HOW DOES LEARNING ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION THROUGH CRITICAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ARTS-BASED INQUIRY CONTRIBUTE TO TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF THEIR CLASSROOM PRACTICE?

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By

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ABSTRACT

Racism is a significant problem within education. The education system has established institutional hierarchies and perpetuated different forms of racism that restrict the learning experiences of diverse students across Canada. One of the ways that teachers address and disrupt racism is through engaging in critical anti-racist professional development. This study gave teachers the chance to engage in critical anti-racist professional development where they learned about race, racism, and anti-racist education while exploring how their positionalities affect classroom practices. This study used a qualitative arts-based methodology called a/r/tography to create a space where teachers could have deep exploration and understanding of themselves and others by re-imagining lived experiences in and through time through the use of visual art. Combining a/r/tography and anti-racist education together it gave teachers the opportunity to develop awareness of their positionalities, become more critically conscious of their own racialized lenses, and understand how these lenses impact their classroom practices. Through critical artistic reflection on their practice in conjunction with learning anti-racist education strategies, teachers learned to reflect on their practices so as to become more aware of how to disrupt racism and white supremacy within their classrooms.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Ph.D. dissertation to all my past, present and future students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE i
ABSTRACT ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii
DEDICATION iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS v
LIST OF FIGURES ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1
Introduction 1
Background and Context 1
Rooted in Racism 2
Whiteness in Schools 4
Teacher Positionality and Racism 5
Anti-Racist Practices Within Schools 7
Building Anti-Racist Teacher Communities 8
The Researcher 9
Positionality 10
Problem Statement 14
Purpose Statement and Research Questions 14
Research Design Overview 15
Layout of Dissertation 16
CHAPTER TWO: RACE, RACISM, AND WHITENESS 18
Introduction 18
Race 19
History of Race 19
Racialization 21
Racism 23
Ideological Racism 24
Institutional Racism 26
Structural Racism 28
Individual Racism 30
Whiteness 31
Whiteness in Schools 34

Colour-blind Ideology 35
Deficit Thinking 36
White Saviour Syndrome 37
White Fragility 38
Culturally Responsive Education 40
Conclusion 40
CHAPTER THREE: ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION 42
Introduction 42
Anti-Racist Education 42
Analysis of Intersectionality 43
Engaging Teachers in Critical Professional Development 44
Diverse Anti-Racist Teacher Community 49
White Anti-Racist Teacher Community 50
Mixed Anti-Racist Teacher Community 50
Benefits of Anti-racist Teacher Communities 52
Understanding Teachers' Positionality 53
Supportive Environment for Analyzing Race, Racism, and Whiteness 54
Critical Dialogue 57
Accountability to Diverse Colleagues and Students 58
Vulnerability 59
Developing a Positive, Anti-Racist White Identity 62
Challenges and Limitations to Anti-Racist Teacher Communities 64
Conclusion 66
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY 68
Introduction 68
Arts-based Research, Methodologies and Methods 68
A/r/tography 73
Learning as Métissage 74
Learning as Rhizomatic 75
Learning as Lived Inquiry 78
Anti-Racist Education Practices 81
Storytelling 81
Relationships between Researchers and Participants 81

Commitment to Diverse Students ... 82

Purpose and Overview of Study ... 83

Research Questions ... 84

The Setting of the Study ... 84

Participants ... 85

Study Design ... 86

Design for Data Generation ... 86

First PD Session- Deficit Thinking ... 87

Second PD Session- Whiteness ... 90

Third PD Session- Nostalgia and Settler Narratives of Saskatchewan ... 91

Fourth PD Session- Culturally Responsive Education vs. Anti-Racist Education ... 93

The Data ... 95

Research Ethics and Human Subjects Approval ... 96

CHAPTER FIVE: ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTICIPANTS AND SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS ... 97

Introduction ... 97

Main Themes-Renderings ... 98

Seeing With New Eyes ... 101

Seeing new ideas and perspectives ... 102

Seeing barriers to diverse students ... 105

Slow Down, Reflect, and Critical Conversations ... 110

Living the Questions ... 115

Living in and Understanding Whiteness ... 116

White Saviourism and Fragility ... 127

White Guilt and Shame ... 130

Connecting and Re-connecting ... 134

Risks of a Single Story ... 135

Personal stories connected to Canadian histories ... 142

Coming to know through Art ... 152

Conclusion ... 156

CHAPTER SIX: Reflections ... 157

Introduction ... 157

Findings of Study ... 157

Learning about their Positionality ... 158

Supportive Environments to Critically Confront Racism and Whiteness 159
Critical Conversations to Promote Anti-Racist Practices 162
Accountability to the Diverse Community 165
Vulnerability in Promoting Anti-racist Practices 168
Developing an Anti-Racist White Allyship 170
Implications for practice 171
Implications for Teachers 172
Implications for Anti-Racist Teacher Communities 173
Implications for Professional Development 174
Implications for Creating Art Pieces 175
Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research 176
Lessons Learned 177
Conclusion 182
REFERENCES 183
APPENDIX A 213
APPENDIX B 214
APPENDIX C 215

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Beauty by Destruction, 2008. Pencil crayon and ink. 8

Figure 5.1 Tyler's External Mask 106

Figure 5.2 Johnny's external mask 107

Figure 5.3 Bob's external mask 108

Figure 5.4 Ani's external mask 109

Figure 5.5 Ani's internal mask... 111

Figure 5.6 Johnny's feather.. 112

Figure 5.7 Tyler's internal mask 118

Figure 5.8 Johnny's internal mask……………………..……………………………………….120

Figure 5.9 Stevie's internal mask... 124

Figure 5.10 Bob's internal mask 132

Figure 5.11 Johnny's personal collage... 143

Figure 5.12 Bob's personal collage 144

Figure 5.13 Tyler's personal collage 145

Figure 5.14 Alexis's personal collage.. 147

Figure 5.15 Marie Rose's personal collage 149

Figure 5.16 Ani's personal collage 150

Figure 5.17 David's personal collage 152

Figure 5.18 Marie Rose's feather 154

Figure 5.19 Bob's Feather.. 154

Figure 5.20 David's feather.. 155

Figure 5.21 Jocelyn's feather 155

Figure 6.1 Jordan's Picking up the pieces …………………………………………………..180

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Using arts-based methodologies, this dissertation contributes to anti-racist education by analyzing eleven high school teachers' understanding of their positionalities and how their awareness of their positionalities affects their classroom practice. The study answers the central research question: *How does learning anti-racist education through critical professional development and arts-based inquiry contribute to teachers' understanding of their classroom practice?* To understand the context and introduce the study, Chapter One provides a review of the background and context of the study, an introduction to the current climate in the education system, research design, and the layout of the dissertation. To conclude this chapter, I illustrate my positionality and how art has helped me as an artist/researcher/teacher in understanding race, racism, and whiteness.

Background and Context

The fight against racism within Canada is not new. Activist organizations and educational scholars across the country have continued the work of past abolitionists and civil rights leaders who began this work centuries ago particularly in the United States and trickling into Canada (Kendi, 2016; Love, 2019; Tatum, 2017). As Kendi (2016) stated, “in a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist” (p. 429). To be anti-racist is to understand anti-racist ideas, structures and practices, support anti-racist policies, promote racial equity, and engage in anti-racist action. There is no middle ground between racist and anti-racist, which means there is no such thing as being non-racist (Kendi, 2019). Tatum (2017) stated that having a middle ground or supposed neutrality supports racist policies and ideas. Anti-racism requires a

radical reorientation of consciousness, persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination (Kendi, 2019).

Engaging in anti-racist practices requires people to look critically at their positionalities. Peoples' positionalities are:

> the social and political context that creates your identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability status. Positionality also describes how your identity influences, and potentially biases, your understanding of and outlook on the world (Dictionary.com, 2018, para. 1).

This is especially important for white people because they continue to benefit from white supremacy and systemic racism that ensures white advantage in spheres of life (Codding, 2021). This dissertation explores the ways in which teachers are promoting and engaging with anti-racist education. This research aims to give a space for teachers to understand and push back against racism and white supremacy within their classrooms and themselves.

Rooted in Racism

Racism is deeply rooted within Canadian society. Built on stolen land from Indigenous people, this country was created to benefit those regarded to be white at the cost of diverse people. 'Diverse' people, teachers, and students within this dissertation are understood to be people who are affected by systems that "produce, enact, and discipline [based on] race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability in order to position some bodies for privileges and 'other' bodies for oppression" (Stewart, Cappello, & Carter, 2014, p. 4). I understand that the term 'diverse' encompasses a range of diversities related to race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc. However, for the purposes of this study I concentrate mainly on those racialized as 'other' as racism is a predominant issue within Saskatchewan. This 'othering' process is explained by Wendall (1989)

as a process that creates difference by making diverse people ‘other’ and grouping them “together as the objects of [their] experiences instead of regarding them as fellow subjects of experience with whom [people] might identify” (as cited in Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 301). This positioning or othering has caused racism, discrimination, and prejudice to be internalized and institutionalized in North American societies and governing systems (Bell, 1991; Cappello, 2012; Stewart et al., 2014). Anti-racist scholars have researched how these systems continue to function as processes that are upholding white supremacy through the oppression of diverse peoples and cultures (Leonardo, 2016). Anti-racist education examines race as significantly contributing to maintaining inequity due to racial ideology and white supremacy within society (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Anti-racist scholars have cautioned that ignoring the realities of racism is ignoring our country’s history (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Instances of racism are not abnormal, rather, racism has been normalized within our society (Cappello, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Recent examples of racism within society are made visible through: recordings of tragic interactions between police officers and diverse people who are shot or killed, how different communities were treated with regard to access to COVID-19 vaccines, the finding of unmarked graves at multiple sites throughout Canada where Indigenous children where buried and the silencing of such acts and cover-ups associated with it, the killing of Colton Boushie in Saskatchewan, the implications of Bill C-21 where a Quebec teacher was put on a leave of absence for wearing a hijab, and the ambiguous nature of trucker protests labelled as the “freedom convoy” yet saturated with racist symbolism including the swastika and confederate flag. I list these examples to outline that racism is not just inherited from the past but is continually regenerated and practiced in the present and in all local communities. Racism is a continually reproduced phenomenon that repeats and recreates the violence and harms on diverse

people. Racism saturates and shapes all of Canada's systems, including justice, policing, banking, housing, healthcare, and education (Codding, 2021). The latter is the focus of this dissertation.

Whiteness in Schools

Racial inequity and white supremacy have saturated our education system and have become status quo within our society. Through establishing institutional hierarchies and systemic racism, whiteness restricts learning experiences for diverse students across Canada. Whiteness as a positionality is a product of racism with a history of colonization, segregation, and genocide (Leonardo, 2016). Canadian schools continue to fail diverse students and communities by using racist policies and a culture of power that benefits and prioritizes white students while at the same time often characterizing diverse students as a problem that needs fixing (Delpit, 2006; Gillborn, 2005; Gillies, 2018). The systematic privileging of white students can be seen in how schools make decisions about curricular materials, instructional approaches, disciplinary policies, and family engagement (Love, 2019; Schick, 2014; Tatum, 2017; Tupper & Cappello, 2008). Anti-racist scholars have researched whiteness and how it has influenced our institutional and social structures, such as education (McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 1993; Schick, 2000a; 2000b). As Cappello (2012) stated "schools were to provide the means through which [diverse] groups could be turned into subjects and full participants in the larger Anglo society" (p.35). Having a significantly dominant white teaching force helped to reproduce the status quo and continue the oppression of diverse people.

Whiteness is defined as a structure that produces white privilege, protects white supremacy, and maintains systemic racism (Leonardo, 2009). Whiteness has impacted diverse students and serves to indoctrinate new generations of white students to uphold white

supremacist actions and policies (Cappello, 2012). Within Canadian schools, the teaching population is significantly white identified despite the increase in racial diversity of students (Harvey & Houle, 2006). An example of this is within the province of Saskatchewan, where "there are 271 [Indigenous] students for every one [Indigenous] teacher" (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009, cited in Gebhard, 2015, p.32). This example illustrates how there is a small chance that a diverse student would ever be taught by a diverse teacher. Rarely do white teachers go into their classrooms ready with critical understandings about racial inequities, systemic racism, and the oppressive structures of white supremacy in education (Carr & Klassen, 1997; Cappello, 2012; DiAngelo, 2011, 2018; Evans-Winters & Hines, 2019; Gebhard, 2015; McLean, 2007; St. Denis, 2010). Taking this into account, "white teachers unknowingly become the gatekeepers to white respectability, and schools become one of the places where racial lines continue to be drawn and redrawn for the masses" (McLean, 2007, p.16). Whiteness works to "hide racism by making white privilege and institutional racism invisible" (Codding, 2021, p.5). As Wilkerson (2020) stated "Just as the studs and joists and beams form the infrastructure of a building are not visible to those who live in it, so it is with [whiteness]. Its very invisibility is what gives it power and longevity" (p. 23). Teachers and educational scholars are using anti-racist teaching practices to make whiteness and white supremacy visible. Disrupting whiteness and white supremacy can create a route for engaging teachers in anti-racist work, as these barriers exist inside individuals' heads as well as systemically throughout institutions (Codding, 2021).

Teacher Positionality and Racism

When teachers are learning about anti-racist education it can help them understand how positionality is produced and how to challenge it (Kumashiro, 2000). Positionality is a theoretical

construct used in many anti-racist education studies (Kondrat, 1999; Murray-Garcia, Harrell, & Garcia, 2005). Positionality is:

> the social and political context that creates your identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability status. Positionality also describes how your identity influences, and potentially biases, your understanding of and outlook on the world (Dictionary.com, 2018, para. 1).

It is used to situate various forms of knowledge and requires participants, researchers, and facilitators to reflect on their personal background and relations with other people (Rose, 1997; De Jong, 2009). The positions that we place ourselves within the world are where we make meaning of and engage with our social positions and lived experiences (Collins, 1986). Being able to understand the multiple and complex social positions of people helps to shape our interpretations of who we are and how our positions affect different situations (Kezar & Lester, 2010).

When people think about their position in the world, and more specifically within society, they reflect on the distinct roles within their lives. They start to examine the different ways to participate in different social settings- family, neighborhood, work, school/classroom, informal gatherings, formal gatherings- and find that humans are multifaceted individuals. People adopt a different point of view as they travel through different social settings of interaction. Teachers are not purely “objective” beings and do not come neutrally into the classroom (Burr, 1995; Collins, 2000, 2004; hooks, 1994; Sleeter, 1996; Tong, 1998). Teachers have many experiences and prior learnings that form who they are as embodied educators. Within their classroom they take the roles of the learner and the facilitator but are not blank slates. They have biases and opinions that affect their teaching in some way (Freire, 2000;

Sleeter, 1996). The learning environment is filled with embedded normalized narratives that are shaped by the views of whiteness and racism. For teachers, it is too difficult to escape the differences unnoticed (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Conde-Frazier, Kang, & Parrett, 2004).

For teachers that practice anti-racist education, it is important for them to understand positionality within larger relations of power. Teachers are introduced and confronted with difference within their classrooms daily. Therefore, identifying these differences and then critically reflecting upon how these differences bring or withhold privilege, access, and power offers teachers the opportunity to understand the effects of positionality and diversity. By understanding the theoretical approaches and concepts to positionality it creates a space for teachers to not essentialize social positions within their classroom practice.

Anti-Racist Practices Within Schools

Anti-racist teaching involves people disrupting white supremacy, highlighting diverse voices and experiences, and taking measures to foster racial equity (Dei, 1995; Kendi, 2019). Anti-racist teaching practices are developed on a foundation of activism. With no middle ground, teachers are either partaking in anti-racist teaching practices, which support racial equity, or doing the opposite where they use practices that fail to disrupt white supremacy in schools and communities (Kendi, 2019; Tatum, 2017). Schools are racialized institutions that require anti-racist practices to develop racial and educational equity (Codding, 2021).

There are several ways to use anti-racist teachings within the classroom. Pollock (2008) explained specific anti-racist methods and actions that teachers can use every day to encourage racial equity and address racism within schools. She also stated that teachers need to work against racial inequity and racism within society by using anti-racist principles, such as acknowledging the lived experiences of diverse students and eliminating misleading perceptions

of white racial superiority (Pollock, 2008). Love (2019) described how teachers could fight against injustices through critical reflection and anti-racist practices. She stated, "education is one of the primary tools used to maintain white supremacy and anti-immigrant hate" (Love, 2019, p. 23). Teachers cannot disrupt white supremacy without using anti-racist ideas, policies, and practices in their classrooms on a daily basis (Codding, 2021).

Building Anti-Racist Teacher Communities

Several teachers are creating professional development anti-racist teacher communities to disrupt racism and white supremacy within schools (Michael & Conger, 2009). These anti-racist teacher communities provide an anti-racist space for teachers to connect and engage with anti-racist work. Anti-racist teacher communities provide a space to examine what it means to be a white or a diverse person living in a racialized society, support emotional processing, and learn the skills needed to participate more fully in anti-racist work (Michael & Conger, 2009). These communities give a supportive (yet critical) environment for deep reflection. For example, anti-racist teacher communities might organize monthly meetings to engage in critical conversations about issues of race, racism, and whiteness. These critical conversations include social justice-oriented dialogue that acknowledges race as socially constructed, recognizes oppressive systems, and seeks to disrupt the status quo of white supremacy (McManimon & Casey, 2018; Micheal & Conger, 2009). Some scholars, such as de Novais (2019), use critical conversations within their anti-racist teacher communities to promote social justice. These critical dialogues have the potential to teach teachers about their positionalities and how their positionalities affect their classroom practice. By letting teachers gather within a shared space to self-reflect and gain awareness of privilege and oppression it creates the possibility for teachers to disrupt white racist thinking, question assumptions, cultivate empathy and take actions to support diverse students based upon their newly acquired knowledge.

The Researcher

This dissertation is affected by whiteness and racism. I have white ancestry and I am studying teachers (most participants were white) as they address race, racism, and whiteness in education. While this dissertation presents an analysis of racism and whiteness, this type of work has the potential to inadvertently recenter racism and whiteness instead of disrupting it. However, I have made an effort to center the voices of diverse scholars (through PD lecturers, literature, and diverse participants) to stop the recentering of whiteness. I collected data with my participants and was consistently reflecting with art throughout the study by painting my own experiences with racism and whiteness.

As an educational qualitative researcher, I accept that I am a piece of the culture and context of my study. My research focuses on the issue of racism and whiteness, which is a significant problem that I live and work in everyday. Like most of my participants, I present as white, and come from a middle-class background while teaching diverse students. As a teacher and a researcher, I have the responsibility to examine and disrupt racism and whiteness in my work. During my experience writing my dissertation, I realized that although I have witnessed several emotional episodes with racism and homophobia throughout my life, they do not exclude the need for me to reflect on my own complicity with white privilege. Applebaum (2013) has explained that we can work to counteract our complicity with white privilege by "stay[ing] in the anxiety of critique and vulnerability" (p. 17). She suggests that we need to be in a continuous reflection of our white self if we want to be effective anti-racist teachers. It is a continuous process in which I will continually question, pull apart, mull over, and assess for understanding. Shotwell (2012) has said we need to lean into the sharp points of our positionalities and use those moments to reflect and change behaviors. I will continue to lean into those sharp points and be vulnerable with my positionality.

Positionality

I was born and raised in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It is the largest provincial city, where my parents (who have been together for 33 years) have lived most of their lives. I had a very stable home life, that was Catholic, conservative, and seen as a “normal” upbringing (as seen from the outsider’s eye). My family has French, Scottish, and Métis ancestry, where they embraced the French linkage in our heritage. They believed in the nuclear heterosexual family, which confused me because I identified with the 2SLGBT+ community. I was socialized into the dominant colonial group and encouraged to adapt to their outlooks in society. If I were to veer away from this outlook, I would be shamed. This dominant outlook was found within my school and classmates with racial and homophobic slurs occurring on a daily basis.

I was consistently at odds trying to find where I fit in this world. I tried to talk to my family and friends about what was happening, but I would get the “just get over it” attitude. I was a voice no one could hear. I was asking and no one was listening. I would go home and tell my parents about how I did not have a sense of belonging, but they did not have ears to hear either. I just felt like I had no one to talk to. No one felt the pain I felt and every avenue I went down felt blocked. I wanted to know that I was not the only one who felt this way. The most significant difficulty for me was feeling isolated and different. The lack of respect that some of my relatives and classmates had towards our Indigenous and queer neighbours influenced my desire to use art as an outlet to express what I felt and wondered about.

In my later years art became a way to heal, provoke, rebalance, stimulate, and explore my identity and the people around me. As Indigenous Elders have said, we need to speak the truth and enter everything with a good heart. Whatever I create, it comes from my heart and my spirit. When I paint, the image develops into a connection to my spirit, it becomes something that can

be felt but not seen. I like the physical sensations of the brush gliding across the linen dripping wet in a harmonious palette of colour. It becomes very meditative for me when guiding my brush across the canvas in a repetitive manner. I release myself and start to form a new entity as I press harder on my brush. Each piece of art I create illustrates my evolving identity and voice in iridescent hues and reflects back to me who I am at that moment and how I situate myself within different social contexts in place and time.

Channeling my energies into my art helped me discover aspects of myself and relate to other people in a similar position. When I presented my work in shows, galleries, and personal homes, it provided opportunities to relate to other people. This was a turning point for me. My private world started to become a public one. I have moved into a new world of storytelling and responsibility. When you see a person crying in front of your painting for the first time, you can tell your work is bringing a powerful message and affecting the world around it. You then realize you are responsible for sharing your story and have a commitment to share your ideals and values through line, form, and colour. *Beauty by Destruction*" (Figure 1) was one of my first public pieces that showed a part of my personal narrative. The idea for this painting came from the idea of the metamorphosis that a caterpillar goes through. Caterpillars liquefy entirely when they are in the cocoon then reconstruct into a butterfly. The incredible thing is that they retain all their memories at the end of this process. The butterflies represent me in my metamorphosis process, where I had experiences that left me feeling emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually destroyed. However, just like the butterfly, I never genuinely forgot these experiences, nor do I forget who I am as a person or where I come from. It becomes part of my lived experience. The hands represent a sense of belonging and connection to one another. Having butterflies and hands together assists in signifying that everything we were, everything we are,

and everything we remember (the good and bad), all have the potential to come together to create something beautiful and build coalitions/communities across differences.

Figure 1.1 Beauty by Destruction, 2008. Pencil crayon and ink.

For me, this joy and pleasure of art deeply influenced my teaching. For years I have instructed children's and adults' art classes. Still, my greatest pleasure in teaching is when a student has an 'A-ha!' moment in their art process of learning. An 'A-ha!' moment is "a moment of sudden realization, inspiration, insight, recognition, or comprehension" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022, para. 1). Creating art can be a transformative experience for people where hope and possibility can be generated. When I started my Ph.D., I searched for a way to integrate people as artists, researchers, and teachers. I understood that there were methods to engaging peoples' experiences with others through visual art. As an art teacher, I am interested in exploring visual art as research, as a process and method to understanding different teaching practices. Cole and Knowles (2000) described how teaching supports different ways of learning:

> Teaching is a complex, dynamic, and socially constructed activity, sometimes impulsive, not always logical, often unpredictable, frequently intuitive, and invariably difficult to describe and interpret… If we characterize teaching as a form of creative expression- characterized as multimodal, nonlinear, and multidimensional- then it makes sense to search for ways of understanding teaching that are also nonlinear, multimodal, and multidimensional. (p. 63)

In my efforts to discover and operate within a plan that is holistic, it was crucial to integrate, create links, and work within the relations of people's positionalities. Carson and Sumara (1997) said:

> Those who involve themselves in holistic focal practices understand that one's evolving sense of identity and one's practices must always be, in some way, interpreted in relation to one another. (xv)

> …who one becomes completely caught up in what one knows and does…it suggests that what is thought, what is represented, what is acted upon, are all intertwined aspects of lived experiences and, as such, cannot be discussed or interpreted separately. (xvii)

Art and anti-racist education have given me an opportunity to critique and understand my positionality. However, saying that sounds like art is just some kind of therapy. It can be that and it can also be something more, where learning from both can bring awareness and social change within a person and the world. It can bring healing to our societies and alert us to the brutality and destruction that is happening within our societies from racism and whiteness. This world is sacred to us all. As an activist, educator, and artist, I hope presenting my story and my

participants' stories can help bring awareness to others about the strength of anti-racist education.

Problem Statement

Teachers continue to "struggle with shifting from well-intentioned 'non-racist' [teachers] who go along with the inequitable status quo to [anti-racist teachers] who actively work to dismantle white supremacy and ensure racial equity in education" (Codding, 2021, p.8). Such a change requires teachers to explore their positionality through a critical lens. Scholars and activists have worked to engage teachers in anti-racist work, but racial inequities persist (Kendi, 2016, 2019; Love, 2019). To disrupt whiteness in schools, teachers must take personal responsibility by committing to learn how to see and then challenge racism and white supremacy while discovering their own role in improving school practices and policies that disadvantage diverse students (Codding, 2021). High school teachers are taught to deliver subject-centered, assessment-driven, Eurocentric curriculums with minimal relational time to connect with students. Teachers continue to face these challenges, which affect their ability to learn how to navigate a diverse student body with critical awareness, empathy, self-awareness, and social reflection. Creating an opportunity for teachers to explore their own positionality in a curiosity-driven and creative way offers them an opportunity to learn how to implement anti-racist education into their classrooms. Teachers need opportunities to engage in the prolonged process of exploring new perspectives with their white and diverse colleagues (Codding, 2021). Having teachers understand their positionalities has the potential to advance awareness into establishing effective spaces for learning anti-racist education and promoting anti-racist practices.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this project is two-fold: first, to introduce high school teachers to anti-racist education and, second, to use critical professional development and art as a way to have these

teachers explore their own positionality. By having teachers understand their positionality they can better understand how their personal values, views, and biases influence the space around them, specifically their diverse students and colleagues. Combining arts-based inquiry and anti-racist education can potentially transform teachers' prior understandings and interpretations of their own positionality. This study seeks to understand whether developing teachers' awareness of their positionality might help them become more critically conscious of their own racialized lens and how these lenses impact their understanding of their teaching practice. Through critical artistic reflection on their practice in conjunction with learning anti-racist education strategies, teachers may be better able to reflect on their practice in such a way that they learn how they might be reproducing racism (Delpit, 2006; Pollock, 2008; hooks, 2003; Freire, 2013). The following research questions guided my inquiry:

1. How does learning anti-racist education through critical professional development and arts-based inquiry contribute to teachers' understanding of their classroom practice?

    A. How does learning about anti-racist education influence teachers in exploring their own positionality and social location?

    B. How does creating, looking at, and discussing art help teachers analyze who they are in relation to each other, their students, and society?

Research Design Overview

This study presents the stories, experiences, and positionalities of urban high school teachers through their creation of art. Participating teachers' lived experiences were explored, expressed, and shared during four online PD sessions that included four parts. First, each PD session included an online one-hour anti-racist education lecture (facilitated by a guest speaker);

second, a 30-minute online live art instructional video; third, one to two hours of independent artmaking; and fourth, one-hour of online focus group discussions.

This study uses a/r/tography as its methodology, an arts-based framework for conducting educational research (note: the explanation of a/r/tography is found in Chapter Four). This methodology assists in promoting the awareness of the interconnected roles of artist, researcher, and teacher whereby teachers' experiences are presented through the creation of art expression then further communicated as research through their reflections on their art. All participants in the study are practicing teachers, who are interested in anti-racist education and in telling their experiences with/in/through art. They were high school teachers from the same school division which facilitated group discussion and collaboration amongst one another. Online group meetings (following Covid-19 protocols) were recorded through Microsoft Teams, which I studied between sessions and later transcribed.

This study uses anti-racist education and arts-based methodologies to allow teachers to engage within professional development and allow them to see their positionalities in a different way. Facilitating introspection on their positionality has the potential to bring awareness to their classroom practice and may encourage insight on how to implement anti-racist practices. Connecting a/r/tography to anti-racist education encouraged a democratic, participatory, and collaborative framework for conducting research within this dissertation.

Layout of Dissertation

In Chapter Two and Three, I discuss the relevant literature related to race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education. I also discuss how anti-racist professional development is essential to teachers and how creating anti-racist teacher communities has the potential to help

teachers learn about their positionality and how their positionality may affect their diverse students within their classroom.

Chapter Four provides an overview of visual arts-based research and rationale for conducting an anti-racist art study. This overview is followed by an outline of the methodology used within this study called a/r/tography. Next, there is an explanation of anti-racist education strategies used with a/r/tography to help with the data collection.

In Chapter Five, I present the findings from my study. I present my participants' experiences and explore how their self-perceptions of their positionalities shaped their interactions during their anti-racist inquiry and practices. This chapter is broken down into four main themes, which are seeing with new eyes, living the questions, connecting and re-connecting, and a/r/tographic approaches. Each theme is broken down into subsequent themes that relate to the scholarly literature of this study.

In Chapter Six I report on the implications of this study for the field of education and provide recommendations for future research. I also discuss the limitations of this study while concluding with some scholarly contributions of this work.

CHAPTER TWO: RACE, RACISM, AND WHITENESS

Introduction

Teachers can benefit from understanding race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education and how they impact schools and classroom settings. Race, racism, and whiteness have influenced every facet of our lives and give a predominantly white teaching force enormous influence over students, especially those who are marginalized based on race (Miller & Harris, 2018). This has made K-12 schools places where racism and whiteness ensures that only certain knowledge counts and only certain people are valued as knowledge producers (hooks, 1992). Teachers can counter these practices by learning from and about anti-racist education. Anti-racist education gives teachers an opportunity to get a nuanced understanding of how racism and whiteness manifests within their classroom, as well as, how to examine their own personal racial attitudes and beliefs towards diverse students (Kailin, 1999; Lee, 2005; Sleeter, 2014; Gadsden & Dixon-Roman, 2016; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). Teachers are at the frontline of education, therefore understanding what race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education means can shift teachers more actively into systemic and personal change.

I draw upon several types of literature to frame an understanding around race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education within society and the education system. The first section reviews how race has been theorized across history and how racialization was developed to construct ideas about racially superior and inferior groups of people. This is followed by an outline of how racism (ideological, institutional, structural, and individual) has been defined or operates within both society and the school contexts. The third section reviews whiteness and how it influences teaching practices, curriculum, and classroom environments. Having a clear

understanding of these concepts and practices can help teachers look at their relationships and behaviors and comprehend how to dismantle racism within their classrooms.

Race

Race is a social construct that is used to justify political, economic, and social inequality. Theorists created a framework to examine human differences (skin colour and other physical differences) and maintain the marginalization of diverse populations while institutionalizing white dominance (McCreary, 2007). Race refers to “a mode of classification which distinguishes human beings on the basis of physical properties (e.g., skin colour, facial features) which purportedly derive from genetic inheritance” (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2002, cited in Baker, 2006, p. 8). These physical properties are then assumed to determine human qualities and capacities that are used to rationalize gross social inequalities (Helm, 1990; Lewis, Hagerman, & Forman, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to understand how race came to be and how it impacts our society.

History of Race

A history of race is necessary in disrupting racism. Golash-Boza (2016) stated, “racial categories and ideologies change over time, but race as a worldview can be traced back to ideas European scientists promulgated in the eighteenth century” (p. 131). These European scientists classified people based on biological traits such as skin colour, hair texture, and other physical characteristics (Omi & Winant, 2015). Carolus Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist, created a typology of four groups of people based on where they were physically located within the world:

> Americanus: reddish, choleric, and erect; … obstinate, merry, free; …regulated by customs.
>
> Asiaticus: sallow, melancholy, … black hair, dark eyes, … haughty, … ruled by

opinions.

Africanus: black, phlegmatic, relaxed; women without shame, … crafty, indolent, negligent; governed by caprice.

Europaenus: white, sanguine, muscular; inventive; governed by laws. (Golash-Boza, 2016, p. 131)

These racial categories were created and used to classify and describe people, and later became a fixed hierarchy that continues to structure racism today. These categorizations became the basis of scientific racism and continue to operate as stereotypes and normalized differences, inequalities, and white supremacy (Omi & Winant, 2015). As Baker (2006) stated "in many ways, these [European scientists] merely put popular ideas about difference onto paper, giving supposedly quantitative and scientific evidence to support the belief that 'primitive' societies are inherently inferior" (p. 7). These ideas justified white dominance through colonialization, slavery, and genocide perpetuated against diverse populations and demonstrate power and superiority of the white race (Mills, 2007). The present-day society is deeply entrenched with the biological racial thinking that eighteenth-century scientists used to categorize and label people. This has created race-based stereotypes that "claim innate differences in traits or abilities among people belonging to different racial groups" (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez, & Peck, 2007, p.126).

While these ideas that race is biological continue to structure racism, the biological argument itself has been soundly refuted (Goodman, 2000; Shih et al, 2007). As Shih et al. (2007) stated "while the myth that race is biologically based is prevalent in society, determining traits and abilities, there is no evidence to support this notion" (p. 126). Harris and Sim (2002) explained how there is greater variance in terms of traits and abilities within racial groups than

between racial groups. Peoples' racial identities are malleable and socially constructed based on macro and micro social processes (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002). These social processes have structural and cultural parameters that are used to divide people into groups (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002). Some examples of these parameters are "different levels of status, disparities in access to resources, and discrepancies in achievement, health, and well-being" (Shih et al., 2007, p. 132). However, racism is evident when people use "biological bases of racial differences in abilities and personality characteristics to justify these discrepancies and perpetuate racial stereotypes" (Shih et al., 2007, p. 132).

Bonilla-Silva (2003) stated that "while race is a constructed concept, it is also a social concept, meaning it has social reality, and has real effects on those who are racialized" (p. 9). Most scholars disagree with the biological theories from the past and yet see race as "playing a fundamental role in structuring and representing the social world" (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 55). Race does not exist outside of our social world (Gaskins, 1999). A participant in Gaskins' (1999) study stated, "I've come to the realization that race does not exist- it's a social construct. These racial categories were constructed totally for economic, political, and social reasons; they're not based on anything, especially anything scientific or biological" (p. 54). Having people understand race is a social structure, not a biological fact, is important to disrupt racist ideologies and to show that inequalities are a result of oppressive power structures rather than racial differences (Baker, 2006).

Racialization

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (n.d.) defined racialization as "the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life" (p. 1). While there is no biological basis to support the idea of the

inferiority of groups of people based on racial characteristics, people are still assigned to racial categories based on perceived physical differences and genetic inheritance. Garcia (2003) explained that "race is something one has, racialization is something that is done to a group, by some social agent, at a certain time, for a given period, in and through various processes, and relative to a particular social context" (p. 285). Racialization is often invisible or seen as normal to those who benefit; i.e., those who are identified as white. This creates a space where "white people may not see themselves as part of a race but still sustain the power to identify and racialize "others"" (ACLRC, 2021, para. 2). This process can put different racial identities on people based on the practices of categorizing, reinforcing, and rationalizing dominance and perpetuating racial inequalities (McCreary, 2007). Understanding racialization as a practice is essential to gain a better awareness of the discrimination and ostracization of diverse people.

Racialization can operate on macro and micro levels within our society and can lead to ongoing interpretation of people's experiences in racial terms (Lewis, Hagerman, & Forman, 2019). When racializing a group of people as inferior this gives moral justification to practice oppressive behaviors, such as slavery and the exploitation of land and resources for the economic benefit of the dominant group. Omi and Winant (2015) researched racialization within American slavery and found that the onset of slavery was a way to create a racialized society by shaping "a specific racial identity not only for the [enslaved] but for the European settlers as well" (p. 64). By ascribing Black people to the inferior group, the European settlers asserted their presumed superiority by asserting themselves as the dominant group. Within Canada, one example is the *Indian Act* (1876) which set out definitions of who could be identified as Indian and therefore subject to control and regulation of their actions and movements, and it was the means by which they were displaced from their lands and contained on reserves (McCreary, 2007). These are

examples of how racialization was created to justify social dominance and unequal power over different racial groups (Gonzalez-Sobrino & Ross, 2018).

As McCreary (2007) stated, “racialization continues to operate within myriads contexts, drawing upon a mix of global and local narratives to construct dominant and subjugated identities” (p. 15). Racialization uses the process that societies have developed to construct race and to justify the inequalities within people’s economic, political, and social lives. These processes can be found operating within Canada and within our different institutions where race is constantly reinventing itself and effectively justifying inequality and white supremacy (Schick & St. Denis, 2005). Race would not be significant if not for racism and white privilege systems justifying it (Johnson, 2009). Understanding how racial inequalities were developed throughout history can help people understand racism.

Racism

Racism is pervasive and complex and can be seen as normalized within our daily lives. It is associated with the justification and ratification of power. According to the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2015), racism is:

> A mix of prejudice and power leading to domination and exploitation of one group (the dominant or majority group) over another (the non-dominant, minority or racialized group). It asserts that the one group is supreme and superior while the other is inferior. Racism is any individual action, or institutional practice backed by institutional power, which subordinates people because of their colour or ethnicity. (p. 9)

This definition summarizes how racist ideologies can be openly expressed and deeply ingrained in people's attitudes, values, systems, and stereotypical beliefs. Moreover, it is easy for people who do not experience racism to deny it even exists. I draw on an understanding or racism

operating through four overlapping and interlocking categories: ideological, institutional, structural, and individual. These categories show how it is ingrained within every facet of our society and how it affects diverse students within our educational systems.

Ideological Racism

Understanding how racialized social systems rely on racial ideologies is essential. A racial ideology is a collection of ideas that "(1) divides people into different racial groups and (2) serves the interests of one group" (Golash-Boza, 2016, p. 133). Racist ideologies are created by the group constructed as superior and such racist ideologies are mobilized in the interest of that group constructed as racially superior (Cappello, 2012). Racial ideologies can adapt over time because the needs and interests of those constructed and produced as racially dominant change. Throughout most of history and in today's societies, the group that holds dominance is white and they influence the ideologies used within society (Feagin, 2014).

One racial ideology found within our society is "hegemonic whiteness". If we break down the words hegemony and whiteness, hegemony is:

> The spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence), which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (Gramsci, 1971, cited from Baker, 2006, p. 13)

Whiteness is a structure that produces white privilege, protects white supremacy, and maintains systemic racism (Leonardo, 2009). It is a way of understanding and engaging in the world that functions to uphold white supremacy and maintains the position of power that people identified

as white continue to claim for themselves (Allen, 2001; Frankenberg, 1997; Leonardo, 2009; Lipsitz, 2018). Lewis (2004) explains how hegemonic whiteness:

> must successfully naturalize the status quo… Racial ideologies, in particular, provide ways of understanding the world that make sense of racial gaps in earnings, wealth, and health such as whites [who purport to] not see any connection between their gain and others' loss (pp. 632-633).

Collins' (2004) work has connections to hegemonic whiteness by explaining that, "when ideologies that defend racism become taken-for-granted and appear to be natural and inevitable, they become hegemonic" (p. 55). White hegemony creates difference by using two different strategies, which are: "(1) positioning those marked as 'white' as essentially different from and superior to those marked as 'non-white,' and (2) through marginalizing practices of 'being white' that fail to exemplify dominant ideals" (Hughey, 2010, p. 1306). When whiteness and racism work together, it establishes unequal power, constructs diverse people as deficient, and positions whiteness as status quo (Aronowitz, 2009; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009).

The hegemony of whiteness has embedded itself within the field of education where it goes undetected by a predominantly white teaching force, despite the significant implications it has for the educational equity of diverse students (Leonardo, 2009; Sleeter, 2001). Anti-racist scholars have analyzed different public schooling policies and practices and found that both whiteness and hegemony assist to maintain unjust social hierarchies (hooks, 1994; Valencia, 2010). Whiteness is thus naturalized and standardized within the classroom and becomes associated with goodness, honesty, purity, cleanliness, and morality (Dryer, 1999). In contrast, non-whiteness becomes constructed as atypical and is connected to malevolent, violence, messiness, and dishonesty (Dryer, 1999). These associations with race make it simpler for white

teachers to pardon their personal accountability for injustices, blame the victims of poverty and inequity, and set the stage for deficit thinking (Gillies, 2018). It is essential to have teachers understand hegemonic whiteness because white teachers who do not know how their racial identity gives them privilege can create unsafe and unwelcoming classrooms for diverse students (Matias, 2013). When teachers do not reflect on their privileged position within unjust systems, they are more likely to perpetuate racist beliefs by creating other(ness) (Bell, 1992; Gillborn, 2005; 2015; Gillies, 2018). Ideological racism justifies racist policies and practices that disadvantage students racialized as inferior and naturalizes unfair advantages and privileges for those racialized as superior (Leonardo & Boas, 2013).

Institutional Racism

Institutional racism can be defined as creating resources, policies, and practices that advance one racial group at the expense of other racial groups (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Feagin (2001) researched the concept of institutional racism and defined it as "a diverse assortment of racist practices [and interests]; the unjustly gained economic and political power of whites, the continuing resource inequalities; and the white-racist ideologies, attitudes, and institutions created to preserve a white advantage and power" (p. 16). Other scholars have described institutional racism as subtle, even invisible, escaping the awareness of the dominant class (Taylor & Clark, 2009). On this point, "many scholars argue that rather than overt expressions of racism like that of the past, today, racial animus is expressed in new ways that are often more subtle and covert than previously" (Lewis, Hagerman, & Forman, 2019, p. 38). By using this tactic, policies and practices that apply to everyone seem to be neutral, but negatively affect diverse people when implemented (Noguera, 2001).

Institutional racism is evident in colonial relations, where one racialized group imposes their ideas through policies (e.g., Canada's Indian Act) and practices (e.g., the Indian Residential School System) to enforce their belief in white superiority (Leonardo, 2009). Institutional racism is hard to identify and eliminate because the institutions perpetuating racism are maintained and peopled by the dominant class. As Taylor and Clark (2009) state, "institutional racism is the policies and practices themselves but also the effect of the policies and practices" (p. 116). When diverse people are constantly disadvantaged and white identified people continually advantaged, "institutional racism is working, regardless of policy wording or the decision-makers intentions" (Taylor & Clark, 2009, p. 116).

There are well-documented reports and scholarly literature on how institutional racism is alive within schools. Some in the form of "culpable ignorance" or "epistemology of ignorance" (Alcoff, 2007; Bartky, 2002; Mills, 2007; Mueller, 2017). These forms of institutional racism focus on "what does (or does not) go on in the minds of 'nice' white people, and how it allows them to ignore the terrible effects of racism" (Bartky, 2002, p. 151). Some examples of how this ignorance is upheld within schools are through the racial composition of teachers and administrators, a lack of respect for customs and traditions, a lack of diverse curriculum materials, white saviorism, and profound commitments by teachers and administrators in deficit discourses that cast non-white folks as perpetually lacking. White saviourism creates a complex where "white teachers believe they are loving their [diverse students] when, in fact, they may be fulfilling their own narcissistic need to save them" (Matias, 2013, as cited in Miller & Harris, 2018, p. 3). By doing this, white teachers are complicit in maintaining institutional racism through the superficial need to be seen as good and not part of the problem (Leonardo & Boas,

2013). This, in turn, reproduces rather than disrupts colonial epistemologies and narratives of white dominance (Leonardo & Boas, 2013).

Schick and St. Denis (2003) explained that "[white] teachers are not necessarily interested in hearing the difficult things that need to be said or doing the difficult analysis of unpacking their assumptions about inequality" (p. 2). Sleeter (1993; 1995) discussed how white teachers' understanding of race was filled with tensions and ambivalence. An education system that enables racism creates a model that fails diverse students (Leonardo, 2009). As Leonardo and Boas (2013) explained:

> history has been made, children in schools have learned how to participate in the current social configurations. These teachings happen inside and outside of schools as networks of social institutions intertwine and interact, instructing future adults on race and gender relations (p. 322).

Without sincere effort from decision-makers to identify institutional racism within practices and change it, there will forever be a cycle of disadvantages to diverse students.

Structural Racism

Racial disparities are the effects of historic and current social and political policies engrained in white supremacy (Blaisdell, 2015). As Powell (2008) stated "Structural racism shifts our attention from the single, intra-institutional setting to inter-institutional arrangements and interactions" (p. 796). A structural view of racism focuses on how racism permeates law enforcement, the justice system, financial institutions, health and medicine, social services, educational institutions, and the economy (Blaisdell, 2015). Structural racism thrives on the everyday interactions of people within society. Osanloo, Boske, and Newcomb (2016) stated that "those who engage in these oppressive practices speak as though there is one vision of the ideal

society" (p. 7). This vision manifests elitism and maintains unearned privilege and advantage to white people while contributing to societal-level racial disparity (Osamloo, Boske, & Newcomb, 2016).

Structural racism can be found in schools in multiple ways and is perpetuated through allochronic discourse (Duncan, 2005). Allochronic discourse is a strategy that teachers use to develop code words that stand in for other more pejorative words- i.e., 'inner-city' and 'urban' which are polite designations for those who are racialized as inferior and/or poor (Duncan, 2005). This type of discourse justifies inequitable conditions within schools and masks policies that created conditions of inequality that are then unquestioned and taken-for-granted facts of life (Blaisdell, 2015). Allochronic discourse perpetuates ideas of the inferiority of specific schools and selected groups of diverse students by maintaining discourses of deficient students and schools.

Allochronic discourse can also be used to label diverse students as "at-risk" or "fragile" if they do not do as well academically as their white peers. This labeling "maintains a set of conditions in which academic success is linked to whiteness and thus maintains white supremacy" (Tyson, 2011, p. 6). Within educational settings, standardized practices that favour white people are used and seen as neutral because they are regarded by white people as neutral and not favoring one group over another (Kailin, 1999). Schools operate on the assumption that using the same tests and same graded criteria within the classroom supposedly gives the same opportunity for students to succeed. That view, however, feeds into structural racism and hinders the learning of diverse students by not acknowledging that everyone may not be at the same starting point or have access to the same experiences and resources (Blaisdell, 2015). White teachers stating they treat all their students equally "has been a common refrain, thus negating,

dishonoring, and ignoring racial identities and realities of their students (and themselves)" (Milner & Laughter, 2014, as cited in Miller & Harris, 2018, p. 2). Using allochronic discourse perpetuates and justifies racial disparity within the classroom where diverse students become invisible and where assumptions of neutrality impede their potential for academic success.

Individual Racism

Race scholars (Lewis, 2004; Feagin, 2014; Omi & Winant, 2015) have found that racial categories are continually used in harmful ways. These racial categories can be expressed overtly or through everyday behaviors. People use individual racism to express a negative outcome towards another person based on race, culture, sex/gender, or ideology (Feagin, 2014). It is the most widely recognized category of racism. Some examples of individual racism from the University of Guelph (n.d.) are:

- avoiding contact with members of a racialized group;
- ignoring, silencing, shunning, and belittling racialized individuals;
- participating in offensive jokes, graffiti, emails, and posters that target racialized people;
- partaking in insults, name-calling, verbal abuse, and threats against persons because of race, culture, sex/gender, and ideology;
- engaging in hate crimes, violence against persons because of race, colour, or creed (religion) (p.4)

Individual acts of bigotry are commonplace and found in school environments (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Sue, 2006). Racism constantly adapts and can appear to be socially acceptable within the school environment and other institutions (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Forman, 2004; Myers,

2005). McCreary (2007) explained how people use polite racism, which "disguises dislike or disdain for the racialized Other in far more subtle remarks and patterns of interaction" (p. 17). This trend camouflages the fact that racism has not gone down over the years but has instead changed to justifying the exclusion of racial groups in a different way (Forman & Lewis, 2015).

Teachers can partake in individual racism in different capacities. For example, white teachers who consistently doubt the academic potential of diverse students (Solorzano et al., 2000). This creates a dynamic based on negative racial stereotypes within the classroom that negatively impacts diverse students. In another example, white teachers often react to race-related content with everything from polite indifference to open hostility (Chesler & Young, 2007). Teachers also can be indifferent "towards societal racial and ethnic inequalities and [therefore] lack engagement with race-related social issues" (Forman, 2004, p. 44). Teachers who do not acknowledge race-related social issues perpetuate covert racism within their classrooms by constructing invisible walls around themselves to avoid engaging in racial inequality dialogue and from building connections with their diverse students (Forman, 2004). Individualized racism within schools perpetuates patterns of control, exploitation, and exclusion of diverse students.

Whiteness

Whiteness is defined as a structure that produces white privilege, protects white supremacy, and maintains systemic racism (Leonardo, 2009). It is a way of understanding and engaging in the world that functions to uphold white supremacy and maintain the position of power that white people continue to claim for themselves (Allen, 2001; Frankenberg, 1997; Leonardo, 2009; Lipsitz, 2018; Montgomery, 2013; Sleeter, 1993). It becomes the axis that other races are constructed against in hierarchical power relations. Racism also operates in tandem

with social class to create a mechanism that works with whiteness to keep diverse people inferior and white people superior (Aronowitz, 2009; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009; Frankenberg, 1997; Sleeter, 1993). According to Owen (2007), "Whiteness infuses and infects all aspects of the lifeworld. Its effects are not restricted to one domain or another; instead, we are immersed in whiteness, as fish are immersed in water, and we breathe it in with every breath" (p. 214). It is part of people's everyday lives even if people do not want it to be.

Lopez (2006) examined whiteness as a "contingent changeable, partial, inconstant, and ultimately social" category of identity that "takes on highly variegated nuances across the range of social axes and individual lives" (p.xxi), such as social class, gender, and sexuality. Whiteness is a discourse that supports a hierarchical worldview that puts white people at the top. Lopez (2006) stated:

> Whiteness is the norm around which other races are constructed; its existence depends upon the mythologies and material inequalities that sustain the current racial system. The maintenance of whiteness necessitates the conceptual existence of Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, and other races as tropes of inferiority against which whiteness can be measured and valued. (p. 132)

Lipsitz (2018) stated that white people benefit from their possessive investment in whiteness, culminating in public policy and private prejudices that perpetuate racialized hierarchies. White people benefit from investing in whiteness because it is the invisible norm used to measure, construct, and maintain difference (Lipsitz, 2018). It is easier for white people to sustain a pretense of innocence and blamelessness because of its invisibility, yet this very action perpetuates racism. Ahmed (2004) pointed out that whiteness is "only invisible for those who inhabit it. For those who do not it is not hard to see whiteness; it is everywhere" (p. 1). This

is a challenge for white people to understand because they are not accustomed to thinking of themselves in racial terms (Lopez, 2006). McIntyre (1997) agreed with this point and stated, “white people’s lack of consciousness about their racial identities limits their ability to critically examine their own positions as racial beings who are implicated in the existence and perpetuation of racism” (p. 16). Whiteness is fundamentally interwoven and deeply intertwined within our society (Frankenberg, 1997; Montgomery, 2013). White people do not even notice their white identity because it has been normalized to a point of invisibility (Lipsitz, 2018). Marilyn Frye uses a metaphor for whiteness by comparing it to a bird in a birdcage. DiAngelo (2011) explained:

> If you stand close to a birdcage and press your face against the wires, your perception of the bars will disappear, and you will have an almost unobstructed view of the bird. If you turn your head to examine one wire of the cage closely, you will not be able to see the other wires. If your understanding of the cage is based on this myopic view, you may not understand why the bird does not just go around the single wire and fly away. But if you stepped back and took a wider view, you would begin to see that the wires come together in an interlocking pattern- a pattern that works to hold the bird firmly in place. (p.58)

This metaphor helps people to understand how white people need to step back and recognize how whiteness has affected diverse people in multiple ways. It might not be seen with the naked eye, but these effects are deeply rooted within our institutional systems and affect diverse people daily.

As Oluo (2017) wrote, “The system of white supremacy does not care about your intentions, it does not care if you do or do not hold hatred for [diverse people] in your heart- it only cares that you participate in the system” (para. 9). White people need to begin

deconstructing race and white privilege and how they partake in the different institutional systems. White teachers need to be given an opportunity to understand how they are impacted by their white privilege and in turn how their whiteness impacts the diverse students within their classrooms. My research is based on the assumption that if teachers reflect on, understand, and uncover racial issues, whiteness, white privilege, and white superiority, then there is the potential to address racism in a meaningful way that is less likely to perpetuate the problem.

Whiteness in Schools

Within Canada, many students living in urban districts do not identify as white but most teachers within these urban areas are white (Harvey & Houle, 2006). Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, and Campbell (2005) found that the teaching force is over-represented with white, female, middle class, and heterosexual bodies. Cappello (2012) stated that the direction of education within Saskatchewan was shaped by “the spirit of Anglo-conformity” (p.35). Within the urban Roman Catholic school division that this study was conducted in only 13% of teachers self-identify as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit. Having a predominantly white teaching force with little critical understanding of race and racism can have substantial negative consequences because of their perceptions and limited understanding of racism and whiteness (Cappello, 2012; Carr & Klassen, 1997; Dee, 2004; DiAngelo, 2012; Heitzeg, 2014; Matias, 2013; Oates, 2003; Picower, 2009; St. Denis, 2010; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clark, & Curran, 2004). These consequences include teachers who are too often invested in counterproductive practices, such as: colour-blind ideology, deficit-based thinking, white saviour syndrome, white fragility, and superficial culturally responsive education (these are discussed below) (Cammarota, 2011; Henfield & Washington, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Matias, 2013; Matias & Liou, 2015). These consequences happen when the whiteness within teachers goes unnoticed. When teachers fail to

understand how racism is operating in them, in schools, and in their classrooms and how it causes educational inequity for diverse students.

Colour-blind Ideology

When white teachers do not acknowledge the material effects of racialization, they may adopt a colour-blind ideology. A color-blind approach asserts that "far better to not 'see' race, to stress that you see … everyone… the 'same' [for fear of being] labeled a racist" (Flintoff & Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 565). White people are largely socialized in their youth to adopt colour-blind racial attitudes (Bartoli et al., 2016). This statement is valid for those white people who grow up in racially segregated environments, where colour-blindness is the standard even as more overtly racist attitudes are transmitted to children (Carr, 2016; Frankenberg, 1993). Colour-blindness normalizes whiteness by making it the default cultural standard against which other diverse populations are measured (Gotanda, 2000; Zamudio et al., 2011). Gotanda (2000) discussed how not having conversations about race allows racism to persist. Colour-blindness, he stated, requires people to recognize race, and then ignore its complex and differing ethical, political, individual, and societal importance. Johnson (2001) agrees and states that most white people are put off by words such as race, racism, and even white and whiteness because they assume that the words are associated with personal and individual blame and guilt. Nevertheless, "noticing but not considering race" (p. 35) allows racism and oppression to be unquestioned, and unacknowledged in the lives of diverse students; meaning that even though race is a social construction, the negative effects on diverse people are very real because it enables racism.

Teachers genuinely have concerns in talking and teaching about race. Leonardo (2009) explained how people would rather avoid race talk due to fears of looking racist. Scholars have also found that many white people are taught throughout their life that talking about skin colour

is impolite (Carr, 2016). Within schools, research has shown that some teachers socialize students to keep silent about issues of race (Castagno, 2008). As Knight (2018) stated, "many consider noticing differences to indicate prejudicial thinking, and therefore, ignoring skin colour is believed to be a way to treat people equally" (p.105). Leonardo (2014) found that maintaining a colour-blind stance actually serves to protect and therefore maintain whiteness through silence. When people ignore how skin colour matters, they reinforce and continue racism throughout society (Carr, 2016; Tatum, 1997). Making race invisible does not make it disappear. Tatum (1997) explained that we need to have conversations about race and be colour-brave, not colour-blind. People need to become comfortable with being uncomfortable if they want to solve racial issues.

Deficit Thinking

When white teachers do not see that 'racial identity' matters, it is more likely they will teach from a deficit-based perspective (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Deficit thinking is one of the most insidious and long-standing forms of racism within schools. According to Yosso (2005), "deficit thinking takes the position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because: (a) students enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child's education" (p. 75). Scholars within education have researched the harmful effects of deficit thinking on diverse students' and those from poor and working-class backgrounds (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Gillies, 2018; Valencia, 1997, 2010; Yosso, 2006). They have found that schools mask themselves as a neutral, caring, and equitable places to learn and to be saved from the deficiencies of their diverse families and communities (Yosso, 2005). As Gillies (2018) stated, "deficit approaches to teaching begin with racist overgeneralizations about family backgrounds and essentialist beliefs about identifying the construct of [diverse students], their families, and

how they are culturally incompatible with white institutions" (p. 69). When deficit thinking is used within the classroom, it is assumed that some diverse students are not as capable as white students. Their strengths are not recognized or valued, and they are always seen as needing help or as having different and inferior capacities. Teachers can become obsessed with presumed differences and categorize "these differences as impediments to learning" (Henfield & Washington, 2012, p. 149). Teachers may "lower their expectations, decrease the difficulty of assignments, eliminate challenging readings or projects, or dilute the curriculum" (Miller & Harris, 2018, p. 2). However, not all diverse students who are racialized are viewed as necessarily having deficits. Studies within the literature have shown that teachers saw Asian students as hard workers and intellectual (Lewis, 2001). Nonetheless, the use of deficit thinking influences teachers and diverse students where substandard education and instruction flourishes (Gillies, 2018).

White Saviour Syndrome

White teachers continue to teach in a way that impedes student learning and then blame the parents and students for having a challenging home life when they fail. Some white teachers respond with white saviour syndrome. In Miller & Harris (2018) they describe white saviour syndrome as "white teachers that believe they are loving their [diverse students] when, in fact, they may be fulfilling their own narcissistic need to save them" (p. 3). White saviourism can be found in Freire's theory of 'false generosity'. This term refers to when a white person uses their power to help diverse groups in a saving context instead of a transforming one. Having a target to 'save' instead of 'transform' assures that oppressive structures stay in place and white supremacy is maintained (Cappello, 2012; Schick, 2014). White saviourism creates teachers with a messiah complex, where they are elevated to an "artificially high level of self-importance and

value for feeding their supposedly bereft students" (Cammarota, 2011, p. 252). This allows white teachers, who occupy a seat of power, to construct diverse students as inferior.

We can find white saviourism instilling itself within media, books, and films throughout history. Brooks (2010) explained how white saviourism is predicted throughout white narratives:

> An oft-repeated story about a manly young adventurer who goes into the wilderness in search of thrills and profit. However, once there, he meets the native people and finds that they are noble, spiritual, and pure. And so he emerges as their Messiah, leading them on a righteous crusade against his own rotten civilization. (p. 27)

White settlers see inequalities within diverse individuals as opposed to how institutions shape and maintain them. This approach upholds racism, classism, and elitism and produces 'difference' throughout our society. As Cammarota (2011) explains, "teaching down to poor students, as if they are unintelligent and culturally deficient, when coupled with the real material hardships they face, will only reproduce poverty" (p. 253). Sleeter (1993) has stated that teachers should help to "reverse policies that propel mainly white people into [teaching]…Schools as they are structured currently operate in a way that largely reproduces the racial and social class structure" (p. 168). By making white educators aware of white saviourism they have the potential to change their behaviors and work in solidarity with diverse students.

White Fragility

Codding (2021) explained whiteness as a "way of knowing and participating in the world that works to defend white supremacy and maintain the position of power that white people continue to enact for themselves" (p.45). Not engaging in critical conversations about race and racism assists white people by sustaining the status quo, which is built into white supremacy

(Bush, 2004; DiAngelo, 2011; Picower, 2009). Whiteness socializes white people to believe in their own privileged positionality (Solomona et al., 2005). A significant way that whiteness reveals itself and disrupts anti-racist practices is through white fragility (Codding, 2021).

DiAngelo (2011) created the term white fragility to describe "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (p. 54). White fragility is shown through defensive moves, which include different displays of emotions, such as anger, fear, and guilt, in combination with displays of defensive behaviors, such as argumentation, silence, or physically leaving the racially uncomfortable situation (DiAngelo, 2011). Fillion-Wilson (2021) stated, "white fragility arises from the racial segregation that many white people experience growing up, reinforcing white people's expectation that white experiences and perspectives be centered" (p. 2). White fragility protects white/racial comfort and "works to punish the person giving feedback and essentially bully [diverse people or those doing the anti-racist education] back into silence" (DiAngelo, 2016, p. 252). The use of white fragility assists in maintaining "the current racial equilibrium, which disproportionately benefits white people and communities" (Codding, 2021, p.46).

Patton and Jordan (2017) did a study of a Black assistant principals' effort to disrupt whiteness through anti-racist practices. The setting for the study was an urban elementary school where the teaching staff was predominantly white. During the anti-racist training sessions, the staff showed aspects of white fragility and white privilege, such as crying, refusing to engage, or saying they felt attacked or afraid (Patton & Jordan, 2017). The assistant principal used contemporary anti-racist movements such as the 'Black Lives Matter' movement to teach anti-racist practices. The white teachers would hear these teachings and get increasingly angrier and refuse to engage. The effects of white fragility can be seen within this article where white

teachers leverage claims of white victimhood to separate themselves from and disrupt the anti-racist trainings (Codding, 2021).

Culturally Responsive Education

Culturally responsive education posits that education must align with the cultural norms, beliefs, values, and practices of any particular social group. This sounds familiar, as this is how many of us have been taught about First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people where the focus becomes the culture of the diverse group rather than the race of the diverse group. What this approach fails to consider is the implications of systemic, historical, and pervasive racism. White teachers that use this approach too often become passive, innocent bystanders, spectators, consumers, and voyeurs and are not asked to confront their narratives, make profound changes, or think of themselves as contributing to the problem (St. Denis, 2007, St. Denis Webinar, 2017). Culturally responsive practices that are infused into schools do not work to disrupt inequities, but they help mask the important conversations that are needed to address inequities (Gebhard, 2019). Within the Saskatchewan context, culturally responsive education remains as an accepted practice to show equity within the classroom (Gillies, 2021). The graduation rates of diverse students within Saskatchewan, specifically Indigenous students, have changed very little despite culturally responsive education being implemented (Gillies, 2021). Despite sincere efforts, this often produces superficial knowledge for students while ignoring the significant issues connected to oppression and superiority; thereby, reinforcing oppression and superiority through silencing, othering, and further exoticizing culture (St. Denis, 2007; St. Denis Webinar, 2017).

Conclusion

Race, racism, and whiteness as a barrier to self-awareness and self-development for teachers needs to be researched to see in what way teachers can understand and dismantle their

interpersonal and intrapersonal biases to anti-racist learning. Teachers need to become comfortable with being uncomfortable if they want to solve racial issues within their classrooms. Within my research, having teachers understand race, racism, and whiteness can potentially create a path towards anti-racist work and address the barriers stated above. In the next chapter, I will examine the potential solutions to the barriers discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION

Introduction

The field of anti-racist education is historically, theoretically, and practically diverse (Knight, 2018). One way to teach anti-racist education is through critical professional development. By creating anti-racist professional development teacher learning communities, teachers can critically engage with anti-racist education and develop new teaching practices. This chapter highlights anti-racist education by examining what it is and how teachers can practice anti-racist education within the classroom. It also illustrates how establishing anti-racist teacher communities to engage in professional development can be a significant way to support teachers in anti-racist practices. At the end of this chapter the benefits and limitations of anti-racist teacher communities are discussed. By continuing engaging in anti-racist education teachers can challenge racism and whiteness within their classrooms.

Anti-Racist Education

Anti-racist education offers a way to understand racial oppression and marginalization of processes, practices, and ideologies that normalize discrimination against people racialized as less than (Kumashiro, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Stewart et al., 2014). It also requires people to have a radical orientation of consciousness, persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination (Dion, 2008; Kendi, 2019). Hassouneh (2006) defined anti-racist education as "a commitment to educate students in ways that make racialized power relations explicit, deconstruct the social construction of race, and analyze interlocking systems of oppression that serve to marginalize and exclude some groups while privileging others" (p. 256). When anti-racist education analyzes different forms of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, antisemitism, ableism, and other "isms" it is called intersectional anti-racism (McLean, 2007). The intention of anti-racist education is to confront and challenge forms

of oppression and to examine how some groups of people are marginalized while some groups are normalized or privileged (Kumashiro, 2000). The school system is arguably one of the central institutions that draws and redraws oppressive lines but is often seen as neutral (Lewis, 2001; McLean, 2007). Many scholars are questioning the inadequacies within schools (e.g., curriculum, textbooks, classroom pedagogies) and how schools do not speak to "the human experience or to the diverse history of events and ideas that have shaped and continue to shape, human growth and development" (Dei, 1995, p. 15).

By understanding anti-racism, intersectionality, and anti-racist education it can assist teachers in implementing it within their classrooms. It can also help teachers examine if they are challenging or reinforcing racism and white ideologies. One way for teachers to learn about anti-racist education is through engaging in critical professional development.

Analysis of Intersectionality

Just as anti-racist education recognizes differential racialization, it has been criticized for being too focused on race (Lund & Carr, 2008). To address this, scholars have used intersectionality to give more attention to structures that perpetuate discrimination based on class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and race (Gillborn, 2008; Dei, George, and McDermott, 2014). Crenshaw (1995), one of the first critical race scholars to examine the concept of intersectionality, looked at how feminist and anti-racist movements left women of Color out of the conversation and failed to address their vulnerabilities in domestic violence. She understood how an intersectional analysis of race and gender could give a standpoint from which to view societal problems and possibilities, human limitations, and liberations (Harris & Leonardo, 2018). Bowleg (2012) defined intersectionality as:

> a theoretical framework for understanding how multiple social identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, SES [socioeconomic status], and disability intersect at the micro-level of individual experience to reflect interlocking systems of privilege and oppression (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism) at the macro social-structural level. (p. 1267)

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) used intersectionality to understand racism in education. Intersectionality emerged as a critical concept to understanding the racialized achievement gap, disciplinary policies, and overdiagnosis and over referral of diverse students to special education (Artiles, Dorn, & Bal, 2016; Milner, 2010; Parker & Stovall, 2004). It is also used within social activism to understand how racism affects all diverse people. Some oppressions reinforce one another while some are more oppressed than others, for example, I might be oppressed by my sexuality, however my racial position and socio-economic status mitigates my sexuality oppression. By understanding this, intersectionality gives teachers awareness of how diverse people are oppressed based on their positionality and that they need to be cognizant of who is in their classrooms. The concept of intersectionality is significant because it brings attention to many facets of an individual's experience and does not oversimplify racism and other forms of oppression (Harris & Leonardo, 2018).

Engaging Teachers in Critical Professional Development

Teachers often participate in professional development to enhance their teaching practices. However, normalized forms of professional development use the banking model of education, which seeks to give knowledge to teachers without having critical conversations about that specific topic area in education (Freire, 2013). Kohli, Picower, Martinez, and Ortiz (2015) explained how this type of professional development is anti-dialogical because it is an anti-

liberatory way of doing professional development. Within my research I use a framework aimed towards liberatory professional development in which I hope teachers gain awareness of their practices to improve their diverse students learning. Using this type of framework allows the needs of diverse students to be met by white and diverse teachers. Other scholars have also used liberatory professional development within their research. Kohli et al. (2015) explored three critical professional development groups and created a framework based on Paulo Freire's four tenets of dialogical action: cooperation, unity, organization, and cultural synthesis. First, teachers worked together to create a learning space that met the needs of their school and classroom (Kohli et al., 2015). This let teachers have influence in creating and executing professional development, which directs them away from the normalized forms of professional development and toward critical engagement. Second, critical professional development is unifying in that it brings everyone together to fight against oppressive structures (Kohli et al., 2015). Third, critical professional development assists in sharing power with the people it is serving, including students, communities, and society (Kohli et al., 2015). Kohli et al. (2015) found that when teachers are organized it gives them agency through mutual leadership and ownership over their professional growth experiences. Fourth, teachers critically view the issues and needs within their own classroom and act upon them (Kohli et al., 2015). According to Kohli et al. (2015), using critical professional development creates a space for evaluating and taking action on topics of inequity and oppression in education.

Critical professional development is vital for white teachers (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Gorski, 2018; Sleeter, 2008; Warren, 2015). Many white teachers go into teaching with misconceptions, fears, and biases, often having been socialized into reinforcing their belief in white superiority and their racist perspectives (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lewis & Diamond, 2015;

Sleeter, 2008). Sleeter (2008) explained, “race, culture, and social class are highly potent filters through which teachers and students interpret each other; the intensity of classroom life wears quickly on shallow good intentions” (p. 574). She identified four noteworthy attributes of professional development that can assist white teachers that work with diverse students: 1) assisting teachers in deep reflections, 2) helping teachers push through their present beliefs and understandings, 3) working with facilitators who are dedicated to and have knowledge of diverse communities, and 4) keeping the emphasis on developing white teachers who can work with diverse students (Sleeter, 2008).

Smith and Redington (2010) explored the outcomes of critical professional development on white teachers and focused on anti-racist workshops. They discovered that white teachers taking part in these workshops can have transformative experiences. After the professional development was completed, the teachers within the study engaged in anti-racist action independently. They took leadership roles in anti-racist teacher communities, had ongoing membership in and engagement with anti-racist teacher communities, and had critical dialogue about racism in their daily lives (Smith & Redington, 2010). Within Smith and Redington (2010) study, they discovered that participants became engaged in anti-racist work because they had a milestone in their life that initiated their interest in critically engaging with racism. This milestone motivated the participants to create anti-racist action. Finally, Smith and Redington (2010) explained the need to help white people connect with anti-racist teacher communities and support these types of initiatives.

Reviewing the literature, several studies focused on outcomes of anti-racist professional development with teachers. I will focus on three studies—Lawrence and Tatum (1997), McManimon and Casey (2018), and Schniedewind (2005)—to explore how scholars have used

different approaches to anti-racist professional development. In Lawrence and Tatum's (1997) study, they analyzed whether white teachers could put their anti-racist education into action after participating in anti-racist professional development. The professional development helped teachers understand several forms of racism and take a proactive role in responding to racism in their schools (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). There were 84 white teachers who participated, and 48 stated that they have engaged in anti-racist action after participating in professional development. This study showed that teachers who participate in anti-racist professional development could go "beyond just verbalizing good intentions" and actively engage in anti-racist practices (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997, p. 175). The participants stated that they were successful with the professional development because it was voluntary, had a goal of addressing racism explicitly, and the time commitment lasted over several months (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). Lawrence and Tatum (1997) found that when the participants engaged in problem-solving and made action plans collaboratively, it helped raise awareness of anti-racist work. The creation of this professional development allowed white teachers "to internalize new ideas and begin to reconceptualize themselves as change agents in ways that briefer interventions do not allow" (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997, p. 176).

In the second study, Schniedewind (2005) explored the stories of five teachers who participated in a 30-hour anti-racist professional development. From the five teachers, three identified as white, and two identified as diverse. Schniedewind (2005) discovered that teachers could take what they learned in professional development and put it into action. These actions were seen as supporting diverse students, challenging stereotypes and white privilege, and confronting institutional racism (Schniedewind, 2005). This study also suggested the significance

of having prolonged opportunities with anti-racist education helped connect teachers in critical reflection.

In the third study, McManimon and Casey (2018) explored anti-racist professional development within a small group of white teachers. They discussed anti-racist praxis, which is a combination of anti-racist reflection and action (Freire, 2013). McManimon and Casey (2018) acknowledged vulnerability as a significant part of anti-racist professional development, which they linked with teachers recognizing that they were still struggling with anti-racist work. They stated, “as facilitators, we modeled sharing our vulnerabilities and the questions we were wrestling with” (p. 401). Their professional development studied relationships and accountability within groups as they cooperatively participated in anti-racist praxis. McManimon and Casey (2018) also learned that their professional development assisted in anti-racist action. They concluded that “creating spaces for [these kinds of opportunities] offers untold possibilities for teachers to develop their own senses of accountability and to act on their worlds in the struggle for justice” (p. 404). If white teachers are constantly in the practice of developing themselves into an anti-racist, then long-term anti-racist teacher communities are needed to assist in sustained engagement and growth.

These three studies influenced my research and how I created my study’s anti-racist professional development. They confirm the importance of having interracial dialogue, collaboration, and accountability within anti-racist work. This is shown in sections below. The researchers also expressed how having an anti-racist teacher community provides a supportive environment for people to have interracial dialogue. Using storytelling as an anti-racist practice is important because it helps people understand diverse peoples’ experiences (Strong et al.,

2017). Allowing people to gather, self-reflect, and gain awareness of privilege and oppression within authentic discussions is a larger effort to make changes within education.

Diverse Anti-Racist Teacher Community

Diverse anti-racist teacher communities are a type of critical professional development built on the need for social change. Michael and Conger (2009) define a diverse anti-racist teacher community as “an assembly of people gathered with others who share a common element of identity in order to explore, celebrate, sustain, and process their experiences around that identity” (p. 56). These teacher communities are spaces where participants can come to acknowledge and delve into their positionalities, get assistance, and mutually reflect on their collective realities. These communities give diverse teachers a space to critically explore and seek to understand themselves as racialized beings (Milner, 2010; Sleeter, 2008, 2016; Varghese, Daniel, & Park, 2019). Such communities have been used to meet the needs of diverse students and diverse teachers (Kohli, et al., 2015; Michael & Conger, 2009; Pour-Khorshid, 2016; Strong et al., 2017).

Diverse anti-racist teacher communities create racial spaces that help and retain diverse teachers while critically engaging them in anti-racist work (Michael & Conger, 2009; Strong et al., 2017). Strong et al. (2017) studied diverse and white anti-racist teacher communities and found that both communities have unique needs. The diverse anti-racist teacher community wanted a place to connect, learn, struggle, and heal in the community (Strong et al., 2017). The white teacher anti-racist teacher community wanted a space to critically explore and examine race and whiteness with other white teachers. Although both communities had unique needs, they both worked collaboratively toward anti-racist educational change. Strong et al. (2017) discovered that anti-racist teacher communities have the potential to improve relationships

between diverse and white colleagues. By improving this relationship both diverse and white teachers can engage in critical race dialogue with each other.

White Anti-Racist Teacher Community

Research has found that white teachers should work with other white teachers to educate themselves on topics like race, racism, and whiteness. As Utt and Tochluk (2020) stated, "it is not the responsibility of [diverse people] to attend to white people's growth and learning" (p. 142). Jensen (2005) writes "the world does not need white people to civilize others. The real White People's Burden is to civilize ourselves" (p. 96). White anti-racist teacher communities are a space for creating a "radical white community"—a community that helps white people understand race, racism, and privilege more clearly, motivates them to take up anti-racist work, and supports them when they fall short (Tochluk, 2010). Michael and Conger (2009) stated, "the only requirement is white people who want to take an anti-racist stance in learning about race and whiteness, and who are willing to face their discomfort, uncertainty, or anger in the process" (p. 56). Within white anti-racist teacher communities, white teachers discuss privilege with other white teachers (Wise, 2004). These communities are vital for white teachers who have a commitment to anti-racist education and to improving their diverse students' learning experiences (Michael & Conger, 2009; Tatum, 2017; Tochluk, 2010; Varghese et al., 2019). Participating in white anti-racist teacher communities can assist white teachers in learning how to identify privilege, make themselves and their white colleagues accountable, and provide accountability to their diverse colleagues and students (Blitz & Kohl, 2012).

Mixed Anti-Racist Teacher Community

Within a mixed anti-racist teacher community, white people and diverse people work together within a shared space to confront and dismantle institutional and cultural racism, internalized racist oppression, and internalized white superiority (Crossroads Antiracism

Organizing and Training [CAOT], 2009). For white and diverse people, mixed anti-racist teacher communities help to highlight the many ways racism operates, shapes, and impacts individuals and society. As Schniedewind (2005) stated "as teachers become conscious about how they have been socialized by racist institutions and norms, they become more able to work with others to challenge and change racism within their classrooms and schools" (p. 280). These communities create an opportunity for people to understand how power and privilege shape identity and to consciously attend to building collective accountability with one another (Fillion-Wilson, 2021). Mixed anti-racist teacher communities invite all people to engage in critical dialogue about racism and whiteness through an anti-racism approach. This allows white and diverse people to share their questions and vulnerabilities about race with the hope of enabling them to be comfortable engaging all their students with similar conversations (Tatum, 1997). This gives the opportunity for white teachers to listen to the experiences of their diverse colleagues. When diverse teachers share their experiences, they invite others into their world. As Miller and Harris (2018) explained "all white teachers have inadvertently upheld and reinforced the master narrative, and to stifle our [diverse colleagues] stories because of our discomfort or defensiveness is to strengthen that narrative" (p. 9). When white teachers engage with the stories of their diverse colleagues, they can work to dismantle white racist thinking and cultivate empathy within their lives (Miller & Harris, 2018).

Having opportunities to participate in mixed anti-racist teacher communities provides an important space for teachers to expand their "consciousness about race, racism, and whiteness and to gain support to apply that awareness to their practice" (Schniedewind, 2005, p. 280). Mixed anti-racist teacher communities have risks (discussed later) but allow for a better authentic understanding of anti-racist partnerships between white and diverse people (CAOT,

2009). Within this PhD study, a mixed anti-racist teacher community was created based upon the participants that signed up to participate in the study. This was advantageous because it created a space for teachers to develop and act upon their positionality and racial consciousness while being able to engage further into participants' lived experiences.

Benefits of Anti-racist Teacher Communities

Educational scholars have identified various shared elements that effectively engage white and diverse teachers in anti-racist teacher communities. First, anti-racist teacher communities can help teachers to learn about their positionality and how it affects diverse students within their classrooms (Acevedo et al., 2015; Alcoff, 1988). Second, these anti-racist teacher communities are created with a supportive (yet critical) environment where teachers can confront whiteness in themselves and society (Matias, 2016; McManimon & Casey, 2018). Third, these anti-racist teacher communities engage teachers in critical conversations that concentrate on individual reflection as a form of anti-racist action (Denevi & Pastan, 2006; Michael & Conger, 2009). Fourth, these anti-racist teacher communities hold themselves accountable to their diverse colleagues and students while seeking critical feedback on how their work is contributing to the larger, diverse-led anti-racist movement (Blitz & Kohl, 2012; Devevi & Pastan, 2006; Michael & Conger, 2009; Obear & Martninez, 2013; Utt & Tochluk, 2020; Varghese et al., 2019). Fifth, these anti-racist teacher communities assist white teachers in reclaiming a positive anti-racist ally identity through critical self-reflection (Michael & Conger, 2009; Tatum, 2017; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). Furthermore, it puts white people into a vulnerable position to learn through racial stress and not be derailed in critical conversations (DiAngelo, 2011).

Understanding Teachers' Positionality

Positionality is used as a theoretical tool in many anti-racist education studies where it situates pieces of knowledge and requires participants, researchers, and facilitators to reflect on their personal background and relations with other people (Rose, 1997; De Jong, 2009). When positionality is acknowledged within anti-racist education, it enhances the participants' learning and creates space for more flexible behaviors (Chick et al., 2009). Regarding prejudice, when a person has more awareness of their own thinking it assists in minimizing bias (Murray-Garcia et al., 2005). People critically aware of their positionality may be more eager to take risks and see failures as part of their learning process for positive transformation (Johnston, 2009; Kowal, Franklin, & Paradies, 2013). They may also be more open to discussing issues around racism and colonialism (Pon, 2009).

Positionality has been adapted to fit a particular definition within a discourse. Many scholars simplify the definition of positionality to encompass race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ableness (Taylor, Tisdell, & Henley, 2000). However, positionality can also be broken down into three sub-categories: identity, role, and power. Identities are social categories (such as race, age, gender, etc.) that are layered and intersected throughout our life experiences. Roles are situation-specific and are either formal (student, teacher) or informal (expert, participant). Power informs a person's social categories and roles in different situations. Taking a critical perspective on one's positionality within an educational framework may help white teachers to create less hierarchical relationships and be more open to how others can contribute to critically understanding white teachers' positionality.

Implementing an understanding of the impact of one's positionality is essential when discussing race. Emirbayer and Desmond (2012) stated that "our understanding of the racial

order will forever remain unsatisfactory so long as we fail to turn our analytic gaze back upon ourselves, the architects of racial domination, and inquire critically into the hidden presuppositions that shape our thought" (p. 524). Having white teachers partake in anti-racist teacher communities that look at positionality can help teachers to take anti-racist actions within their classrooms (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). By examining teachers' own pedagogical practices, they can consider ways to incorporate theories, perspectives, and approaches that interrupt normalized learning practices. This, in turn, creates safe spaces for critical dialogue to happen.

Supportive Environment for Analyzing Race, Racism, and Whiteness

When analyzing whiteness with white anti-racist teacher communities, there needs to be a commitment to creating a supportive environment to have critical conversations over a prolonged period of time. Anti-racist work needs dedication and cannot be done with a one-and-done training session (McManimon & Casey, 2018; Schniedewind, 2005). Creating a supportive environment where white teachers feel safe without centering white emotionality, fragility, and white supremacy can be challenging (Matias, 2016). White teachers can encounter feelings of guilt, failure, fear, defensiveness, confusion, and disappointment while engaging in anti-racist work (DiAngelo, 2011; McIntyre, 1997; Micheal & Conger, 2009; Picower, 2009; Varghese et al., 2019). The goal of these anti-racist teacher communities is to provide a space that is supportive yet critical to process emotions around race and racism (Micheal & Conger, 2009). Kohli et al. (2015) stated that there needs to be a supportive community developed to create a balance of love, support, and challenge.

In order for white teachers to identify and address racism and whiteness in a group setting they require support, accountability, and critical feedback throughout the learning process (Tatum, 2017; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). Varghese et al. (2019) studied white teacher participants

and found that anti-racist teacher communities provided a supportive environment for participants to reflect critically on their emotionality. For most participants, emotions such as anger, resentment, and resistance gave way to deep self-reflection, awareness, and allyship (Varghese et al., 2019). However, some participants faced strong emotions that they broke down throughout the process and "completely avoided engaging with the racist ideologies and assumptions behind such feelings" (Varghese et al., 2019, p. 22). Varghese et al. (2019) stated that if they had extra time and help within their study, they may perhaps be able to assist the emotional white teacher participants with critical reflection on their experiences.

Although it is crucial to create a supportive environment when engaging teachers in anti-racist practices, overemphasizing the need for "safety" can stunt teachers learning. Crowley (2016) explained how some white teacher candidates are hesitant to implement anti-racist practices into their teaching, even when they learn about race and racism within a supportive environment. The candidates could intellectually understand critical racial knowledge, but "they displayed ambivalence when they discussed putting it into practice, as shown by their desire for safe spaces to talk about race" (Crowley, 2016, p. 1026). Diverse people and white people enter race dialogue from different perspectives and lived experiences (Codding, 2021). Interracial dialogue can sometimes turn the conversation to revolve around whiteness (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). This accommodates white participants permitting them to distance themselves from their views, which then remain unchallenged and unchanged (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). One way to address this tendency to distance is to engage in Homi Bhabha's third space theory.

Bhabha's (1994) third space of hybridity provides a "terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation" (p. 2). This third space gives teachers an opportunity to explore

their positionality and develop a nuanced understanding of their racialized selves with others (Leonardo, 2009). Teachers often "struggle to know themselves outside of the problematic, fixed construction of the "ally" and move past feelings of insurmountable guilt" (Utt & Tochluk, 2020, p. 127). Engaging with the third space encourages teachers to disrupt the normalized hierarchies and break down binaries to introduce more dynamic and egalitarian systems within their classrooms (Bhabha, 1994). When teachers use the third space, it creates a space of revitalization and creativity where all voices, narratives, and histories can be heard.

Two examples of anti-racist teacher communities that have created supportive environments within Saskatchewan are S.T.A.R.S. (Student Teachers Anti-Racism Society) and Sask SAFE. S.T.A.R.S. was developed in 2009 by ten students and one instructor that were connected to the Indian Teacher Education Program within the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. This group works "collaboratively to understand, identify, and address individual and systemic racism and its interlocking forms of oppression based on gender, sexuality, ability, class, religion and other socially constructed categories" (Student Teacher Anti-Racism Society [STARS], n.d.). They organize professional development opportunities that happen every few months for pre-service teachers to learn about anti-racist and decolonizing education. Sask SAFE (n.d.) is similar as they provide knowledge, resources, workshops, and conferences to support teachers and pre-service teachers in anti-racist education. Their main goal is "to create spaces to discuss [racial and systemic] issues and maintain a dialogue that normalizes the work towards social justice in [school] divisions" (Sask SAFE, n.d.). Sheelah McLean, a leading anti-racist educator, is a committee member on Sask Safe and has stated that "education is key to stopping racism" (Bridges, 2017, para. 10) in Saskatchewan. Having groups like S.T.A.R.S. and Sask SAFE available to teachers gives them space to have critical

conversations about race as a social construct, recognize oppressive systems, and seek to disrupt the status quo of white supremacy within their classrooms.

By creating spaces to understand oneself and one's relationship with society, teachers can identify invisible privileges that affect their daily lives and presence in the classroom. The focus on self-reflection is key to creating action to improve the educational experiences of diverse students and becoming more aware of their teaching practices (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Anti-racist teacher communities help teachers develop crucial relationships that encourage accountability and critical feedback, which can give support to participants as they learn and develop their anti-racist practices (Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

Critical Dialogue

Teachers need to engage in critical conversations about race and racism. Critical conversations are a form of reflective dialogical action that led to liberation as understood by Freire (Micheal & Conger, 2009; Kohli et al., 2015). They are anti-racist dialogues that acknowledge race as socially constructed, recognize oppressive systems, and seek to disrupt the status quo through anti-racist practices (Kohli et al., 2015). Critical conversations can happen within storytelling and collaborative problem-solving. Strong et al. (2017) discovered that storytelling and collaborative problem solving were two effective practices within group meetings. In their study of white and diverse teachers, Strong et al. (2017) discovered "the insidious ways [white supremacy] shows up in our society and in our own behaviors" (p. 136). They used story/talking circles where the participants shared their lived experiences and then shared its significance. Strong et al. (2017) stated that sharing personal and professional experiences with racism and white privilege helped teachers take steps towards actively undoing "the white supremacist culture of individuality and heroism" (p. 137). These critical

conversations facilitate awareness and acknowledge that race is a social construct, recognize oppressive systems, and seek to disrupt the status quo through anti-racist praxis (Strong et al., 2017). Rather than engaging in uncritical dialogue they engaged teachers as politically aware individuals (McIntyre, 1997). The teachers collaboratively problem solved, told their lived experiences with racism and anti-racism, and purposefully engaged in dialogue guided by PD lecturers and myself. Participating in anti-racist teacher communities can assist teachers in pushing themselves and each other to have dialogue and reflection but also to take action in their classrooms and school communities.

Accountability to Diverse Colleagues and Students

White teachers must hold themselves accountable to their diverse colleagues and students. Creating accountability with diverse colleagues and students is a significant part when creating anti-racist teacher communities with teachers (Blitz & Kohl, 2012; Devevi & Pastan, 2006; Michael & Conger, 2009; Obear & Martninez, 2013; Utt & Tochluk, 2020; Varghese et al., 2019). Having white teachers participate in anti-racist teacher communities allows them to engage in dialogue about race and racism and assists them in having a greater understanding of how racism and whiteness affects their diverse colleagues and students (Denevi & Pastan, 2006; Obear & Martinez, 2013). When white teachers work collaboratively in anti-racist practices, it improves their relationships with their diverse colleagues and students (Strong et al., 2017).

Within the literature, scholars have researched and examined different accountability guidelines that can help white anti-racist teacher communities (Cushing, Cabbil, Greeman, Hitchhock, & Richards, 2010). Utt and Tochluk (2020) suggest two fundamental approaches to use:

1. Listening: Of utmost importance is uninterrupted listening to the truths expressed by [diverse people], both colleagues and students, particularly as they relate to how racial privilege inhibits perceiving speech or behavior linked to a history of oppression and pain. For example, if a [diverse person] offers feedback about how a white teacher's discipline practices are not in the best interests of [diverse students], actively listen instead of self-defending.
2. Communicating accountably: Inevitably, white teachers will make mistakes, some of which will harm relationships and damage trust. This should not lead to disengagement. Instead, accountability requires white teachers to apologize (avoiding language like "I am sorry you were offended," which places the onus on the "other") while committing to do better going forward. (p. 144)

Using guidelines such as the ones above help white teachers to build relationships across races and have opportunities to learn about anti-racist practices. When teachers are accountable across racial differences, they are acknowledging a person's postionality. According to Utt and Tochluk (2020), "a praxis that strives for accountability considers how each person is related to various individual and community relationships within the context of a set of complex identities" (p. 146). Delpit (1995) explained how teachers need to listen with their ears and eyes and with their hearts and minds. Such accountability is essential for anti-racist work, especially for white teachers.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability allows white teachers to learn through racial stress rather than fall back on whiteness to derail critical conversations about race and racism (DiAngelo, 2011; Picower, 2009). Applebaum (2017) stated, "vulnerability is key in countering whiteness, and critical hope

may be a way of supporting vulnerability without providing comfort" (p. 873). Boler (2004) explained critical hope as an "emotional willingness to engage in the difficult work of possibly allowing one's world view to be changed" (p. 128). Using critical hope can support people in their discomfort and create a space where learning can happen (Applebaum, 2017; Boler, 2004). It recognizes that when people are willing to exist in ambiguity and uncertainty, they can notice privileges and inequities (Boler, 2004). Delpit (1995) stated that if teachers want to connect successfully through different cultures and acknowledge issues of power, "they must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow their world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into their consciousness" (p. 47). In the context of vulnerability, teachers must be prepared to acknowledge systemic oppression, confront emotional inattention, inspire openness towards critical self-reflection and be willing to experience ambiguity and uncertainty.

Discomfort can help people engage in anti-racist practices (Boler, 1999). Fuller and Meiners (2020) explained how white people need to feel discomfort and struggle against whiteness because it can cause significant harm if they do not. They agreed with DiAngelo's (2011) stance on building stamina to resist whiteness and that white people need to learn when they are wrong, change the behavior, and be accountable. Fuller and Meiners (2020) stated, "the next time someone points out that we are exhibiting behavior that is white superior, discriminatory, or racist, take a breath and take it in as a chance to learn and build stamina" (p. 270). Leonardo and Porter (2010) stated that white people engaging in critical race conversations need to take control of their discomfort, inadequacy, and defensiveness. When the space of vulnerability is embraced, white people and diverse people can take off the masks they have been wearing for protection and survival (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). When "both groups assume the

consequences for risk, it actually allows for a more authentic dialogue and reflects the 'tension' inherent in discussing racism" (Leonardo & Porter, 2010, p. 153). In addition, Matias (2016) explained that feelings of fear, anxiety, and stress are a typical and possibly needed to engage in anti-racist education. Being vulnerable allows white teachers to struggle and be uncomfortable but it also lets them "fall in love, learn, take pleasure and find comfort in the presence of others, and to experience the simultaneity of those feelings" (Gilson, 2011, p. 310). Vulnerability should not be seen as a condition that limits people but enables people. It is a condition of openness where people can learn to reduce ignorance (Gilson, 2011). Vulnerability is an essential component in developing as an anti-racist teacher. Teachers need to be able to critically critique and revise their "knowing attitudes" (Gilson, 2011, p. 325). When teachers, specifically white teachers, are vulnerable within anti-racist work, they have the potential to become vigilant, able to self-reflect, and stay in the discomfort of critique (Applebaum, 2017).

When teachers become vulnerable, they can continuously self-reflect on their practices, and seek to understand their own biases and the systems that discriminate against their diverse students. A teacher within Utt and Tochluk's (2020) study reflected on his privilege and his pedagogical practice by stating:

> Going into my first year of teaching, I was convinced I had the whole antiracist White person thing figured out. I knew I had privilege, and I had a strong analysis of systems of oppression and how they were impacting my African American and Latino students on Chicago's west side. As the school year progressed, though, I realized something quite troubling. I struggled with learning people's names and learning 175 students' names was tough. But, while I knew the names of all my lightest-skinned students, I had far more trouble learning my darkest-skinned students' names. I cannot help but think this was

> apparent to them. Without meaning to, what messages had I been sending them? Were the other White teachers doing the same thing? There is no way that this was not adversely affecting my students, particularly since I saw the ways Colourism was playing out in my classroom in other forms. (p. 133)

This teacher considers himself an anti-racist teacher and has been doing anti-racist work for a long time (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). However, it was only when he self-reflected on his practice and became vulnerable that he was aware of the subconscious bias he had and how he could disrupt it (Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

Developing a Positive, Anti-Racist White Identity

Anti-racist teacher communities have the ability to assist white teachers in understanding what it is to have a positive anti-racist white ally identity through critical self-reflection (Michael & Conger, 2009; Tatum, 2017; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). A nuanced understanding of whiteness and privilege is important in creating an anti-racist white identity and teaching praxis (Leonardo, 2009). Investigating privilege within teachers' lives reveals how privilege distorts their lens and how they view the world (Thandeka, 2001). When teachers are cognizant of privileging, they "understand how subconscious enactments of racial privilege negatively impact communities, injures [diverse students], and displays poor modeling for white students" (Utt & Tochluk, 2020, p. 133). As Utt and Tochluk (2020) stated, "the difficulty many white people have in conceiving of themselves in a positive way while also recognizing being entrenched within a system that privileges them leads many White people to simply reject association with white identity" (p. 133). When teachers reject their white identity, it impedes the self-reflective process and stops them from thinking about how racism is internalized. Teachers need to self-reflect to understand the consequences of privilege and its reflection in their classrooms.

Teachers developing a positive anti-racist identity have to recognize how white culture affects their lives and is connected to their ancestral, familial, and ethnic roots (Leonardo, 2009). When teachers accept this, they understand how they have been shaped by historical and contemporary forms of oppressive white culture and it allows them to find a more meaningful cultural grounding (DiAngelo, 2012; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). Together they assist white teachers in regaining a sense of rootedness that stops them from avoiding their connection to whiteness and complicity with systematic oppression (Giroux, 1997; Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

A positive anti-racist white identity requires a person to cope with the negative emotions that come from anti-racist work and direct them into anti-racist action (Case, 2012; Reason, Rossa Miller & Scales, 2005; Reason, Scales & Roosa Miller, 2005; Smith & Redington, 2010). Thomann and Suyemoto (2018) discovered that white people struggled with feelings of guilt, sadness, and hopelessness while reflecting on their white identity. This can make white participants disengage from the anti-racist process. However, they also learned that having the capacity to unpack these feelings assisted in active engagement with anti-racist work (Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018). When white people develop an understanding of their feelings and privileges, they can engage in anti-racist practices (Reason, Roosa Millar & Scales, 2005).

Tatum (2017) used Helms' (1990) model for positive white identity development as a framework to understand how white people analyze race and racism. When white teachers feel guilt and shame it can hinder them in critically engaging with anti-racist education. Tatum (1994) explained how teaching about positive white ally role models could show white people a positive path in transforming how they respond to learning about race and racism. Having anti-racist teacher communities helps white teachers to combat social isolation and support a new, positive, anti-racist identity. This also benefits diverse students because when white teachers

understand their relationship to whiteness and white culture, they can work toward anti-racist practices and stop racial prejudice (Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

Challenges and Limitations to Anti-Racist Teacher Communities

While there are many benefits to anti-racist teacher communities, there are also some limitations and challenges to consider. Crowley (2016) stated, "even when white teachers engage willingly, learning about race and racism remains exceedingly thorny" (p. 1027). These metaphorical thorns can be seen as temporary paralysis to anti-racist action, recentering whiteness, and revisiting of racial traumas for diverse people.

Blitz and Kohl (2012) explored how when white people engage in anti-racist teacher communities, they can experience a "temporary paralysis" in their capacity to take anti-racist action. White people tend to get overwhelmed by their need to avoid using their white privilege (Blitz & Kohl, 2012). This can be resolved by creating safe spaces where white people can learn about their white privilege. However, these safe spaces have the danger of recentering whiteness and white fragility if they are not balanced with critically challenging whiteness and maintaining accountability to diverse colleagues and students (Codding, 2021). This temporary paralysis also happens to teachers when they are doing the anti-racist work beyond the safety of the space created by the anti-racist teacher communities (Oluo, 2018). As Fillion-Wilson (2021) stated, "there is a sense of perfectionism, of having to 'arrive' at some mythical place of perfect skills and knowledge before venturing out to do the work with people who may disagree with them" (p. 12). However, when white people work together collaboratively within their anti-racist teacher community, they can share their lived experiences with one another and help each other out when they face difficulties outside of the teacher community setting.

Tate and Page (2018) have discussed that when white fragility is centered within anti-racist professional development it prioritizes comforting white suffering and creates an environment where white people are seen as victims of the same racism from which they benefit. When anti-racist professional development concentrates on tackling unconscious biases it can "(re)center white supremacy by removing blame and its accompanying shame and guilt" (Tate & Page, 2018, p. 151). Tate and Page (2018) understand that shame and guilt are part of the learning process to unlearn white supremacy. They also noted that expressions of white fragility need to be felt and processed, not superficially recognized in unconscious bias training (Tate & Page, 2018). McWhorter (2020) also critiqued anti-racist trainings because they can center white people as a significant first step in anti-racist work. While he agrees that racism is a big problem, he disagrees that white people should have to devote their lives critically analyzing their individual internal racism (McWhorter, 2020). The emphasis on personal critical reflection can be seen as a performative naval-gazing exercise that translates into neither an understanding of racism nor a feeling of urgency towards action (Fillion-Wilson, 2021). Although anti-racist professional development gives opportunities for teachers to learn about stereotypes and prejudices, these changes can be short lived, and the participants may return to baseline levels, or worse, increase their racial stereotypes (Hill & Augoustinos, 2001). However, research has demonstrated that when white people engage in critical reflection it can have a domino effect where it increases anti-racist action (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; McManimon & Casey, 2018; Schniedewind, 2005).

When having a mixed anti-racist teacher community (white people and diverse people), it can "reopen deep energy" within the diverse people within the teacher community. This deep energy can be understood as revisiting racial trauma or 'going back to the scene of the crime'

where their past, unresolved injuries happened (Lee, 2004). This can be a painful process of reopening past wounds that diverse people have experienced, however, it can also be an opportunity to heal. Facilitators that run anti-racist teacher communities need to be aware of this and be careful not to push diverse people to share their traumas with the group (Fillion-Wilson, 2021). Their sharing of traumas can exploit their presence in the anti-racist teacher community in the service of white people's learning (Fillion-Wilson, 2021). This is a challenge with mixed anti-racist teacher communities because diverse people become teachers instead of students (Blackwell, 2010). Diverse people's stories are significant because it gives a chance for white people within the anti-racist teacher community to see the world through a new perspective and connect across differences.

By creating anti-racist teacher communities, white teachers can learn about these limitations and convert their good intentions into genuine and authentic anti-racist practices. Anti-racist teachers have to move to decenter whiteness in anti-racist educational spaces (Fillion-Wilson, 2021). According to Fillion-Wilson (2021) anti-racist teacher communities need to "decenter whiteness while centering the experiences of [diverse people] in anti-racist education is, in fact, the only way to make learning spaces truly anti-racist" (p. 16). There needs to be anti-racist action so that the discussions about racism do not just stay as informative and introspective talk (Fillion-Wilson, 2021). Nonetheless, these barriers can be addressed by creating professional development for teachers that helps them learn about themselves and promotes anti-racist praxis.

Conclusion

Teachers need the space and the opportunity to learn about anti-racist education and to start questioning concepts, pedagogies, methodologies, and the nature of knowledge. If teachers decide not to acknowledge "racism and race privilege in curricular practices, the effect of

colonization continues" (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 296). Engaging teachers in professional development allows teachers to learn about the concepts of race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education. Anti-racist teacher communities can develop a supportive environment, engage teachers in critical conversations about race and racism, and hold white teachers accountable. There are benefits to anti-racist teacher communities including preparing teachers for interracial dialogue, helping teachers learn about their positionality, developing a positive anti-racist white identity, learning to be vulnerable and preparing teachers for engaging in anti-racist praxis. However, there are some challenges and limitations, such as temporary paralysis to anti-racist action, recentering whiteness, and revisiting of racial traumas for diverse people. With awareness of these limitations, professional development can be constructed to take them into account and provide support for genuine anti-racist praxis. In order to create equity within education, teachers need to challenge current power relations.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the study's arts-based anti-racist methodology and how it was used as a framework to answer the research question: *how does learning anti-racist education through critical professional development and arts-based inquiry contribute to teachers' understandings of their classroom practice?* I begin by giving an overview of visual arts-based research, methodologies, and methods and how they can be used within the education field. This is followed by an outline of the methodology used within this study called a/r/tography. Next, there is an explanation of anti-racist education strategies used with a/r/tography to help with the data collection. To conclude, there is an analysis of how the overall study was conducted and how the data was examined and analyzed.

Arts-based Research, Methodologies and Methods

The arts have impacted "the social world, including cultural aspects of social life, economic and political structures, identity issues at the global, national, group, and individual levels, and many other issues" (Leavy, 2009, p.218). These impacts are illustrated through many art forms such as "photography, painting, drawing, cartooning, graphic novels, collage, sculpture, ceramics, installations, knitting, quilting, doll making, 3D art, and mixed media art" (Leavy, 2018, p.21). The practices of creative arts therapy have informed the use of the arts within research methodology (Coeman, Wang, Leysen, & Hannes, 2015). Scholars used different art forms with therapeutic techniques to help people understand their lived experiences (McNiff, 2008). Within the last few decades, arts-based research has been applied within "the broad field of humanities, including social and cultural sciences, public health and educational sciences" (Coeman et al., 2015, p. 33). Arts-based research can allow people to explore and reflect on their lived experiences, facilitate critical dialogue, build connections with others, and address power

relations within the research process (Dewey, 2005; Foster, 2012). This practice of using art to facilitate self-reflection to encourage insight means that the practice of art is an excellent methodology to use when people want to explore and have critical conversations about topics of race, racism, and anti-racist education within and across diverse communities.

Definitions of arts-based research make clear that art and critical conversation are linked. Leavy (2009), a prominent scholar within the arts-based research field, defines arts-based research as:

> Arts-based research practices are a set of methodological tools used by qualitative researchers across all social research disciplines, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and representation. These emerging tools adopt the tenets of the creative arts to address social research questions in holistic and engaging ways in which theory and practice are intertwined. Arts-based methods draw on literary writing, music, performance, dance, visual art, film, and other media. (p. 230)

Having the opportunity to use art gives research projects a unique way to "analyze, understand, and embody human experiences, generate and convey meaning and awareness, and enhance reflexivity and empathy" (Fonseka, Taiwo, & Sethi, 2021, p. 44). Art has the ability to create spaces that are collaborative, participatory, dialogical, and immersive for people. These arts-based processes provide people with a way to explore, understand, represent, and challenge their lived experiences, personal stories, positionalities, and future possibilities (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014). Having art as a medium for self-expression and a way to understand multiple perspectives can allow people to engage with emotions in a safe and brave way (Bell & Roberts, 2010). Giving people an opportunity to engage with the arts "provides people with perspectives of possibilities of what is and what can be" (Leavy, 2018, p. 202).

Arts-based practices have the ability to uncover lived experiences (Dewey, 2005). It can express human life and help develop a deeper understanding of people's experiences. As Gschwandtner (2014) stated:

> creating a work of art is actually a process of making visible, transferring a phenomenon from one reality to another, even a kind of popularizing move in which a phenomenon so far inaccessible is made accessible for a larger group of viewers (pp. 306-307).

Engaging in artistic expression gives the opportunity to people to access new meanings and can be used to make race, racism, and anti-racism topics visible instead of invisible. Having people create art provides a space for "discussion that allows stereotypes and oppressive discourses to be exposed and challenged, rather than passively accepted, and to be replaced with more empowering and culturally-accepting ideologies" (Fonseka, Taiwo, & Sethi, 2021, p. 46). Having diverse voices within the conversations assists people to understand how race intersects with people's positionalities, influences individual experiences of oppression, and promotes social change (Collins, 2000). When this is considered, arts-based practices can move past just reflecting on social conditions and toward actively changing them (Fonseka, Taiwo, & Sethi, 2021).

Arts-based practices are an excellent avenue for research projects with an aspect of exploration, discovery, description, or process. Leavy (2009) stated, "the capability of the arts to capture process mirrors the unfolding nature of social life, and thus there is a congruence between subject matter and method" (p. 21). Arts-based practices are used within the problem- or issue-centered studies where the study's problem dictates the methodology. Arts-based practices developed in a transdisciplinary environment can go across, blur, and expand methodological and theoretical borders (Leavy, 2011). They can make connections between and across

disciplines, such that arts-based practices have an integrative holistic approach to research (Chilton & Leavy, 2014; Leavy, 2009).

When using arts-based research methodologies and methods, researchers and educators are able to answer questions that other research traditions such as interviews and questionnaires cannot (Cohenmiller, 2018; Dunn & Mellor, 2017; Kara, 2015). Art can be used within a multimethod research design where it replaces the dialogue (Holm, 2008; Leavy, 2009). This creates another narrative where people can discuss different topics affecting them. Dunn and Mellor (2017) argued that certain methodologies might not access the emotional and symbolic aspects of people's experiences. Ellsworth (2005) also stated, "some knowing's cannot be conveyed through language" (p. 156). Guenette and Marshall (2009) explained how art is another way to communicate and for people to "have the opportunity to switch from a purely verbal way of expressing oneself to a more creative form. It can also provide valuable distance from what has been experienced, a 'break' from a more intense verbal process" (p. 87). The arts heighten our senses and create significant dialogue for both the creator and the artwork's audience. Fonseka, Taiwo, and Sethi (2021) stated:

> arts-based research is grounded in a philosophy that recognizes the power of making and responding to art to convey truth and awareness and generate preverbal forms of knowledge that engage sensori-emotional, perceptual, kinesthetic, embodied, and imagined ways of knowing as part of an aesthetic intersubjective paradigm. (p. 44)

Intersubjectivity allows people to use relations as knowledge sharing and create meaning with others and their environment (Ellsworth, 2005). This allows people to enter a shared emotional lived experience to "co-construct a new, re-imagined, and often transformative life narrative" (Gerber, Bryl, Potvin, & Blank, 2018, p. 2076).

By engaging with visual art, people get in tune with their emotions. Eisner (2008) explained that "the arts in research promote a form of understanding that is derived or evoked through empathetic experience and is something that can provide deep insight into what others are experiencing" (p. 7). Cohenmiller (2018) also found that engaging and discussing artwork that has been created can assist in deeper understanding and communication with the participants. The participatory aspect of arts-based methods helps to create a welcoming and open space for amateur artists to create and participate in artmaking. The art made by the participants can be influential when the emotions and multiple meanings of the art are considered (Leavy, 2009). This also helps overcome some power imbalances between the researcher and the participants as the research is a collaboration 'with' participants rather than 'on' participants (Irwin, 2013). Academics who practice arts-based methods can provide their participants an opportunity for their voices to be heard, facilitate more profound reflections and dialogue, and empower them to better articulate their experiences. Capous-Desyllas (2014) found that arts-based research has the ability to transform and empower, which in turn can bring about social change within society. Applying arts-based methods within different contexts aids in connecting cultures, generations, socioeconomic classes, and people (Irwin, 2013).

Having the arts within research counters categorical and binary thinking and values life experiences (Dewhurst, 2014). It gives opportunities to reflect on multiple meanings that live within our social context, especially around race, racism, and anti-racist education. The art people create within arts-based research projects can reflect the connections and relationships between people, places, and social conditions. Arts-based research methods are often amalgamated with other practices and methodologies to enhance traditional qualitative approaches and achieve a more complete and nuanced understanding of the study at hand

(Hannes & Coemans, 2016). This provides an opportunity to “open new spaces that, as negative space defines a positive object in visual art, creates new ways of thinking about traditional research practices” (Leavy, 2018, p. 7). This study uses a/r/tography as its methodology. A/r/tography is described, analyzed, and critiqued in the section below.

A/r/tography

A/r/tography is a type of practice-based research methodology that recognizes making, learning, and knowing as intertwined within the movement of art and pedagogical practices (Leavy, 2018). Instead of identifying what has already been found, a/r/tography embraces each movement, each new idea, as a new reality within an open, vulnerable space (Irwin, 2013). A/r/tography is interested in the connections between persons’ identities/roles as artists, researchers, and teachers (the “a/r/t” in a/r/tography) through a unified process of artmaking and reflective writing (the “art” and “graphy” in a/r/tography) (Irwin, 2004). A/r/tography generates questioning, wondering, and wandering within the artist/teacher/researcher to use and perform knowledge, teaching, and learning from multiple perspectives (Irwin, 2004). This enables people to emerge from submerged realities and see themselves and art as if for the first time. A/r/tography does not have any criteria or descriptions attached to it instead emphasizing the process rather than the method (Rogoff, 2001). This creates an opportunity to have an open and active space for people who come from various backgrounds. The foundation of a/r/tography is about deep exploration and understanding of oneself and others by re-imagining life histories in and through time (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). As stated by Irwin and de Cosson (2004), a/r/tography “is about each of us living a life of deep meaning through perceptual practices that reveal what was once hidden, create what has never been known, and imagine what we hope to achieve” (p. 30).

I have broken down a/r/tography into three sections: Learning as métissage, learning as rhizomatic, and learning as lived inquiry. Each section goes into deeper detail about a/r/tography and how it has been used as a teaching and research methodology.

Learning as Métissage

A/r/tography welcomes the existence of métissage and integrates knowing, doing, and making through an aesthetic experience (Linstead & Hopfl, 2000). Irwin (2002) explained métissage as:

> A way for those of us living in the borderlands to creatively engage with self and others as we re-imagine our life histories in and through time. A/r/tography is a form of representation that privileges both text and image as they meet within moments of métissage. But most of all, a/r/tography is about each of us living a life of deep meaning through perceptual practices that reveal what was once hidden. Create what has never been known and imagine what we hope to achieve. (p. 10)

Métissage is interdisciplinary and provides a space for exploration, translation, and understanding of meaning-making through art. Irwin and de Cosson (2004) stated, “from a socio-cultural perspective, métissage is a language of the borderlands, of English-French, of autobiography-ethnography, of male-female” (p. 29). This creates a yearning to discover “new territories, a space of reformation and transformation, a geographical, spiritual, social, pedagogical, psychological, and a physical site of intersubjectively that is established in and through dialogue” (Irwin, 2002, p. 9). Learning becomes participatory and evolutionary where relational learning happens within the mind/body, theory/practice, or artist/researcher/teacher. These learnings are not separate or dichotomous but are “enfolded in and unfold[ed] from one another” (Irwin, 2002, p. 73). The folding and unfolding, like fabric, lets people experience the

process of differentiation. As Springgay, Irwin, and Kind (2005) explained, “in a fold, the outside is never fully absorbed, it is both at once exterior and interior. There is always a play of opposition and tension in the operation of the fold” (p. 901). As Meskimmon (2003) stated, “folding holds out the potential to diversify endlessly without falling into the logic of binary oppositions. This sense of the fold takes matters as doubling back upon itself to make endless new points of connection between diverse elements” (p. 167). This action of un/folding allows people to examine concepts and social positions as part of a whole or a complex compilation of smaller wholes that are connected (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000). When people un/fold, they start to make connections within those folds to their social positions, ideas, and relationships with other people. As people get more versed within the experience of folds, their actions become more refined, flexible, and critical (Springgay, 2003).

A/r/tography métissage is a strong metaphor because it assists people to “experience and understand one thing in terms of another” (Richardson, 2000, p. 926). It is a metaphor for people who want to integrate a/r/tography into their professional and personal lives (Irwin, 2003). By engaging in métissage, people are uniting different forms of thought that can converge and diverge in several different teachable ways (Irwin, 2003). This creates a space where knowledge and ignorance live and where people can make relationships, share dialogue, and understand one another. This helps people learn about critical concepts rather than stand-alone facts, as well as the connections between concepts.

Learning as Rhizomatic

A/r/tography acknowledges that the world is socially constructed (Irwin, 2013). Metaphorically resembling a rhizome, a/r/tography understands the world as an interconnected, complex web that resists categorizations, hierarchies, and linear tellings (Irwin, 2013).

Rhizomes are “plants that grow long roots underground and send out shoots for new plants to grow above ground” (Carter, Beare, Belliveau, and Irwin, 2011, p.18). Symbolically a rhizome can be seen as a collection of concepts that are dynamic and not static. The rhizome “operates by variation, perverse mutation, and flows of intensities that penetrate meaning, opening it to the unnameable which begins to proclaim itself” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xx). Carter, Beare, Belliveau, and Irwin (2011) explain how the rhizome is a metaphor:

> The roots grow in all directions, with one point connecting to any other point. Like a mesh of lines on a road map, there are no beginnings or middles, merely in-between connections. In this sense, if one visualizes a series of strong roots connecting the artist's work to that of the writer, teacher, and researcher, the spaces between these seemingly separate identities disappear. Instead, each identity is strengthened by another allowing for new directions/approaches/ideas to emerge-unrealizable when one chooses to “plant” themselves in a particular epistemology/subject/way of thinking or being. (pp. 18-19)

Rhizomes engage the in-between spaces within artmaking, researching, and teaching. These in-between spaces are open and vulnerable where meanings and understandings can be discussed, reconstructed, and become something else. It is a space where there is a critical exchange of reflective, responsive, and relational knowledge with one another. Grosz (2001) stated:

> The space of in-between is the locus for social, cultural, and natural transformations: it is not simply a convenient space for movements and realignments but in fact is the only place- the place around identities, between identities- where becoming, openness to futurity, outstrips the conservational impetus to retain cohesion and unity. (p. 91)

People who engage within the in-between spaces are re-thinking, re-living, and re-making the details of their social positions as they encounter differences and similarities in contradictory worlds (Rogoff, 2000). The in-between disrupts the dualisms within our lives and becomes a process of understanding the relational meanings between our social, economic, cultural, and political beings (Grosz, 2001).

A/r/tography creates an opportunity to engage with oneself in different concepts, information, and art works within the in-between spaces while imagining and creating various relationships between people and ideas (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). Metaphorically people within the in-between spaces develop practices that can slowly erase the borders and barriers within spaces that were once sustained between the oppressor and the oppressed (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). Smith (1993) stated, “the typography of the [in-between spaces] is simultaneously the suturing space of multiple oppressions and the potentially liberatory space through which to migrate toward a new awareness of [people’s positionalities]” (p. 169). By engaging in the in-between space, people can have the opportunity to engage with their multiple social positions. Bhabha (1990) described this space as nomadic, where the practices and orientations of a person’s social positions are interwoven, and they are constantly moving through and within each other. By interacting within this space, people spark reflection, creativity, and self-knowledge (Greene, 1977). This space allows different texts, images, and languages to come together, dismantle, and come together repeatedly (Irwin, 2003). This creates a process of reflecting and continuously evolving perspectives for people. Irwin and de Cosson (2004) stated, “it is not about dichotomous thinking but rather dialogical thinking, relating and perceiving” (p. 30). People that use a/r/tography live within these in-between spaces as they re-create, re-search, and re-learn ways of understanding, appreciating, and representing the world (Finley & Knowles,

1995). By bringing attention to the in-between spaces of knowing, doing, and making, people have the opportunity to understand their perceptions and knowing through lived inquiry (Irwin, 2004).

Learning as Lived Inquiry

Living inquiry is defined as "an embodied encounter constituted through visual and textual understandings and experiences rather than mere visual and textual representations" (Springgay, Irwin, & Wilson Kind, 2005). A/r/tography is a living inquiry where the person allows feeling and life to come to the forefront of their practice. As Leavy (2018) stated, "when artists, researchers, and teachers engage in lived inquiry, they remain open during their practice and become attuned to the ideas, feelings, and meanings as they emerge during the process" (p. 46). Working within a lived inquiry encourages people to continue "questioning their being and becoming" (Irwin, 2008, p. 28). This opportunity gives people an open and vulnerable space where their meanings and understandings are discussed, reconstructed, and become something else. It also gives them a space to have critical exchanges of reflection, responsiveness, and relational knowledge with one another. Using living inquiry gives people a chance to have an embodied experience through visual and textual understandings and experiences.

Having interconnected social positions, meanings, and relationships evolving repeatedly in dialogue with everyone creates an environment of lived inquiry (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). Using a/r/tography as an inquiry process helps create meaning out of challenging and complex questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no answer. This methodology is not concerned with pinning down meanings but creating openings and making room for other relational meanings to happen for participants. Triggs, Irwin, and O'Donoghue (2014) stated, "A/r/tography insists that whatever is already known is in the process of responding to the felt

potential of what it may become" (p. 255). Art is an emerging practice that we live in and cannot stand outside of. Irwin (2003, 2006, 2008, 2013) explained how when artists, researchers, and teachers engage in lived inquiry, they remain open during their practice and become attuned to ideas, feelings, and meanings as they emerge during the process. People live within experiences and a/r/tography does not place itself outside those experiences. Irwin (2003) also discussed how people find places of difficulty when people engage in the process, but these places are also areas that matter. Sullivan (2010) reaffirms this by stating that inquiry seeks an understanding rather than an explanation. People use a/r/tography practices and roles to make, change, and understand meanings (Springgay et al., 2005). The inquiry does not have to be statistically significant to be meaningful to the person engaging in the process.

Using lived inquiry within a/r/tography embodies and engages the world by examining people's personal, political, and/or professional lives. It has rigor by using continuous reflective and reflexive engagement, analysis, and learning through "memory, identity, autobiography, reflection, meditation, storytelling, interpretation, and/or representation" (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 903). People have the opportunity to present their questions, practices, and understandings through artistic experiences to create meanings (Springgay & Irwin, 2004). Their meanings can be presented through different qualitative methods such as:

> interviews, journal writing, field diaries, artifact collections, and photo documentation, yet it can also include any form of artistic inquiry such as painting, composing music, and writing poetry, and educational inquiry such as student journal writing, teacher diaries, narratives, and parent surveys. (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. xxix)

Through these processes people can share their inquiries with others to see similar and/or different experiences.

La Jevic and Springgay (2008) got their non-art teacher candidates to create and share visual journals (collages of images and words). They said, "we introduced visual journals into this course as a way for students to engage in living research and to develop an embodied and relational understanding between self and other" (La Jevic & Springgay, 2008, p. 73). The students explored their social positions and how those positions interweave with each other. The students also reflected on the process of creating a visual journal as one student said:

> This class has completely changed my idea about the type of teacher I want to be. The visual journal has taught me that I want to be a teacher that strays from the norm. Many pages in my journal show how we need to look at the world with an open mind and delve into issues in the world…the journal has shown me that teaching is about taking ordinary things and making them come alive for students. (La Jevic & Springgay, 2008, p.76)

Using lived inquiry shows how art has the power to transform. People can use art to illustrate a concept and position it as a change agent (Rogoff, 2000; Springgay & Irwin, 2004). When people engage within the lived inquiry, it creates opportunities for people to have experiences that are incredibly moving, sensitive, complicated, nuanced, and compelling (O'Donoghue, 2008; Suominen, 2003; Wilson, 2004). They also willfully attend to multiple, shifting, intersecting social positions within a supportive environment. Lived inquiry makes this methodology breathe and listen by giving people a space to inquire about the world around them through artmaking. Developing lived inquiries involves mindful attention to viewers'/readers' ability to relate with other people's experiences and how they can use these learned experiences within their personal and professional lives (O'Donoghue, 2009). By connecting with the lived inquiry within this methodology, participants engage deeply with themselves and their practices.

Anti-Racist Education Practices

This study uses anti-racist education and other critical, collaborative, and participatory frameworks that actively work to educate people on how to address oppressive power dynamics, eliminate discrimination, and advocate social justice for diverse people. With this study, participants used different anti-racist practices to articulate and share their stories, create connections with other participants, and focus their teaching practices with the aim to improve the experiences of diverse students. The anti-racist practices that were used in this study are explained below.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful means to challenge our mindsets around the dominant narratives within our society. Scholars that write about storytelling usually have a focus on community-building functions, such as “stories build consensus, a common culture of shared understandings, and deeper, more vital ethics” (Delgado, 1989, p. 2414). Using stories as a strategic tool can “expose, analyze and challenge the majoritarian stories of racial privilege (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). They can open new connections within our reality, displaying the possibilities for lives other than those we live. According to Delgado (1989), “they enrich imagination and teach that by combining elements from the story and current reality, we may construct a new world richer than either alone” (p. 2415). Stories give us critical consciousness and engage us to understand how to dismantle the dominant narrative. In this study, these stories come about from the interconnected histories of the participants' positionalities and how they connect or disconnect with one another.

Relationships between Researchers and Participants

This study analyzed the interactions among participants and the communities they work in. Dixson (2006) described how there needs to be an emphasis on relationships. She stated,

"given that anti-racist education is first and foremost about social change, from my perspective it is essential that anti-racist researchers take seriously the importance of developing meaningful, reciprocal relationships within the communities in which they do research" (Dixson, 2006, p. 228). The types of shared relationships that Dixson (2006) thought of stops scholars from "asking questions for the sake of asking questions" (p. 228), as well as, researching concerns that do not impact diverse people or their communities. In this study's context, Dixson's methodology is an example to reference when looking at dynamic, collaborative relationships between the participants and researcher within a creative space.

Delpit (1995) stated that attaining educational justice for diverse students requires teachers and diverse people within the community to have critical conversations. However, "it is those with the most power, those in the majority who must take the greater responsibility for initiating the process" (Delpit, 1995, p. 46). Participating in critical dialogue involves each participant in this study (especially myself) to acknowledge their multiple, intersecting, and relational positionalities and reflect critically on how their positionalities impact their classroom practices (Desai, 2000).

Commitment to Diverse Students

Anti-racist education focuses on social change, critical pedagogies, and emphasis on praxis grounded in equitable and reciprocal relationships (Greenwood & Levin, 2005; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). This focus creates a moral obligation for anti-racist researchers, as Carter (2003) stated:

> As researchers, we have an obligation to the experiences we expose. We cannot be casual participants, curious onlookers, or disinterested scholars if our purpose is to conduct research grounded in truth-telling that seeks to liberate rather than oppress. We must not

> be motivated or intoxicated by the academy's extrinsic rewards. We have a responsibility to resist the temptation to do "hit and run" research unconcerned about the consequences of our work. Instead, as much as possible, we must encourage a researcher sensibility and ethic that expresses and demonstrates concern for our communities' collective good. (p. 33)

The research within this study is informed through anti-racist education and arts-based methodologies. These are founded in creating equitable and reciprocal relationships between the participants and having a mutual curiosity in understanding how our social positions affect the classrooms we teach in.

The purpose of this study is to confront the dominant discourses happening within urban schools and how teachers, and communities can change that discourse by understanding how positionality affects educational environments. This is done mainly through the participants' independent artmaking and critically analyzing their own experiences through the study's professional development themes. This study has a social conscience that intends to bring positive change within teachers through the creation of artworks.

Purpose and Overview of Study

As previously explained, the purpose of the study is two-fold, first to introduce high school teachers to anti-racist education, and second to use art as a way of exploring their positionality and classroom practice. Combining arts-based inquiry and anti-racist education can potentially transform teachers' prior understandings and interpretations of their own positionality. This study draws on high school teachers' stories, experiences, and perspectives within urban Roman Catholic schools in a prairie city. Participants' experiences were studied, expressed, and disseminated within a discussion group format. Four PD sessions each consisted

of a guest lecture on a particular anti-racist topic, independent creative inquiries through artmaking, and a focus group discussion on their inquiries. All participants in the study were interested in anti-racist education and understanding their lived experiences with/in/through art.

The dominant narrative portrays urban schools as neutral spaces. These narratives are mostly upheld by teachers who work within the institution. Developing teacher awareness of their social position assists teachers in becoming more critically conscious of their socio-cultural lens and how these lenses impact their understanding of their teaching practice. This may cultivate a better understanding of how their own lived experiences can affect their interpretations and reading of who they think they are. Through critical artistic reflection on their practice and learning anti-racist education strategies, teachers may be better able to understand their positionality and how it affects their classroom practice (Delpit, 1995; Pollock, 2008; hooks, 2003; Freire, 2013).

Research Questions

As noted in Chapter One, the three interrelated research questions that guided this study are:

1. How does learning anti-racist education through critical professional development and arts-based inquiry contribute to teachers' understandings of their classroom practice?
    a. How does learning about anti-racist education influence teachers in exploring their own positionality and social location?
    b. How does creating, looking at, and discussing art help teachers analyze who they are in relation to each other, their students, and society?

The Setting of the Study

The participants in this project were all recruited from the same school division. I chose to recruit participants from one school division to enable group rapport and offer a setting for one

particular environment (urban Roman Catholic high schools). The study was conducted over an online platform because of COVID-19 protocols.

Participants

People with a permanent teaching contract within an urban Roman Catholic school division had the opportunity to participate in the project. I created the invitation to participate and consent form with the input of the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Committee and the urban Roman Catholic school division. I emailed the invitation, and the consent form to the Superintendent of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Unit via email, and they were in turn sent to all high school teachers. Since we were in a pandemic when I conducted the research, all communication with participants was done online.

I was glad that those who responded to the invitation formed a mixed anti-racist teacher community. There was a total of eleven participants; four identified as Indigenous (two First Nations and two Métis) and seven identified as white settlers. Two people identified as male and nine people identified as female. There was one participant in the 20-30 years age range, five participants in the 30-40 years age range, and five participants in the 40-60 years age range. All participants currently live in affluent middle-class areas of the city but teach in urban inner-city high schools. The teaching experience of the participants ranged from 5-25 years. Within this urban Roman Catholic school division, 13% of teachers self-identify as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit within the teacher population. The division does not collect data on other cultural diversities within their teacher population.

I chose to have a small community of participants for this study to have quick group rapport and enable participants to delve into the study's anti-racist topics. The anti-racist teacher

community was big enough to represent different lived experiences and small enough to allow all participants to share and reflect.

Study Design

The design of this study uses in-depth interviewing and participant made visual methodologies (Clark, 1999; Clark-Ibanez, 2007; Seidman, 1998). The study design does not use all the strategies within these approaches. Instead of doing one-on-one interviews with participants they instead shared their experiences within an interactive focus group. Also, this study uses participant's artwork for the basis of reflection and dialogue. The participants gathered together for four focus groups over a period of four months. The focus groups were conducted online because of the current COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, the participants also participated in individual artmaking to reflect on and share their experiences as urban high school teachers. Before every focus group discussion, I drafted a schedule of questions, which were distributed through email to the participants, to guide the focus group discussions. The participants and I handled the questions in a holistic way. I decided to do this because it allowed the participants to reflect on and pursue whichever question(s) that they were more connected to during their independent artmaking.

Design for Data Generation

The use of multiple data generation methods is critical in arts-based research. This section illuminates the topics examined within the focus group meetings, how data was generated, and what questions were asked of the participants. A more detailed analysis of the participants' narratives can be found in the chapter five.

A significant part of this study was the participants' art pieces. These art pieces became open channels for participants to share their reflections and discuss their personal and

professional experiences and relationships with race, racism, and whiteness. Participants were provided with questions (found below) that I would be asking within the PD sessions before each focus group meeting. The participants were welcome to reflect on the questions through a unified process of dialogue and artmaking. However, they were not told how to approach these questions or how in depth to go with each question. It was essential to give the participants freedom and agency whenever possible during their artmaking while staying true to the purpose of the project. The participants' individual lived experiences led their art making; each participant's art piece and reflection came to fruition in various forms. As the participants shared their artworks, it inspired others and prompted participants to dive deeper into their understandings or make new connections in their individual inquiries. Within this study, the methodology of a/r/tography was modified because of Covid-19 protocols (meetings and discussions had to be online). The participants did not do reflective writing but used reflective dialogue instead to express their thoughts on their art pieces and anti-racist content.

First PD Session- Deficit Thinking

The first PD session revolved around the topic of "what is race?", "colour-blindness ideologies", and "deficit thinking of marginalized students." There was also time dedicated to presenting the major themes and art methods used in the study and gathering background information from the participants. The guest lecture was presented by Dr. Carmen Gillies, a faculty member with Gabriel Dumont Institute. The lecture was virtual over Microsoft Teams (each PD session was virtual because of the COVID-19 pandemic) and identified the concept of race and how it is seen within our current society. They also discussed different examples of deficit thinking, how they encountered it and how they addressed it.

Deficit thinking was picked as a PD topic because it is a construct that has been identified as one of the most widespread and prevailing narratives within schools and for diverse students and communities (Valencia, 1997; 2010; Ronda & Valencia, 1994). Deficit thinking shapes the dominant societal narratives about diverse people and impacts social policy and practice within education. Scholars of education have researched the damaging impacts of deficit thinking on diverse students' educational experiences and on those from poor and working-class backgrounds (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Valencia, 1997, 2010; Yosso, 2006). When deficit thinking is used within the classroom, it reinforces white superiority, overgeneralizes, and essentializes beliefs about diverse people. Deficit thinking can impact how teachers define their roles as teachers and how they position themselves in their classroom environments. Teachers need to "question assumptions about students' abilities, advocate for students' rights, and provide quality meaningful education to all students" (Gillies, 2018, p. 70). Teachers need to be given the opportunity to understand deficit thinking and how their own social positions make them view their diverse students in a certain way.

After the guest lecture on deficit thinking was finished, the participants were instructed to create an art project. The first art project was mask making. People often do not realize that they put on masks when interacting with others. We wear masks within our personal and professional lives to prevent people from seeing too much of our identities. We wear thousands of masks sometimes all within one day. This art project was designed to help participants become aware of the masks they wear, especially with their colleagues and students. I provided them with a paper mask attached to a canvas (8 inches x 10 inches). I wanted them to use any type of medium and create symbols, colours, pictures, and words related to their outer social self. I gave them some generic examples such as caring (symbol: heart), ally (rainbow colours), and Métis (infinity

symbol). The participants had to do some inner reflection to analyze how their exterior features, such as, culture, skin color, physical characteristics, and gender, can contribute to deficit thinking within their classroom environment.

After a week passed, we had a virtual talking circle on Microsoft Teams where the participants presented their masks. I asked the participants to send me a picture of their masks so that I could put them into a PowerPoint to share with the anti-racist teacher community. I developed six questions that I asked the participants to understand more about their experiences with the content of the guest lecture and their artmaking. They could answer all of them or pick the ones that spoke to them. The questions were:

1. Describe your mask.
2. How did this project meet your expectations?
3. How did this activity help you understand your positionality (your identity)?
4. Describe a memorable moment throughout the art process? Any 'A-ha!' moments?
5. How will you incorporate what you learned into your teaching and classroom practice?
6. What questions are you still wondering about?

I facilitated the focus group dialogue where the participants took turns discussing their art project verbally and answering questions that I asked. This meeting additionally centered on getting to know one another and developing a supportive environment for group rapport.

Second PD Session- Whiteness

The second PD session was devoted to the concept of privilege, whiteness, white fragility, white supremacy, white saviourism, and meritocracy. The guest lecture was presented by Dr. Sheelah McLean, a community activist, and an educational scholar on Whiteness Studies. She examined and analyzed how white identity affected the education system and gave examples. She also gave examples of ways to address whiteness within the classroom and pointed out ways whiteness flows into teachers' lives. These teachings are vital for teachers because white teachers who do not see their positionality as meaningful often allow unchecked expressions of white privilege to seep into their classrooms (Matias, 2013; Sue, 2010; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). In addition, race-conscious white teachers who do not have a nuanced understanding of their positionality can cause unintentional harm by identifying as racially just without understanding how they impact their diverse students negatively (Lawrence & Tatum, 2004). Thus, white teachers need an opportunity to create a safe and positive white anti-racist positionality that "helps them hold the tension between their privileged position within unjust systems and their sense of self" (Utt & Tochluk, 2020, p.129).

After the guest lecture was finished, the participants were asked to create another mask. However, instead of painting the outside of the mask, they painted the inside. They were asked to reflect on how the taken-for-granted norm of whiteness seeps into their classroom practice and mindset. I picked the inside of the mask because whiteness can be found within everything and especially within our thought processes. By painting the inside of the mask, the participants had to think about their privileges and how they used them to support their diverse students. This session had significant meaning because routine self-reflection on white privilege is necessary to disrupt subconscious enactments of white supremacy and modify personal behavior within their classroom environment.

After a week passed, the participants and I met on Microsoft Teams to discuss the inside of their masks. They were again asked to send a picture of their mask so that I could make a PowerPoint of all the masks together. The discussion was in a talking circle format where each participant took turns speaking. The participants had the opportunity to answer all the questions or answer the ones that spoke to them. The questions I asked were:

1. Describe your mask.
2. How can we help our students and others within our school reflect on whiteness within their lives?
3. How can white settlers respond more constructively to conversations with race?
4. What can be done to ensure that our white settler students do not develop white fragility that is so commonly found within our schools?

The questions within this PD session evoked deeper thinking because the participants started to grasp the concepts and wanted to do more critical self-reflection of their social positions.

Third PD Session- Nostalgia and Settler Narratives of Saskatchewan

The third PD session was about nostalgia, Saskatchewan settler narratives, and racism. The lecture was presented by Dr. Lynn Caldwell, Professor of Church and Society at St. Andrew's College. She discussed dominant narratives and how race and colonialism operate through seemingly benign/innocent claims to a shared identity. The guest lecture focused on "who we are" as Saskatchewan people and how teachers reproduce whiteness as the norm even in attempts to address colonialism and racism. She discussed how by disrupting these innocent stories about Saskatchewan people, pasts, and places, we could have anti-racist education and

action. This lecture got the participants to think about their histories and how these histories helped to shape their positionality.

After the guest lecture, the participants were asked to make a collage on a canvas to explore their narratives. They had to think about their narratives and how their family history shaped them into the person that they are today. The participants also thought about how colonialism is linked to their history and how this can contribute to racism within their lived experiences. They could glue images (photos from their phone, social media, magazines, etc.) to the canvas to create their narrative. We also discussed how they could be creative and have different symbols or pictures to represent various parts of their lives. For example, if they had four siblings, they might glue four butterflies to represent that.

After a week, the participants met me on Microsoft Teams to discuss their narrative collage. We kept the same format as the previous PD sessions. The questions I asked where used to engage the participants in their histories and to think about their diverse students' histories. They also were created to make the participants reflect on their positionalities and how their positionalities could impact their diverse students' narratives. The questions I asked within the talking circle were:

1. Describe your collage to me.
2. What responsibilities do you think race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other attributes of your personal or professional positionality play in your relationship with your students?
3. What are some of the most common disruptions within your diverse students' stories or narratives?

4. What are some of the untold experiences about your students that you think are significant and how can these experiences create better relationships with your diverse students?

After the participants critically reflected on their own personal narratives, we had a mini debrief and discussed when to schedule our last PD session.

Fourth PD Session- Culturally Responsive Education vs. Anti-Racist Education

The fourth PD session was about the differences and similarities between culturally responsive education/pedagogy and anti-racist education/pedagogy. The participants watched a taped lecture by Dr. Verna St. Denis, Professor of Educational Foundations at the University of Saskatchewan. Her lecture focused on how culturally responsive education/pedagogy and anti-racist education/pedagogy can be used within the classroom setting and how they are interpreted from an Indigenous and non-Indigenous person's point of view. Having teachers understand the similarities and differences between both views is essential because it has the potential to liberate or oppress diverse students within their classroom environments. If there is not an analysis of race and racism within culturally responsive education, it can be limited in its benefits and may in fact reinforce stereotypes. After the guest lecture, the participants were instructed on what they would be creating for their last PD session.

The participants were given an 11-inch wooden eagle feather. I picked a feather because they represent love, trust, strength, wisdom, bravery, and holiness. The feather's spine can be seen as a pathway/journey that we are on and how sometimes our paths take different directions (the branches of the feather spine), but we always make our way back to the original path and move forward. This is similar to the journey in understanding anti-racist education and building relationships with our diverse students. They used colour symbolism to represent their journey

with building relationships with their diverse students. They started at the spine/base of the feather (1st year teaching) and worked their way to the tip/fan of the feather (present day). They could blend the colours, use shapes within the colours, and use their creativity to the fullest. When the feathers are done, they look like a timeline with colour. I told the participants that they could use any colours to represent different meanings, words, and perspectives. Some examples I gave to the participants to represent different colours are as follows:

- green—growth and harmony
- yellow—happiness and hope
- orange—creativity and enthusiasm
- red—energy and anger
- blue—trust and intelligence
- purple—mystery and spirituality
- brown—honesty and wholeness

We met after a week to discuss their colourful eagle feathers and answer a few focus group questions. We used a talking circle again and the discussion revolved around the questions:

1. How did you choose to paint your eagle feather? And what do the colours represent?
2. How did you see the differences in cultural responsiveness and anti-racist education, and do you see those differences reflected in your anti-racism journey?
3. Do you find it easier to be culturally responsive than anti-racist? Why?

4. How do you think the differences in these practices shape how you view your diverse students? How do these different practices affect relationship building with diverse students?

After the focus group discussion was finished, I thanked them for their generous participation in the study.

The Data

The study data was collected virtually and comprised of focus group discussions and artworks created by the participants. Since the artworks were a critical component of the study and the focus group discussions, creating a visual presentation for viewing and discussing the artworks created by participants was important. I collected pictures of the artworks from the participants before our focus group discussions and created a PowerPoint presentation that had images of all the participants' artwork. This helped with discussions and viewing the artworks virtually.

All focus group meetings were recorded through Microsoft Teams. I reviewed the video of the discussions between meetings and later transcribed for the data analysis. When the professional development sessions were completed, I created a document that combined the transcripts narratives with the images of the participants' artworks. The transcript was also analyzed in relation to the research questions of this study, anti-racist education understandings, and the use of a/r/tography. When I was reading over the transcripts, I kept notes about my thoughts and any ideas I had on my data. I used highlighters and notes in the margins to categorize my data into themes that were associated with the PD sessions. When a participant had an ‘A-ha!’ moment I would highlight it to use for my data analysis. This analysis is presented in chapter five.

Research Ethics and Human Subjects Approval

Before this study started, the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Saskatchewan approved my studies application (Appendix A). I had to also get approval from the urban Roman Catholic school division to conduct my study (Appendix B). All participants reviewed and signed an informed consent form, which discussed the risks and benefits of participation, explained concerns associated to ownership and documentation of their art pieces, and clarified how the recordings of focus group discussions would be performed and saved for data analysis. All the data was kept on a password protected file on my computer and backed up on a password protected external hard drive, to prevent loss of data. A copy of the approved consent is found in Appendix C.

CHAPTER FIVE: ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTICIPANTS AND SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter is focused on the analysis and interpretation of data generated through the anti-racist professional development and arts-based practices of the study. I managed the data analysis and interpretation of facilitating anti-racist teacher community sessions by repeatedly viewing the participants transcripts, artworks and responding to their experiences during the discussions. The data analysis, synthesis, and interpretation unraveled and unified its way throughout the study. As the study moved the participants became more vulnerable and shared more about their lived experiences. I used several methods within the data analysis, including repeatedly viewing, transcribing, and annotating the study videos, collecting participants' art works in the study PowerPoint, combining participants' art works from the study PowerPoint with the transcripts from the study videos, and by generating themes presented in the study. Engaging a/r/tography as my approach to analysis the data, it allowed me to be creative and free where the data was overlapping and interlocking throughout the data analysis themes. This allowed me to immerse myself within the data in various means by relating it to current methods as an artist/researcher/teacher and thinking about how it would impact educational research and practices within schools.

Participants had broad parameters to reflect on and pursue the different topics within each PD session in this study. Each participant took a different approach in their artmaking and how they reflected on their experiences with the studies anti-racist themes. This resulted in some participants having a more significant presence in some sections rather than others. Despite this, the data creates a holistic picture of the participants’ learnings. This study does not conclude

because anti-racist education is a journey. Instead, the data opens possibilities for the participants to engage further with their positionality and with anti-racist education within their classrooms.

It is also important to note, within this study, there were Indigenous and white settler participants. The Indigenous participants pseudonyms are *Moira*, *Stevie*, *Marie Rose*, and *Twyla*. The white settler participants pseudonyms are *Johnny*, *David*, *Jocelyn*, *Alexis*, *Tyler*, *Bob*, *Ani*. I decided to keep the participants in one anti-racist teacher community to show the interracial dialogue that happened within the study and throughout the themes of the study.

Main Themes-Renderings

Within this study, a/r/tography was applied. When applying a/r/tography into research the artistic process is more important than the product (Irwin & Springgay, 2008). Thus, instead of using specific methods it uses concepts or renderings to communicate and illustrate people's lived experiences (Pourchier, 2010; Springgay et al., 2008). These renderings are contiguity, living inquiry, metaphor and metonymy, openings, reverberations, and excess. Springgay et al. (2008) explained these renderings as “conceptual practices of a/r/tography, moving into the boundaries between theory, practice, and creative activity and allow each to impact one another” (p.xxxi). The renderings are entry points into understanding lived experiences and provide a space to enact doing, making, and knowing. They connect the methodological and pedagogical components of a/r/tography using multiple forms of representation. Renderings are not seen as criteria or descriptions of a/r/tography but seen as a way to understand and make meaning through artmaking. In this study, five of the renderings came through within the data analysis: contiguity, living inquiry, metaphor and metonymy, openings, and reverberations. The main themes of the data analysis were created based on these five renderings.

Contiguity is about the relationality of all renderings and aspects of a/r/tography. Since concepts that exist next to each other inform each other, this rendering illustrates the relationality between concepts like artist, researcher, and teacher. Springgay et al. (2005) explained:

> As with the doubling of art and graphy; the doubling of art and a/r/t emphasizes an unfolding between process and product, text and person, presence and absence, art and audience, teacher and student, author, and reader; but it also resides in the edges of these dualisms. In this instance, duality is understood to mean duality/unduality. (p.901)

Using a/r/tography allows people to pay attention to places of connection, re-connection, tension, and places in-between. It helps people to reject artificial boundaries and understand that relational meaning resists simplified narratives. Springgay et al. (2005) stated, “It is about dwelling in the space of inquiry that resists formal naming: a willingness to allow for discomfort, frayed edges and holes” (p.901). Contiguity is about inquiry and not about categorization, where understanding and meaning making happen within lived experiences of people.

Living inquiry is a rendering and a methodology of embodiment (Pourchier, 2010). Since a/r/tography refers to the living practice of artists, researchers, and teachers, it uses living inquiry to explore the visual and dialogical processes of experience (Springgay et al., 2005). Focusing on the processes of artist/researcher/teacher, living inquiry comes from constant reflection and questioning the world around us (Springgay et al., 2008). The inquiry is thought of as rhizomatic rather than linear (Irwin et al., 2006). As Springgay et al. (2005) explained, “Living inquiry refuses absolutes; rather, it engages with a continual process of coming to know. Searching for meaning that is difficult and in tension” (p.902). In living inquiry, a person examines their personal, political, and professional lives. In the process of living inquiry, the participant “recognizes the power of art to transform” (Springgay et al., 2005, p.903) and

recognizes/questions their positionality. The artistic process speaks to the experience rather than representing the experience itself. Through the artistic and inquiry process, not just the product, it enables people to make meaning of the complexities of their lived experiences.

People use metaphor and metonymy naturally when engaging with this methodology. They use their senses in relation to making sense of the world (Richardson, 2000). Metaphor and metonymy open opportunities for showing the connection between different meanings. Springgay et al. (2005) stated, “there is both a loss of meaning and simultaneously a realization of it, invoking the presence of what it is not, and also what it might become” (p.905). Having supportive spaces to understand different meanings and concepts helps people to see new ways of thinking, work within the in-between spaces, and form relationships. This shifts people's awareness and opens them to understand the world in a new way and to “inhabit fields which previously appeared as opaque and unapproachable” (Flumara, 1995, p.21). People's actions are active and create openings for new understandings.

Openings provide opportunities for dialogue and spaces that reveal what is seen, as well as what is unseen, and what lingers underneath the surface (Springgay et al., 2005). A/r/tography is a process of understanding the world by unraveling and then making art to understand this process. This process provides opportunities to shift from the known to the unknown. Springgay et al. (2005) explained, “Openings are not passive holes through which one passes easily or that allow one to see through with distinct clarity. These openings [refuse]… comfort, predictability, and safety- deliberately seek out the difficult, the unknown, the ambiguous, [and] the unpredictable” (p.905). Openings become spaces where complexity can be explored, revealed, investigated, and experienced. Openings become active spaces between reviewers and readers and between image and dialogue, where understandings and questions can be explored.

Reverberations are moments or spaces that require people to see their inquiry differently (Irwin & Sprinnggay, 2008). Specifically, the metaphor of reverberation (a continued effect, an echo, or repercussion) forces a different perspective. As Springgay et al. (2005) stated, "Reverberations also excite possible slippages of meaning, where the act of returning is not mirrored but a performance where each reverberation resists and pushes forward toward new understandings" (p.907). While reverberations are usually understood in relation to other renderings, they provide movement and alternatives. Reverberations often are the ideas that people return to and ponder. Listening for the echoes between a person's positionality, the person works to understand the spaces in between and see with new eyes.

With the understanding of a/r/tography, its renderings and analyzing the data, four main themes came out of the data analysis to illustrate connections between arts-based methods and anti-racist education. The emerging themes were seeing with new eyes, living the questions, connecting and re-connecting, and coming to know through art. Each of these themes will be discussed with sub-themes that are connected to anti-racist education. There are examples and visuals from our discussions within the anti-racist teacher community to enrich the study's themes and illustrate the connections between arts-based methods and anti-racist education.

Seeing With New Eyes

"Art does not reproduce what we see, rather, it makes us see" (Klee, n.d.)

The first theme that emerged from the PD sessions was about the new perspectives and innovative ideas participants found about anti-racist education. Participants started to see, explore, and create in different ways that strengthened their understanding of anti-racist education, their positionalities, and their diverse students. Contiguity, or "the state of bordering or being in direct contact with something" (Springgay et al., 2005, p.901), provided relevant,

educative experiences for the participants in this study. Inquiring into their lived experiences allowed them to see new ideas and perspectives. It also gave them the space to slow down and reflect on what is present and what is absent. In addition, several participants did not foresee the synergistic effect of art experiences and dialogue in opening up these new and ever-changing landscapes. Communicating visually and verbally about, across, through differences, the participants made meaning in the space between self and the teacher learning community. These moments of insight that occurred spontaneously acted as a catalyst for further insights into anti-racist education.

Seeing new ideas and perspectives

Seeing new ideas and perspectives was a theme that the process of creative experiences seemed to spark in the participants. The fact that two people can see vastly different things in an art piece helps to understand the reality of paradox. In addition, being immersed in art can improve the ability to solve problems or think outside of the box. Several of the participants found the mask project as a way to see with new eyes. The participants had significant moments where they stopped to think about their masks and the masks of their diverse students.

Stevie and *Tyler* discussed how their students wear masks:

Stevie

> The mask activity made me think of my students and think about what they would put on their masks. How do other teachers see them? Our students have a perspective on how they are seen. I also hear a lot about our students from other teachers within the staffroom or in separate conversations. Their masks are painted before we get to know them based on other people's opinions. I often try to experience that student before I listen to other teachers' opinions of that student. This happens a lot.

Tyler

> It stood out to me that we wear these different masks or present ourselves differently at various times, and we need to keep in mind that what we see in the classroom is not necessarily the whole story and that other things are going on with that. Students may not be comfortable showing or sharing with me for whatever reason. Moreover, that is okay. We need to develop relationships with students to make them feel comfortable and welcomed.

Seeing with new eyes meant new perspectives, new meanings, and seeing anti-racist education in a different context. Some of the participants were already inclined toward the anti-racist content but through the art their inclination was rejuvenated even though it was challenging sometimes. Some participants had to create new understandings, but they stayed vulnerable to the topic materials even in challenging times.

Tyler and *Bob* discuss how doing challenging things can make you more vulnerable:

Tyler

> I did find it incredibly challenging. It was quite a process, a thinking process, a drafting process, and a final process. It was hard. However, I think it was really good. It also reminded me that doing hard things is essential, and keeping that in mind with my students, I asked them to do some of the stuff that I asked them to do. Doing hard things can make you vulnerable, and sharing things is complex and requires time.

Bob

> So, what continues to remind me is that do not be hard as metal and try to work out your vulnerability. Be vulnerable because we all have those cracks right, and we need to go beyond to understand our students to make relationships with them. I need to listen to my

> students first to understand where they are coming from and seek to know them more. I want to be able to say, "I know who you are," and "I see you."

Participants used artistic and creative expressions to understand themselves and their teaching and classroom practice within this study. Using anti-racist education and a/r/tography in unison can support forms of speaking and listening across different boundaries and lead to understanding both the self and others. Eisner (2008) explained how artistic expression enables the development of insights into particular situations, both our own and that of others. Similarly, Haye and Yorks (2007) discussed how "the arts can bridge boundaries separating people and keep those boundaries porous" (p.2). Greene (1995) examined how creative and arts-based forms of expression can build community and imagination, which "permits us to give credence to alternative realities [and] allows us to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions" (p.3). Understanding how students might have different experiences and worldviews than teachers is a way to be more aware of how our teaching practices are impacting our students. As *Alexis* said:

> The more I encounter diverse students, the newer ways of learning I learn. I have been a learner of anti-racist practices, and I think that during my first few years of teaching, I assumed myself to be the expert in the room. However, that is not the case anymore. The students revealed how teaching and learning should occur, and I am starting to understand those impacts.

The majority of the participants grew up within a white settler perspective. It is important for teachers to understand their white settler perspective and "begin to analyze the current processes which determine the identity constructions of communities that have been Othered" (McLean, 2007, p.19). When learning about the different identity constructions through the guest

lecturers some of the participants found it challenging to see through a different lens than they habitually had. By using art with anti-racist education, the participants were able to think creatively and immerse themselves into a new way of thinking about their classroom practices.

Seeing barriers to diverse students

The knowledge found within the a/r/tography process was integral to identifying barriers to diverse students and understanding how to create equitable social practices within participants' schools and classrooms. For example, in the first art project, the participants painted the outside of a mask to represent how students, co-workers, and society view them based on their exterior. They connected what they learned from Dr. Carmen Gillies lecture on deficit thinking of diverse students and their own experiences within the classroom. This process was therapeutic where it allowed the participants to process and understand their oppressive behaviors and reframe their focus toward more hopeful outcomes. In addition, this activity showed how building connections with students is significantly more challenging if they do not address their classroom practice.

Some of the participants describe some of the imagery on their masks and the barriers they face in their classrooms:

Tyler

> I included a wall over the mouth section of the mask. I am seen as friendly, but I am also reserved and can come across as quite reserved. I can come off as quite superficially friendly on the outside and do not go very deep. I also thought that putting the wall up over my mouth and the keep out a sign that although I consider creating relationships with students to be one of the important things about teaching, it can be challenging. I also find it extremely hard to be vulnerable and share things about myself. Moreover, I do not know if I model that very well in my classroom. So that could also influence how thriving relationships are developed and formed in the classroom.

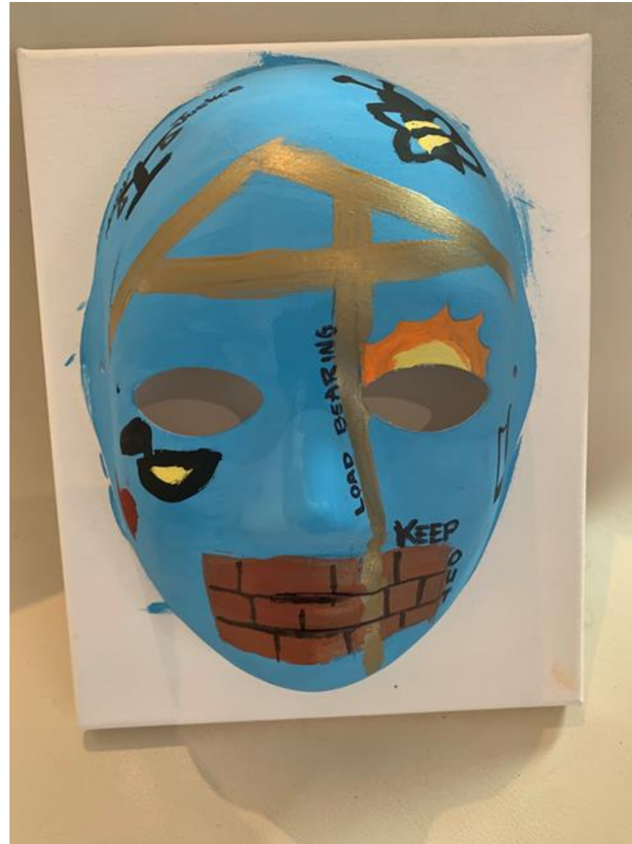

Figure 5.1 Tyler's External Mask

Johnny

I have an image of blinders. We are sometimes like a horse with a carriage, and I think it is because it is tough not to be blinded by your own experience and be able to recognize that your experience may not be typical. You may think you understand a lot more things about people, but you do not because you have not gone through other people's experiences or been in their shoes. I have my mouth made prominent, mostly because I talk too much. I am super outspoken, and sometimes it is my best trait, and sometimes it is my worst because I am usually not afraid to speak my mind. However, I do not sometimes take enough opportunities to listen hard enough to people because of it, too. This activity made me sad. I think about the things that I can take for granted, and other people do not get that. It is upsetting because there is no reason there should be a

difference in value put on people simply by how they are being seen. It just does not make sense. The idea that anyone would see people as less than when our diverse staff and students are so gifted bothers me.

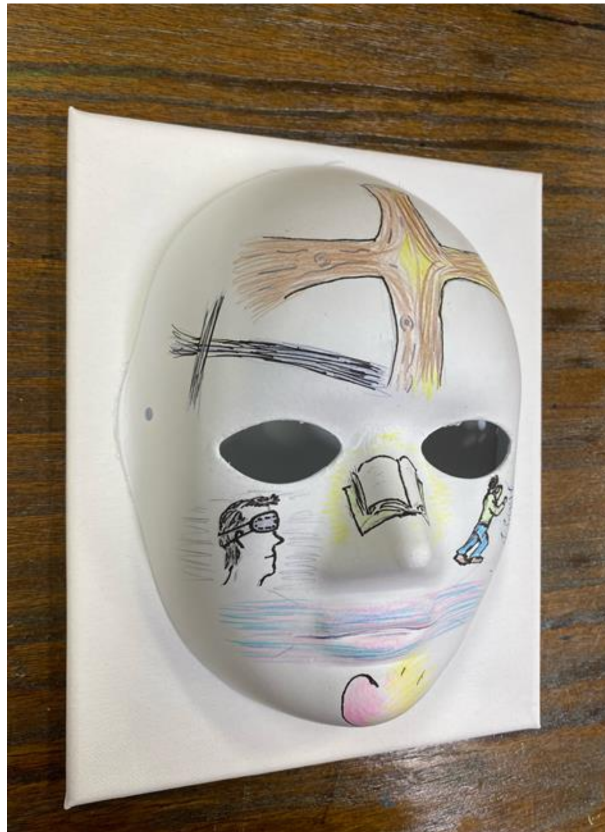

Figure 5.2 Johnny's external mask

Bob

So, my mask is covered in tin foil. The metal is like real metal, but it is fragile. I put the reflective side out because people who look at me often see a reflection of themselves in my external mask. They do not often see the real me, and I think the deficit thinking that comes across essentially is that I could come across hard because of that mask. Even though I like reflectiveness and people do not see me, they see themselves. I know that many people who do not like seeing themselves in me, and sometimes those who are only able to be okay with seeing themselves seem to be best with being okay with me if that

makes sense. So, I like that the mask essentially is fully covered in tinfoil. No part is peeking through except the eyes. The background I left white on purpose, and the reason is because sometimes people look at me, and they see the whiteness of who I am, and it represents that. It also signifies the lack of experience or that I have had no hardship because of that mask that I need to give off in situations. The most significant part was realizing how I might come across as hard and almost impenetrable.

Figure 5.3 Bob's external mask

Ani

You have to learn how to adapt and like what you are doing to change things. It just sort of made you contemplate more about what you are doing. When I was doing this, I was like, hey, like this is my mask, but what are the masks of my students? What struggles are they having? I think of my students and if I am doing enough to get to know them, or are

they struggling with stuff? You know that they are hiding who they are, and I thought about this a lot. It made me reflect on how everyone has a mask and be mindful because we do not know what people are wearing underneath that mask or what is going on in their lives.

Figure 5.4 *Ani's external mask*

Having teachers understand the societal inequities that diverse students face is important. Allowing the participants to take part in artmaking created a space for them to gain knowledge on race, racism, and whiteness in a minimally threatening way. The art making allowed them to bring to light the hidden biases and ways of thinking they had about their diverse students. For example, with *Johnny*, he came to many realizations on this classroom practice and how he can take things for granted. This allowed him to start seeing the barriers that his diverse students and colleagues have and how these barriers can be manifested within his teaching practices. This was

a good first step for *Johnny* where he started to have awareness of the educational inequities within his school.

Slow Down, Reflect, and Critical Conversations

Within this study, I found that creating art pieces made the participants slow down, think through the anti-racist topics, and think about how they wanted to tell their story. From my viewpoint, the participants had dialogue that was more authentic, genuine, nuanced, and had significant insights with/in/through their artwork than they would have had if it were just a discussion with no art piece attached. While most participants were initially hesitant, they quickly began to display a willingness to explore more complex understandings of anti-racist education within their art projects and our critical conversations.

When the participants created art, they created metaphors with different visual elements (motifs, colour choices, imagery) to express their experiences. This was evident in the way they created their masks and feathers. Using artmaking as a tool allowed participants to understand their positionalities and integrate their learning into their lived experiences. This was shown by several participants, and it revealed the normalization of whiteness within educational system and their personal narratives. One of the participants discussed her experience with being a white person and having difficulty engaging in critical conversations.

Ani

> I put the word coward at the top and I put that because even though I am not a total coward, I can be scared to have critical conversations. Nevertheless, sometimes, I know I should say something, and I do not because I lack the courage to be in uncomfortable environments. I have those challenging moments of addressing things in life and avoiding them at times. This penetrates my teaching and stops me from having more critical conversations. I do not want to be led into an uncomfortable conversation, so maybe I

skim the surface of the subject to not have it. I made patches inside the mask to look like a quilt as well. I am trying to patch up this cowardness and focus more on anti-racist education. I deal with racial issues in my teaching, but am I doing it justice? I have brought in an expert anti-racist educator into the classroom, and I do teach books and talk about stuff, but at the same time, it can be patchy, and how deep am I going? How often do I do it? Do I think about it often enough, or is it just check-marking off a box? Okay, check. I taught an Indigenous novel. Check the box. Done. I do not have to talk about it ever again! I want to incorporate it naturally organically throughout my teaching, and I do not think it is happening.

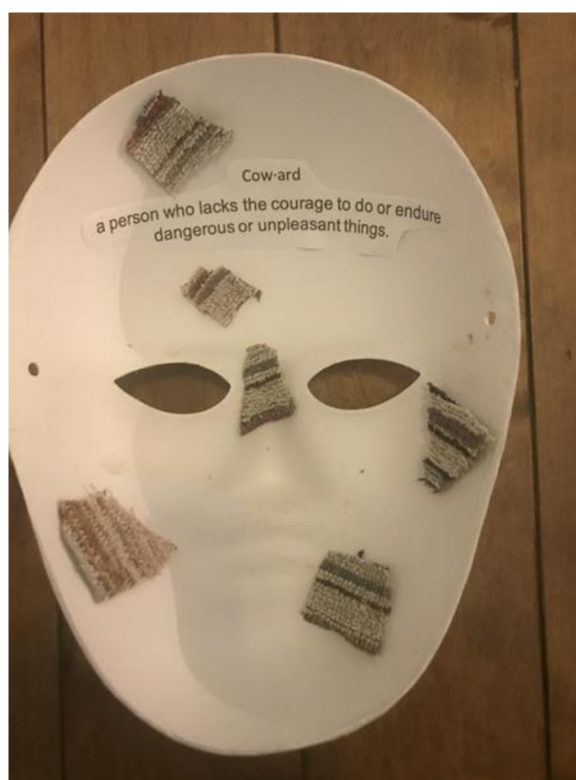

Figure 5.5 Ani's internal mask

Anti-racist education calls for ongoing critical self-reflection, analysis of experiences, and education which ties nicely with the a/r/tographic process. Using anti-racist processes, teachers can become more equipped to disrupt harmful knowledge, both voiced and silent, and to

facilitate change through critical conversations. Several of the participants discussed how they do not get allotted time to have critical self-reflection of their practice, and this study was an opportunity to do that. During the critical conversations, the participants worked collaboratively by problem solving, telling their experiences with racism and anti-racism, and participating in anti-racist dialogue guided by the PD sessions. Within the fourth PD session, participants used colour symbolism to paint a feather, and it symbolized their reflection on their anti-racist education journey within their career. The fan of the feather was where they are currently at in their anti-racist educational journey; then they used colours to symbolize hope, growth, happiness, etc. *Johnny* said this about the fan of his feather:

> The fan of my feather is all purple and green because I found a new direction in my teaching career that will be what I do for the rest of my career, which is incorporating anti-racist education. I think it is working to improve relationships with diverse students and bring to the surface issues happening within our students' lives.

Figure 5.6 Johnny's feather

Also, within the fourth PD session, participants compared anti-racist education to culturally responsive education which they learned from Dr. Verna St. Denis lecture. This was a critical conversation because it showed the participants the differences between the two educational

practices and asked them to reflect on how they use these practices within their classrooms. Several of the participants found that being culturally responsive is easier to do, which affirmed St. Denis's (2007) statement about teachers picking culturally responsive education because it allows teachers to be passive, innocent bystanders. These are some of the participants' thoughts on the similarities and differences between culturally responsive education and anti-racist education:

Bob

> I just wrote down one respects culture (culturally responsive education), and the other one respects the person (anti-racist education). And that is a dramatic difference. I mean, one helps the other kind of thing because you have the foundation of anti-racist teaching first. However, I think hands down, anti-racism education helps with building that relationship because, as I said, you are considering the person and not just saying, like, well, here is some information about this culture and that culture, and other things.

Tyler

> I think it is easier to be culturally responsive than to be anti-racist. It also feels safer. You are not asking anybody to get uncomfortable, and to sit with that discomfort and reflect on it when you are just working in a culturally responsive framework. Anti-racism requires hard conversations, and it requires people to challenge ways that they have been thinking and have been doing things in their professional and personal lives. So, I think it is a more challenging framework to work within, but I think it is also just so important that we are doing it with our students. If we do not work within an anti-racist framework, we deny our students the truth. Without acknowledging the history and why things are the way they are and why our students might be feeling marginalized or understanding

the reasons behind their experiences makes us not see our students for who they are. They are being lumped into just one culture with cultural responsiveness, and it does not look at the individual experience.

Moira

I do find it easier to be culturally responsive than anti-racist. I think that with anti-racism, even if you are a person who is well-versed in the area, there are still uncomfortable situations/conversations regardless of how comfortable you are with it. So, I think that stepping into that uncomfortable space is more complex than just being culturally responsive where it is not. You are not putting yourself out there as much when you are culturally responsive. You can work behind the scenes and step out whenever you want to. Anti-racism goes beyond the classroom and school in terms of everything in a student's life. If they start to think and see with an anti-racist lens, they will do better beyond their schooling and out in the community. It changes their perspective significantly.

Ani

It is for sure easier to be culturally responsive than anti-racist. You can be culturally responsive and racist without even knowing it. With anti-racism, you are having critical conversations, and sometimes they can be under uncomfortable situations. Where culturally responsive, you are more of an admirer where you participate in pow wows, go to culture fairs, and eat cultural food. It is more romantic and effortless. I have traveled worldwide, and I have always admired different cultures and never thought to link that with my privilege, and anti-racism education has shown me that. I am in the phase of recognizing where it is great to learn about cultures and immerse myself, but I need to

> recognize the disparities by doing this. This does affect building relationships with students because if we are not authentic with our students, the relationship can be seen as unauthentic and not genuine. We cannot be admirers when building relationships with students. We need to immerse ourselves in anti-racist education to create better relationships.

The a/r/tography process allowed participants to reflect and have critical conversations with one another. In addition, they had an opportunity to see their positionalities with new eyes and how it affects the diverse students and colleagues around them. This ignited a flame within some of the participants to address race, racism and whiteness through lived experiences and stories within their classrooms. Several of the participants' art pieces resonated strongly with the anti-racist teacher community and expressed complex educational understandings of anti-racist education. They found that learning about anti-racist education through art gave the opportunity for teachers to confront and challenge different forms of oppression and examine power structures within the education system.

Living the Questions

"I beg you…to be patient with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms and like books written in a very foreign tongue. Do not search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer" (Rilke, 1987, p.34)

Exploring topics in an a/r/tographical process allows a space to ask difficult and complex questions. When working within an a/r/tographic process, knowledge is co-created, and the learning that happens is not linear or a step-by-step progression. Within this study, the

participants found insights about the PD anti-racist topic areas and were living the questions within the anti-racist teacher community. A/r/tography also allowed openings as opportunities to engage in dialogue. The openings were opportunities to understand what is unseen and what is backgrounded in dialogues, questions, and actions. The visuals and verbal conversations during our PD sessions provided openings allowing for learning, teaching, and inquiry. The theme of living the questions captures the lingering questions, perplexities, and confusions that linked the participants' experiences and positionalities with the anti-racist education topics.

Throughout the study, new understandings of anti-racist education topics surfaced. Some questions arose, along with some aspects of misunderstandings and confusion. The development of original questions to understand additional questions is understood to be part of a/r/tography and a way of analyzing deeper meaning. Irwin et al. (2006) stated, “A/r/tographic inquiry emphasizes the process of inquiry, and therefore questions evolve as the shifting rationality found within the project informs the direction of the inquiry” (p.75). A living inquiry involves engaging with multiple dynamic realities that depend on context so, as Rilke pointed out, the goal is not to find easy answers.

Living in and Understanding Whiteness

Many of the participants in the study were of white settler descent. This study made them confront their whiteness and understand how whiteness affects their positionality and the diverse students within their classrooms. They were asked questions about Dr. Carmen’s Gillies and Dr. Sheelah McLean’s lectures. The themes within the lectures revolved around colour-blind ideology, deficit-based thinking, whiteness, white saviour syndrome, and white fragility. These critical conversations about whiteness were significant because when we do not talk about the consequences of whiteness, it creates a discourse where teachers feel as if nothing is missing or wrong in their lives or teaching practices. The schools they teach at are “good,” and the

communities they live in are "safe," yet this specific racialized branding results from macro-racism. Two of the participants in the study addressed this within their artwork and discussed how whiteness is ingrained within educational institutions and how it affects their personal narrative:

Tyler

> I have not spent a lot of time thinking about what it means to be white, to be honest, so I had to do a little bit of research. I read a few articles and some of the things that came up I put down in the center of my mask inside of a book. So, I use the book to represent the knowledge, resources, sources, institutions, and media that have taught me to be white or created that cultural identity. I have been impacted and wanted to put it on white paper, and I tried to do white writing over the top to show that it was like you could hardly see it. Unless you are looking hard for it, it becomes so ingrained that you are not even aware of it, shaping how you see the world. I read a few articles and some of the things that came up I put down in the center of a book. So, on top of the book, I put a school. Moreover, in the center, I put myself inside the bricks of the school and institution. The inspiration is that all that stuff that has shaped me and influenced who I am has guided me to become just like everyone else. Another piece within the institution where I perpetuate or uphold institutional worldviews and perspectives. I did not learn anything about being anti-racist or exploring these ideas until recently in my career. So, I feel like I have in the classroom upheld those values while not being aware that I was doing it. Then on the outside of the school, I have other hands reaching out, and those hands are meant to symbolize reaching out to different resources, perspectives, and groups like this research group. To help me see these worldviews and these ideas more apparent to me

and help me learn how to process them and become better in my classroom with my diverse students. They are meant to show how we can break down those institutions with the help of all these people. Then at the bottom, I had put some transparent tape over my mouth with the word "Shhhh" that part stood out to me, that silence. That is something that I have always struggled with where I am standing up against the status quo, especially if older men uphold it for some reason. Then I put underneath words like "mmm, but wait, no" down into the chest area. I did that to symbolize that choking feeling when you know that you should say something, but you do not feel like you have the words or the vocabulary or intuitiveness to understand what is happening or what someone said is wrong. I feel like until recently, I have dug into these ideas that I could not express, and now I want to fight those arguments that I have heard repeatedly all my life.

Figure 5.7 Tyler's internal mask

Johnny

So, I kind of frame my mask between two different elements. So, the top part of it is that's the government's Saskatchewan symbol and then the bottom part is my town' water tower where I grew up. That whole underside of the Mask I think is just how I grew up within a white middle class environment. Where almost everybody shared a really common background. The diversity in my town is very minimal and so when you're growing up in that context your kind of just take a lot of things for granted that are just kind of normative and wouldn't think about these sorts of things like whiteness. That's kind of what the piece of duct tape across the middle is about. It's kind of like how that blinds me from other experiences that are different from the ones that was raised with and how I can often be really surprised by things that are happening within the world because those things don't match with my experience. The reason why everything is underneath the government Saskatchewan flag is to address that power structure. I think within the context of the province that symbol for me is about the dominance of whiteness and about how easily I navigate through world compared to a lot of other people because I'm white. Everything is framed by the dominant narrative. I have a black background around the outside of the mask that parallels the night sky. I did this because the need for growth is kind of infinite and it's always behind the scenes but then also because there's a darkness sometimes. This darkness like whiteness creeps in without us being aware that it's even present. And so, we have to be ready to shine a light on it, especially within our own selves.

Figure 5.8 Johnny's internal mask

Tyler's narrative is echoed amongst teachers teaching within the education system where whiteness is so deeply rooted within education that it is invisible. However, when you finally see it and see that it is wrong it can give you discomfort of realizing how one is complicit in oppression. Having anti-racist teacher communities can help to support teachers like *Tyler* and *Johnny* to reflect on their experiences and to learn the vocabulary needed to have those critical conversations. This anti-racist teacher communities helped teachers to develop racial stamina to help address racism and strive to become anti-racist. The anti-racist teacher community also brought *Tyler* into a community of likeminded people who filled her with a positive and affirming energy to empower her to have critical conversations about race, racism, and whiteness.

Engaging in conversations about racism can be triggering and can provoke a range of defensive actions, feeling, and behaviors. Within the second PD anti-racist teacher community discussion, we discussed what white settlers could do to respond more constructively to conversations about race. *Moira*, *Marie Rose*, and *Stevie* who are Indigenous give their perspective on how whiteness effects them while giving advice to their white colleagues. Some of the dialogue that happened is shown below.

Johnny

> I am finding ways to build relationships and listen to diverse people's experiences and backgrounds better. As white people, we do not have to always respond to or [give a] rebuttal [to] their experiences. I like just listening, absorbing, and living within the discomfort of other people's experiences and stories. This helps me learn and reflect on my whiteness and what kind of privileges I have.

Jocelyn

> In many ways, I think just being open to hearing people is the biggest thing. As I am getting on in my career and more opportunities are opening up to explore racism, stereotypes, whiteness, and how institutions embed their ideas into us. I feel like I am more open to listening and being part of groups like this one and having those critical conversations. People need to be open to that so that they can learn and be more critical of their practices.

Moira

> I would say kind of like the same approach that I take in my teaching. Make sure that you never try to say that you know how diverse people feel, know who they are, or understand what they are going through. That is one major thing you should never do as a

white teacher. I think that getting or appreciating and hearing your diverse students' stories and voices is beneficial and not placing judgment on them. So, allowing students to share their stories and allow[ing] them to share their experiences but not put a value on those things or those thoughts is an excellent place to start.

Ani

We need to bring in stories within education, especially from diverse youth. I heard a quote something like "stories have souls." So, the stories of the students that have been impacted by racism are highly significant. Teachers need to hear these stories from their students and build a platform for them to use their voices. I think stories from diverse students and continued education are needed. It will be uncomfortable at times, but by making sure there is an openness to enter new territories, we will learn about these students in a constructive way with no judgment, shame, or guilt. I am done seeing numbers and statistics of our diverse youth in PD sessions. I want to listen and watch our students because there is great power behind that and significant research behind that as well.

Alexis

We need to listen to marginalized voices and not oppress them. When I think of personal narratives, we need to listen more and hear other people's stories. I think about how we stand on the earth and how we stand on the ground, and we must understand that there is a different narrative for each person. Listening is the first part of that, and then once you see that, there is a different narrative. Then you can start to ask some questions around that narrative. However, you must listen first because the person must feel like you are a safe person for them to tell their story too.

Marie Rose

We need to show that white privilege is very real, and we need to create advocacy. This helps with allyship and creates opportunities for people to see how they contribute to systematic racism. When they understand what they are doing, they can put it into action. White teachers need to understand how harmful oppression is and how it continues to be perpetuated within our classrooms because we do not have race conversations. Are you going to die on teaching that one book like “To Kill a Mockingbird?” That is what you are going to hang your hat on. We need to see action and if to start critiquing what we are teaching within our classrooms.

Stevie

I think having open dialogue and communication with people about race is beneficial. I associate the rigid side of my mask with whiteness but having groups and conversations like this one helps with collaboration and gives other perspectives to break down that rigidness. I have my heart on the Indigenous side because I always lead my life with an Indigenous worldview. It also helps me to break down that rigidness that whiteness has.

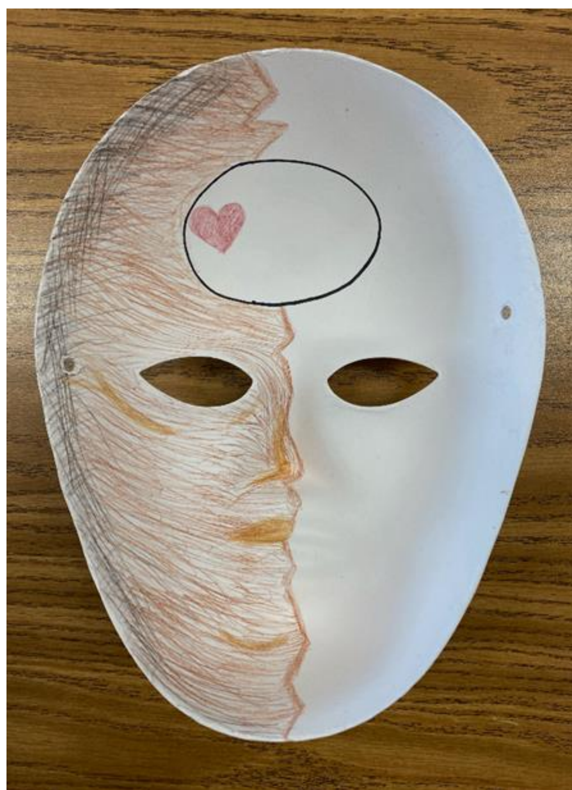

Figure 5.9 Stevie's internal mask

After discussing how to critically engage with talks about race, it brought us into discussions about white privilege and how it seeps into our daily lives and classrooms. Dr. Sheelah McLean discussed within her lecture how it is vital to have teachers understand and reflect on their whiteness. Teachers need to know the effects of their personal white narratives because it is found within classrooms, resources, curriculum, subject areas, etc. A teacher's whiteness can also be reflected onto their diverse and white students.

I asked the participants, "*how can we help our students and others within our school reflect on whiteness within their lives?*" This question got the participants thinking about how they would teach about whiteness and how they could teach about being an ally for diverse people. These are some of their responses:

David

I think it is a matter of understanding that they know what it is. Using the term whiteness and interchanging it with dominant narratives or worldviews shows students that whiteness can change itself in many different ways. But then having a lot of reflection geared towards giving them the opportunity with more than one occasion to reflect on it. Often this stuff is a journey, and I have been going through it for five or six years. Whiteness has been a topic that has come up in my classroom or in my own personal practice, and I am still learning a lot about it. Even the art projects that we do in this anti-racist [teacher community] allow people to reflect and frame it differently. This creates the opportunity for deeper learning and reflection on the topic.

Bob

I am not sure. As I said, I have not thought a lot about what it means to be white, and, as I was doing this, I was thinking about how that is a huge piece that is missing from my classroom. We will explore or have explored through pieces of literature the understanding of First Nations identity and how it is not stagnant and how there are stereotypes of it being trapped in the past and that sort of thing. We talk about what it means to be Indigenous today, but we do not ever do that when it comes to talking about being a white ally, and that piece is missing.

Twyla

It must be continuous work and rigor when reflecting on whiteness. Obviously, with people of all diverse backgrounds, it can be challenging. We focus on one thing, such as residential schools. Everyone talks about residential schools. It is like the only thing that you learn about Indigenous people. People get apathetic about it because they deal with

feelings of guilt or shame. So, I think how I would be approaching it with students is stating we are not stuck in the past. You know now what things have happened to us. So, like working hard on celebrating Indigenous resiliency! This is a chance to debunk that negative connotation that often comes with Indigenous people. The fact that most people through education are just learning about these systems is unfortunate. These systems have damaged Indigenous peoples, and we have fought to change those policies that make those systems possible.

Marie Rose

I think to help our students, we must provide history. We have to create opportunities for students to feel. They need to be able to experience it. Be put into uncomfortable situations and have time and space to talk it out. I think that is one thing: we often tend to end the lesson at the wrong time, and we let them go. I think it is essential to communicate that and give time for voices to be heard. We have to be mindful of our diverse students, especially regarding racism, not because it is heavy work but because it is a journey we need to walk with our white counterparts. Or otherwise, we will never see change. It comes down to educating and showing how deeply ingrained systemic racism is and how it is embedded within every aspect of society. But being an Indigenous person is hard, and you can quickly get so bogged down that you give up and lose hope, but there is hope. Our diverse students wear these invisible backpacks that are so heavy from our oppressive histories. We need to make our schools safe so that they can take them off for a moment. To be able to breathe because as soon as they walk out those doors, they deal with all the racism, inequities, and disparities within our society.

Alexis

> One of the things that we can do is present information that is not centered around Eurocentric ideas. People are diverse, and we need to appreciate them and their knowledge. Specifically, in my area of teaching, I look at the contributions that other artists have made from all over the world and the voice they give to my area of teaching, which is Art. I think that is the first thing that I can do too. We need to be conscientious when we look at people's understanding of who they are. They can see themselves in my class and others see them.

Having the ability to learn and reflect on whiteness is important in anti-racist action. It has the potential to be a powerful opportunity to accept responsibility to change oneself. The Indigenous participants, *Marie Rose,* and *Twyla*, discussed how we need to know the history but cannot be stuck in the past. As *Marie Rose* stated “Our diverse students wear these invisible backpacks that are so heavy from our oppressive histories. We need to make our schools safe so that they can take them off for a moment”. Being able to recognize, analyze, reflect, and create dialogue around whiteness is beneficial for teachers and their students. This helps in creating a safe space for diverse students to express themselves and share their lived experiences.

White Saviourism and Fragility

By sitting in the uncomfortable position of learning and growing with anti-racist education, the participants started to unpack the ingrained white saviourism, and white fragility that they see within society, in their classrooms and in themselves. Cammarota’s (2011) article on white saviorism grapples with one’s white fragility and how peoples favorite inspirational “rags to riches” movies promote the white saviour syndrome. The white saviour discourse renders diverse people incapable of helping themselves without the aid of the white saviour’s intelligence and civility. How did we not notice that films such as *The Freedom Writers*, *Avatar*,

The Help, *The Blind Side*, and *The Last Samurai* all had the same white saviour discourse? It can make some feel angry for "ruining" a perfect movie with today's political correctness, and it can make others feel sick to their stomach because we enjoyed aspects of these movies in our youth.

Within the anti-racist teacher community, I asked, "*what can be done to ensure that our white students do not develop white fragility that is so commonly found within our schools?*" Some of the participants' answers are as follows:

David

> I think it is making sure that we acknowledge our privilege and acknowledging it in the classroom. One thing that makes it easier is always situating myself right at the beginning and acknowledging that I am a settler. I will acknowledge my privilege, whether it is an able body or just understanding the things that make me sometimes. Acknowledging that I have that privilege and situating myself will allow students to recognize that I recognize that there is racism that can show itself and being open to the topic and knowing where I sit on that spectrum is important.

Johnny

> I think the thing that I have done that has been most effective recently is including the "*I am still here*" book into my grade 12 book study. Many of the topics about things happening in the world are brought up in that book, and students can share their experiences better. My diverse students can share what it was like to grow up in Saskatchewan, or my immigrant students talking about the experience of coming to Canada and what they experienced in their own country. It allows for a much larger conversation to occur, and the students are very receptive to each other's experiences. That is far more effective than me standing at the front of the class and telling them about

things. They hear about it from each other, and questions come up from those discussions, and they have the opportunity to transcend the classroom. One of my diverse students offered prayer and did half of it in her first language, which I thought was surprising because it was not encouraged or talked about or anything, but she felt free to do that. I would guess it is partly because of the freedom that came from having conversations in class. She felt empowered to be able to do something like that.

Twyla

When people see Indigenous people as victims, there are many different things that happen with that. You get people who want to be the heroes, the vigilantes, and all those things, and then people who just get turned off or overwhelmed. I have heard and seen many crying and people visibly upset about what has happened to Indigenous people, but then nothing goes anywhere after that. So, helping those students and giving them the tools to be comfortable and not uncomfortable within their education is critical. We need to have critical conversations that do not have blame attached to them because I think many people just get turned off from that. People get turned off by it when people are aggressive, and then it is hard to get others on board. However, looking through time, even with the Black Lives Matter movement and just watching the white people stand up and use their voices for good, is so powerful. So even having those stories embedded into your sessions can help show how allyship can look and eliminate white fragility.

Moira

There are a lot of apprehensions. I would tell white students to get involved because of white fragility. But also, it is because they may think differently or have racist parents or whatever else. However, speaking with them would be the first thing I would do to

> address white fragility. The first thing is that people need to feel uncomfortable, like when you are talking about race, white fragility, and white privilege, if people are not feeling uncomfortable, it is not working. So, people need to be uncomfortable to be able to move through it. That is like with anything; if it is not hard, you will not see real change.

These participants' answers show how they keep their students engaged in anti-racist education even when students respond to racial stress with expressions of white saviourism and fragility. When learning and teaching anti-racist education teachers need to recognize white saviourism and fragility within themselves and their students to ultimately lead to anti-racist action.

White Guilt and Shame

Dr. Sheelah McLean discussed in her lecture that white people need to feel uncomfortable when taught about racism, privilege, and dominant narratives. But creating this uncomfortableness needs to be done in a critical supportive environment. However, white guilt and shame do not help white people or diverse people because they stop critical reflection from happening "because whites end up feeling individually blameworthy for racism" (Leonardo, 2009, p.264). Leonardo (2009) further adds that when this happens, white people become "overly concerned with whether or not they look racist rather than exploring the structural aspects of racism" (, p.264). There needs to be a meaningful change where people move past fear and learned apathy. One of the participants in my study discussed guilt and shame and how it has affected her teaching:

Bob

> So, my mask is supposed to come across as like a fabric weave. As it continues to develop through my lifetime, it continues to come together. You can see the whiteness of the background and its symbolism of how my life is getting weaved together on top of it.

The different threads of the fabric have assorted colours and represent different things. The black thread is wider and represents guilt and shame and the journey I went on to understand what it means to be an anti-racist white ally. It also represents my understanding of what whiteness means and delving into all these different things and feeling like, "oh my goodness! I have been a part of this?!? and I promoted this?!?" I have not understood these topics, and I cannot believe that we have not concentrated on them within our curriculum or in schools. I do not think my guilt and shame will ever go away because it has been woven into my life. It weaves through in and out. I need to come to terms with reassessing how I think and act so that I do not promote those colonial backgrounds. The green thread represents growth, and it is about why shame, guilt, and those types of things happen to me. I am also growing up in that and getting the capacity to understand why that happens and how I can move past the shame and guilt. The yellow represents fear and sometimes intimidation of not speaking out. There is a fear of not wanting to be socially ostracized when talking in groups. It is like teaching people to be allies or being in a room with people who have challenging thoughts and behaviors is scary to me. Then the red thread represents anger, where in times of different emotions come over me. I become angry because of what I hear people say and wonder how that can be possibly said?!?! How can you not see what you are promoting right now? So, it is a weave of emotions, and as that weave gets more prominent, I think it makes more impact on my whiteness. And of course, as the weave gets thicker, that whiteness disappears, but it is always in the background. So just acknowledging that as well.

Figure 5.10 Bob's internal mask

Bob sees herself in a space of always growing and understanding her guilt and shame. This does not stop her from participating in anti-racist practices. She locates herself as a eager anti-racist white ally. Even though she frequently experiences defensiveness when encountering the ways in which white supremacy emerges within her life, she responds with self-reflection and critical examination of it.

Anti-racism also "forces white people to sit in their discomfort and acknowledge that they continue to benefit from white supremacy, which is often accompanied by emotions of guilt and shame" (Codding, 2021, p.165). Shotwell (2011) discussed how people need to "lean into the sharp points of discomfort when discussing racism rather than cushioning ourselves from it" (p.80). People need to work to understand guilt and shame so that it can be used as a

transforming tool. White people will have a challenging time feeling good when immersed in anti-racist work. People can move out of guilt and shame where they either reproduce the dominant narrative or act on it and see racism and whiteness as intolerable. Participants within the study started to shift from positions of not being aware of systems of oppression and discrimination to positions of understanding how social change is needed. *Tyler* discussed her experiences with learning about anti-racist education:

Tyler

> Anti-racism requires hard conversations, and it requires people to challenge ways that they have been thinking about for a long time are ways that they have been doing things and feel very normal. So, I think it is a more challenging framework to work within, but I think it is also just so important that we are doing it with our students. If we do not work within an anti-racist framework, we deny our students the truth. Without acknowledging the history and why things are the way they are and why our students might be feeling marginalized or understanding the reasons behind their experiences makes us not see our students for who they are.

As *Tyler* expressed, remaining in critical conversations with anti-racist education proves to be an important part of anti-racist practices, as it provides a space and support for critically reflecting on our history. When the participants engaged in the anti-racist PD topics the art helped them to live within the questions asked. Art helped to promote active reflection and reflective action, where the participants were able to employ anti-racism practices into their lived experiences.

Connecting and Re-connecting

"Rhizomatic relationality is essential to a/r/tography as a methodology of situations… rhizomes resist taxonomies and create interconnected networks with multiple entry points" (Irwin et al., 2006, p.71)

Within the anti-racist teacher community, connections and re-connections surfaced in thoughts and practices related to the anti-racist education topics and the participant's positionalities. Participants spoke about their unique narratives as individuals and how they are connected to others simultaneously. Some depicted new connections and reflected on their meanings, while others re-connected with previous relationships with the anti-racist topics. The participants' connections were challenging, surprising, and complex but turned into new understandings when shared through art and dialogue. The connections and re-connections with the participants' experiences and creative practices were illuminated through the a/r/tographic rendering of reverberations. The connecting and re-connecting was a significant and repeated piece within the study because it helped participants understand their personal and professional identities and experiences within the classroom.

As explained above, a/r/tography explores the connections within a process that is called rhizomatic. Irwin and de Cosson (2004) explained the rhizomatic process as:

> Rhizomatic plants send out a network of underground roots, and the networks are connected but have no starting or ending point. They join at nodes that send up new root stems above the ground to become new plants. Meanings in a/r/tography are never static, there is no hierarchy, and complex connections (underground) are not always visible, just like rhizome roots. (p.33)

The rhizomatic relationality of a/r/tography makes inquiries "emergent, generative, reflexive and responsive" (Irwin et al., 2006, p.75). There are no beginnings but several entry points when

rhizomatic connections are used. Within this study, the rhizomatic philosophy on connections and re-connections was used. This was a metaphor in a/r/tography to assist in exploring the perspective of knowledge as being alive, continually growing, adapting, and changing, which repeatedly happened in the study (Irwin, 2008).

The dialogue within the anti-racist teacher community showed connections and re-connections repeatedly, even when it was unexpected. The participants were unaware of the significance of their experiences and artistic creations and how they gave them a deeper understanding of the anti-racist topic areas. Being more conscious of connecting and re-connecting gave a nuanced understanding of the anti-racist education topics. The dialogue within the anti-racist teacher community evolved around connections that participants made within their own lives and, specifically, with their diverse students. Being able to re-connect to stories of their educational practice with the new understanding of anti-racist education was a source of development. The participants saw the anti-racist teacher community as a space where they could share their lived experiences within a supportive environment. New insights often emerged for the storyteller as well as other participants. As Fonseka, Taiwo, and Sethi (2021) stated, "[creating art] allows participants with intersectional experiences to share their stories and insights with others, offering knowledge that would not otherwise be accessible to those outside of the experiences" (p.47). This study allowed participants to use their art to share mutual knowledge, have open dialogue, and create and understand stories that would have otherwise not been seen or silenced within the dominant narratives of the education system.

Risks of a Single Story

Since most of the participants were of white settler descent, understanding the dominant narratives within the educational institutions and how they are connected to their diverse students was crucial. McLean (2018) has explored the "white people have struggled too, just pull yourself

up by your bootstraps" discourse that is continuously targeted at our diverse students in prairie settler culture. McLean (2018) described how this viewpoint feeds into a very grave falsehood: "the story that my family built a life from nothing works to make economic inequality between white settlers and Indigenous people seem natural and normal" (p. 32). This quotation connects to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's (2009) TedTalk, "*The Danger of a Single Story*," describing how a single story can distort history and strip people of their dignity. The participants discussed the connections of how dominant narratives affect their personal and professional identities and how these dominant narratives play into their classroom practices:

Johnny

> Well, I think things that make up dominant narratives make me blind to some things until those things become apparent to me. Like some things, I could prep for, but I am not a marginalized person, so I cannot prep for some of the inadequacies within the classroom. In the last year and a half in my school, I felt unprepared and had holes in my knowledge and understanding. It took me more by surprise. It is hard to know what you do not know until it becomes apparent because you realize that there is something that is missing, and that is to do with my own personal narrative. Understanding there is not one single narrative but multiple is important.

Tyler

> So, I included a few words there that came to mind as I reflected on this. In some ways, I think that it has affected me and the way I teach or how I approach teaching. I included the word ignorance because I thought again of my story or my family's history and how our experiences have been celebrated and reinforced through different media. This has left me very ignorant of many other narratives that exist out there within my school

community. Many of the narratives I teach in class to my students are normative and status quo. I do not think that I had always questioned that throughout my teaching practice until more recently, when I began this work. So that is an area that I need to continue to work on and that I need to continue to work with my students and make sure that lots of different narratives are present and celebrated.

David

When I teach Indigenous studies, I could see my race and gender as barriers to my diverse students. I think my position in the class could be a barrier to some Indigenous students because when I teach, I do not have an Indigenous lens, my lens is still out of white male with privilege, so I can see how that could impact students—being a male it can be seen as being more intimidating. Maybe unwelcoming. But I want to learn different perspectives and learn the side of history from Indigenous people. Understanding history from the white settler side is dangerous and can send the wrong messaging to students.

Stevie

I am Indigenous, but I often find that students do not know that. Some assume, but a lot would not just assume. So, I often try to share that with my students and talk about my life and my family a little bit to hopefully make some of those connections with my students. I always try to let them know that I am very open. Like, I do not think there is anything that a kid could tell me that I would be upset about or like anything like that. I think that kind of attributes back to how I was raised.

From the participants narratives it was expressed that we do not live in a vacuum where there is only one single story. Our experiences are constantly connecting and re-connecting with one another. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) emphasized the importance of being skeptical of the "single story" – stories about events, groups, or societies that are simplified, unquestioned, and told only from one particular perspective. For example, Lee, Kumashiro, and Sleeter (2015) outline the typical stereotype of Asian Americans being perfectly assimilated minorities and how the reoccurrence of this stereotype throughout history has marginalized the diverse experiences of an entire ethnic population. This reproduction of knowledge and perception of identity told through racialized and white supremacist histories works to support systems of power and privilege while diluting other's culture, experience, identity, and the complexity of the broader context. In the third PD session, the participants viewed their own narratives through collage and how their narratives connect, re-connect, disrupt, and combine.

I asked the participants, "*what are some of the most common disruptions within your diverse students' narratives*?"

Johnny

> Depends on what type of student. If you are talking about students who are coming from out of the country or from refugee camps, they have disruptions. Usually, they do not speak English, or their parents do not come simultaneously. Those would all be significant disruptions that have to do with coming from a different country of origin. If it is Indigenous students, it is often because of family experiences and different traumas from their past backgrounds. I would not necessarily be aware of it, but they carry forward, and sometimes those disruptions are harder to deal with because of what I represent as a white male. My whiteness as a teacher could also be a disruption to my

marginalized students' stories. In the last ten years of my teaching, I found that white culture causes many more traumas, and students carry them more pronouncedly. As teachers, we need to know what supports are available for students and what supports need to be created to address these disruptions. A tremendous amount of education is needed for teachers to respond to the different types of traumas and disruptions.

Tyler

So, I was thinking about that a lot. I have so many students with so many diverse backgrounds and experiences. I feel like many of my diverse students have had to experience racism or [have] been exposed to racism at different points in their narratives. Many of my students come from different countries and have had to leave their countries for various reasons to relocate. They are missing that connection with their families, which has caused disruptions within their narratives and education.

Twyla

An interruption to diverse student stories would be the disconnection from who they are. An example would be that Indigenous students do not [always] know which communities they are connected to. This socially locates us and connects us to our language, which there is a disconnection to language. You not only see that in Indigenous communities but also in newcomer families. You can see that they start to break down when they no longer speak their native language; they become Canadianized. There is a loss of identity and voice. There is an interruption in terms of where they live. So really, sometimes struggling with a sense of community because of those moves in their life and also with friendships as a result of that. That has been a huge theme for me where I have worked

where I have students that were homeless, couch surfing, living with different family members, so that inconsistency—also going to many schools because of that.

Ani

My EAL students are trying to fit into this Canadian Circle. They also still have to fit into their cultural community as well. They are trying to come here and fit into this Canadian identity. They have this double battle, they got to fit into the Canadian world, and then they still got to fit into their world. Do you know what I mean? It is so layered when I just think about that. When I worked in the inner city, many Indigenous students had struggles where they did not even have a place to stay at night, bouncing around from home to home to home. Unbelievable. But you know they have so many interruptions, but they show up at school ready to learn. They have so many-layered interruptions and try to understand that, you know, like really looking at the whole student.

David

I think I can be a disruption in my students' narrative. Some of my students of colour, Indigenous, or Black students do not open up to me as quickly because of what I represent. I think for them, at times, it takes a lot of work. That is the most significant barrier—the most considerable disruption to me, understanding or hearing what my students have to say. A lot of the time, they just do not want to talk to me because I am the male white guy. Sometimes my connections with students do not happen within the classroom setting. I learn about my students outside of the classroom, where more connections are made, and then those carry over inside the classroom. But, you know, um, when I asked tough questions, that might allow for good conversation, and students just are not ready to share. And I think that might or most often have times to do with me

being white. I do not have the same collective experience, and they think that I might not get it, or I might not understand.

Stevie

The displacement is a huge thing. I am First Nation person that lived on reserve till I was four years old, then moved to Saskatoon, where I have lived all my life. I do not know my language, and there were always many assumptions about me as a student, and teachers would call on me to answer First Nation questions. That made me quite self-conscious and shy. A lot of the time, especially when Indigenous topics got brought up when I was in elementary school and high school, I would feel my face turn red, and I would look away because I would be so scared that they were going to call on me and assume that I knew these things. I can identify with this with my students because I am unsure what their thoughts are and where they are at with their culture and knowledge. That translates into my teaching, too. Sometimes, I can come across as not as confident or shy within my classroom. So, I feel for the students that are displaced and do not know their whole story or identity.

Having critical conversations with active listening is important. Everyone has a story that can help others understand and relate to others lived experiences. As Mehl-Madrona (2005) stated:

Telling our story is a creative act of communion formation. When we speak, relationships form. Telling is an act of relating. Connections are created. Responses are expected. A community arises, made up of us and our audience. The audience is never passive. We expect the audience to react-to encourage us, to sigh with us, to cry with us, to get angry with us. In this way we know our story is being heard. (p.131)

Teachers need to be given the opportunity to analyze and challenge their own stories to recognize their own perceptions, attitudes, and understandings. With critical reflection, teachers have the potential to improve their skills as anti-racist teachers.

Personal stories connected to Canadian histories

Dr. Lynn Caldwell discussed in her lecture about the breaking down of single-sided perspectives and dominant narratives. By doing this it calls for the need to connect and re-connect with our perceptions of our personal, family, national, cultural, and contextual histories. We want to not only question how we got here but also examine how our beliefs, values, and ideas are developed and connected within a larger Canadian context. To bring people's attention to these factors, Lee, Kumashiro, and Sleeter (2015) describe how they analyzed the "four P's" with their students. That is, what Pushed your family out of their country? What Pulled them to North America? What Punished them on arrival? What Privileges them? Several of these questions presented by Lee, Kumashiro, and Sleeter were presented within the participants' collages. Here are the participants' re-connections to the stories of their personal narrative collage:

Johnny

> This art project made me feel more vulnerable than the other ones. There are lots of things in here with my family history. So, the bottom row stuff represents my family when we went bankrupt when I was in grade six. We owned many properties in Rosetown. When all the mortgage rates jumped in the eighties, my family could not cover all the payments. My family was solidly middle class, and then suddenly, we were struggling month to month and not making ends meet. When this was happening, huge things happened in my life. My two big safeguards and weight were my Parish Community in Rosetown and Saint Theresa's because they gave me the families that kind

of raised me, took care of me, and provided for all my emotional needs and support. I needed what I did not have at home. The picture of books is there because books have always been an escape for me, a source of strength, a place where I built up my inadequacies and rebuilt them. On the other side, I have a picture of an arrow that relates to my students because I could have done lots of things. I chose to teach because I wanted to help people, give them hope, and be able to recognize their value and be able to see themselves.

Figure 5.11 Johnny's personal collage

Bob

So, this is my collage, and it shows the background of my life. My grandma was a war bride whom she married a Canadian soldier and then came over to Canada. One of the main narratives that would go on in my household is that manners equal morals. I was expected as a person, a female, to be pretty but not too pretty, funny but not too funny, smart but not too smart. I was raised to find a good man, marry, and have the white picket fence. There is the "sssshhhhh" at the top of the collage because I have been shushed for

expressing my opinions. I talk about different things, and I am honest and transparent, which is unacceptable in my family. The letter in the middle discusses manners and morals and discusses the oppression that comes through that. It discusses how people should act and go about life. This collage is aggressively organized. And that just kind of talks about the oppression of women. There is always a fine line of balance between manners and morals. However, we need to raise people up like our marginalized students so that their narratives are heard even if they go against the normativity of manners and morals.

Figure 5.12 Bob's personal collage

Tyler

I have a colonial kind of story. All my ancestors came from various places in Europe. So, I have a boat and European flag to represent that, and then they settled in Western Canada, where they did lots of farming and worked for the Hudson Bay Company. I have a Hudson Bay symbol on there. So much of the information I have has been transmitted through gatherings, family holidays, family dinners, and celebrating traditions. That is

probably where I picked up most of my stories. I also included a picture of pierogies with my family's code of arms to represent some of the cultural symbols that I saw growing up which triggered conversations, told me a narrative, and reinforced that narrative. I included the books *Little House on the Prairie* and *Green Gables*. I included those to show how literature, media, and other things I was exposed to, reinforced, normalized, and celebrated my narratives. I included a picture of me in a Ukrainian outfit, and it was for a cultural celebration presentation at school. My knowledge was again attained through school, like through projects, or was celebrated or normalized or reinforced through activities. I had no disruptions that I could think of in my personal narrative.

Figure 5.13 Tyler's personal collage

Alexis

When I think about my family history, two things come to mind for me. The fact I just finished showing the Allen Sapp video, and one of the elders at the very end of the video talks about finding your space. Once you find your space, you can move forward in this world. Thus, I started to think about how we find our space through our family history

because of our history, our families have found their space. The history I have done is in two parts here. I have the Red River settlement from my family on my dad's side. Furthermore, I have an aerial view of Saskatchewan with crops because my mom is farming. My mom is Irish and Scottish, and they are storytellers, and nothing is written. They tell stories about their history. I started to think about how that history has been passed down to me as well.

On the other hand, my dad can open binders, and our history is in there. My grandmother was the second of 19 children, and my grandmother's father was the third of 11. Thus, my dad has 84 first cousins in the Manitoba area. Some are French Canadian, and some are Metis. My family is French Canadian. It is interesting even how history gets passed down, you know, in different families, so I decided to concentrate on that because the other thing that I started to think about in terms of family history is how we take up space. It relates to how our ancestors used their space once they understood it. Those were things that came to mind. Like my mom's family is very much, "you grow where you are planted," and my dad's family planted and moved onward. I started to think about how my students are not just the stories they tell around their families. It is around how they see their space. How they are learning is affected by how they see their space and how they have used it. I will give you an example. Sometimes, when I get students who come to my classroom like newcomers to Canada, I am intrigued by how they learn because it is tied to their history of how the people before them have learned and how things have been passed down to them. I see this all the time. When they come, they want to continue that type of learning here. With Indigenous students, they bring with them

their space and how they have learned to this point. Those were the things that came to mind when I made this collage.

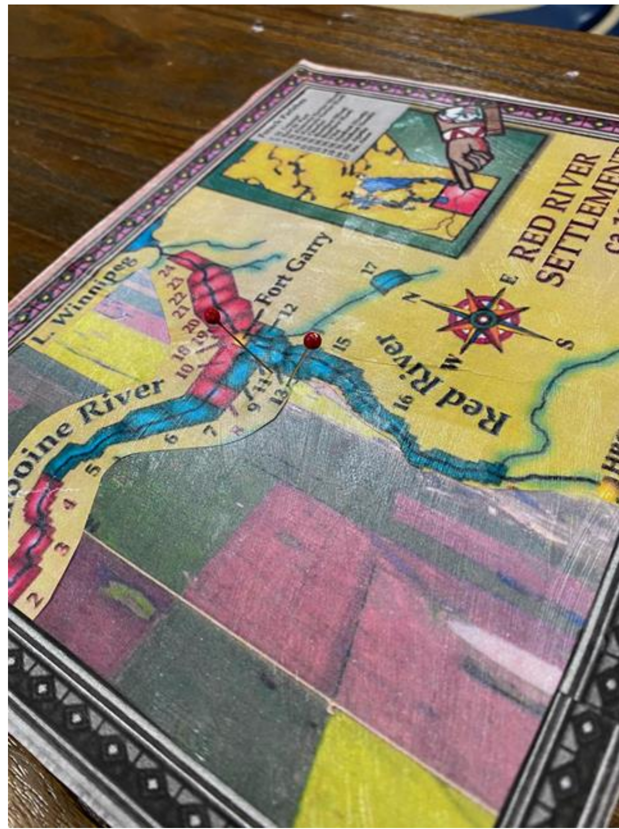

Figure 5.14 Alexis's personal collage

Marie Rose

Let us start with the backdrop first, which is about my connections to the land. I have land, a river, and a lake. I feel like water is so healing for me. I am just super connected to the water. This could be because my grandma lived right across from a lake, and her place was a big part of my life. I have a Métis stash, and I made it like a window looking in and at road allowance people because that is a part of my history. I have a picture of a woman with her baby on the back and the arrow going backward. It represents resisting colonization and what it has done to my family and me. I feel like it is stolen my identity as a Métis person. I am on this journey of reclaiming, and the buffalo represents that. I

also have a heart, and in the center of the heart, it is my mom because she is my life-giver. She just showed me natural resiliency, strength, and unconditional love. I lost her at an early age, which was tough on me. I have a picture of my kids, husband, and nieces. They are my driving force in life and are my foundation for everything I do.

Furthermore, what a real father is supposed to be. He inspires me and is just taking me into the family. I have a picture of a thistle because, as Indigenous people, we are beautiful, resilient, and no matter what, you cannot kill us! We are still here. You cannot get rid of us. We are not going anywhere. Our students need access to land, anti-racist practices, and reclaiming of Indigeneity. I have a picture of a strong Indigenous woman wearing a superman costume, but I have it cut to show a broken-hearted person. Because there is so much, and we need to wear our armor. We still armor up, and it does not matter what keeps coming at us because we keep going and persevere. However, even under that hard armor, there is still hurt. Sometimes I need to show myself and share my hurts to help educate.

Figure 5.15 Marie Rose's personal collage

Ani

In my collage, I have words refugees, Ireland, and travel. I have a picture of British paratroopers jumping out of a plane because my dad was a British paratrooper. I have some quotes where one says, "I am a strong woman because a strong woman raised me" because my mom was really like the glue that held the family together. I have a quote that "sometimes being a big brother is even better than being a superhero." My brothers are protective of me. My parents are immigrants and moved to Canada. My brothers were born in Ireland. My dad was a British paratrooper, and his job was to go into Ireland, attack, and fight. He fell in love with an Irish woman, then moved to Ireland. My family was targeted, and my mom had guns held to her head because she was married to a British guy. So, they moved to Canada, and then about a year and a half later, they had

me. When I was in grade three, my dad pulled me out of school and took me backpacking around Europe in a VW van. It was the first time I saw a poor homeless man in France. I am from small-town Saskatchewan, so sheltered, and I could not comprehend it when I saw this man. When I look at my career now, my first teaching job was in the inner city of Saskatoon. I worked with many students who were in gangs or kicked out of school or different things like that. Now I am an EAL teacher. I always had to work with students that needed more than academics from a school. I reflect that based on how my parents were treated as immigrants to Canada.

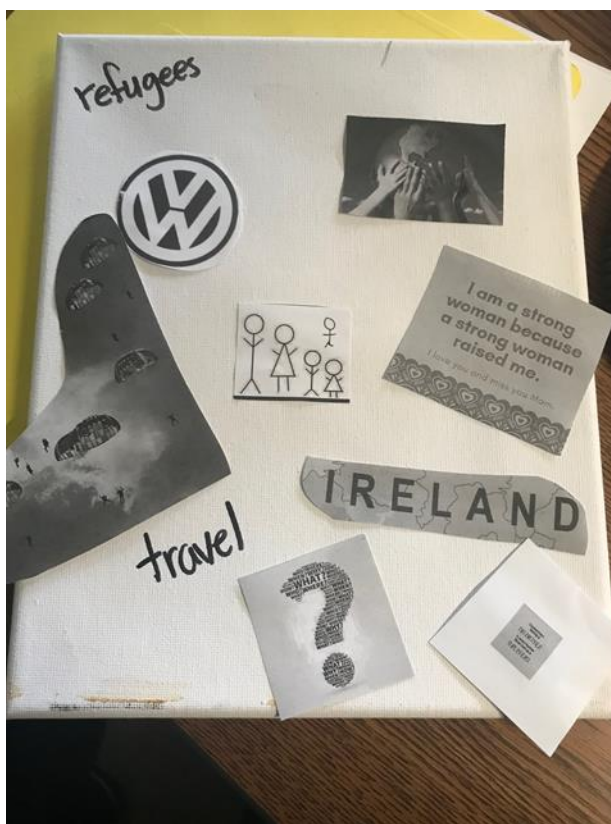

Figure 5.16 Ani's personal collage

David

I was born and raised on the Prairies, and both of my parents came from farming communities. The grain tower and the wheat fields and crops represent that part of my

life. Spend a lot of time just doing things in and around the province as a kid: traveling and camping with my parents and sisters. Then moving over to the right-hand side, where it says Chitek lake, there is a picture of the beach and trees. That is where I spend a lot of time in the summers. My parents built a cabin out there, and that is the beach on Pelican Lake First Nation, and that is like a five-minute walk away from where I spent all my summers. That is a place I know well, and I could tell stories about the shoreline and like climbing from the rocks along that ridge where the trees start over to where my parents' cabin is. I am connected to that place.

I have posters of the Canadian governments' recruitment process in the 1870s. This was Clifford Sifton and Frank Oliver's initiative to settle the interior portions of Canada. They created these recruitment posters and tried to attract farmers into Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta, especially from Europe. That is how my family was recruited. A lot of the settlers within Saskatchewan were people who had the same background as I do. These are the parts of who I was, but I did not know them like I had no idea. This is stuff that I did not know. Until I became a teacher and started investing in learning about it. I always ask myself: why am I here? Why are we in this space? Why do I occupy myself in the territories? Why do we spend our time here? Why we live here was no accident, I suppose, but it was very calculated in terms of how we would see why we are in Saskatchewan. It was that invisible thing that always hung over the top of us.

Figure 5.17 David's personal collage

Many participants found the connection and re-connection with creative practice to understand anti-racist educational topics to be highly effective. The connections formed to the anti-racist education materials were more profound and sustained due to the a/r/tographic process. Participants could express ideas and concepts that can be difficult to express only in words. The connection and re-connection to participants' positionalities gave a better understanding of how they present themselves within their classrooms.

Coming to know through Art

"Art is coming face to face with yourself" (Pollock, n.d.)

Using a/r/tographic approaches within this study assisted me to understand the data holistically and guided by the study's research questions and theoretical foundations. This methodology allowed me to be creative and critical in my analysis, move freely through the data, and relate it to personal and professional knowledge systems.

A/r/tography practice often draws people together with a shared interest that is important to participants, such as the anti-racist topic areas. Irwin (2008) described participants within

a/r/tography as "singular plural beings" (p.72) who place great value in the group commitment to relationality within a living inquiry. Ambiguity and uncertainty are not avoided but instead appreciated. Irwin (2008) further stated that "becoming a practitioner is less about practice and more about becoming…[and] the emphasis for learning is on an awareness of our selves-in-the-making" (p.73). Participants truly opened themselves up to one another through both words and art. In doing so, they created a space that uniquely illuminated many layers of understanding about anti-racist education.

Participants were very enthusiastic about the a/r/tography sessions that explored anti-racist education topics and included very open expressions of art. They were creating new understandings of themselves and their classroom practices. Participants affirmed the value of the arts in all forms. Within the anti-racist teacher community discussions, it was affirmed that sharing the art pieces that participants created was inspiring and engaging for them. For example, within the first PD session, *Johnny* said he has a new perspective on Indigenous staff and students based on what he saw within *Stevie*'s art pieces. Several participants also have a new view on art and how it can capture and produce meaning around different societal issues. The feathers that the participants created have found homes on the participants' classroom walls and are a reminder to be an anti-racist teacher within their classrooms.

Figure 5.18 Marie Rose's feather

Figure 5.19 Bob's Feather

Figure 5.20 David's feather

Figure 5.21 Jocelyn's feather

Two different understandings came about while creating the art pieces. One understanding is that art is a structured process with the goal of producing a product. The second understanding was that the purpose of the art was to explore, discover, enrich lives, and learn about anti-racist education. Both ideas have value, but the participants liked the latter because it illustrated the practice of a/r/tography that they were living out. Many participants enjoyed

creating art, and there was no pressure to create a masterpiece. When I discussed a/r/tography with the participants I discussed how the process to which you got to your final art piece is where the learning process happens.

Conclusion

The use of art helped participants reflected on their learnings of anti-racist education. At the last session, one participant said, "I just do not want this to end!" I understand positive affirmations of the anti-racist PD sessions does not necessarily translate into being anti-racist. I do not know if the teachers are doing anti-racist activities within their classrooms. However, participants are currently brainstorming ideas to determine how an anti-racist teacher community like this one could continue to meet, learn, explore, and create. As the process of a/r/tography evolved through the four PD sessions, the understanding of anti-racist education unfolded. It was a very moving and powerful experience for all involved. It was as though the participants contributed to creating a beautiful art piece that expressed their deepest feelings and understandings of anti-racist education as the art forms emerged.

CHAPTER SIX: Reflections

Introduction

This anti-racist education study has shown how teachers can develop an awareness of how their positionalities can affect their classroom practice. The participants' stories and artworks reveal how important it is to recognize racism and white supremacy and how it affects diverse people. By using anti-racist education, art, and arts-based research methodologies, I analyzed how urban high school teachers were responding to racism and engaging in anti-racist practices. This study provides an understanding of how art can be used to teach teachers about anti-racist education and promote anti-racist practices (internal reflection and external action), teachings, and systemic change.

In this chapter, I explain how the findings of this study fit within previous research on anti-racist educational practices. Then I focus on the implications the study has prior to considering the limitations of this study. I also provide recommendations for future research into anti-racist education practices and then what I learned through my Ph.D. journey.

Findings of Study

Anti-racist teacher communities are a form of critical professional development that differs from the normalized, anti-dialogical form of professional development by promoting engagement in critical conversations and anti-racist practices (Kohli et al., 2015; Sleeter, 2008; Smith & Redington, 2010). This study builds on previous research into the use of anti-racist teacher communities and art as tools for engaging teachers in anti-racist education. I will explain the findings of this study as they relate to the literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three.

Learning about their Positionality

Research studies on teachers learning about race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education suggest that teachers need to reflect on their positionality within their work, possess self-awareness, and be able to self-reflect on what they do in their classrooms. Within the anti-racist teacher communities, teachers learned about their positionality and how it relates to other people. The participants became more aware of the attitudes and biases based on their own lived experiences. Having the participants partake in a set of lectures, structured art activities, and focus group discussions allowed them to engage in different theories, perspectives, and approaches to anti-racist education. The opportunity to use art gave the participants a way to critically examine their positionality, take risks, and see failures as part of their anti-racist learning journey. When the participants discussed their own biases and struggle with racism, it not only made them aware of their positionality but also allowed other participants to be open to the process as well. This process opened them up to the idea of discussing issues around race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education.

A/r/tography assisted the participants in understanding their positionality while making them more aware of their artist/researcher/teacher role. As the participants made art around race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education, they identified connections to their daily interactions, living and working environments, and immediate relationships- sometimes as if they were seeing them for the first time. As *Jocelyn* stated:

> I really liked creating my mask and painting. I really think that I need to spend more time reflecting on my teaching practices and how my positionality may affect all of my students. Hearing from everyone else also helped me to understand where other people are coming from and how their lived experiences are found within their classrooms.

The participants' learning about their positionality was rhizomatic, where they engaged in the in-between spaces of artmaking, researching, and teaching. By engaging in the in-between space, they were able to re-think and re-live their lived experiences and how these experiences affected their classroom practice. The participants became open and vulnerable, which helped them to reflect, respond, and relate to their positionality within the framework of their everyday experiences, growing their awareness of injustices in their own worlds. These activities helped the participants to reflect on and confront complex ideas- such as race, racism, and whiteness- that can be difficult to discuss. As *Twyla* said:

> Making art triggered some of my old memories of myself and my experiences within the classroom. But I love art for that reason because it made me think about my lived experiences, how my lived experiences connect with others, and how my lived experiences affect my teaching practices.

Having the participants reflect on their positionality through art gave them an opportunity to become more aware of how whiteness and racism have affected their own thinking. This study gave the participants an opportunity to analyze their positionality critically while allowing them to take risks within the learning process.

Supportive Environments to Critically Confront Racism and Whiteness

The literature shows that one-off forms of anti-racist professional development are unsuccessful at generating change and supporting anti-racist practices among teachers (McManimon & Casey, 2018; Schniedewind, 2005; Sleeter, 2008). Anti-racist teacher communities need to create supportive environments for critically confronting racism and whiteness over a prolonged period of time (Codding, 2021). This study engaged urban high school teachers from across a school division in critical conversations throughout half the school

year; it began in October with a discussion on race and deficit thinking and concluded in February with a discussion about the differences between anti-racist education and culturally responsive education. This relatively prolonged engagement with topics of race, racism, and whiteness helped teachers begin to critically examine their positionalities and their classrooms. This study's anti-racist teacher community also created the actualization of a third space in which the participants engaged in the in-between spaces. Leggo et al. (2013) used a metaphor of a third space to describe the in-between space in which the participants resided. Leggo et al. (2013) stated:

> Ecologists describe the place where two ecological habitats such as a meadow and a forest meet as an ecotone [or a third space], a place of tension (from oikos or habitation, and tonos or tension). The [third space] is the place where two habitats meet and overlap, where they extend into one another and create a place of richness and fruitfulness that is only possible because of the overlapping. In other words, the [third space] is a space of productive tension where life can be more complex and intense than in either of the distinct habitats. (pp. 252-253)

This in-between/third space was a place of tension for some people with regards to addressing their own whiteness and racism within their own lives. However, it was also a space where the teachers created a community of trust, vulnerability, mutual respect, and support where meanings and understandings could be discussed, reconstructed, and become something else.

Anti-racist scholars have explained the significance of having a balance in creating a space that is both supportive and critical by providing support, accountability, and critical feedback throughout the process (de Novais, 2019; Kohli et al., 2015; Michael & Conger, 2009; Tatum, 2017; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). While giving support is critical within an anti-racist teacher

community, facilitators must be cognizant of people's discomfort. Applebaum (2017) explained discomfort as “synonymous with the possibility of individual and social transformation” (p.863). When working in anti-racist education, the discomfort becomes an opportunity for development and learning (Applebaum, 2017; Boler, 1999). The study's findings expanded on previous work by revealing how prolonged engagement with anti-racist education within a supportive environment can critically engage teachers in anti-racist practices and in self-reflection on their positionalities. The study also showed how creating art while learning anti-racist education helped to awaken awareness and make the injustices happening within the education system visible.

Within the third space, it allowed an opportunity for teachers to self-reflect on their anti-racist understandings and how to implement these understandings into their pedagogy (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Navarro, 2018). The research literature recommends the importance of creating collaborative spaces to analyze and explore problems and strategies for improving classroom practice (Kinloch & Dixon, 2018; Navarro, 2018; Picower, 2011; Shockley & Banks, 2011). The anti-racist teacher community space was, “a space of intervention in the here and now” (Bhabha, 2004, p.10) created by and for the participants. The supportive and shared space allowed teacher participants to ask anti-racist questions, and to collectively explore their anti-racist understandings. In particular, the anti-racist teacher community acted as “a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present” (Bhabha, 2004, p.10). In this study, teachers were committed to anti-racist education and this ‘in-between’ gave them an opening to reflect, dialog, reimagine, create, and prepare for their actions in the present time (Bhabha, 2004). These openings were also opportunities to understand what is unseen and what is backgrounded in dialogues and actions. The visuals and verbal

communication during our focus group discussions provided openings allowing authentic learning, teaching, and inquiry. As Springgay, Irwin, and Wilson Kind (2005) articulated, "openings are not passive holes through which one passes easily or allows one to see through with distinct clarity. These openings [refuse] … comfort, predictability, and safety- deliberately seeking out the difficult, the unknown, the ambiguous, [and] the unpredictable" (p. 905). This gave the participants a supportive environment to ask questions and to be vulnerable, which gave them an opportunity to understand that they are not alone in this process of understanding anti-racist education.

During the second PD focus group session, *David*, *Tyler,* and *Jocelyn* stated that they were grateful for the small community setting because they could gain trust and mutual respect with the other participants. This study created a space by offering support and anti-racist education to teachers who wanted to learn. School divisions should look at having professional development in small community settings instead of huge 'staff developments', or division mandated professional development sessions. Teachers should have a space to unpack their lived experiences, teaching, and school realities. It is also important to allow teachers to have a space to plan and create after they have learned the content from the professional development. These supportive spaces can only come to fruition if there is mutual respect and trust amongst the teachers themselves and between teachers and facilitators.

Critical Conversations to Promote Anti-Racist Practices

Anti-racist teacher communities engage teachers in critical conversations by allowing them to self-reflect as a method of anti-racist action. Earlier studies have explained the value of critical dialogues and how they can help in dismantling racist narratives and substituting them with anti-racist narratives that acknowledge the experiences of diverse people (Michael &

Conger, 2009). The findings of this study emphasize the significance of self-reflection and collaborative problem solving to address race, racism, and whiteness (Strong et al., 2017). The anti-racist teacher community critically examined race, deficit thinking, whiteness, dominant narratives, culturally responsive education, and positionalities based on their individual teacher practices. This helped the participants to begin to develop an understanding that race is a social construct based on oppressive power structures. The discussions focused on personal reflections and helped teachers plan for anti-racist action within their personal and professional lives. *Johnny* discussed how his teaching career has gone in a new direction based on listening to his diverse students and participating in this anti-racist teacher community. These critical conversations helped him understand how diverse people are impacted and affected within the school system. Here is an example of Johnny having an ‘A-ha!’ moment based on a critical conversation with his diverse students:

> Last February I was working with students on Black History Month. I realized that after years of working with them on it that I did not understand why it was so important to them. Until there was a confrontation between one of the students and a teacher and they all of a sudden started disclosing all their experiences with racism within our school. I really had not seen and wasn’t prepared for what they had to tell me. I was really blind to it. The fact that I was so close to these students for so long and had been oblivious to it. I was really upset and made me reflect on why that was the case. Having that critical conversation with my students gave me a different perspective and how I need to be more aware of the dominant narratives that are happening within my personal and professional life.

This study was designed to promote the engagement of all participants through collaborative inquiry and collaborative conversations to promote understanding and action of anti-racist practices. Lind (2007) researched how collaborative inquiry and collaborative conversations were among the most important components of professional development. These collaboration opportunities gave the participants an opening to collectively engage, speak the truth, experience discomfort, understand gaps in their knowledge, and to be open to learning something new. The participants led this collective inquiry by presenting their questions, practices, and understandings within their art pieces. This helped participants to see if they had similar or different experiences than others within the anti-racist teacher community. It also allowed them to reflect on how they need to let their diverse students share their stories to enrich their classroom teachings. As *Ani* and *Jocelyn* explained:

Ani

> I think it is through education, understanding historical events and critical conversations that will help teachers understand race, racism, and whiteness. I mean, I talked to some people about Residential Schools who are around my age (I am 42), and they do not know what those are. And I am like, pardon me! People can be ignorant to it, do not want to talk about it, or were not allowed to talk about it. I think having groups like this one to talk about race, racism, and whiteness is important because we can learn about it and learn how our lived experiences have been affected by it. I also think within education we need to bring in stories especially from diverse youth. I heard a quote that said, "stories have souls". So, the stories from the students that have been impacted by racism are extremely significant. Teachers need to hear these stories from their students and start having those critical conversations. It is going to be uncomfortable at times but making

sure there is an openness to enter new territories and allowing yourself to learn about our diverse students in a constructive way with no judgement, or shame or guilt. I am done seeing numbers and statistics of our marginalized youth in PD sessions. I want to listen and watch our students because I think there is great power behind that and significant data behind that as well.

Jocelyn

I think in many ways teachers need to be open to hearing other teachers and students' experiences. As I am getting on in my career and there are more things going on with exploring racism, stereotypes, whiteness, how institutions embed their ideas into us, etc. I feel like I am open to listen and actually be part of groups like this one and have those critical conversations. I think people just need to be open to that.

The teachers engaged in collaborative problem solving, told their lived experiences with racism and anti-racism, and purposefully engaged in critical dialogue guided by PD lecturers and myself. Participating in the anti-racist teacher community assisted the teachers in pushing themselves and each other to dialogue and reflect. I hope this study helped the teachers commit to practice anti-racist education in their classrooms and school communities.

Accountability to the Diverse Community

Anti-racist teacher communities must be accountable to diverse communities and ask for critical feedback on their anti-racist work from diverse colleagues. This also needs to be done without making diverse colleagues responsible for white people's education. It is often misguided when teachers attempt anti-racist action without engaging in critical reflection and interracial dialogue (Codding, 2021). The study found that there is a need for diverse accountability so that uncritical and misguided actions are less likely happen (Blitz & Kohl,

2012; Michael & Conger, 2009; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). This anti-racist teacher community created a space where the teachers were willing to leave white dominant society's "protective pillows" and engage in critical conversations about race. These spaces are an essential part of anti-racism education because they support teachers as they engage in critical conversations about racism and whiteness (Codding, 2021). Teachers also gain competences when they take part in interracial dialogue with their diverse colleagues. Having *Twyla*, *Marie Rose*, *Stevie*, and *Moira* (these participants are Indigenous) helped the other participants understand the perspective of their diverse students and colleagues. As *Marie Rose* stated:

> I have lived a lot of the experiences that diverse students are dealing with on a regular basis. I just do not ever want my students to experience what I had to endure in my life. I always say to my students at the beginning of every year that they are my kids. I spend more time with them than I do my own children. I tell them they are my adopted kids and in the Indigenous way when you adopt someone into your life, that is forever. I want to validate who they are and allowing everyone regardless of their culture to be celebrated. Creating that community and that family with critical thinking skills and question the world around you. I am not afraid to talk about the systemic issues that are happening around us and my students started speaking up on it. You can be having these really authentic conversations with one another which in turn builds that relationship with one another.

Having these Indigenous participants within the study helped to create interracial dialogue but also helped the other participants see how race, racism, and whiteness impact diverse colleagues and students. The dialogue helped to create trust and build relationships across race. Not developing trust and building relationship it can lead white teachers to "continuing enactments of

privilege, oppressive policies, and superficial or dysfunctional cross-race relationships" (Utt & Tochluk, 2020, p.144).

Utt and Tochluk (2020) suggested that listening to diverse people is important to building relationships across race and to learn about anti-racist practices. *Marie Rose* and *Moira* explained:

Marie Rose

> Giving students opportunities to use their voice and acknowledging their stories. Our students can probably teach the teacher more than we teach them. We need to empower students to own their learning, to offer their knowledge and just validate them. By knowing their untold story, you can also bring their family in to speak. If I'm teaching an indigenous studies class and I know my student comes from a line of chiefs, why wouldn't I invite one of his family members to come talk. How much more powerful would that be? It much better then watching a video on youtube. But how would you know that if you don't know that kid and we need to care about them. I hate hearing "Oh, there's not enough time and I teach this many children, blah blah, blah". I don't care. You see your students every day. You see him/her/they every day. Validate them. Push them. Hold them accountable. I think its so important and we forget that. Our diverse students want to be seen and able to tell their story.

Moira

> Make sure that you never try to say that you know how a diverse person feels or know who they are or understand what they are going through. That is one major thing that you should probably never do as a white teacher. I think that hearing your diverse students'

> stories and voices is very beneficial and not placing judgement on them. So, allowing diverse students to share their story and allowing them to share their experiences is very important. They hold value within the classroom.

The participants in the study gained an understanding of how important it is to be accountable to their diverse students and colleagues. By listening to their diverse colleagues, they got to learn about their diverse colleagues lived realities and how significant race, racism and whiteness impacts their lives. During the first PD session, *Alexis* painted her lips on her mask gold to signify that silence is golden when diverse people are talking about their experiences. She talked about how she is learning that words carry weight, and she needs to listen before speaking. These types of 'A-ha!' moments happened when the white participants understood the significance of their diverse perspectives and engaged in critical interracial dialogue with their diverse colleagues.

Vulnerability in Promoting Anti-racist Practices

This study addresses how expressions of vulnerability can be used to re-engage teachers in critical conversations. Participants showed vulnerability by expressing emotion, acknowledging their mistakes and responsibilities, engaging bravely, and seeking assistance when needed. Vulnerability assisted the participants in being open to and engaging with anti-racist education instead of falling into white fragility that places people resistant to change. When there is no vulnerability, white fragility can stop the anti-racist learning from happening. By showing vulnerability, teachers continue to learn past the discomfort that is created by racial stress.

When recognizing these power dynamics within the participants' art pieces, they started to make sense of the discomfort they might experience in their classroom; however, this

discomfort is an experience teachers can learn from. It becomes imperative for learning about anti-racist education. Within society, we are often taught to avoid discussions about who we are in relation to other people (Delpit, 2006). However, people need to embrace this discomfort to change the fear around discussing race. Delpit (2006) explained, “we do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs” (p.47). She explained, “we must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness” (Delpit, 2006, p.47). Delpit illustrated that teachers need this vulnerability to step outside themselves and critique their own positionalities. Creating a sense of discomfort accepts this vulnerability and jars our way of thinking.

Creating and viewing art helped the participants to explore vulnerability and discomfort while deepening their understanding of race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education. When people are uncomfortable, they have the potential to learn. Several times, the participants expressed that creating art made them uncomfortable. However, in making art, the ‘A-ha!’ moments happen when the artist or the learner leans into their vulnerability and discomfort to question who they are. To teach and learn about one's positionality, one must be prepared to be uncomfortable, patient, and persistent to have transformational success (Dewhurst, 2014). The sharing of lived experiences and art pieces within the study allowed participants to be vulnerable, which helped them understand experiences other than their own. They started to build compassion for other people. Looking at ourselves and others' experiences also gave participants a framework for understanding how social and institutional change might be made. This helped the participants have a better awareness and understanding of their positionality, their school communities, and their diverse students.

Developing an Anti-Racist White Allyship

Within this study, seven out of eleven participants were white. Throughout the study, the participants became more aware of their positionalities and started to share a positive self-identity of white anti-racist allyship. Developing an understanding of themselves as anti-racist white allies assisted the white participants to analyze experiences of racism and whiteness and signaled the need for critical self-reflection, which allowed them to re-engage in anti-racist practices (Case 2012; Reason, Roosa Millar & Scales, 2005; Smith & Redington, 2010; Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018). Tatum (1994) stated that a positive self-reflection of an anti-racist white ally can change how white people react to critical dialogue about race, racism, and whiteness. In this study, participants began learning how to be anti-racist allies through critical conversations, being in a supportive environment, and allowing themselves to be vulnerable with their positionality and lived experiences.

On several occasions, allyship is seen as a (false) place of arrival. As DiAngelo (2018) stated, there is no place of arrival:

> Interrupting the forces of racism is ongoing, lifelong work because the forces conditioning us into racist frameworks are always at play; our learning will never be finished. Yet our simplistic definition of racism- as intentional acts of racial discrimination committed by immoral individuals- engenders a confidence that we are not part of the problem and that our learning is thus complete. (p.9)

Marie Rose echoes what DiAngelo stated above:

> We need to show that white privilege and racism is very real, and we need to create advocacy. This helps with allyship and creates opportunities for people to see how they contribute to systematic racism. When they understand how racism and white privilege

> affecting their lives, they can start to create change and action. White teachers need to understand how harmful oppression is and how it continues to be perpetuated within our classrooms even when we have race conversations. You know, are you going to die on teaching that one book like "To Kill a Mockingbird?" That's what you're going to hang your hat on. Or are you going to say oh, I'm hurting kids. So, I'm not going to use that book anymore. Our anti-racist education learning journey is never complete. We need to create opportunities in supportive spaces and build people up to be allies for our diverse students.

Amongst the participants, especially *Moira*, Johnny, *David,* and *Bob*, they found that anti-racist education is a continuing practice of participating in critical self-reflection and anti-racist action. This leads them to position themselves and challenge themselves in the process of anti-racist inquiry. *Tyler* and *Jocelyn* see themselves as beginners in their anti-racist journey. However, they are starting to want to be in those critical conversations and want to support their diverse students and colleagues. These are just some ways the participants thought about anti-racist education and how it influenced them into being allies. The anti-racist teacher community gave a supportive space for the teacher participants to learn, engage in critical conversations, become accountable for their diverse students and colleagues, become vulnerable, and develop anti-racist white allyship.

Implications for practice

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational scholarly work, particularly for white teachers, diverse teachers, anti-racist teacher community facilitators, and professional developers. I address this study's critical implications, limitations, and

recommendations in the next sections focusing on teachers, anti-racist teacher communities, and professional developers. I also discuss the implications for creating art pieces.

Implications for Teachers

This research is important because teachers are a significant player on the operations and effects of race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education within schools and classrooms. This study challenged teachers to consider how positionality affects their classroom practice and to reimagine how they act in schools. When teachers are unprepared to teach anti-racist education, they may advance dominant historical narratives and white supremacy, which are ultimately harmful to diverse students. Through this study, teachers were provided with a space to process and understand their own positionality, and to learn how race, racism, and whiteness function in schools and classrooms. Engaging in anti-racist education and positioning is a life-long process that involves acknowledging and reflecting on personal experiences. This repositioning requires people to be open to being vulnerable, having critical conversations, and wanting to learn from diverse voices. In order to remain engaged in anti-racist education, teachers need to seek out critical professional development that does not comfort white fragility or (re)center whiteness. Critical professional development will assist teachers through the discomfort of unlearning a worldview structured by white supremacy.

When creating anti-racist teacher communities, teachers should stay away from placing the responsibility on their diverse colleagues to offer steps in addressing racial inequities but should be accountable to the diverse community. This means anti-racist teacher communities should continually reassess how their efforts support diverse-led anti-racist movements. White teachers play an essential role in addressing racism and whiteness in education. However, as Codding (2021) stated “this does not mean they should be leading such efforts without critical

guidance and feedback from the [diverse] community" (p.250). Teachers need to listen to diverse people within the community because the information is significant to having both anti-racist action and critical reflection. Not having anti-racist reflection and diverse accountability leads to uncritical, misguided, and harmful actions.

Implications for Anti-Racist Teacher Communities

Anti-racist teacher communities can play a significant role in promoting anti-racist practices among teachers. The study found some significant implications when facilitating anti-racist teacher communities. First, anti-racist teacher communities need to create a space that encourages vulnerability. Participating in an anti-racist teacher community should be motivated by a individual commitment to or interest in anti-racist work rather than feelings of obligation or pressure to take part (Codding, 2021). Anti-racist teacher communities should engage teachers in topics that reappear and develop over time, thus focusing on deep and prolonged engagement. Critical conversations should occur throughout the anti-racist teacher community to help create trust and build accountability amongst participants. Having the same teachers meet every time was found to promote vulnerability, trust, accountability, and critical conversations. Second, expect and prepare to address different racial stressors. When racial stressors occur within the anti-racist teacher community, teachers within the community had to make sure not to comfort white fragility or recenter whiteness. They can stop this from happening by using compassion and critical conversations to support themselves as they persist in the discomfort of unlearning and becoming anti-racist allies (Codding, 2021). Third, anti-racist teacher communities need to see that vulnerability and critical conversations are skills that need to be developed. Rather than dismissing participants who show racial stressors, other community members should focus on re-engaging them in the conversation by modelling vulnerability and critical dialogue; because being an example of a positive anti-racist educator cultivates others to do the same.

Implications for Professional Development

Normalized, standardized, top-down professional development programs resemble the banking model of education. They are designed to deliver usable techniques, lessons, technology, and strategies to teachers. Typical professional development, as described by Intrator and Kunzman (2007), often requires the instructor to "'fill' the students with the contents of his narration—the contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance" (Freire, 2013, p. 68). Rather than addressing systemic problems in education, standardized professional development programs typically provide a one-time "fix all" for teachers rather than listening to their problems and providing time, space, freedom, and support for teachers in their problem-solving quests. Lind (2007) articulated that "high quality professional development programs… support teachers in meeting the needs of diverse learners; provide adequate time for practices that involve inquiry, reflection, and mentoring; are subject centered; and are rigorous, leading to long-term change" (p. 2).

This study helps to reconsider how to approach anti-racist professional development with teachers. Anti-racist change within education can only happen if teachers commit to long-term learning and action against racism and whiteness. Interracial dialogue should play a significant role in guiding anti-racist changes. Having anti-racist teacher communities as professional development can educate teachers on how to be vulnerable and how to engage in critical conversations. One-off professional development is not enough to change the hearts and minds of teachers and can instead activate examples of white fragility and cause misguided action and inaction (Codding, 2021). White teachers have been recipients of white supremacy and they need to understand how whiteness has affected them personally, their schools, and their communities.

Implications for Creating Art Pieces

Within this study, I found that creating art pieces made the participants slow down, think through the anti-racist topics, and think about their lived experiences. From my understanding, the participants had dialogue that was more in-depth, authentic, genuine, and nuanced with/in/through their artworks. When the participants created art, they created metaphors with different visual elements (motifs, colour choices, and imagery) to express their experiences. This was evident in the way they created their masks and feathers. Using artmaking as a tool allowed participants to learn about positionalities and integrate their learning into their experiences. This was shown by several of the participants, and it revealed the normalization of whiteness within our educational system.

Viewing and discussing the art pieces in the focus groups served many capacities within this study. For the participants, the ability to show what they had created gave them an opportunity to describe their experiences in a more meaningful way. Having the ability to view and discuss the art pieces in a collaborative supportive environment gave the participants a space to connect with one another. Each art piece that participants created introduced new themes and experiences within their lives and helped steer the conversations in the direction of their learnings. Several of the participants' art pieces resonated strongly with the anti-racist teacher community and expressed complex educational phenomena or ideals. Each participant confronted the different topics of the PD workshops from various perspectives founded on their positionalities and lived experiences. The participants' differences provided critical and nuanced dialogue about their classroom practices. Art opened up a way for the participants to understand and deepen their knowledge of race, racism, whiteness, and anti-racist education.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study illustrates how teachers are engaging in anti-racist education, there were some potential limitations to this research. A significant limitation to this study was that it was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. I could not meet with my participants in person due to social and physical distancing restrictions. The study was created to be virtual, which restricted the information I could collect during the focus group discussions. While video conferencing technology allowed me to observe the anti-racist teacher community discussions, it also limited me in observing subtle types of communication, for example body language, murmurs, and side conversations. When the discussions were happening there was only one participant speaking while the others were muted. I could not hear any verbal cues from the muted participants that would signify understanding, misunderstanding, or other emotional responses. Having everyone on the zoom call, I could only observe the participant speaking, as the participants display boxes were stretched across various sides on top of the computer screen. In addition, video conferencing interrupted the flow of conversation, frequently affecting participants responses and engagement in the dialogue. Another limitation connected to the COVID-19 pandemic was the limited time and energy participants were able to commit to the study. While I planned to gather participants' written reflections after each PD session, I chose to not to do this because I did not want the participants devoting significant amounts of time to this study during a challenging year.

Arts-based research methods can be a challenge to use within academia. Firstly, it is unfamiliar to some scholars and can be problematic when finding funding and publishing arts-based data (Kelemen & Hamilton, 2015). Western culture often ignores emotional and embodied ways of knowing which are central to the arts and values more rational-cognitive ways instead (Foster, 2012). Secondly, having teachers who do not have a background in the arts can feel

challenged using arts-based methods. This can give them a feeling of discomfort and an assumption that you have to be trained in the arts to use it as a pedagogic tool. Having this perception gives a narrow version of art as something that only a privileged few can do (Freedman, 2003). I hope this study challenged these limited perceptions by illustrating the strength of arts-based inquiry and how it can assist teachers in obtaining knowledge, understanding their positionality and how they can change their classroom practices. This study can offer an access point into the route toward gaining the understanding teachers require to educate in socially just and equitable ways.

Future research would profit from in-person data collection. For example, beginning from where this study ended to see how the teachers are applying or not applying anti-racist practices and pedagogies in their classrooms. Additionally, it would be interesting to see if the students are feeling a difference within the classroom based on the new anti-racist practices the teacher is doing in the classroom. I believe that students' participation as co-researchers in this type of study would contribute to the field of education research and provide more insights into how positionalities of teachers and students can affect classroom environments. Lastly, future research could examine the significance of using art to engage teachers in different areas of research. Being able to use art, opened channels for the participants to dive deeper into anti-racist content and show their lived experiences in a different way. So, exploring other artistic media and art forms, such as sculpting, dancing, and music to see if they help participants engage in critical reflection in another area for future study.

Lessons Learned

Words can be hard. While words are often privileged, there are other ways of making meaning and presenting events that happen within our lives. Inscribing the lived experience into

visuals, and dialogue can assist people to see with their own lenses and perspectives on anti-racist education topic areas. This research documented a community of high school teachers meeting to learn about anti-racist education, create art, develop supportive environments, engage in critical conversations, become vulnerable and inquiring into lived experiences with one another. This study shares several months of making art and learning together. While the participants' stories and art document a moment in their teaching careers, this research explored how an alternative, content-specific, professional development activity enabled the participants to learn about their positionalities, resist the easy road, become aware of injustices, and move forward to make a change in their lives. Our stories come from different perspectives based on our positionality, but when told collectively, these stories create a meaningful memoir of a community of teachers working together to become stronger, present, and aware of race, racism, and whiteness. My research illustrated and articulated our story as a community; my story is tangled within the stories of the eleven teachers seeking learnings, support, and change.

As an artist, I spend a great deal of time working on creating imagery that is important to me. I believe, as do other art scholars, that art acts as a form of communication between human beings and what matters in life. Of course, what matters in life varies from one individual to the next, but ultimately artists create art about what they believe is important. Pablo Picasso created Guernica as a reaction to the violence and suffering inflicted on the victims of war; Kara Walker used silhouettes to create narratives pertaining to race, gender, and sexuality; Ruth Cuthand used printmaking, painting, drawing, photography, and beadwork to challenge mainstream perspectives on colonialism; and Zachari Logan created images and installations with themes of masculinity, identity, memory, and place. My art is continually evolving; I create images that attend to relationships within my life and the small moments of every day. Not only am I

recording the images of my day, but I'm also searching for new ways of seeing and creating. I seek out artists, media, and techniques. This search takes place in museums, galleries, in books, online, in my classroom, and in the world around me. As an artist, researcher, and teacher, everything I encounter is source material for future works of art and a learning opportunity.

Working as a teacher for several years, I was confronted with whiteness, white privilege, and racism on a daily basis. Whiteness and racism run deep in our school systems, and I had to recognize that I could not save my students from poverty, and my niceness was not enough to remedy systemic racism. I have worked in anti-racist education for several years now and I still experience flashes of whiteness within myself. This study was a significant personal journey for me because, like my participants, I present as a white teacher participating in anti-racist teaching and self-reflection. If I am setting out to critically analyze whiteness and racism, I must critically analyze whiteness and racism within my personal experiences. I started this dissertation with a painting and a discussion of my positionality. I thought it would be appropriate to finish this process with a painting and discuss my experiences.

I created a painting titled *Picking Up the Pieces* (Figure 6.1) to reflect on my own anti-racist journey within this research process. This painting has several meanings, it is a self-portrait of me and how whiteness has entrenched itself within me and my outside world. But by opening my eyes, ears, mind, heart, and hands, I started to learn what it is to be an anti-racist teacher and how I can have an impact on the people around me. There are certain parts of my body that are colored to show how they have been influenced by my education, personal learnings, and this studies research process. As an a/r/tographer I am constantly engaged with my lived experiences, picking up different pieces of information, residing in the tension of the in-between space, and pursuing and acknowledging discomfort as a place of learning. I am

constantly in tension with racism and whiteness, however, as I learn more, and more that tension is subsiding, and the anti-racist learnings are coloring in the whiteness. I hope one day I can fill that self-portrait with beautiful colors to represent how our world is embracing anti-racist education and our diverse people. It is through studies like this one that learnings can happen and can start to change the narrative.

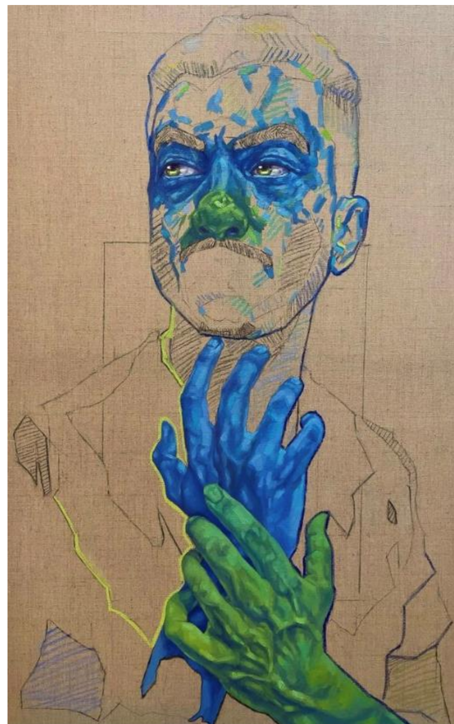

Figure 6.1 Jordan's Picking Up the Pieces

Although art is a big part of my life, it wasn't for everyone in this study. Only a few people engage in artful practices in their personal lives. Several of the participants haven't engaged in visual art since they were children. But the supportive environment allowed the participants to engage with their feelings in a safe and brave way. As Lawrence (2005) stated:

> [T]here is often a great deal of discomfort when adults are asked to draw, paint, or present a dramatic skit. My students often feel the need to preface sharing of their artwork by telling the group, "I'm not an artist"- those are the ones who are brave enough to attempt the activity at all. I suspect many teachers also feel this discomfort. They avoid artistic expression because it raises the specter of learned childhood responses to being judged and evaluated by the quality of their art… It is the process of creating art, not the product, that is most important. The process is where the learning takes place. (pp.8-9)

The process of art allowed them to explain their experiences and perspectives within a space that was open and vulnerable, where meanings and understandings could be discussed, reconstructed, and become something else. Meeting bimonthly over a period of several months allowed us to become comfortable with each other during our meetings. The prolonged engagement with a/r/tography and anti-racist education enabled the participants to build trust and rapport with me and with each other. Our discussions were representations for creating connections between lived experiences, injustices within the school system and a/r/tographic perspectives. Every time we gathered, we pushed our thinking and discovered new ways of expressing our ideas and lived experiences. As personal experiences were constructed in and out of each other's stories, we talked about the challenges of racism and whiteness within schools today and thought how our collective conversations might lead to enhanced student learning. It was not our objective to come to solutions but to explore classroom processes, current understandings, and possibilities for growth. Engaging in professional development that had a/r/tographic practices encouraged the participants to listen and view from multiple perspectives, thus contributing to the complex relations of the roles of artist, researcher, and teacher within the professional development

sessions. Creating a supportive space to ask questions and to be vulnerable helped the participants recognize that they were not alone in their anti-racist learning.

Conclusion

Teachers play an essential role in addressing race, racism, and whiteness in education. This study offers support for engaging teachers in anti-racist education to promote anti-racist practices. Critical professional development with anti-racist teacher communities can offer teachers a way to learn about anti-racist education that promotes understanding of positionalities, supportive environments, critical conversations, accountability to diverse colleagues and students, vulnerability, and a positive white ally identity. The findings of this study reveal significant effects for engaging teachers in anti-racist education through critical professional development and art-based inquiry. Without prolonged engagement with anti-racist education, teachers will have a tendency to continue to harm diverse students through racialized exchanges, racist worldviews, and uncritical misguided action (Codding, 2021). As Canada, and specifically Saskatchewan, grapples with racism and whiteness within schools, this dissertation offers a way to use critical professional development through art as a way to dismantle the lens of racism and white supremacy.

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APPENDIX A

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 01/Sep/2020

Certificate of Approval

Application ID: 2033

Principal Investigator: Verna St. Denis

Department: Department of Educational Foundations

Locations Where Research Activities are Conducted: Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division, Saskatoon, SK, Canada

Student(s): Jordan Raymond

Funder(s): Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools

Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan

Title: How Learning Anti-Racism Education Through Art Pedagogy and Inquiry Creates Pathways to Authentic Teacher/Student Relationships

Approved On: 01/Sep/2020

Expiry Date: 01/Sep/2021

Approval Of: Behavioural Research Ethics Application

Consent forms (workshop and exit interview)

Recruitment email

COVID Safety Plan

Reference list

Acknowledgment Of: TCPS2 Core Certificate (Raymond)

Review Type: Delegated Review

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TPCS 2 2018). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

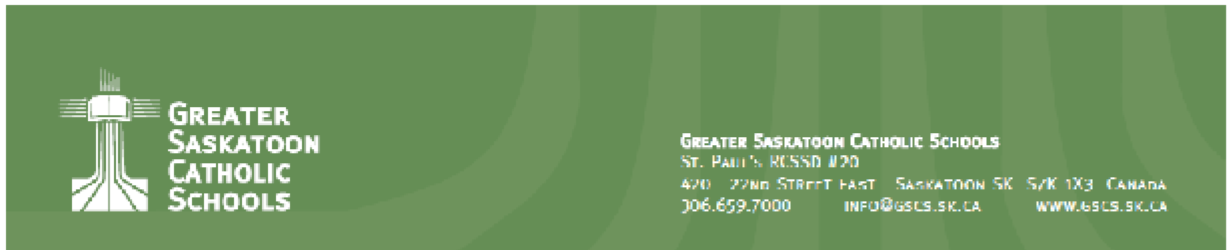
Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php.

Digitally Approved by Scott Tunison, Vice Chair
Behavioural Research Ethics Application
University of Saskatchewan

APPENDIX B



July 7, 2020

Jordan Raymond
1107 1st Street East
Saskatoon, SK S7H 1T6
Email: jraymond@gscs.ca

Dear Jordan,

Thank you for your interest in conducting research within Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. We have reviewed your application entitled *"How learning anti-racism education through art pedagogy and inquiry creates pathways to authentic teacher/student relationships."*

Thank you for taking time to meet and provide clarification on your research. We are pleased to inform you that we are willing to support this initiative. You are approved to research within GSCS up to June 30, 2021.

- Please submit the invitations to participate in your project, as well as instructions on the population that you intent to invite to participate, and we will distribute the invitations on your behalf.
- Please include a copy of your ethics approval from the University of Saskatchewan.
- You will be permitted to contact only those teachers who consent and participate in your research.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. Good luck in this most important work.

Sincerely,

Gordon A. Martell, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Education

cc. GSCS Research Committee

APPENDIX C

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: How learning anti-racist education through arts-based pedagogy and inquiry creates pathways to authentic teacher/student relationships

Student Researcher(s): Jordan Raymond, graduate student, Educational Foundations, College of Education, (306)260-6145, jmr388@usask.ca.

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr. Verna St. Denis, Educational Foundations, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, (306)966-2734, verna.stdenis@usask.ca

Purpose and Objective of the Research:

- The purpose of the project is twofold: first to introduce high school teachers to anti-racist education and second to use art as a way of exploring your own positionality in relation to these ideas (privilege, deficit discourse, power, meritocracy, inequities, and social oppression). These sessions may cultivate a better understanding of how your own lived experiences can affect your interpretations and reading of who you think your students are. Through artistic critical reflection on your practice and learning anti-racist education strategies, you are maybe better able to foster genuine and authentic relationships with your diverse students.

Procedures:

- Your participation in this project will be attending 4 Professional Development sessions that will be online via Microsoft Teams. Each PD session will consist of:
  - 1-hour guest lecture on anti-racist education (audio/video recorded)
  - Watching a 30-minute art instructional video (audio/video recorded)
  - 1-2 hours of independent art making
  - 1-hour of focus group discussion (audio/video recorded)
  - And a 1-hour private exit interview after all 4 PD sessions are completed (audio/video recorded)
- The PD sessions will be conducted between October 2020 and December 2020. The final exit interview will be conducted between December 2020 and February 2021. Specific dates within this timeframe will be emailed to you if you wish to participate in the project.

- The recordings of the focus group discussions and exit interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The student researcher or the Social Science Research Laboratory (University of Saskatchewan) will be doing the transcribing. After your exit interview, and prior to the data being included in the final report, you will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and focus group discussions. You may add, alter, or delete information from the transcript as you see fit. You will be given two weeks to revise your transcripts and send them back to the researchers.
- Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role at any time during the project.

Potential Risks:

- Participant confidentiality will be protected partially by giving you pseudonyms. All participants will be known to each other because you will be in contact with one another during the guest speaker anti-racist education lecture, art instructional video, and focus group discussions. The researchers guarantee that they will keep your transcribed information confidential; however, full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because of the setting and nature of the project.

Potential Benefits:

- Participation in the project will allow the researcher to gain a better understanding of how anti-racist education and arts-based inquiry can assist high school teachers in exploring their own positionality and improving their classroom practice. Further, by critically reflecting on your practice you may be better able to foster genuine and authentic relationships with your diverse students.

Confidentiality:

- The data from this research project will be published and presented in a PhD thesis; however, your identity will be kept confidential. Although direct quotations may be reported from the focus group discussions and exit interview, you will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information (your name, the school you teach at, your subject area you teach and any other data that might identify you) will be removed from the data.

  Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) to grant or deny your permission:

I grant permission to be audio recorded	
I grant permission to be video recorded	

Please only select one option below:

I wish for my identity to be confidential, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym. The pseudonym I choose for myself is: ___________________________	
You may quote me	

Storage of Data:

- All data will be stored online on the student investigator's password protected NVIVO account. Once data collection is complete, the data will be electronically downloaded from NVIVO and removed from their server. Electronic data will be kept on a password protected file on the researcher's computer and backed up on a password protected external hard drive, to prevent the loss of data. All data will be securely destroyed five years after the completion of the research project. You will be able to keep your art projects after the completion of the project.

Right to Withdraw:

- Your participation is voluntary, and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort.
- Should you wish to withdraw, you can email the researchers about withdrawing from the project. The data that is collected from you will, as much as possible, be deleted from the research project and destroyed.
- Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your position (e.g., employment, academic status, access to services) or how you will be treated.
- Your right to withdraw data from the project will apply till two weeks after the approval of the transcription of your exit interview. After this, it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred, and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.

Follow up:

- To obtain results from the study, please email jmr388@usask.ca.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1.
- This research project has been approved and reviewed on ethical grounds by the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division Ethics Committee.
- This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office: ethics.office@usask.ca; 306-966-2975; out of town participants may call toll free 1-888-966-2975.

Continued or On-going Consent:

- Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; have had an opportunity to ask questions and your questions have been answered. By completing and submitting the future art activities, focus group discussions and exit interview, YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS IMPLIED and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this project.

I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

______________________________	______________________________	________________
Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

______________________________	________________________
Researcher's Signature	*Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.