done for this research to make coding and analysis less tedious. Interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

Observations

Observations are different from interviews in that it takes place in the setting where the interest of the study occurs naturally and represents a firsthand encounter, as stated by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). Another tool utilized in this study was semi-structured qualitative observation within the classroom. Semi-structured qualitative observations within the classroom, according to Mertler (2017), allow the teacher-researcher the flexibility to pay attention to other activities occurring in the classroom. He continues by saying the semi-structured observation allows the teacher-researcher to shift from one event to another. As the lead teacher in the classroom, being able to attend to more than one thing at a time was critical to the success and safety of the classroom community. Being the teacher and the researcher put me in the position of participant observer. The participant observer has the ability to use firsthand knowledge to interpret what is observed. Merriam and Tisdell list several areas for the participant observer to observe.

Recorded classroom seminars focused on specific questions or themes were conducted biweekly. The seminars were whole group with the teacher researcher acting as the facilitator. The facilitator asked a round-robin question or opening question first. Then the facilitator asked several open-ended questions where the students were allowed to constructively argue their opinion. After four questions, the facilitator asked a final question. Each child was then given the opportunity to speak on the topic. The seminars were recorded to assist in the transcription process. As a participant researcher in this study, I observed the students during the seminar, noting what students say and their expressions and body language. During the seminar, I sat outside of the circle of students and participated only to ask questions, remind students of seminar rules, and help students remain on topic. The seminar questions were developed based on each intentionally chose books the help of the lead Paideia teacher. The questions for seminar were also based on the Domains of Knowledge. Stemming from the seminar questions were the post seminar artifacts. The post seminar artifacts were also developed based on the text and in collaboration with the Paideia lead teacher.

Quite often I sat back and listened to discussions that occurred particularly during free choice centers. Free choice centers are centers students self-select to either play with classmates or independently. These were very informal observations and I only noted comments that stood out to me as an observer. As an observer, I did not initiate the conversations, however I did ask questions if I noticed misconceptions, biases, or stereotypes, to understand their thoughts behind their comments.

Organization of Data

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state the mass amounts of qualitative data must be sorted, chosen, and then woven into a narrative with coherence. Organizing the data is critical in the development of the coherent narrative. Mertler (2017) contends the organizational step reduces the massive amounts of narrative data. He continues by saying the organization of data is done through a process called coding scheme. This research utilized coding scheme to group data by similar types of information. The data was organized using colored highlighters to notate categories. Data was sorted by individual grouping (race, gender, family composition, language, class, ability) with notation of overlapping. The data was sorted into three sources; researcher, participants' exact words, and outside sources (literature or collaborators). Coding is the shorthand designation for data. The coding for this research can be found in Appendix B.

<center>**Treatment, Processing, and Analysis of Data**</center>

Overview of Data Analysis

Analyzing the data is one of the most vital aspects of any research study. Analysis of data requires the utilization of methods to break apart and understand the information gathered. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), collecting and analyzing data occurs simultaneously when done in a qualitative study. This research study used multiple methods to analyze the data collected. Based on both the grounded theory and narrative inquiry theory, the data was coded. Coding is simply assigning some form of short-hand designation to several aspects of the data. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interviews, field notes, and documents need the identifying notations of coding. Due to

the use of grounded theory in this research, one method used is the constant comparative method. This research study applied the narrative inquiry theory; thus, it used the thematic method of narrative analysis. Each method of analysis is defined and detailed as related to the study below. The data was sorted by individual grouping (race, gender, family composition, language, class, and ability), with notation of overlapping. The data was periodically analyzed on biases. The data was also sorted based on three sources; researcher, participants' exact words, and outside sources (literature or collaboration with others).

Methods of Data Analysis

Constant comparative analysis, first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), constitutes the foundations of grounded theory. It is used to develop concepts from data through coding and analysis of data simultaneously. The constant comparative method combines data collection, coding, and analysis. According to Kolb (2012), the constant comparative method incorporates four states; the comparing incidents applicable to each category, integration of categories and their properties, delimiting the theory and writing theory.

In this research study, the interviews and observation notes, were coded using open codes at the beginning of the study. Open codes are used to identify any piece of data that might prove useful. Utilizing the information gathered through open codes, the researcher created axial codes. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define axial codes as the grouping of open codes based on similarities. Through the constant comparative method, the researcher compared what was said in the interview with what was noted during

observations. The researcher used the open and axial codes to create categories. Categories are the answers to your research question. After placing the data into categories, the researcher utilized properties or concepts to describe the categories. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state properties are dimensions of categories and another element of grounded theory. In addition to applying properties to analyze the data, the researcher developed hypotheses about suggested links between the categories and properties.

This research study not only used ground theory across the data sources to develop core constructs, but narrative inquiry as well. The researcher looked at the narratives provided by children seminars, interviews, or in the artifacts in their entirety sing the thematic method of analysis. Thematic method narrative analysis, according to Riessman (2007), keeps the narrative intact through theorization of the case versus components like grounded theory. Riessman goes on to say the thematic analysis can apply to stories developed during an interview as well as through written documents. This research study uses interviews and field notes from observations from which stories can develop from. Because thematic analysis places more emphasis on the content of the story versus who or how, this research study used transcription of the recordings to analyze the seminars and interviews.

Summary

Chapter 3 details the research process, tools, and participants for this qualitative research study. Gathering data is only one step in research. Organizing, sifting, and sorting through data is critical to the research process. For this research, several tools

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were utilized. These tools were interviews (semi-formal) and observations. Simultaneous to data collection, the data was sorted and coded using inductive analysis. This research study was done with 21 kindergarten participants of varying races, linguistic background, family compositions, gender, and class. This chapter highlighted the development of the data collection process and briefly discussed the analysis of the data. Chapter 4 goes more in depth with the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings

Overview of Study

Children learn prejudices, biases, and stereotypes early in life (York, 2016). They bring those prejudices into the classroom and they impact their thoughts towards others. Our society is seeing a resurgence in bigotry, hatred, and violence toward one another based on a variety of labels including race, gender, language, and religion just to name a few. Lack of understanding and appreciation of diversity is one of the leading causes of bias, prejudice, and stereotypes (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). If we work to provide counternarratives beginning in early stages of development, we can hope to see a difference in the direction society is heading. This study sought to document the biases, prejudices, and stereotypes kindergarten students had toward race, gender, family composition, class, abilities, and languages and counteract them using children's literature. It was the intention of the study to counteract myths and stereotypes related to the aforementioned topics with hopes of creating more empathic and understanding kindergartners.

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to show that kindergarten students have stereotypes, biases, and prejudices regarding race, gender, language, family composition, ability, and class. However, some of those stereotypes, biases, and prejudices changed after engaging in discussions around antibias culturally responsive children's literature. Chapter Four discusses the data collected through interviews and field notes from seminars, as well as

class anchor charts. The chapter is divided into sections based on each type of data collected with subsections devoted to each of the topics addressed (race, gender, ability, family composition, language, and class) as it relates to that data type. The chapter also includes a discussion of when the topics overlapped.

Let's Review

Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) says "from the first year of life children begin to notice differences and similarities among the people who surround them" (pg. 12). Even at the age of three, children begin to ask questions about attributes such as racial identity, gender, language, and physical disabilities (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). Children learn social identities about themselves and others through covert and overt messages from society. These messages can often lead to biases, stereotypes, and prejudices. This study used a combination of critical research, observational study, and narrative inquiry to answer three questions regarding these biases, stereotypes, and prejudices. It provided intervention to address the problem of practice through the use of antibias culturally responsive children's literature. Data was collected in a kindergarten classroom of 22 children and two teachers. I served as both researcher and teacher. This research used constant comparative analysis to develop codes and analyze data gathered through interviews, field notes, and artifacts. Critical information was selected with open codes and axial codes and categories were created.

Interventions Used

Efron and Ravid (2013) contend the center of critical research is the social justice agenda, where it exposes inequities and brings about social change. According to

Merriam and Tisdell (2016), critical research's main goal is to critique existing

conditions and bring about change as it happens. In order to make these changes, some

interventions must be applied. In this study the intervention is the implementation of

antibias culturally responsive literature. Over the course of twelve weeks I read children's

literature based on one of the six topics, with each topic focused on for two weeks. The

first week was devoted to a multitude of books and the second week was focused more on

one book. The students and I discussed the texts and participated in seminars on one book

with me serving as facilitator.

Welcome to Room 507

Your classroom environment speaks volumes about what and who you value and

sends that message to your students. What message are you sending you students?

Central to this study is the context and environment in which it took place. At the

beginning of the year parents were given a cultural questionnaire that asked them about

their race, religious affiliations, family composition, home languages, and several other

items I felt I needed to know in order to create an inclusive classroom. This

questionnaire, as explained to my parents, was my way of getting to know my families

and the students better. I began the year with 23 students, predominantly males and

African American. By the time of the study, one student moved away, one came. By the

end of the study two moved away and one more came. In total, 21 students who began

the year with me participated in the study. Out of those students four students' parents

opted for their child not to be interviewed and their answers to seminar questions not to

be included in the write up.

When you walk into Room 507 you will observe a classroom with no desks or typical chairs. There are yoga mats, rocking stools, tall stools, floor pillows, scoop rockers, ottomans, yoga balls, and a couch. Everything is organized by colors (pink, green, blue, yellow, and purple). Materials and supplies are within the reach of students. The classroom houses dramatic play, computers, blocks, games/puzzles, art/science, library, writing, and listening centers with a large community carpet in the front of the room. The walls are surrounded with student work, anchor charts, and reference walls such as the sight word wall. Books are found in every corner of the room and reflect a variety of topics from beginning of the school year to dinosaurs to books about people who've made an impact in the world. In Room 507 there is two pillows with peace signs near a shelf with posters about feelings, how to explain your issue, and how to apologize. Known as the "Peace Corner," students can bring classmates and teachers (yes, I have been brought here a few times) to the pillows and discuss their problems or issues peacefully. Room 507 tries to promote conversation, even if they are hard ones, acceptance, and understanding. We try to look out for one another and support differences. Not every day is sunshine and lollipops, however students often refer to each other as family and calls my instructional assistant and I "Mom".

Establishing a positive classroom community began at the beginning of the year and lasted until the end (it gets testy toward the end). Without establishing classroom community at the beginning, students would not have been comfortable enough to share their ideas openly, without fear of judgment or repercussions. "Creating a classroom environment that encourages students to take the risk of learning. We've known for a long

time that when students lack a sense of safety or of belonging or of contribution, learning takes second place to meeting those needs" (Tomilison, Unknown).

So, What Happened?

This section is broken into themes with each focused on the findings as it relates to each topic (race, gender, class, language, family composition, and ability). Mertler (2017) says through your writing you should "take your readers along on all aspects of your study" (pg. 198). By breaking the section into the different themes, it is my way of taking the reader(s) through the journey my students, assistant, and I went through to discover and confront our biases.

It Don't Matter If Your Black Or White

Students were on the carpet in their usual spots around the large circle. Raising hands to answer questions was not always a requirement, so students were able to call out their answers. I began the discussion of race the way I planned to begin each topic, with a chart paper with the question "What do you know about race?". I explained we would be talking about race for the next few weeks, however I did not define it because I wanted to see how they would define the term. Given that I had just beaten them in a foot race outside, I had assumed they would use their prior knowledge and connect the question to the physical action of racing. When I asked, "What is race?", I was surprised by the answers I received. Students responded by saying race was differences, something you can see, different people, being nice, and being kind. For the question of "What do you know about a race?" I broke the chart into four different skin tones and asked what they thought when they saw someone with each color. Table 4.1 shows their responses for

each color. What stood out the most was their thoughts on the lightest skin color and the darkest complexion. For the lightest, students felt that they could be good or bad people and they were pretty because they were pink, and you can see their face. For the darkest complexion students said they were automatically bad and ugly, citing the fact they were so dark as the reason for being ugly.

Table 4.1

What Do You Know About Race

Initial Question: What do you know about race? *Note: Students were shown different color skin-tones*			
Friends	Mom/dad	Good	Bad
Handsome because he is brown	Good/bad	He looks like me	Most robbers look like this
Holding a purse	Engineers	Engineers	Only robs people
Good/bad	Race car		Ugly because he is dark
Firefighter	Drivers		You can't see their face
Police	Pretty because they are pink, and you can see their face		
Race is friends, mixed colors, mixed people, different people, colored people			

During Week 2, the students and I engaged in dialogue regarding the book *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz I read the story to them Monday through Thursday. On Friday morning, students sat in seminar circle to discuss the story as I facilitated by only asking questions. The students were familiar with seminar because we participate in a school-wide seminar at least once a month. Seminar is a group discussion lead by a facilitator using questions based on a text the students studied and analyzed for a week. Each seminar takes place on the large group, circular rug. Students sit in what's called a

"seminar circle" with the teacher-researcher (me) sitting on the outside. During seminar students are asked to look at the speaker, take turns to speak, connect to the story, and agree or disagree with one another's responses. As the facilitator my job was to ask the questions, remind students of the rules of seminar, and bring them back to the topic or question by repeating the questions. The first question for each seminar is done in "round-robin" style, where we go around the circle and every child answer with one word. The round-robin question is followed by "why or why not".

During the race seminar students were asked to use one word to describe themselves. For their responses, students described themselves in terms used in the book such as chocolate, peachy, and vanilla. Students explained that they chose those colors because that was their skin color. When students were asked if they would change their skin color most students replied no because their family likes it, they wouldn't look like their family anymore, or because God made them that way. Only one student said he would change from chocolate skin to peach just because he wanted peach skin. Students were asked what they thought when they saw someone of different complexion. Their replies included being friends with them and that you could read colors of people's skins. No negative comments regarding race emerged. Students were also asked if they thought people are as different on the inside as they are on the outside, why or why not. There was mutual agreement among the students that people were the same on the inside and could all be friends no matter what color they were. Finally, students were asked why they thought the author, Karen Katz, wrote this book. They suggested it was written to talk about colors and to get other to understand the colors of different people. Students also mentioned that we should treat people the kind no matter their color.

The race interview took place during writing workshop, which occurs at approximately 9:00am. The interview lasts approximately 10 minutes. The other students were in engaged in independent writing while I conducted the interview with four students. The students were chosen at random and consisted of two girls and two boys. The students are notated in the interview by initials and the interviewer is notated by the letter I. LP is White. NT, DS, and BB are all Black. Throughout interview, BB and DS slowly began to lose interest and made few comments or answered questions unless they were directed explicitly to them. Most of the interview was dominated by LP and NT and was more of a discussion between the two. Interview questions can be found in Appendix A. Table 4.2 depicts some of the questions and responses used to establish themes through open codes.

Table 4.2

Transcription of Race Interview

Transcription of Race Interview	
Teacher Questions	**Student Responses**
"What's your race?"	LP: Umm..White skin NT: Black skin BB: brown
"What's the difference between black skin and brown skin?"	LP: Both of them are kind of different. Dark brown are kind of like it's blackish color. Brown is like a lighter color than like black.

"What does being brown mean to you?"	NT: Brown people mean they are very nice. They be friends with other people like white skin people. Sometimes black people play with white people and white people play with brown people and they all became family. It doesn't matter what skin you are you can friends.
"Do you think all brown people get treated right?"	NT: No, not all brown people get treated right. Some brown people get treated right. Like me I get treated right. But sometimes other people don't get treated right. LP: A long long time ago, when umm Dr. MLK was born it was really hard for his life because the white people were being mean. His brother's house was bombed because white people were being mean. And then Dr. MLK's house was bombed because white people didn't like him or his brother because they were just black.

During the interview students described their race based on the color of their skin. BB described herself as brown whereas NT and DD described themselves as Black. I

asked the students what the difference was between Black skin and brown skin. LP stated

that they were kind of different because brown is a lighter color than Black. She did

believe brown skin was still considered Black people. BB brought up the topic of being

friends with other races and the group agreed that anyone could be friends. We began

discussing what it meant to be brown skin, Black skin, or White skin. NT said being

brown meant people were nice and could be friends with White skin people. He also

noted they could all be a family because skin color didn't matter. LP (the only White

child in the group) could not describe what being White meant to her. We went on to

discuss it being their skin color was hard or easy and why. NT said being a little brown

boy was easy because "little brown boys are nice to little brown girls, but that doesn't

mean you have to be friends with little brown girls." He went on to say that brown boys

could be nice to White boys and girls. We discussed how people treated others because of

their skin color. NT once again chimed in and stated that the whole class is his family,

they play with him, and share toys with him. He doesn't believe he is ever treated

differently because of his skin color inside or outside of our classroom. When asked if

she thinks being White is hard, LP says it's only hard because of her little brother (she

keeps dropping him). We discussed whether all brown skin people are treated right or

not. Both LP and NT agreed that they aren't. LP explained that a long time ago Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was not treated right. She referenced bombings of his home as

well as his brother's by White people, just because they were Black. Neither one believed

that White people still behaved this way today. Both LP and NT would revert to the past

when discussing the mistreatment of Black people by White people. For instance, they

spent several minutes discussing slavery and Abraham Lincoln, who LP credited with

freeing Black and other people. NT does believe slavery could return; however, the military would fight because they fight for justice. We discussed families and whether they had to have the same skin color or not. I always describe my family to my students (my mother is White and father was Black). Both children did not think families had to have the same skin color, but they could. The interview ended when the students were ready to go back to writing workshop.

"You can't play with us because you are Black" says one White boy to NT, a Black boy. NT breaks down in tears and both run to my table to tell me what happened. Before I can handle the situation, TD (White male) interjects, "Hey man, he can play with us. We don't do that in this classroom. That was back in the day, not anymore." This incident occurred during our two weeks of focusing on race. After two weeks of reading antibias culturally responsive children's literature and discussing race, I brought the students back to the whole group carpet and another chart was created. For this anchor chart, I asked students what they learned about race. Once again, the chart was divided into the same skin colors as before. Table 4.3 shows students' responses. After two weeks of reading antibias culturally responsive literature about race, I found children's perceptions of the darkest colored one had change from being the ugly one and strictly bad to being similar to the other complexions. Students also described more of the things one could be versus how they looked.

Based on the interviews and discussions, it was evident that students were very focused on friendship and family. They were confused about current situations and past. Based on their conversations during interviews, seminars, and daily interactions, I believe the children's perceptions of race did make slight changes. Students began to see the

darkest skin person as equal to the lightest skin person. Students also began to connect race to the other topics. For example, as we worked on family composition, students suggested not all family members have the same skin color. Through this study it became clear these particular students did not refer to or connect with current situations with race, such as Black Lives Matter, yet they often brought up discrimination is schools and Martin Luther King. Students had positive self-images and positive thoughts regarding other races, for the most part.

4.3

What Did You Learn About Race?

Initial Question: What did you learn about race? *Note: Students were shown the same skin-tones as the beginning chart*			
That's me	It's me	Me	Good/bad
Firefighter	Hire people	Officer	Nice
Teacher	Doctors	Nasear	Author/illustrator
Doctor	Regular people	Baker	Friend
Both good and bad	Police officers	Both good and bad	Student
Friends	Not always good	Mom/dad	
Darker	Girls/boys	Boy/girl	

Boys vs. Girls

According to Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010), gender is the first identity children notice. By two years of age children describe themselves as boys or girls. Derman-Sparks and Edwards suggest that gender identity is inclusive of gender anatomy and gender roles. "While gender anatomy is universal, the behaviors, and attitudes

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considered to be typical and acceptable for each gender differ from culture to culture"

(Derman-Sparks & Edwards, pg. 90). Understanding how children think about gender

identity is crucial in dispelling stereotypes and prejudices. Statistics regarding the

negative experiences of LGBTQ students are startling. According to The National School

Climate Survey (2015), conducted biennially, it was found that 57.6% of LGBTQ

students felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation and 43.3% felt unsafe

because of their gender expression.

Table 4.4

What Do you Know About Gender?

Initial question: What do you know about gender?	
Boys	**Girls**
Do different things	Nice
Play video games	Bad
Watch TV (chill)	Cheerleading
Nice	Ballet
No cheerleading	Wedding designer
Play sports	Pretty
Run fast	Dresses
Learn	Make-up
Listen	Good readers
Mohawks	Do math
Fight	Good at home and school
Dirty	

Wear ties/bowties	
Bad readers	
Some good at math	

Students were gathered on the large group carpet. The same rules apply for gender as it did for race. Students were allowed to shout out their thoughts and opinions. I asked the question "What do you know about gender". Unlike race, students did not know what gender was and I did not provide any background knowledge. I chose not to give background knowledge before asking the question because I wanted to see what they knew. When students struggled, I decided to break it into two categories: boys and girls. Table 4.4 shows what students thought about being a boy or a girl.

Based on their responses in Table 4.4, students had stereotypical views of boy and girls, including the roles they should play. Quite often we hear that girls are better readers than boys and this is a stereotype student carried into the classroom, even at five and six years old. Students also noted what boys could and could not wear, as well as the girls. One important thing to notice is that there were more ideas given about boys then about girls.

After this anchor chart, we began two weeks of reading and discussing books about gender identity and gender roles. During this time, children's ideas about gender began to change. At the end of week 2 of gender, we conducted another seminar. This seminar was on the book *Jacob's New Dress* by Sarah and Ian Hoffman. During the seminar students were asked how Jacob felt about the "dress-thing" he created. Students' responses ranged from happy and proud to sad and mad. Students who said proud or happy argued that he

felt that way because he made it himself and no one else in his family wear dresses. Students were asked to describe things people say only boys can do or only girls can do and how that made them feel. NT describes how boys get laughed at for wearing dresses and AA says girls are told they cannot climb trees. Both children said they did not like when people say those things. Students also discussed how the other students bullied him with the exception of the one friend who stood up for him. During this seminar, JG, whose family is religious and has strong beliefs in gender roles, spoke up frequently in support of Jacob's dress decision. In the end, students concluded that girls and boys could wear whatever makes them happy.

The gender interview took place during writing workshop, which occurs at approximately 9:00am. The interview lasted approximately 10 minutes. The other students were in engaged in independent writing while I conducted the interview with five students. The students were chosen at random and consisted of two girls and three boys. Like the other interviews, the students were notated by their initials. The interview begins with me asking the group if they considered themselves males, females, or neither. The students looked confused, so I backtracked and asked if they knew what male and female were. RM described males as boys and females as boys. I rephrased my question and ask did they consider themselves male or female or neither. LT responded that she is a girl because she gets her hair done. When asked if boys got their hair done, the group was split. Some said no and some said yes. RM and ZG recalled times they got mohawks and braids. The interviewees were asked what they knew about boys. According to the group, boys play with boy toys such as cars and power rangers. When asked about girls, they responded that girls play with girl toys such as barbies and pink cars. I asked why

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they called toys "girl/boy" toys. The children could not verbalize why they classified toys that way. The interview went on to discuss whether girls could change to boys or boys could change to girls. The students all agreed that it was not possible for the change of gender because God made them the way they are; however, they did agree that people could look like a boy/girl on the outside but feel like the opposite on the inside. Table 4.5 shows some of the comments made through the interview and were used to create themes.

Table 4.5

Transcription of Gender Interview

Transcription of Gender Interview	
Teacher Questions	**Student Responses**
Do you know what male and female are?	RM: I know. I know. Male is a boy and a female is a girl.
Do you consider yourself boy or girl or neither?	JS: A boy ZG: A boy JS: Because boys do things that are female or not. LT: A girl. my mom does my hair.
What is a boy toy?	RM: A red car LT: A race car
"Why do you call it boys toys?	Because boys buy the toys

| Is it okay for a person to look like a boy on the outside but feel like a girl on the inside? | LT: Yes, because that how Jesus made them. |
| | RM: That's how God made them. |

"Girls are only supposed to wear dresses." "Boys can act like a girl, but when they go home they need to rethink what they do." These comments were made during and after the intervention period on gender. After readings and discussions, we came back to at carpet and I asked students "what did you learn about gender." Table 4.6 illustrates their thoughts on what they learned about gender.

Table 4.6

What Did You Learn About Gender?

Initial question: What did you learn about gender?	
Boys	**Girls**
Different	Different
Friends	Friends
Can wear dresses	Sports
Have different names/ "girl names"	Different names
Braids	Braids
Earrings	Earrings
Police	Police
Vets	Vets

First, I noticed that students gave equal amounts of ideas for girls as they did boys. Students listed all but one thing the same for each category. For the boys, students decided boys could wear dresses. I believe this comes from the book *Jacob's New Dress* by Sarah and Ian Hoffman. Based on the first anchor chart and this anchor chart, I noticed a change in the students' perceptions of gender and gender roles. However, comments such as the ones mentioned previously, shows that while there was a little change in their thoughts, students still used gender to distinguish between toys among other things. It was noticed that during center time it became normal to see all students wearing dresses, taking care of babies, or being firefighters. Table 4.5 reflects the coding of comments made during the interview on gender. This table highlights the themes found in gender.

Families Argue Over The Simplest Things

"Families argue over the simplest things" says NT during the first anchor chart on family. The question we began with was "What do you know about families". What I noticed during this discussion was that the children focused on more of what families do versus the composition of a family. It could have been the wording of the question that left it more to actions of families, when the intention was to understand their thoughts on what makes a family. One student did mention a family is a mom, dad, grandma, and grandpa. Table 4.7 highlights what students initially thought about families.

Table 4.7

What Do You Know About Families?

Initial Question: What do you know about families?
Sleep separate or together

Love makes a family
Mom, dad, grandma, grandpa
Girl and boy
They argue over simple stuff/ families break up/ get mad at each other

During Week 2, the students and I focused on the book, "*And Tango Makes Three*" by Henry Cole (2005). The seminar for family was set up in the same style as the seminar for the prior topics. I sat on the outside of the circle, only interjecting to redirect attention, ask the questions, and reminding students of the rules. The round-robin question, or the first question, the students were asked if Roy, Silo, and Tango were a family. The majority of the students responded yes with only two students saying no. When asked why, the students responded they were a family because they had each other. Next, the students were asked what made a family. BB commented that it took people meeting and deciding they would be a family. According to TD, parents meet in high school and get married, but they may not stay together. Half of the students stated that families had to have babies (in reference to the book). The seminar conversation went towards adoption because in the story Tango was adopted by Roy and Silo. When asked about adoption, students had a lot of theories on why and how it happens. MCA stated that some families get babies not from a hospital but from another family. NT responded that adoptions occurs when parents die and people find the baby and take them in to their family. JG felt that with adoptions babies and children were given away. LP suggested it happens when a person can't take care of a kid so another family takes the child. Finally, the children were asked why would Roy and Silo want an egg. One response that stood

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out, was BB's statement that Roy and Silo felt they would not feel complete without a baby like all the other penguin families.

The family interview took place during writing workshop, which occurs at approximately 9:00am. The interview lasted approximately 10 minutes. The other students were in engaged in independent writing while I conducted the interview with five students. The students were chosen at random and consisted of two girls and three boys. The students were notated in the interview by initials and the interviewer was notated by the letter I. LP is a White female raised in two-parent, heterosexual home with her infant brother. MC is a White female, also raised in a two-parent, heterosexual home with her two-year old younger brother. MC's maternal and paternal grandmothers are active in the classroom. TD is a White male, whose parents are separated (never married). He visits his father on the weekend and has a younger sister from his father. During the week he stays in an apartment with his mother. NT is a Black male from a two-parent heterosexual home with one older and one younger brother. JG is Black male from a two-parent heterosexual home with a younger sister and one older brother. His family is also active in their church. Table 4.8 highlights the pieces of transcription of the family interview. From the transcription of the interview, the axial codes were developed.

Table 4.8

Transcription of Families Interview

Transcription of Families Interview	
Teacher Questions	**Student Responses**

Think about your family. Who is in your family?	JG: My mom, dad, nana, granddaddy, and cousins. All of my aunties, granddaddies, grandmas, brothers and sisters. TD: People that are in my family are my mom, dada, cousins, grandmother, sister, and granddad.
How is having both your parents live together different from not having them live together?	JG: Probably TD's mom or dad picks him up and he just makes a pattern. He just goes to him mom or dad house on different days. I go to my house Monday to Monday. TD: Yes. I go to my dad on Fridays and Saturdays and Sundays.
So what do you think when you see someone with two dads?	NT: They lost their mom. MC: Their mom died.

Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2013) indicate, "young children have their own definitions of who is in their family" (p. 113). They have their own definitions of what makes a family period. They continue stating that children do not ascribe worth to any family structure, however they develop those from the world around them. During this interview it became evident that these children's family composition went beyond those who lived with them to include extended families (aunts, uncles, and cousins). However,

while I know firsthand these children have siblings, only two mentioned those siblings. MC lives with her mom and father, but when describing who is in her family, she neglected to list her mom.

The students were asked to describe how their families where different from their friends or classmates, TD stated his parents do not live together. After this statement, JG immediately described how TD gets picked up by either his mom or dad and makes a pattern (staying one day with this one, another with the next). TD interjected and described how the weekends are spent with his dad, but on Sundays he goes back to his mom for the week. When the interview went on to discuss same-sex parents and their feelings on that family composition students thought that the only reason there would be same-sex parents is because the family either lost their mom or dad. Although we read books about same-sex parents (see Appendix), students still had a hard time grasping that some families are just same-sex because that was how they wanted to be, not because of the death of a mother or father. Though less obvious, students still had the idea that a mother or father had to be a part of the family at some point. The interview then went on to adoption and students had differing opinions on adoptions. Interestingly, LP stated that she personally knows a little boy and mom with White skin, who adopted little Black children. MC chimed in and mention how her aunt recently adopted a brown skin girl. The students disagreed on why adoptions happened. Some felt it was because a parent/parents died. Whereas, MC believed that adoptions happen when someone has a baby and they are unable to take care of them, so they give the child away. Finally, when asked if being family means you must look alike, students agreed that they did not have

to and proceeded to describe how they have various racial members in their families. JG ended it by saying it did not matter the color because he still liked them and loved them.

As with all the other areas in this research, we wrapped up the unit on family by creating an anchor chart of what we learned about family composition. The following table details what they learned after studying different family compositions. When students responded to the "what did you learn" question regarding family, they focused more on the composition of the family then they had with the initial anchor chart. The students listed various ways families could be compiled and included the fact that some people have family members who are incarcerated. I also noticed the mention of a parent passing, which I experienced six years ago and was very opened with my children about. Table 4.9 shows what the students learned about families.

Table 4.9

What Did You Learn About Families

Question: What did you learn about families?
Some are adopted
Sometimes they look different
Some are in mommy's belly
Some have 2 dads or 2 moms
Some have newborns
Some parents are separated
Sometimes moms or dads are in jail
Sometimes they are in the military

Some families are lost
Sometimes family members pass away
Could have 1 mom or dad or grandparents

The students' thoughts on family composition changed as we discussed different family make-ups. The change was evident from the first anchor chart to the last anchor chart. Although some concepts, such as why adoption happens or same-sex couples, were slightly harder for them to understand, they still understood families were composed of in different ways. The students were also made connections to their lives as they discussed their own family makeup.

Poor People Are Useless

"Despite the large numbers of children living in poverty, class and classism are arguably the most overlooked and misunderstood dynamics of inequality in the United States" (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2013, pg. 101). When asked what they knew about class (without any background given) children immediately named things we did in our classroom, such as lining up, listening to the teacher, and recess. To redirect them, I asked what they knew about poor people, middle class people, and rich people. Our classroom is reflective of varying socioeconomic levels, as is our school. Table 4.10 reflects the students' thoughts on class.

Table 4.10

What Do You Know About Class?

Initial Question: What do you know about class?

Note: Students initially said class is students, centers, lines, presidents, classroom, and respectful. I explained (in simple terms) we were talking about different socio-economic levels		
Rich	**Middle Class**	**Poor**
Buy expensive things	Have 1 or 2 dollars	No money
	Not a lot of money	Useless
Have lots of money	Helpless	Alone
Gold/gold teeth	Helpful	Homeless
Wear glasses	Happy	No water or food
Cool	Sad	Angry
Get money out of the bank	Sometimes they feel good	Happy

Designed like the prior seminars, the seminar on class was no exception. The students were gathered on the carpet, once again with me on the outside. We reviewed the rules and the purpose, as well as the text. The text for this seminar was Lois Brandt's (2014) book, "*Maddi's Fridge*". Beginning with the round robin fashion, students were asked how Maddi felt when Sophia opened her fridge. Most of the students said Maddi felt sad, upset or mad. However, JG said he thought Maddi felt weird because he thought Maddi felt this would be her life forever. The children were then asked why they thought Maddi did not have food in her fridge. The children believed it was because Maddi's mother did not have enough money and because they were poor. When asked why Maddi made Sofia promise not to tell anyone about the empty fridge, EW thought that Maddi felt others would pick on her for being poor. Students discussed why Sofia didn't tell her mom in the beginning as well as why she finally did. They commented that at first Sofia did not want to break her friend's promise, however she knew her mom could help her

friend. The seminar went on to discuss what should we do when we see people in our community experiencing hardship or things that aren't fair. They all suggested we donate and ask others to help. Finally, the children were asked what they believed the message the story was trying to convey. The majority of them believed the message was to give poor people food.

This interview was conducted with a group of four girls from differing socioeconomic levels. There are three African American girls and one Caucasian girl. The girls often play with each other throughout the day. They were asked to think about their family and then tell if they thought they were rich, middle class, or poor and why. All of the girls described themselves as middle class with similar reasons. One of the main reasons was because of what their moms (specifically named moms) could buy them. As LA put it, her mom had enough money to buy her little things but not enough to buy big things. LP considered her mother rich but her dad to be middle class. She said it's because her mom makes "good money" but her dad doesn't get that much money. When asked to describe what "good money" is, the girls said it was being rich and all considered LP's mom to be rich because she was a doctor. The girls thought felt that rich people were proud because they had a lot of money, however poor people are happy because they have a family.

They also said you can tell if a person is rich or poor by how they look. According to this group, rich people wear necklaces, specifically gold ones, (which excludes me as my necklace is silver) and they have a lot of things. Poor people look sad and are only happy if they have a family. This group went on to say you become rich by robbing banks or other people or having a good job that pays lots of money. On the other hand, you

become poor by wasting money, which BB says is done by giving it away or as LA says, buying too much stuff. The jobs for rich people ranged from doctors and dentists to McDonalds workers (because of all the cars out there) and pizza makers. As for poor people, they only had one job or no jobs. Finally, while the majority of the group felt that belonging to one group did not make you less than or better than anyone else, BB felt differently. BB felt that rich people were better because they had more than other people. Table 4.11 depicts parts of the interview on class. These comments were used to create themes for the study.

Table 4.11

Transcription of Class Interview

Transcription of Class Interview	
Teacher Questions	**Student Responses**
What do you think your family is (rich, poor, or middle class)?	EW: my family are middle because (inaudible) MA: Rich, because we have a lot of toys. LA: I'm in the middle because my mom can buy little things but not big things. Because when it comes to big things she tells me she doesn't have the money for it.

	LP: I think kind of rich and in the middle. My daddy doesn't get that much money but my mommy does.
Can you look at someone and tell their class?	MA: Yes because if they are poor their clothes might be dirty AA: If they are rich they have a lot of clothes and money and cars.

After the discussions and reading of various books on class, we came back as a whole group to discuss what we learned about class. Table 4.12 depicts what students learned about class after our study. It was interesting to see what jobs they attributed to poverty and which was attributed to being rich and there was some overlap.

Table 4.12

What Did You Learn About Class?

Initial Question: What did you learn about class?		
Rich	**Middle Class**	**Poor**
Lots of money	Not a lot of money	Have clothes
Happy	Poor sometimes	Some have homes
Gold	Nurses	Not a lot of money
Some have crowns	Doctors	Sad/happy
Police	Police officers	Just trying to get things to be a better family
Firefighter	White/brown/light skin/any color	Mail driver

Work at store	Happy/sad	Teacher
White/Black	Good	Engineer
Go to jail	Angry	Construction worker
	Jealous	Garbage worker

Based on the data collected about class, students' thoughts ranged from how people felt to the types of jobs they can have. During this portion, I found that students often had more negative thoughts regarding how rich people became rich. In the prior table, the students even stated that rich people go to jail. I believe the topic of class may have been a harder one for students to describe and connect to because it isn't something that is always visible or discussed. The perceptions did change but only slightly as stated before was more negative for rich people.

She Thinks Like Him

By far, differing abilities was one of the most difficult concepts for my students to grasp. However, they became very eager to discuss people with differing abilities. Just like the other categories of diversity, we began the topic of differing abilities with a "what do you know about" anchor chart. The students were able to share their ideas without raising their hands. At first, they struggled with the term "differing abilities". I chose to use the phrase "differing abilities" instead of "disabilities" because of the negative connotation with the prefix "dis." When the students asked for help, I broke it into blindness, physical, and things that are brain related. According to Kissinger (2017), when children see able differences they are curious, just the same way they are curious

about race or language. The participants in this study are just the same. Table 4.13 details

what children thought about different abilities.

Table 4.13

What Do You Know About Different Abilities?

Initial Question: What do you know about different abilities?	
Blind:	- Can't see /Sometimes wear glasses - Went too close to the TV
Physical (things we can see)	- New body parts / fake body parts - Sometimes they are in wheelchairs
Brain (people whose minds work different from yours)	- Friends - Teachers - Principals - Students

For the second week, the students and I focused on the book, "*Ian's Walk"* by

Laurie Lears (1998). The book focused on Ian, a young boy with Autism and is told

through one of his sister's perspectives. During the story, Ian does different things like

listen to the brick walls and lays down on the sidewalk. When Ian does these things, his

sister feels a certain way. The students were asked how Julie (Ian's sister) when Ian did

those things. The students felt that Julie was mad because he kept doing things she

thought was weird. When asked what Julie meant by Ian tasting, seeing, and hearing

things differently, JG said it was because he wasn't like us; he doesn't eat what his sisters

eat or like to smell the things his sisters smell. NT said it was just the way he was born.

The students were also asked why Ian's sister got mad at him sometimes. They felt she

was mad because people around him wouldn't like his behavior and that he was different.

In the story Ian gets lost and his sister, Julie, closes her eyes and thinks about Ian. When

asked why Julie does this, JG responded it was because she had to think like him to find him. LT says it was because she was thinking what Ian was thinking in order to find him. Finally, students were asked why the bell (which is where Ian was found) was Ian's favorite spot. The response ranged from he liked the noise it made to just wanting to lay under the bell.

Similar to the other interviews, the interview for differing abilities was conducted during writing workshop. I chose five students at random and interviewed them while the other students worked on writing. This interview consisted of two boys and three girls. None of the students in the interview receive special services or resource services. I began the interview by asking the students what they thought when they see someone who is ably different? NT replied when he saw someone with a "fake" leg or arm he wonders what happened to them. No one else responded. We moved on to discuss how we treat people who we see as ably different. The students all felt we should treat them the same as other people because they are people too. We then discussed how people who are ably different felt when other people stare or called them names. MCA felt they would be sad or angry because they were being picked on by other people. NT and TD discussed how people might be embarrassed because they are different. Finally, we discussed what make someone ably different. The students immediately discussed the idea of someone being in an accident and losing a limb. NT also indicated that a person may have lost a limb during war. What was noticeable about this interview was that it was short, and students only focused on physical differing abilities, despite having heard books about various differing abilities. The students seemed struggle with this interview

the most. Table 4.14 highlights the pieces of transcription of the abilities interview. From the transcription of the interviews, the open codes were developed.

Table 4.14

Transcription of Abilities Interview

Transcription of Abilities Interviews	
Teacher Questions	**Student Responses**
What make someone ably different?	RM: When they are missing an arm NT: If they are blind LP: or they can't hear
How do you think people who are ably different feel when other people call them names or stare?	JS: bad or sad ZG: It's not nice to stare JS: Everyone is different
What do think about those who have different brains?	NT: They think differently but we should still treat them right.

After reading about and discussing people with blindness, Autism, Down Syndrome, hearing loss, and missing limbs, the main thing the children gathered was people do, see, taste, hear, and touch differently. This is reflected in Table 4.15. I chose not to break the final anchor chart into parts like the first, because I felt the participants no longer needed it sectioned off.

Following the study on differing abilities, it became apparent that this was a difficult topic for them to convey. While they certainly interact with students from differing abilities, especially during recess with students from the self-contained

classroom, they still couldn't make a connection. They could not move beyond them being different. This was complicated subject for them. There was one conversation outside of this study, that showed me they (or some of them) think about differing abilities. On the bus from a field trip one day, JS and TD asked me if another child in our classroom had Autism. Before answering, I asked them why they thought that about their classmate, and they explained that she rarely (if ever talks) to anyone. I explained that she does not have Autism (there is no diagnosis), she is selective of who she talks to and is just a little more quiet than other friends.

Table 4.15

What Did You Learn About Different Abilities?

Initial Question: What did you learn about different abilities?
People smell things differently
Touch differently
Hear differently
They see things differently
They taste differently
Think differently
Run/walk differently

It's Cool To Speak Another Language

Language is an important part of any person's culture. According to York (2016), language is vital social relationships, an important cultural element, connected to cognitive development, and is political. If children don't understand the importance of

language, biases and stereotypes can develop. Even in kindergarten, children have interactions with people who speak languages other than English. For instance, in our classroom we have students who speak Spanish, Arabic, Mohagmo and Pidgin, and Cebuano (language spoken in the Philippines). Just like the prior categories, we began the language study with the anchor chart asking, "What do you know about language". Students listed several languages spoken and noted that people speak in different pitches. Students also noted sign-language as a form of language, which may have come from our study of differing abilities prior to language. Cebuano was new to me and most of the other students. Students brought in the Chinese language because of a children's show. One child said his mom took French in college. Table 4.16 depicts what students knew about language.

Table 4.16

What Do You Know About Language?

Initial Question: What do you know about language?
Some people speak Spanish
English
Some speak loudly
Chinese
Some speak quietly
French
Arabic
Cebuano
People speak differently

> Some people talk with their hands (sign-language).

For the second week on this topic, we dived into the story called "*The Name Jar*" by Yangsook Choi (2001). The story is about a young Korean girl who is afraid to share her name with her class because when she shared it on the bus she was teased. Her classmates created a jar to help her select a name. In the end she becomes comfortable with her own name and shares it with her class thanks to a friend in her class. Just like the other seminars, the seminar on languages began with a round robin question. I asked the students if they agreed with Unhei's mom that being different was a good thing. The students responded

The interview on language was like all of the other interviews. It occurred during the same time of day (reading workshop). This interview featured five students; two boys and three girls. There were two Arabic speakers and one who speaks Moghamo and Pidgin (African languages). During this interview the students were asked about the languages they spoke here at school or at home. LT (the one who speaks Moghamo and Pidgin) described her languages as a different kind of "English" at home then she does at school. Interviewees were asked what they thought or felt when they hear people speak a language other than English. The students responded it made them think of their friends in class who speak different languages and it makes them happy. LP commented that when RM speaks Arabic it is a little bit weird because he speaks too fast for her to understand. I then asked RM and AA how they felt when they hear people speak something other than Arabic. RM responded it made him happy because he could learn new things. I asked the children what they knew about African American language and

there was no response. LP did turn the discussion towards sign-language. The students then took turns showing me how to say love in sign language and when asked where they learned it from, they responded, the television show called Daniel Tiger. We moved the interview toward the topic of Spanish and Arabic. The students discussed how counting and colors sounded different. RM and AA told us how in English we often pronounce the word Ramadan wrong and their prayers sound different than in English. The students noted how Arabic also sounds different from Spanish. AA interjected and stated that it was hard for her to understand her friend when he speaks Spanish. We continued to talk about whether it was okay for people to talk different languages and they all agreed it was, with TD pointing out that some people don't speak at all. I explained to them that in the United States there is no universal language and asked if they thought there should be a universal language. AA thought there should be one so that everyone could understand everyone. LT agreed, arguing that would be the only way for people to understand what you want. When asked what the one language is, we should all have to speak in the U.S., AA responded French and LT responded Arabic. However, RM said all languages (as in you speak what you know how). TD ended by stating he wished people would speak how they normally speak. Table 4.17 highlights the parts transcription of the language interview. From the transcription of the interviews, the axial codes were developed.

Table 4.17

Transcription of Language Interview

Transcription of Language Interview	
Teacher Questions	**Student Responses**

What languages do you speak?	LT: I speak a different English at home from the English I speak hear. AA: Arabic and English RM: Arabic TD: English LP: English
Is it okay for people to talk different languages? Why	LP: Yes, because some people can talk Arabic and English TD: Because some people cant even talk LT: It's okay because some people talk different from you LP: It's okay because everyone talks differently
In the United States (where you live) there is no national language. There is no one language everyone has to speak. Do you think we should have one, why or why not?	AA: So we can talk LT: So people know what you want TD: So people can understand you
What should be the one language that everyone in the United States should speak?	LT: I think Arabic AA: I think French LP: French RM: I think all the languages.

| I: We should learn all the languages? | RM: No, I talk Arabic, she talks English, B talks Spanish |
| | TD: I wish people just to speak how they normally speak. |

The final anchor chart for language was not as in depth as the initial anchor chart. The students noted that sometimes it's hard to understand people who speak different languages. This time they only acknowledged Chinese, whereas in the first chart they named several other languages. They also pointed out that people can speak more than one language. Table 4.18 details their very brief discussion of what they learned about language.

Table 4.18

What Did You Learn About Language?

What Did You Learn About Language?
Sometimes you don't know what they are saying
Some people speak Chinese
There are different languages
People use language to communicate
Language can be different
People can speak more than one language

Language was a very interesting topic to dive into with this group because we had several students who are bilingual. The students were able to make connections during

the interview and seminar as well as throughout everyday conversations. It was not rare to hear them asking the language experts how to say something in Spanish or Arabic. The students also received Spanish lessons as a part of the six-day related arts schedule. TD once stated he wished he was able to speak more than one language as it was cool. While there was less change in their perceptions of different languages, their thoughts on languages were more positive to begin with unlike some of the other topics. What was interesting to me, was prior to this sign-language wasn't what came to mind when I thought of different languages, however it was an important thought to my students.

Summary

Having deep conversations based on race, gender, class, ability, family composition, and language was both interesting and needed. The data gathered from their before and after anchor charts, seminars, and interviews were eye-opening and sometimes challenged my own thoughts. The questions driving this study and the collection of data were based on the biases and stereotypes kindergartners begin with, how they transform, and how their discussions reflect understanding, all based upon the use of antibias culturally responsive children's literature. This summary will be broken down to answer each question individually.

Research question one asked what biases, stereotypes, or prejudices do kindergarten students bring into the classroom regarding race, gender, family composition, class, ability, and language? Based on the data collected regarding race, students had a negative view of darker skinned people while placing more positive

thoughts on fairer skinned people. Regarding gender, the students often categorized toys by gender and had stereotypes of how boys acted or looked versus girls. When it came to families, students' biases presented themselves as families having to have a mother and a father at one point or another and often associated death with being the reason for same sex couples. Regarding class, students often stereotypically connected happiness to having more money, while being poor was connected to sadness. They also connected being poor to having no money. Their biases as it related to abilities were a little less obvious as this seemed to be a harder topic for them to understand.

Research question two sought to understand how children transformed their thoughts and perceptions regarding diversity before and after the implementation of antibias culturally responsive children's literature. The collection of students' ideas on the beginning and ending anchor charts depict how their thoughts transformed before and after antibias culturally responsive children's literature. There was some deep transformation for some of the topics and not as in depth for others.

The final research question sought to understand how children's discussions of antibias literature reflected their understanding of each of the topics. Kissinger (2017) says "it is in our day-to-day interactions with each other, adults with children, children with children, adults with adults, and in our responses when bias comes up" (pg. 1). It was through their interactions and discussions (formally and informally) I was able to see what their understanding of the topics were. What I noticed was that these students would often correct each other's biases and misconceptions without my prompting. They would often have discussions about whether girls could play with Pokemon cards or if a friend of different color could join the group. Race, gender, and language were the three they

discussed most often formally and informally. Class, ability, and family compositions were the ones they discussed the least. Based on the data, it seems as if race and family composition were the topics they understood the most. Ability was a struggle to both discuss and understand, however Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) says this is one of the harder concepts of diversity for young children to grasp.

Chapter 4 was designed to explore, analyze, and present the data gathered in this study. From the data we discovered the biases brought into the classroom while confronting and challenging them using anti-bias culturally responsive children's literature. The following chapter will reflect on the study, including next steps and ideas to consider.

Chapter 5:

Thoughts, Feelings, and Next Steps

It's free choice center time in a kindergarten classroom and three five-year-old males are having a deep debate over race. R tells N he is not allowed to play because he is a little Black boy. Before the teacher can interject or intervene, T defends N, stating we don't do that in this classroom; everyone can play with anyone. At recess, a discussion on family composition occurred when C says to a group of friends, "when I grow up I am going to marry a girl", and J (a male) interjects and says, "you can't because you are a girl." C goes on to explain her parents are both girls and they are married. Then there was the conversation over gender and crayons. "Oooo, you're using a pink crayon. Pink is a girl color. Right Ms. Jenkins?" says N (male), laughing as J (male) uses a pink crayon. Before Ms. Jenkins can say anything, MC jumps in and says there is no such thing as a "girl" color, pink is for boys, too.

These statements, conversations, and debates happen often in this kindergarten classroom. One student makes a statement filled with bias or laden with stereotypes (mostly unintentional) and another student responds to dispel that stereotype or provide a counternarrative. Often, the counterarguments were connected to a text read together in this classroom. Most of the conversations occurred without the intervention of the teacher. However, it was not always this way. The school year began like any other, 25 five-year olds of varying backgrounds trying to find their way in a new space, with two

new adults in their lives trying to guide them. What is different this year is the lead teacher's choice to be more intentional about the books she would incorporate; more intentional of the conversations in which they engaged. Intentionally selecting books discussing often avoided subjects like race, gender, class, or differing abilities, the lead teacher in this class was determined to have conversations some thought would go over the heads of such young children. This teacher leaned on the works of Ladson-Billings, Derman-Sparks and Edwards, York, and Kissinger, to have conversations with some of the school's youngest learners regarding race, gender, family composition, language, ability, and class. Of course, she was nervous, yet the need for these conversations outweighed the fear.

Children enter classrooms with biases, stereotypes, and prejudices. Without intervention or counternarratives those children can grow up to become adults with biases, stereotypes, and prejudices. It is seen and heard every day when adults say, "I was taught this as a child" or "This was just the way I grew up." Then there were the comments made by those adults who "just grew up like this." Comments such as, "these little Black boys. Isn't that what society is soooo focused on right now?" or "I'm not going to help this child pay for the field trip because their parent is just milking the system." They were once children who learned bias, stereotypes, and prejudice (intentionally or unintentionally). Looking at society, the teacher realized now more than ever there is a need to stand up and push for uncomfortable conversations with children. The teacher realized these topics should not be uncomfortable, rather a part of everyday conversation or "normal." This teacher realized while it may be difficult at first, there is a great need for humans to begin to see each other as humans, with value and worth based

on more than our skin color, pocketbooks, physical abilities, or who we love. This teacher is me; I am that teacher.

What This Study Is All About

The introduction to this chapter highlights things that occurred through this study, as well as the problem of practice driving the study. The problem of practice is kindergarten students will enter their classrooms with bias and stereotypes of race, gender, family composition, abilities, class, and language. They are humans and all humans have bias in some way, shape, or form. They bring these ideas, not always positive, into a room where they should all feel safe, valued, wanted, and loved. If left unchecked, the biases these kindergarten children bring could not only affect this school year, but schooling years to come and life as an adult. These kindergartners could potentially turn into leaders who discriminate because they believe all dark skin people are bad or that two men should not marry. The books read in a classroom can either affirm the stereotypes students bring or provide counternarratives.

The research questions were chosen because of the need to understand what the kindergartners thought before and after reading antibias culturally responsive children's literature on each of the topics. This research grew from three research questions that sought to understand the biases kindergarteners brought into the classroom, how they discussed antibias culturally responsive literature, and how that literature changed their thoughts. This was a qualitative action research study built on the foundation of critical research and narrative inquiry. It utilized semi-structured interviews and observations with field notes. It was conducted over 12 weeks with my kindergarten class.

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When Literature Meets Practice

Children notice differences before they notice similarities. Best-selling author and inspirational speaker, Ola Joseph once said "diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another's uniqueness." Diversity is not one thing but a conglomeration. Muthukrishna and Schluter (2011) content that confronting the issues of the impact of race, social class, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, and disability is a challenge that teachers as well as students must engage. The challenge is creating an environment where students feel comfortable having conversations about diversity. Antibias culturally responsive children's books served as a catalyst for the conversations for each topic in our kindergarten classroom. The following subsections are brief depictions of the results and my interpretations for each topic. The headings are actual sayings from either seminars or interviews.

"It Doesn't Matter Your Skin Color"

What's race got to do with it? Got to do with it? What's race, but a social constructed notion! Race is a difficult concept to define. Its complexity leads to varying opinions on the definition and its purpose. Brown and Armelagos (2001) content anthropologists are questioning the usefulness of the concept of race. The U.S. Census (2018) base racial categories on societal definitions. Race is wrapped in history and has a seemingly metamorphizing definition. Cornell and Hartman (2007) assert although race lacks a biological foundation its social categorization still exerts monumental authority. Race is defined as "a human group defined by itself or others as distinct by virtue of perceived common physical characteristics that are held to be inherent" (Cornell &

Hartman, 2007, pg. 25). Kissinger (2017) states that children need to be provided the scientific definition of race; our different skin colors protect us from the sun.

As complicated of a concept that race is, it is one of the first things children notice. Since they can see skin color, young children were able to notice a difference in each of our skin colors. The students attributed different jobs and characteristics to each of the different skin tones used. After reading and discussing antibias children's literature, the students' perceptions had changed. What stood out most to me regarding race was the students' thoughts on the darker complexioned person. In the beginning they had negative thoughts, however at the end their thoughts changed and saw the darker person in a better light. Their conversation regarding race were interesting to hear. Quite often they discussed whether White people could have Black babies or marry Black people. They learned to describe their skin colors using different adjectives based on some of the stories read in class. The students took pride in their skin color as they were quick to discuss how their skin looked like creamy ice cream or deep chocolate with smiles on their faces. They were willing to have conversations with other teachers about race. They also discussed how "back in the day" (as they called it) people were treated bad because they were dark skin and that wasn't fair because everyone deserves to be treated right. It was evident to me that the students' stereotypes towards race have changed. The one thing I did notice was that the children attributed discrimination based on race to the past without making connections to what is currently happening in our society.

"Yea, Cause Boys Can Wear Dresses If They Want To"

Meyer (2012) ascertains children learn what cues characterize girls and boys beginning at an early age. There are often the notion children are too young or having dialogs regarding gender and sexuality will "steal" their innocence, however, Bickmore (1999) says assumptions of children's "innocence" regarding sexuality are outdated. Whitney (1999) surmises children are attracted to typecasts and apply those typecasts in organization of their world. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) emphasizes that gender is the first core identity children develop. Children begin to define themselves and others as boy or girl by age two. Children have already created ideas of what behaviors and activities are connected to gender by age three. According to Carter and Curtis (2008), children define their own gender identity by five years old. The expectancy of gender roles and sexuality comes from and varies depending on families, cultures, and societal expectations. Those expectancies were definitely brought into our classroom and it was evident before the implementation of antibias children's literature.

In the beginning students equated hairstyles, clothing, jobs, toys, abilities, and other attributes to gender. Their assignments were highly stereotypical. Some of the stereotypes were what I expected; others were not. Describing girls to be good readers and boys as bad readers were expected (very typical statement made in society). However, what I did not expect was for them to attribute being good at home and school to girls only. It made me think what boys were told at home. After the antibias children's literature classroom conversations became interesting. While students listed the same things for girls and boys for the "what did you learn", they still did things that contradicted what they said they felt. For example, they say boys and girls can play with

any toys, yet they still assign toys a gender; as in girls can play with boys' toys like cars and boys can play with girls' toys like barbies. They did not assign gender to dressing up though. Plenty of times after reading books about boys in dresses, the boys would wear dresses in dramatic play. While most students never made many connections between home and school, there was one student in particular whose home life clearly played a heavy role in how they assign roles, even after reading children's literature. JG made the comment that "you can dress how you want here at school. Like boys can dress like girls. But when you get home you better not do that and pray to God." It is clear that JG's religion impacts what he feels about gender. While the other students' ideas of gender roles had changed, JG's did not. Their thoughts on "girls' toys" and "boys' toys" seemed to be harder because they were unsure of how else to describe the toys. Another concept that was a struggle for them was the idea of being transgender. The students were adamant you cannot change gender because that is the way you were made.

"People Just Meet And Make A Family"

Kissinger (2017) states children's identities are connected to their families' identities. She goes on to say today, children come from families no longer considered "the nuclear family". Continuing, Kissinger asserts children ascertain ideas of what makes a family from society and it becomes the duty of educators to broaden the idea of family.

The wording of the question "what makes a family" led the children to initially focus more on the ways people in families behave or interact versus who are in a family. This may have been based on the way I presented this information. Teacher error! They

did mention a mom, dad, grandma, and grandpa. What I noticed was that very few mentioned their siblings at any point during the study of families and all of the children in the classroom had at least one sibling. After the readings, they did discuss the ways families are composed as well as things that happen to families such as separation and death. Adoption was brought up often because several students knew families with adopted children. There were misconceptions when it came to adoption and same sex parents. The participants attributed death of one parent as reasons for adoption and same sex couples. The students also connected race to families. They would make statements that their families were different shades of the same race but could not connect that there are families composed of different races. Even though I explained and showed my family, where my mother is White, my father Black. The students were very colorful in their depiction of how families are actually created. One description included a man and woman meeting in high school, dating, and deciding to make a family. Another was a mom and dad laid together, then God gave them a child.

"My Mom Makes Good Money"

Research has shown young children, as young as six, have the ability to classify people by social class. Class was a concept that came with very stereotypical views for rich, poor, and middle-class people. What was really eye-opening was when they commented poor people where useless and the only way rich people got their money was by robbing people and the bank. Students understood that regardless of the amount of money people have their emotions can be the same. Jobs were also things that applied to any class. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) says young children equate material

things with love and approval. What I found was that this group of students did not necessarily display that idea. They did equate the amount of money their families have with the ability to buy small or large items. Thoughts changed slightly about the different classes, however there is still more work to be done. Our school is a uniform school, with the intention of having students not be able to identify who comes from a more affluent family and who doesn't. To students, material things designated how much money you have, not jobs. They often thought I was rich because they knew when I bought things for the classrooms (like Hotwheels and new books).

"We Should All Speak Whatever Language We Want"

Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) explains the United States has always been a nation of many languages and the number of children whose home language is not English is continuing to increase. Utilizing books in the classroom representative of those home languages is a vital piece to the antibias classroom puzzle. York (2016) asserts research shows biliteracy is beneficial to human brains. This year we were fortunate enough to have multiple language experts of differing languages in our classroom. We had Arabic speakers, Spanish speakers, Cebuano speakers, and Mohagmo/Pidgin speakers. The students had more positive thoughts about speaking different languages. They also showed interest in learning other languages. It could be heard often in the classroom "So and So, how do you say (insert word) in (insert language). The students seemed highly intrigued to both learn and teach new languages. I believe the language study went the way it did because students were acclimated to sharing and using their home languages in the classroom since the first day of school. I believe the language

study began with less stereotypical thoughts because students were used to seeing and hearing them from their favorite cartoons. Sign language was also another language they brought up (which I did not initially think of) as a language they see on different cartoons.

"We Are All Different, But We Still Have To Treat People Right"

Diamond (2001) states there is a correlation between young children having frequent interactions with peers with "disabilities" and prosocial behaviors. There is little known about young children's beliefs regarding individuals with differing abilities. However, Diamond says the noticeable ability differences acts as a clue to children, whereas less visible ability differences (such as mental retardation) tends to be more difficult for children to understand.

The children discussed physical differing abilities like missing limbs and others like blindness. When it came to mental differing abilities, students had a harder time with the concept. Although we've spent time around and interacting with both physically and mentally ably different people, the students did not make a connection between the books we read and those students. I believe that this form of diversity is a struggle for this group of children and would be a topic to spend more time discussing. They did not even notice the physical difference in a child with down syndrome.

Oh, The Things I Would Change

As I did this work the list of things I would change if I did this study over continued to grow daily. This section briefly describes the list of things I would change.

1. Use a focus group versus whole class. A focus group would let me get deeper conversations with the same group of students across each topic.

2. Look at religion. Religion played an important part in many of the participants lives. There were also a range of religions in our classroom. Understanding biases and stereotypes regarding religion would have been another area of diversity.

3. Looking at the questions. I would reword some questions to help them understand what was being asked better.

4. Connecting past to present. The students were really stuck on things that happened in the past like bus discriminations yet could not connect to the present-day practices of discrimination.

5. Extend the time. I would want to spend longer on each topic. Being that we have so many "other" things to accomplish that extended time on each topic would give us more time to dive deeper.

Wake Up All The Teachers, Time To Teach A New Way

Change. This six-letter word invokes different thoughts, feelings, ideas. Change is inevitable. Evans (2001) says change is simply substitution. The intent of this study was to substitute students' stereotypical thoughts with counternarratives. My call to teachers is that we begin substituting the books displaying race, gender, class, family composition, ability, and language in biased ways with books that provide students the opportunities to see themselves positively. Our classrooms are changing as is our society. It is part of our duty to help young children develop into humans who are understanding and accepting of those who are different from them. Like Harold Melvin and the Blues say…

"Wake up all the teachers, time to teach new way. Maybe then they'll listen to what you have to say. They're the ones that coming up and the world is in their hands (Melvin, 1975).." Let's change our teaching to teach them to cherish the diversity of the world they hold.

As an educator, I too must be willing to wake up and teach a new way. My goals following this study is about as long as the things I would change. I plan to walk into each school year armed with my books to confront and combat bias in the young humans from the beginning of the school year to the end. I intend to share what I have learned with my colleagues both school and district levels. I also hope to connect with my parents so that my work crosses the bridge to enter the homes of my students. Finally, I want to ensure my antibias work spills over from storybooks to other aspects of the classroom environment.

Profile of a South Carolina Graduate and This Research

In 2015, the South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA), the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), the State Board of Education (SBE), and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) adopted and approved The Profile of the South Carolina (South Carolina Department of Education, 2015). It was done in an effort to identify the knowledge, skills, and characteristics a SC high school graduate should hold in order to be prepared for success as they enter college or pursue a career. The profile is intended to guide all that is taught and done in SC schools to support college- and career-readiness. Through this study it became evident, in my opinion, that

the incorporation of antibias culturally responsive children's literature into the kindergarten curriculum met standards as outlined on the profile document. For example, one topic under the profile umbrella is to develop life and career characteristics such as global perspective, integrity, and interpersonal skills. Through discussions of often "tough" topics, these kindergarten students were presented the opportunity to see the perspectives of others from their community and around the globe, while communicating their thoughts, opinions and beliefs. Another topic under the profile umbrella this research was able to address was the world class skills necessary for the SC graduate. Participants, even at ages 5 and six were able to be creative, communicate, collaborate and critically think about race, gender, family composition, class, abilities, and language. Through this research state standards were addressed and the profile of a South Carolina graduate was integrated.

Children Saw More Than Race; This Teacher Did Too

It's the way that people, often those in positions of power, assign status based on the label they have carved in their minds. This positioning results in a lack of opportunities to interact with others in positive ways. Spending time with people- being in close proximity with those who are different- can break down labels and assumptions and give relationships a chance to develop. (Candee Basford, cited in Senge, 2000, p.195)

Our class used books and each other as ways to be around diversity and breaking down labels, developing relationships with each other. This was more than a study; it was an experience. It always fascinates me to watch five and six-year-old children have

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conversations, however this year and study took it to another level. I was amazed at how they took the topics and incorporated in their daily interactions. Naturally, I'm proud anytime they accomplish a goal or make a connection. Yet this time I was even more proud of them for displaying the courage to stand up for one another, for willingly having conversations regarding topics that many adults avoid. Of course, my work is not done as each year brings in new students with their own thoughts and ideas surrounding diversity. Work with these particular students is not done. I can only hope that as they continue to grow, they will take what they have learned through the antibias children's literature and continue to confront and challenge their own biased thoughts as well as others. These children saw more than race and through them, I was able to see more too.

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Appendix A:

Interview Questions

Race

1. What race do you consider yourself? Why?

2. What does being a _____ person mean to you?

3. Do you think it is easy being _____? Why or why not?

4. How do you think other people see you and your race?

5. What kinds of images do you see in the media or books or toys regarding your race?

6. How does being _____impact your day?

7. Would you change your race? Why or why not?

Gender

1. Do you consider yourself male or female or neither?

2. What do you think about boys or males? What about girls or females?

3. Is it possible for a person to look like a male on the outside but feel like a female on the inside? Does it work the other way too?

4. What do you think when you see a _____dressed like a _____?

5. How does being a _____ impact your day?

6. How do you treat someone who is a different gender than you?

Family composition

1. What is your family composition?

2. How is your family different from one of your friends?

3. How do you feel when you see someone with two moms or two dads?

4. How do you feel about people who are adopted?

5. What are some things that are important to your family?

Ability

1. What do you think when you see someone who is ably different?

2. How do you treat people who you see as ably different?

3. How do you think people who are ably different feel when other people call them names or stare?

4. What makes someone ably different?

Class

1. What do you consider your family to be (rich, poor, or middle class)? Why?

2. How do you treat people who have less than you? How do you treat people who have more than you?

3. Can you tell rich, poor, and middle-class people apart? If so how?

4. How do you think rich people treat others? Poor people?

5. How do you think people become rich or poor? Do you think a poor person can become rich or a rich person become poor?

6. Does having money make you better than someone else? Why or why not?

Language

1. What do you think when you hear people speak a language other than English?

2. What do you know about African American Language? Spanish? Arabic?

3. Do you think the United States should have a national language (one main language)? Why or why not?

4. What languages do you speak? What languages does your families speak?

5. How important is your language to you?

Other Questions

1. How does our class treat people who are different?

2. Is our class reflective of diversity? If not, how can we make it?

3. What can we do to make sure everyone is represented in the classroom?

Appendix B:

Codes

- X = elementary school

- TR = teacher-researcher

- Students initials = student comments

- Obs = observation

- Int = interview

- Sem = seminar

- R = race

- G = gender

- FC = family composition

- L = language

- C = class

- A = ability

- WG = whole group

- Ind = individual

Appendix C: List of Books for Study

Boelts, M., & Jones, N. Z. (2012). *Those shoes.* Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.

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Fleming, V., & Cooper, F. (1993). *Be good to Eddie Lee.* New York, NY: Philomel

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Appendix D:

Tentative Seminar Questions

Race:

1. Is skin color a part of your story?

2. How does the color of your skin affect you?

3. The author says, "race is a story" what does he mean by this?

4. Is race an important part of someone's life? Why is race important and does it
   define you?

5. Is race an important part of your story? If so, why? If not, why?

Class: Maddi's Fridge

1. How do you think Maddi felt when Sofia opened her refrigerator?

2. Why do you think Maddi's refrigerator is almost empty?

3. Why do you think Maddi asked Sofia promise not to tell anyone?

4. At first, why didn't Sofia tell her Mom what was going on with Maddi?

5. Why do you think Sofia finally decided to tell her Mom that there was no food in
   Maddi's fridge?

6. Have you ever felt like Maddi in that you wanted to help a friend but didn't know
   what to do? How so?

Language:

1. Do you agree with Unhei's mother that being different is a good thing? Why or why not?

2. Have you ever had an experience like Unhei's?

3. Do you think that the children on the bus could have responded to Unhei's name in a different way? What could they have done, and how would that have made a difference?

4. Why does Unhei choose not to share her name with her class? How does the class react?

5. How does Unhei feel about the name jar? How can you tell?

Gender: Jacob's New Dress

1. "How would you feel if someone told you not to wear your favorite clothes?"

2. "Why do you think Christopher is upset that Jacob wants to wear a dress?"

3. "Why do you think Jacob feels like he can't breathe when he is waiting to see what his parents will say about his dress?"

4. "What types of activities could Jacob's teacher do with the class to help the kids expand their ideas of what it means to be a boy or a girl?"

5. "What would you do if Jacob were in your class?"

Family: And Tango Makes Three

1. Are Roy, Silo, and Tango a family? How do you know if they are or are not?

2. Can you tell me what kinds of things make up a family?

3. How do you know when a group of people is a family?

4. Why did Mr. Gramzay give Roy and Silo an egg?

5. Sometimes human couples adopt children. Are these children part of the family even though they came from a different set of parents? Why or why not?

6. Why do Roy and Silo want to have an egg?

Abilities: Ian's Walk Seminar Questions:

1. Why do Ian's sisters need to watch him closely when they go to visit the park?

2. How do you think Julie feels about Ian's behavior?

3. What does Julie mean when she says Ian hears, tastes, and smells things differently?

4. If Ian was your brother how would you handle it if other people stared at him lying on the ground?

5. Why does Ian sometimes make his sister angry? Why do you think that Julie says that Ian tastes things differently too?

6. How does Ian's sisters feel when they realize that he is missing?