

Abstract

Title of Dissertation: UNCOVERING CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS: USING A CULTURALLY RELEVANT ANALYSIS TO REVEAL TEACHERS' DIVERSITY AND EQUITY BELIEFS WITHIN VISIONS AND PRACTICE

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The primary purpose of this study was to examine teachers' beliefs about diversity and equity through a culturally relevant analysis of their visions of teaching and practice. The secondary purpose was to identify how centrally located these beliefs were within their visions. Participants included a Black British female second grade teacher, a White Cajun-American male pre-kindergarten and a White American female art teacher within one public elementary school in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Using qualitative case study methodology, participants' visions and practices were collected through individual interviews and observations of teaching over the course of one unit of study. Data included interview transcripts, observational field notes and teaching artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, student work). Using Atlas.ti Qualitative Data

Analysis (QDA) software, data were analyzed using teacher vision and culturally relevant teaching (CRT) frameworks. Both open and a priori codes were assigned to data for each case analysis. Findings reveal underlying positive beliefs for all three teachers as evidenced by the presence of culturally relevant elements in their visions and practice. All teachers also held these elements centrally within their visions of teaching and their practice. The framework for this study as well as its findings demonstrate how vision and CRT may be used to reveal underlying asset rather than deficit teacher beliefs about students.

UNCOVERING CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS: USING A CULTURALLY
RELEVANT ANALYSIS TO REVEAL TEACHERS' DIVERSITY AND EQUITY
BELIEFS WITHIN VISIONS AND PRACTICE

by

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Dedication

For my grandmother, Helen Chang, 張楊毓寧女士,

for raising all of us

and loving us still –

For Riley (白建華) and Taylor (白建榮),

whose presence I hope will make the world

a more loving and just place for all people.

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This dissertation represents the culmination of a six-year-long journey that challenged me in unpredicted and unimaginable ways. I would not have persisted through the challenges presented over these six years without the support of many friends and family members, some of whom I will mention here and all of whom I will not be able to capture in these few pages. While I remain grateful to all individuals who supported me, I must specifically thank a few named here.

This journey began six years ago when two faculty members saw in my application something interesting and promising. Professors Victoria-Maria MacDonald and Sherick Hughes led the Minority and Urban Education (MUE) Program and welcomed me into the University of Maryland (UMD) family in 2009. It is a family unlike any other program's at the University, and I am grateful that they invited me to join. Their love and support served the foundation of my beginning years as an educational scholar; I am so grateful.

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Chapter One: Introduction

As the fate of individuals and nations is increasingly interdependent, the quest for access to an equitable, empowering education for all people has become a critical issue for the American nation as a whole. As a country, we can and must enter a new era. No society can thrive in a technological, knowledge-based economy by depriving large segments of its population of learning. The path to our mutual well-being is built on educational opportunity. Central to our collective future is the recognition that our capacity to survive and thrive ultimately depends on ensuring to all of our people what should be an unquestioned entitlement – a rich and inalienable right to learn.

Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) *The Flat World and Education*, p. 328

Darling-Hammond's call for equitable education highlights the importance in providing all students with access to high quality educational opportunities. These opportunities must provide students with access to high quality instruction in the form of equitable classroom experiences. Such experiences require that educators and citizens demand no less than schools in which equity and excellence co-exist. One might ask, what do equitable and excellent schools look like? In these schools, students learn – *all* students benefit from schooling. In equitable schools, patterns of academic performance based on race, class, gender, exceptionality, neighborhood, home language, (or other category) do not exist. We must believe in and work towards this vision of schooling as we strive to provide our nation's youth with a life of democratic possibilities (Collins, 2009) rather than maintain institutionalized barriers and differential opportunities. Such a vision of equity and excellence requires vigilant attention to school practices that support

all students in accessing knowledge and educational opportunities. It requires collective efforts of all stakeholders – parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and community leaders – to commit themselves to understanding how each student learns, and thus, how best to teach her.

Rationale

Existing conditions within many of our nation's schools leave students with inequitable learning opportunities. These inequities result from structures of schooling and continue to exist along lines of academic performance (Kumashiro, 2012; Nieto, 2000; Oakes & Lipton, 2012; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). Three trends contribute to these inequities and create a *demographic imperative* (Banks et al., 2005) calling for an urgent need to re-examine how we structure schools and the opportunities afforded to students within them. These trends include: (a) a demographically homogenous teacher population, (b) patterns in learning outcomes and learning conditions associated with different student groups, and (c) differential treatment of students in today's schools.

The first trend lies within a difference in demographic background between most teachers and the student populations they serve. While today's P-12 teaching force continues to remain predominantly White, European American, monolingual, middle-class and female, P-12 student populations are increasingly diverse (Banks et al., 2005; Sleeter, 2001; Sleeter & Grant, 2009). Most recent data on schools and staffing show that 76% of public school teachers identify as female, 82% as White and almost all come from middle-class backgrounds (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013). In addition, only 7% of teachers identified themselves as African American, 8% identified as Hispanic, 1.8% as Asian American and 0.6% as Native. These data also showed that approximately

40% of schools employed no teachers of color (National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004).

Simultaneously, our nation's classrooms have experienced increases in racial, ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and academic diversity over the past few decades. Between 1973 and 2007, percentages of students of color in U.S. schools increased from 22 to 55% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Over two decades, public school students identified as White decreased from 67 to 54%. At the same time, the Hispanic student population increased from 12 to 23% (Aud et al., 2012). These data also show that numbers of students learning English increased from 8 to 10% between 2000 and 2010. This percentage represents approximately 4.7 million students in today's classrooms. In addition, about 95% of students with identified disabilities who are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) received instruction in regular schools in 2009-2010. Furthermore, the number of students with disabilities who spent most of their school days in general education classrooms has steadily increased since this data has been collected (Aud et al., 2012).

One might ask, what is problematic about such increases in student diversity given the persistence of teacher homogeneity? Cognitive research investigating the ways in which teaching and learning occur emphasizes the importance of connecting learners' prior experiences, cultural frames, and individual points of view to deeply understanding, accessing and utilizing new information (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

Connecting personal experiences to create meaningful connections between prior and new learning is beneficial for student learning generally, and is especially helpful for students from non-mainstream (White, European-American, middle-class) backgrounds

(Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Examinations of teacher practice demonstrate misunderstanding, under appreciation, and/or misinterpretation of student behavior and cultural assets when teachers teach students from cultural backgrounds that differ from their own, leading to academic underperformance (Bell, Horn, & Roxas, 2007; Ready & Wright, 2011; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Sleeter, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). To be fair, it is possible for teachers to successfully cross this demographic divide (Cooper, 2003; Haberman, 1991; McLaren, 2007; Oakes & Lipton, 2012; Sleeter, 2001; Sleeter & Grant, 2009); however, doing so typically requires ongoing, focused and supported assistance in developing specific knowledge, skills and dispositions in teacher preparation and practice (Ball & Tyson, 2011; Ball & Cohen, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Kose, 2009; Kose & Lim, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Differential student achievement outcomes due to differential access to resources in schools characterize the second trend contributing to the demographic imperative. Even though educational attainment and reading achievement rates for students of color have increased since 1975 (Bauman & Graf, 2003; Lee, 2002; Ramirez, 2004), other data show that persistent and patterned educational achievement disparities continue to exist between racial groups. To illustrate, according to 2009 achievement data, students identified as White or Asian/Pacific Islander performed higher in both mathematics and reading than students identified as Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native in fourth, eighth and twelfth grades (Aud et al., 2011). These discrepancies also persist between racial groups in terms of education attainment. Hispanics, African-Americans, Native Americans, and certain Asian groups (Vietnamese, Hmong, Thai) lag behind

Whites and other Asian groups (Chinese, Japanese, Korean) in attaining a high school diploma. Hispanics lag behind Whites, African Americans, and Asians in high school educational attainment. While 27% of non-Hispanic Whites attained bachelor's degrees in 2000, only 10% of Hispanics, 14% of African-Americans, 14% of Pacific Islanders, and 11% of American Indian and Alaskan Native populations reached this educational level the same year (Bauman & Graf, 2003). Minority students also are less likely to complete high school and demonstrate less likelihood of attending 4-year colleges than White students (Fry, 2004, as cited in Reardon & Galindo, 2009). Moreover, students with learning and other high incidence disabilities drop out of high school more than students without disabilities and attend college at lower rates (Sanford, Newman, Cameto, Knoockey, & Shaver, 2011). Certainly, while there may be other reasons why many students from non-mainstream cultures and students with disabilities do not attend post-secondary schools (e.g., poverty or motivation), these data suggest that our education system has not yet provided equitable learning opportunities for many students.

Differential access to resources (materials, services, experienced teachers, etc.), also leads to diminished in-school learning opportunities. More students of color and students from low-income backgrounds attend more poorly funded schools than their White and Asian middle-class counterparts. In fact, in 2009-2010, 37% of Hispanic and Black students and 19% of American Indian/Alaska Native students attended high-poverty schools while only 6% of White and 12% of Asian/Pacific Islander students attended such schools that same year (Aud et al., 2012). These conditions leave students with fewer and poorer quality books, computers, and other materials. In addition, high poverty schools employ less experienced and fewer qualified teachers, and fewer support

personnel (such as counselors and social service providers). Lower quality resources directly impact learning opportunities and outcomes for students attending such schools (Darling-Hammond, 2004). By extension, these data suggest that discrepant access to educational resources continues to fall along racial and economic lines.

Finally, many researchers posit that this pattern of educational discrepancies relate to the differential manner in which students are treated in schools. This differential treatment characterizes the third and final trend contributing to the demographic imperative (Banks et al., 2005). As noted earlier, lower income schools often employ more teachers who do not meet criteria as “highly qualified” (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Teachers without certification typically have less experience by virtue of the fact that a certain level of experience is needed to become certified. Unfortunately, this expertise and subsequent access to (or lack of) high-quality teachers may contribute to differential student outcomes, as can classroom and learning contexts (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Goe, 2007).

School structures also factor into student achievement outcomes. For example, tracking provides some students with more rigorous curricular access while simultaneously limiting exposure to challenging content for students who are tracked into lower level courses. Studies suggest that these differences in learning opportunities and approaches themselves affect student achievement outcomes (Callahan, 2005; Gamoran & Mare, 1989; Maaz, Trautwein, Lüdtke, & Baumert, 2008; Oakes, 1982; Oakes & Guiton, 1995). In addition, past research identifies sociopolitical influences on culture, curricula, and instruction as influences on approaches to teaching that disadvantage

students from non-dominant backgrounds (Banks & Banks, 2010; Delpit, 1995; García & Guerra, 2004; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Sleeter, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999).

Teachers' dispositions toward their students also contribute to differential treatment in the classroom. The relationships between teachers' dispositions – expectations, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, assumptions – and differential opportunities they create for student learning are well documented in both sociological and educational research studies (Alexander, Entwisle, & Thompson, 1987; Lee, 2009; Ready & Wright, 2011; Rist, 1970; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Tach & Farkas, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Wong, 1980). These dispositional elements routinely play into decisions teachers make in their classrooms, instructionally, socially and organizationally. They furthermore influence the creation of learning conditions that provide or inhibit equitable access to instruction, thereby facilitating or impeding student success differentially and, therefore, enhance or limit classroom equity. Teacher perceptions of students' intellectual ability, class origin, and race (with teacher background sometimes serving as a mediating variable) often lead to differential expectations and, subsequently, differential treatment of students in classrooms (Bui, Quirk, Almazon, & Valenti, 2010). In addition, teachers who are committed to inclusive teaching improve both participation and learning among students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Robertson, Chamberlain, & Kasari, 2003). Such differential treatment leads to patterns of teacher behavior that create or prevent educational opportunities for students (Tach & Farkas, 2006). The existence or absence of such opportunities leads to higher and lower educational status and performance, respectively (Alexander et al., 1987; Ready & Wright, 2011; Rist, 1970; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Tach & Farkas, 2006). Weiner (2003) recognizes this

critical role of these dispositions, posing that “underlying attitudes and beliefs can create conditions that either put students at risk of failing or help them learn well” (pp.12-13).

These three conditions – an ethnically homogenous teacher workforce, longstanding inequities in student outcomes and differential treatment of students (particularly along racial, ethnic and socioeconomic lines) – illuminate the demographic imperative we face in today’s schools. This demographic imperative makes critical a need to better understand how schools and classrooms provide equitable or inequitable learning opportunities for students given the increasing diversity present in today’s K-12 student population. In order to further our progress toward equity and excellence in all schools, for all students, work must be done to understand how teachers engage in the teaching-learning process within these increasingly diverse contexts.

Given the important predictive role of teacher quality in the schooling process (Wright et al., 1997), it is critical to understand what – if any – beliefs teachers hold about diversity and equity. To examine teachers’ beliefs, I examined visions and practice. I argue that understanding the diversity and equity considerations that are present in teachers’ visions and practice will deepen our understanding of how teachers engage or disengage students in the classroom, and the degree to which they provide students with differential learning opportunities. Understanding this thinking may inform future professional development that intends to promote more equitable teacher thinking. Finally, understanding diversity and equity considerations within teachers’ everyday practice may illustrate how important these considerations are for teachers.

Study Focus

This study focuses on the role of teachers as agents who are uniquely positioned within schooling structures to continue or interrupt inequitable learning cycles. Specifically, this study focused on teachers' visions of teaching and practice within the context of one elementary school located in a major metropolitan city in the Mid-Atlantic States. Moreover, particular attention is given to understand teachers' beliefs about diversity and equity.

Teachers' visions – defined here as teachers' ideal images of practice – play a critical role in not only illuminating theoretical understandings of teachers' philosophies of teaching and learning but also in understanding their underlying beliefs about diversity and equity. As will be discussed in chapter two, the exploration of teachers' visions as well as reflections about how they relate to their enacted practice presents opportunities to understand how teachers provide educational opportunities in the classroom, both intentionally and unintentionally.

Study Goals

This study explored teachers' diversity and equity beliefs as revealed through the construct of teachers' visions of ideal practice and their enacted teaching. In doing so, this study examined teachers' considerations of diversity and equity understandings – or lack thereof – during their instructional decision-making processes. Past studies report on teachers' dispositions toward diversity for preservice teachers (Byrnes & Kiger, 1997; Garmon, 2004; Swain, Nordness, & Leader-Janssen, 2012; Weisman & Garza, 2010). However, this study reports on the ways in which in-service teachers' beliefs about and

considerations of diversity and equity appear in their classroom practice. As such, this study provides insight into the thinking and teaching of established teachers.

Research Questions

In order to better understand how teachers conceptualize diversity and equity in their visions and practice as well as to understand the interactive nature of these ideas with teacher actions, I ask two questions:

1. What beliefs about diversity and equity are revealed through teachers' visions and practice?
2. How central or peripheral are beliefs about diversity and equity within teachers' overall visions?

The following section provides a detailed description of the conceptual framework guiding this study.

Conceptual Framework

This study uses the construct of teacher vision with the theoretical lens of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009) as both a framework for understanding teacher thinking as well as an analytic tool to examine this thinking. More specifically, it utilizes teachers' visions and CRP to uncover diversity and equity considerations in thinking and practice. While doing so, this study assumes a direct relationship between teacher thinking and action with a focus on teacher dispositions as foundational to enacting practice equitably.

The following section details the specifics of teacher vision, the connection between teachers' thoughts and actions, and the role teacher dispositions play within teachers' thinking-acting process. Lastly, it outlines the basic tenets of culturally relevant

pedagogy as a theoretical lens for interpreting these thoughts and actions, thus revealing underlying beliefs teachers hold about their students as well as how they engage with them in their teaching.

Teachers' thoughts and actions. Teachers' thinking and dispositions play a critical role in the decisions they make to engage and teach students. In a report conducted by the National Institute of Education (1975) examining teachers' thinking the reporting Panel states:

It is obvious that what teachers do is directed in no small measure by what they think. Moreover, it will be necessary for any innovations in the context, practices, and technology of teaching to be mediated through the minds and motives of teachers. To the extent that observed or intended teacher behavior is "thoughtless," it makes no use of the human teacher's most unique attributes. In so doing, it becomes mechanical and might well be done by a machine. If, however, teaching is done and, in all likelihood, will continue to be done by human teachers, the question of the relationships between thought and action becomes crucial. (National Institute of Education, 1975, p. 1)

Indeed, the connections between teachers' thoughts and actions are critical to consider if schools are able to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students.

One component of providing equitable access to knowledge for all students lies within the role of teachers' dispositions – attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and expectations. Teachers' attitudes toward and beliefs about diversity influence how they view their students and the instructional decisions they make. These overall teacher dispositions

influence the creation of learning conditions that enable or inhibit equitable access to instruction, thereby facilitating or impeding student success differentially.

While studies identify some ways in which teachers' dispositions may positively or negatively impact students' access to learning, other researchers propose specific dispositions are necessary to facilitate equitable access for all students. Banks et al. (2005) describe such components:

... there are some beliefs and attitudes that are critical for teachers to be effective with all students, including respect for all learners and their experiences, confidence in their abilities to learn, a willingness to question and change one's own practices if they are not successful in a given case, and a commitment to continue seeking new solutions to learning problems. (p. 253)

Positive beliefs and attitudes such as these therefore may serve to create conditions for success rather than expectations for failure.

Teacher dispositions toward diversity and difference. Existing studies illuminate common trends evident in teachers' dispositions toward diversity and inclusion. Work with preservice teachers illuminates misunderstanding and lack of awareness about the social conditions affecting many students of color (Bell et al., 2007; Weisman & Garza, 2010). As a result, many teachers attribute student failure or lack of engagement to deficits embodied in students themselves (Bell et al., 2007; Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Valencia, 1997; Varenne & McDermott, 1998). In addition, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion vary widely, many times depending on their preparation experiences. Attitudes toward students with exceptionalities differentially affect general education classrooms. Specifically, general education teachers ensure for more effective

use of accommodations when they possess positive attitudes toward including students with learning disabilities in general education contexts (Biddle, 2006). Course- and fieldwork can also positively affect preservice teachers' attitudes toward inclusion structures as well as toward teaching students with exceptionalities in their classrooms (Swain et al., 2012).

Teacher vision. Teacher vision provides a powerful construct for examining the connection between teachers' thinking and practice. Shulman and Shulman (2004) pose a five component structural model of accomplished teacher development that includes a teacher's vision, motivation, understanding, practice, reflection and community. These components, they pose, interact iteratively as teachers develop into more accomplished practitioners. The authors identify vision as a necessary component of readiness to engage in a dynamic learning process in which a teacher's vision serves as both an ideal to strive toward as well as a yardstick for measuring practice. They state, "A highly developed and articulated vision serves as a goal toward which teacher development is directed, as well as a standard against which one's own and others' thoughts and actions are evaluated" (p. 261). Their construct of vision includes an active and engaged process of teaching and learning that can be deepened, enhanced, guided and differentiated. Thus, vision has an important role in relationship to practice because all five components can support teachers moving from intention to accomplishment.

Hammerness (2006) describes teacher vision as "images of ideal classroom practice.... They embody teachers' hopes for the future and play a significant role in their lives and work" (p.1). These images include the teacher, his/her role, the role of students, and the activities or ideas in which these individuals engage in the classroom. Duffy

(2002) describes a process of *visioning* as “a teacher’s conscious sense of self, of one’s work, and of one’s mission” (p. 334). Both these descriptions capture a teacher’s internal imaginings of practice. These ideal images of practice serve as a gateway to understanding teachers’ thinking and instructional decision-making processes.

Teacher vision has been used as a construct to better understand teachers’ imagined images as well as how these images relate to planned and enacted classroom practices (Duffy, 2002; Hammerness, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2010; Mercado, 2007; Squires & Bliss, 2004; Turner, 2012). In doing so, vision can serve as a “measuring stick” (Hammerness, 2006) for analyzing one’s own progress toward enacting upon these ideal images of practice, including their goals and purposes of instruction. Vision can serve as a means to assess and reflect upon past instruction and the choices made therein. Vision also guides teachers’ attention to particular classroom events and further informs their ongoing instructional decision-making processes (Sherin & van Es, 2009). In these ways, vision proves a powerful tool for teachers in their reflective practice, retrospectively, in the moment, and for the future (Hammerness, 2006, 2010).

In her studies, Hammerness (2001, 2006, 2010) uses vision as a tool for teachers to explore their own understandings about teaching and learning. Teachers not only explore their own beliefs about teaching and learning, they also examine how their personal experiences and backgrounds inform these beliefs. Furthermore, Hammerness explores how these visions support teachers as they navigate between holding high expectations for teaching and resisting the urge to lower these expectations when faced with challenging classroom realities. Hammerness (2001) states, “Inviting teachers to make their visions explicit, and assisting teachers to examine and challenge those visions

may help to surface deeply-held beliefs about teaching and learning” (p. 158). In these ways, vision includes not only images of ideal practice, but emotional and dispositional elements, as well.

When used as a tool for reflection, exploring teachers’ visions can be a powerful tool that sheds light on approaches to practice and for understanding teachers’ emotions and attitudes toward students. Vision-formation develops from teachers’ personal and professional experiences and thus, is shaped by these experiences. In this way, visions can themselves engender stereotypical beliefs or prejudicial tendencies. Teachers’ visions – particularly novice or preservice teachers – may themselves represent exclusionary or culturally biased images of ideal practice. Past studies demonstrate how articulating and developing preservice teachers’ visions provides insight to their beliefs and understandings of practice as well as illuminates misunderstandings, underlying biases, beliefs and assumptions (Hammerness, 2006; Mercado, 2007; Turner, 2012).

While teachers often begin their careers with particular visions, their visions can change depending upon the contexts in which they work or by their experiences with students; that is, visions develop within a particular context but, may shift or refocus in response to contextual situations (Hammerness, 2001, 2006). Thus, context plays an influential role in supporting a teachers’ ability to enact their visions of teaching (Hammerness, 2006, 2010).

Culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching. In addition to considering the role of teacher dispositions in influencing differential student outcomes, the existing demographic imperative necessitates a re-examination of the ways in which teaching and learning occur in schools. This imperative is needed as the

majority of discrepant student learning outcomes are results of traditional, hegemonic approaches to teaching and learning that historically privilege particular ways of knowing and demonstrating understanding over others (Ball & Tyson, 2011; Banks & Banks, 2010; Collins, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Kumashiro, 2012; Oakes, 1982; Sleeter & Grant, 2009). A growing number of counter-hegemonic teaching approaches have been developed to combat these practices. These approaches can be characterized broadly as critical approaches to teaching and include culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010), culturally responsive teaching (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), equity pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 2010), diversity pedagogy (Hernandez Sheets, 2005), and multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2010). Studies have demonstrated the impact of teachers enacting upon these critical approaches to teaching in ways that empower students and increase access to knowledge and learning by enacting non-traditional approaches to teaching.

Vision, culturally relevant and responsive practices, and teachers'

dispositions. Given that teacher actions greatly impact student achievement outcomes, understanding how they consider diversity and equity and subsequently act upon these considerations is needed to support them in developing critical practices for equitable classrooms. Through articulating and examining teachers' images of ideal practice, vision provides a conceptual tool to bridge teachers' ideals with practice. Of these processes and actions, Hammerness (2006) states, "Vision shapes the way [teachers] feel about their teaching, their students and their school and helps to explain the changes they make in their classrooms, the choices they make in their teaching, and even the decisions they make about their futures as teacher" (p. 2). In effect, examining constructs of vision

provides opportunity to uncover pedagogical, dispositional and practical elements included in planning and enacting teaching and learning. In this study, vision is used to examine components of teaching and learning with respect to diversity and equity beliefs.

Scope of this Study

The relationships among elements of teacher dispositions, thinking, instructional decision-making, and practice included thus far embody a vast range of possibilities for examination. It is also essential to clearly define what this study will not examine. First, this study does not seek to impose a particular theory of teaching and learning upon its participants; rather, it seeks to capture teachers' current and developing beliefs of diversity and equity as well as the interactions between teacher practice and decision-making. Even though a component of professional development (PD) is included in this work, these sessions focused on critical examination of student behavior and engagement as well as teachers' decisions in order to further delve into teachers' underlying dispositions. In doing so, I asked teachers to think about and reflect upon the decisions they made rather than asking that they make particular decisions based on my own understanding of classroom events.

Second, while this study examined teachers' vision and practice, I did not seek to investigate the sources of this thinking and action; that is, I did not intentionally seek to examine in depth teachers' prior life experiences that led to the development of these understandings. Studies examining such personal experiences conclude that they are indeed influential in teachers' dispositional development (Bell et al., 2007; Eberly, Rand, & O'Connor, 2007; Haberman, 1991). However, teachers' developmental trajectory prior to this study was not a focus of my work. Rather, I sought to capture teachers' current

understandings and how they related to practice during the tenure of this investigation.

Personal information about teachers' background was collected in order to provide some understanding of their lived experiences only.

Finally, this study did not intend to provide an evaluation of PD effectiveness, even though it addresses ways in which PD and teacher training may or may not have influenced or facilitated development of beliefs or practice. PD was examined only with specific relation to the research questions in capturing the nature of teachers' beliefs and actions over the period of data collection.

Significance of Study

Research addressing specific teacher dispositional elements (i.e., beliefs and attitudes) emphasizes the importance of these elements in teaching students from diverse backgrounds. In the most recent compilation of diversity and teacher education published by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Grant and Gibson (2011) state, "The research on diversity and teacher education is virtually unanimous that ideology, dispositions, and beliefs matter" (p. 29). In addition, in creating new standards for teacher educator preparation, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) notes an important and under-researched connection between teachers' beliefs and practice. They state, "The Commission recommends that CAEP strongly encourage additional research to define professional practices of P-12 educators and how these practices, beliefs, and attitudes relate to student learning and development" (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013). The call for teachers to develop skills and understandings that help them support all students' learning as well as for research addressing the specific dispositions teachers bring to the classroom relevant

to teaching diverse students are consistent themes in national educational discourse as well as research on teacher preparation and teacher education research (Ball & Tyson, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Howard, 2010).

This study has the potential to contribute to research in three significant ways. First, while numerous empirical and theoretical studies have examined teacher dispositions (Garmon, 2005; Lee, 2009; McAllister & Irvine, 2002; Ready & Wright, 2011; Rist, 1970; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) few if any examine teachers' visions, particularly related to their conceptualizations of diversity and equity. This focus is necessary as teachers are tasked with supporting diverse students in equitable ways through Specialized Professional Associations' (SPAs) certification standards as well as through high-stakes accountability measures. Second, through a close exploration of teachers' visions of diversity and equity as well as the relationship of these visions to their practice, this study attempted to illuminate how teachers internalize and act upon ideas to provide equitable or inequitable learning opportunities in classrooms. By providing a better understanding of how teachers conceptualize diversity and equity and how they enact these understandings, teacher educators can better design future teacher preparation and PD experiences to directly address ways teachers conceptualize diversity and equity. Such targeted focus in teacher education may ensure for more intentional preparation of teachers to teach students from diverse backgrounds with a focus on developing more equitable, asset-minded teachers' dispositions. Finally, by revealing beliefs about diversity and equity through vision and CRT analysis, this study sought to expand a theoretical construct and analytical process for future research.

Conclusion

This chapter justified the purpose of this study. In doing so, I provided an outline of the *demographic imperative* including a description of today's diverse classrooms as well as the needs created by such increasing diversity. In addition, I explained the theoretical underpinnings for my central phenomenon of interest – teachers' visions and practice related to diversity and equity. I sought to further illuminate the manner in which key concepts, assumptions, and theories involved in this study interact. Finally, I argued that teacher dispositions – particularly beliefs about diversity and equity – subsequently guide their thought and decision-making processes.

Chapter two critically examines literature related to teachers' thinking and student learning, particularly with relevance to issues of diversity and equity. Chapter three describes a pilot study that informed the design of this dissertation. Chapter four details my methodological approach and methods for data collection. The subsequent three chapters share findings for three participants. The final chapter discusses implications and limitations of these findings as well as suggests areas for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of literature to expand upon the theoretical bases surveyed in chapter one for better understanding teachers' thinking and practice related to diversity and equity as revealed through their visions. The following literature review is organized in four sections. First, I examine studies that specifically connect teachers' dispositions toward students to social or academic student outcomes. Second, I review studies examining teachers' attitudes toward "diversity," "culturally and linguistically diverse students," and "inclusion." The third section provides an examination of recommended teaching practices that have been shown to result in equitable access for students from various backgrounds and experiences. Finally, a descriptive review of teacher vision is delineated, highlighting its usefulness as a construct through which to examine the heart of this study's inquiry.

Teachers' Dispositions: Beliefs, Attitudes, Perceptions and Expectations

As described in the previous chapter, teacher dispositions include teachers' underlying beliefs about students, their capabilities and teachers' attitudes toward students based on these beliefs. This section outlines studies that examine teachers' beliefs and attitudes as well as related perceptions and expectations of students.

Teachers' perceptions of student characteristics affect differential treatment of students. In a seminal sociological study on social organization, Rist (1970) observed the influences of teachers' perceptions of students' social class on their expectations of students. In this two and a half year longitudinal "microethnographic" study Rist found that as soon as the eighth day of school, the kindergarten teacher physically organized students in table groups according to similar physical (dress, hair and skin color, etc.) and

behavioral/social characteristics. Compared to students at other tables, students placed at the first table were consistently called upon to conduct higher status duties such as reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, reading the weather calendar, participating in “show and tell” activities, taking messages to the office, taking attendance and leading the classroom to the bathroom.

This teacher treatment led to differential opportunities for academic engagement as well as respective differential behaviors between students according to table assignment. By May, the kindergarten teacher’s actions were observed as primarily directed toward the first table, while the second and third received less attention and support for their learning. In addition, the second and third tables were observed as less engaged in classroom activities when compared to the first, and less engaged in May than they were at the beginning of the year. In addition, effects of the teacher’s open low esteem for tables two and three were compounded by behavior of students at table one who repeatedly insulted and openly taunted the other tables for their lack of intellectual competence and cleanliness of appearance. Rist (1970) claims that such interactions with the teacher and peers influenced the behavior of students at the second and third tables, leading to the self-fulfilling prophecy for these students (poor behavior, lack of academic engagement, etc.). That is, the differential treatment of students at tables two and three by their teacher and peers influenced the ways in which they behaved, leading to poorer academic engagement and performance. These trends in behavior continued through final observations during the beginning of students’ second grade year.

When asked about the noticeable differential student behavior at each table, teachers attributed these groupings to students who were “fast learners” at the first table

as opposed to the other two tables where students “had no idea of what was going on in the classroom” (Rist, 1970, p. 275). Rist argues that “the development of expectations by the kindergarten teacher as to the differential academic potential and capability of any student was significantly determined by a series of subjectively interpreted attributes and characteristics of that student” (p. 268). While the teacher attributed these table groupings to students’ *ability*, there is no evidence that such an objective measure was administered upon which she could make these decisions objectively. Rather, Rist implies that her subjective judgments formed the basis of her decisions, and furthermore, that she was unaware of the biased nature of these judgments.

Furthermore, Rist (1970) hypothesizes that these subjective judgments are based on the teacher’s preconceived notions of an “ideal type” of successful student. Such judgments are based on the teacher’s beliefs about the necessary characteristics leading to attainment of “success” cultivated by her own background as a Black middle class, college educated community leader. Such “highly prized middle class” attributes included demonstrating ease of interaction among adults, high degree of verbalization in Standard American English, leadership abilities, neat and clean appearance, family education, and group participation abilities. Such subjective evaluations and subsequent teacher actions – mediated by her own background experiences – influenced the expectations of and interactions with students that encouraged educational opportunities for students at the first table while discouraging such opportunities for students at tables two and three. This within-classroom stratification began a trend in educational status for students that continued through the next two years. Unfortunately, these observations are consistent with more recent qualitative and quantitative studies examining the effects of

limited teachers' expectations on student school behavior and performance (Lee, 2009; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

While Rist's (1970) qualitative study offers a detailed micro-analysis of the relationship between teacher perceptions and student status in one classroom, these observed differences in teacher expectations beg exploration into whether or not such judgments of student performance are justified. In a more recent study, Ready and Wright (2011) conducted a study using a three-level hierarchical linear model (HLM) on nationally representative data (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, 1998) to explore the links between teacher perceptions and children's socio-demographic backgrounds. The study examined the extent to which teachers perceive differences in students' academic skills after accounting for actual between-group disparities in measured ability. In addition, unlike previous studies, the authors examined the accuracy of these perceptions in predicting the cognitive skills of nearly 10,000 students with particular (high-, low-, and middle-income) socio-demographic backgrounds within classrooms in public and private schools. The use of HLM allowed the authors to examine how teacher accuracy and bias vary as a function of classroom and school contexts.

Data for this study were from a nationally representative sample from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten (ECLS-K) Cohort conducted in 1998. The sample included 9,493 children within 1,822 classrooms, nested within 701 public and private schools. Data included teacher ratings of children's language and literacy skills, ECLS-K literacy assessment scores, child characteristics data (race, SES, single-parent status, language, etc.), classroom characteristics data (teacher race, teacher educational

attainment, state of certification, years of experience, etc.), and school characteristics data (average SES, location, sector).

While this study yielded numerous results, most relevant to this study are the significant differences in teacher perceptions of literacy ability. Within-classroom HLM estimates (Level 1) reveal that teachers possess differential perceptions of student ability according to student race, (Black effect size = $-.13$, $p < .01$; Hispanic effect size = $-.11$, $p < .01$), gender (female effect size = $.14$, $p < .001$), and SES (effect size = $.10$, $p < .001$). While these effect sizes are small, they persisted even after adjusting for teachers' background characteristics and between-group differences for actual literacy ability. Between-classroom estimates (Level 2) model teacher accuracy as a function of teacher and classroom characteristics. The authors find that after controlling for students' individual background characteristics, literacy skill levels and teacher backgrounds, teachers overestimate students' literacy abilities when teaching classrooms with high average SES (effect size = $.21$, $p < .001$, fall; effect size = $.16$, $p < .001$, spring) and academic skills (effect size = $.32$, $p < .001$, fall; effect size = $.36$, $p < .001$, spring). Furthermore, these class-wide estimates for SES are larger than those for individual children SES (effect size = $.10$, $p < .001$, fall; effect size = 0.09 , $p < .001$, spring).

These results imply that teachers' perceptual inaccuracies exist and are based on student background, particularly race, gender and SES. Even more troubling is the additional effects of class-wide SES and academic skill level (as noted above) on teachers' perceived student academic abilities, compounding the effect of perceived skill level when teaching in higher SES classrooms. In all, this study sheds light on the intervening variable of classroom context as an additional influence on teacher

perceptions and inaccurate differential expectations of students. Furthermore, Ready and Wright's (2011) study identifies the misalignment between teachers' perception of student ability and students' tested ability, a perceptual difference that holds great potential for further educational stratification and inequitable schooling.

Teacher perceptions (and misperceptions) not only apply to students along racial, ethnic or SES lines, but also apply to perceptions of students with disabilities. Reid and Valle (2005) identify "a cycle of behaviors in which "knowing" that a student has a label (any disability label) predisposes a teacher to look for particular deficits associated with that label and respond to the student in day-to-day classroom interactions as though the student truly possessed the expected characteristics" (p. 195). In effect, a teacher's knowledge that a student has been labeled with a disability develops her deficit expectations of that student. Further expanding this analysis, McDermott, Goldman, and Varenne (2006) provide a cultural analysis of the ways in which labeling students creates teacher and student expectations inconsistent with their abilities. The authors state:

We have generally found children called LD [learning disabled] – the ones on our classroom videotapes over the past 30 years – to be far more capable than claimed. By a play of rumors, facts, and concerns, in real classrooms LD children have to spend their time avoiding getting caught not knowing something. Facing the double job of doing school tasks while arranging to not look incompetent, children who are ripe to be categorized as LD often have their struggles magnified... Under current conditions, the search for LD results in documentation mostly of what many children cannot do. (p. 14)

McDermott et al. suggest that many students – especially those with LD – possess greater abilities than classrooms often afford them. This conclusion supports Reid and Valle’s assessment that inaccurate perceptions and expectations of students with disabilities can result in behaviors that serve to discourage educational opportunities and, therefore, lower student status in classrooms. As demonstrated through these studies, teacher perceptions not only relate to their expectations of students, but also relate to differential treatment of students.

Teachers Attitudes Toward Diversity and Inclusion

This section discusses literature examining teachers’ attitudes toward diversity, teaching diverse students or students from nonmainstream cultural backgrounds, as well as teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion. While particular attitudes toward and beliefs about diversity and inclusion are the foci of the following literature, they are relevant also for highlighting the inextricable relationship between dispositions toward diversity and inclusion and underlying beliefs about students, educational philosophies and personal perspectives on teaching and learning. Thus, the following review refines our understandings about teachers’ overall dispositions and beliefs.

Teacher attitudes toward diversity. Existing studies examine both preservice and in-service teachers’ attitudes toward diversity. Two consistent patterns emerge within this body of literature for preservice teachers: (a) there exists a commitment to teaching fairly for all students, and (b) these teachers have little exposure to or experience with students and families from culturally, socioeconomically different backgrounds. These studies show that preservice teachers’ beliefs and understandings about diversity and equity vary widely. Furthermore, their preparation to navigate encounters with students

of diverse backgrounds – particularly backgrounds different and unfamiliar to their own – are inadequate at best and negligent at worst (Gay, 2010; Sleeter, 2001).

Studies examining preservice teachers' attitudes toward and beliefs about diversity in classrooms show trends in teachers' beliefs: (a) teachers expect to teach in environments similar to their own homogenous, middle class suburban environments, (b) the majority of these studies examine preservice teachers' attitudes or understandings of diversity or diversity-related topics such as multicultural and urban education. Easter, Shultz, Neyhart and Reck (1999) use survey data to collect preservice teacher attitudes and beliefs about diversity and urban education. Using data collected from preservice teachers in one teacher education program, the authors found incongruent beliefs about teachers' own abilities to teach in urban environments and their familiarity with such learning sites.

Of these preservice teachers, 78% reported coming from exclusively rural or suburban environments and 63% of these reported feeling they could teach best in learning environments similar to those in which they learned. Half of all respondents reported that they “would be comfortable in a classroom of diverse students” (p. 211), while 96% of respondents “believed they could teach in a classroom of diverse students or had no preference concerning where they would teach” (p. 211). However, simultaneously, 22% claimed they had experience in an urban environment. Furthermore, when prompted to supply comments describing life in an urban environment and children in urban schools, respondents either provided no response, or focused on physical and environmental factors surrounding students, focusing the least on relational or academic aspects of children in schools.

While these data do not in themselves pose a problem per se, they do illuminate a gap between teachers' perceived beliefs about teaching in urban environments and their familiarity with these environments as well as the children living in them. Easter et al. (1999) state, "If students believe they can teach in the midst of cultural diversity and then find those beliefs incongruent with reality, the profession may lose teachers who could have made a difference in young lives had they been better prepared" (p. 215).

In a seminal piece examining teacher views of diversity, Paine (1989) analyzed responses from 233 beginning teacher education students – 174 elementary education majors and 59 English and mathematics secondary majors – participating in the National Center for Research on Teacher Education (NCRTE) Teacher Education and Learning to Teach (TELT) study from five higher education teacher education programs. The author used baseline data (survey responses and interviews) to explore these preservice teachers' orientations toward diversity at the beginning of their teacher preparation experiences. The author used open coding and emergent categories to identify themes within these data. After coding and analyzing propositions for disconfirming evidence, these themes were compared to four approaches to diversity to characterize general orientations toward diversity.

Paine (1989) draws important conclusions from prior research, suggesting four orientations: individual difference, categorical difference, contextual difference and pedagogical perspective. In this context, an individual difference orientation toward diversity focuses on psychological and biological sources of difference. Such orientations toward diversity manifest in comments about individuals' appearance and/or cognitive capabilities ("intelligence"). Thus, individuals who are the source of problems also bear

primary responsibility for enacting upon solutions. A categorical difference orientation toward diversity views individuals as part of larger social categories (i.e. gender, race, social economic status, etc.). Social justice work in this orientation involves reducing barriers and differences between social categories while not necessarily challenging the categories themselves. Contextual difference orientation recognizes both individual differences and how these differences are “created, maintained and changed” (p. 3) by their interactions in such contexts. In this way, differences are partially socially constructed.

Finally, Paine characterizes a pedagogical perspective on diversity as building on the third orientation. However, this orientation takes the understanding of difference as individually and socially constructed and couples it with direct implications for classroom action. Specifically, Paine states, “... this view of diversity necessarily combines understandings of human diversity with knowledge of and skills in ways to respond to or build on diversity in educational settings. The recognition of difference, from this view, cannot be separated from action” (p. 4). In this orientation, these differences are intentionally considered when engaging in pedagogical decisions in the classroom.

Paine’s (1989) analyses revealed that most respondents believed firmly in the importance of “equality” in education. Simultaneously, they rejected particular individual differences as important to consider in teaching. However, overall, these preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity drew primarily upon an individual differences orientation toward diversity. That is, individual differences among students were recognized with little relationship to patterns of differences, social contexts, or

pedagogical considerations. Some evidence illustrated tendencies toward categorical differences; however, these differences were mentioned in relation to patterns of social differentiation and individual attitudes. In effect, categorical differences such as family background (often a proxy for SES) were used to explain students' individual and psychological characteristics such as attitude and motivation. Paine writes, "In other words, social, categorical differences were translated into an individual, psychological category" (p. 7).

In addition to a general orientation to diversity, Paine (1989) identified three other major patterns with respect to respondents' orientations: (a) a continuous relationship between diversity and fairness, (b) implicit models of teaching, and (c) difficulties and dilemmas in dealing with diversity. Across these data, preservice respondents continued to demonstrate a commitment to fairness. One respondent commented:

Boys and girls are different. But in schoolwork, really I don't think you can say, okay, boys are better in math and girls are better in, you know, sewing I don't think that's fair. You know, everybody is there to do the same amount of work and the same kind of work. (p. 6)

Recognition of individual difference given the same expectation was further complicated by high agreement (70%) that teachers "can teach in ways that accommodate the individual interests and abilities of their students" (p. 6). These data demonstrate teachers' overall commitment to fairness as characterized by a recognition of difference, an expectation of sameness, and recognition that differences in instruction may occur to meet individual interests and capabilities.

Over two decades later, Gay (2010) identifies persistent patterns of colorblindness and unwillingness to discuss issues related to systemic causes of prejudice in preservice teacher classrooms. She writes:

Many prospective teachers do not think deeply about their attitudes and beliefs toward ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity; some even deliberately resist doing so. When my students are asked about them, they make declarations about being “beyond race, ethnicity, and culture,” colorblind, or advocates of racelessness. (p. 145)

This lack of attentiveness to cultural diversity and unwillingness to engage in conversations regarding these student characteristics remain troublesome given the existing research connecting attitudes with student performance. Gay even further describes specifics regarding these attitudes, writing:

Some of my teacher education students even believe that people of color are too sensitive and exaggerate the lingering effects and intensity of racism, discrimination, and poor quality educational opportunities. Others argue that U.S. society is now in a postracial era and that concentrating on cultural diversity and racial inequities in education is no longer necessary. (p. 146)

Here, Gay shares attitudes that not only lack recognition of existing biases, they go further to assign responsibility for inequities in education on individuals of color or underestimate the importance of engaging in related conversations.

These studies illustrate preservice teachers’ well-intentioned attitudes to teach students from varying cultural, linguistic and cognitive backgrounds; however, their lack

of exposure to and experiences with individuals from these communities sheds light on a potential conceptual gap between intention and preparation for action.

Teacher attitudes toward inclusion. While prior studies illustrate teachers' attitudes and beliefs about cultural and ethnic diversity, another body of literature examines attitudes toward inclusion and inclusive practices, primarily in two common areas: (a) teachers' general support of inclusion practices, and (b) teachers' willingness to teach students with disabilities with support.

In a research synthesis, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) identify 28 studies examining teachers' perceptions toward including students with disabilities in their classes. Specifically, this synthesis examines research containing original data on teacher's attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities presented in a "percent agree" or similar format. Selected studies include 10,560 respondent teachers and other school personnel from a variety of school contexts (urban, rural, suburban) across the United States and one city each in Australia and Canada.

Most relevant to this study are reports on general education teachers' perceptions of mainstreaming or inclusion. These nine studies include teachers in U.S. regions and one Canadian province. Overall, when synthesizing these data in response to the question, "Are general education teachers willing to teach students with disabilities?" the authors found 53% of teachers expressed willingness to teach. In addition, their willingness to teach covaries with the severity of disability, suggesting, as the authors conclude, that "teacher willingness may be influenced more by procedural classroom concerns than by affective responses to working with students with disabilities" (p. 65). In addition to this general willingness, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) report that about

half of general education teachers and about two-thirds of special educators believed that inclusion practices provided benefits for students overall.

Even though such a meta-analysis in this area of research has not been conducted since this study, researchers in the U.S. continue to examine teachers' attitudes toward inclusion in general education classrooms. Kahn and Lewis (2014) developed a voluntary online survey and distributed it electronically to science teachers through the National Science Teachers' Association in 2012. The authors designed the survey instrument based on prior research models, adjusting the instrument to specifically examine the perceptions and attitudes of K-12 science educators teaching in inclusive classrooms. The final instrument included 25 items on a Likert-scale with one open-ended question. Items surveyed teacher preparedness, attitudes toward students with disabilities and teacher experience. A total of 836 teachers produced full responses to the questionnaires, and 159 additional participants provided responses that authors deemed sufficient to include in analyses. Subsequently, between 836 and 995 responses were analyzed for individual survey items. Participants included 81% female, 87% public school teachers, 69% of whom earned master's degrees. Participants varied in the grade level taught (PreK-3: 22%; 4-5: 22%; 6-8: 22%; and 9-12: 45%). Ninety-eight (98) percent taught in suburban school contexts with 43% of participants teaching in the Southeast region of the U.S. (although all regions were represented in the participant pool).

Using mixed methods approach to data analysis, the authors conducted a qualitative analysis of open-ended question responses and calculated percentages for closed survey item responses. These two sets of analyses were consolidated during the interpretation phase of analysis.

Results from closed item responses demonstrate positive teacher attitudes toward including students with disabilities in their general education science classrooms. Two survey items yielded positive attitudes in this respect. Fully 89% of respondents indicated their positive belief that students with disabilities benefit from science activities, and 85% believed that students with disabilities could participate in all laboratory experiences. Less positive, however, were responses to additional items on this survey: 32% of respondents believed that students with disabilities were diagnosed inaccurately; they believed these students actually had behavior or discipline problems rather than their identified disabilities. Furthermore, 48% of respondents suspected that student disability labels were used as excuses for school failure. In all, 75% of respondents believed that targeted training was needed in order to overcome prejudices and emotional barriers in working with students with disabilities.

Including students with disabilities in their classrooms also caused teachers additional stress. Almost half (48%) of respondents felt particular stress related to preparing students with disabilities in their classrooms for statewide tests, and more than half (55%) believed that students with disabilities in general education classrooms made it more difficult for schools to make annual yearly progress (AYP) on these assessments. Only 14% of teacher respondents felt their evaluations should include performance for students with disabilities in their classrooms. More encouraging, however, were responses regarding teachers' willingness to learn more to support their students with disabilities where 90% responded that they would like to learn more about teaching students with a variety of disabilities and 86% expressed willingness to participate in additional trainings to do so.

Qualitative data revealed eight themes related to teaching science to students with disabilities: (a) equity; (b) training and resources; (c) benefits of having students with disabilities in the general classroom; (d) classroom challenges; (e) teacher collaboration; (f) assessment; (g) what works; (h) inclusion and policy regarding students with disabilities. The nature of these findings illuminates existing tensions between teachers' beliefs about teaching students with disabilities in theory versus in practice. Relevant to this dissertation, one theme demonstrated teachers' belief that for all students – including those with disabilities – scientific literacy was important regardless whether those individuals pursue careers in science or not. The authors note the exemplar quotation demonstrating this attitude, “What some people fail to understand is that even if students with disabilities do not choose to become scientists they still need to be informed voters!” (p. 901). Similarly, they note the importance of providing all students opportunities to excel in science. In contrast, responses also revealed concerns with the high cost of supporting students with disabilities (“A society cannot afford to insist that ALL students, regardless of disability, be afforded equal opportunities because that is an impossible goal” (p. 901)), and their belief about high levels of achievement for all students (“...not everyone is “wired” to be good at science” (p. 901)). These quantitative and qualitative results indicate general positive attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms with simultaneous reservations and doubts about the practices and goals accompanying expectations regarding supporting their success.

Other recent studies demonstrate similar findings to Kahn and Lewis' (2014). Cook (2004) asked 46 general education elementary teachers in 16 Ohio schools to nominate three students in each of the following attitudinal categories: attachment,

concern, indifference and rejection. Using four one-way chi-square analysis to compare students with disabilities to those without disabilities in each of these four categorical nominations, Cook found that included students with mild disabilities were significantly more likely to be identified by these teachers with attitudes of concern ($\chi^2 = 11.13, p < .001$), indifference ($\chi^2 = 3.29, p = .05$) or rejection ($\chi^2 = 7.97, p = .01$) nominations. These differences in nominations demonstrate continuing patterns of attitudinal disparities toward students with disabilities and their typically achieving peers.

Other related literature continues to illustrate positive and negative attitudes toward students with disabilities and models of inclusive practice. While coursework and preservice experiences in teacher preparation programs continue to provide experiences that strive to change negative or prejudicial attitudes toward students with disabilities, results of such experiences are mixed (Shade & Stewart, 2001; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008; Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey, & Simon, 2005; Swain, Nordess, & Leader-Janssen, 2012). Consistent, though, is the lack of preparedness general educators feel they have to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms (Cook, 2004; Kahn & Lewis, 2014). For general education teachers who do possess positive attitudes toward their included students, administrative support, time and additional training all contribute to their positive feelings (Mackey, 2014).

Other studies examine attitudes toward inclusion both of students with exceptionalities as well as students from non-English speaking households (Beacham & Rouse, 2012; McCray & McHatton, 2011; Swain et al., 2012; Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2001). In a survey of 125 high school teachers in one school, Van Reusen, Shoho and Barker (2001) found that teachers' training or experience teaching students with

disabilities held more positive attitudes toward inclusion. However, over half of respondents held negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms as well as their own abilities to teach these students effectively.

With respect to teaching linguistically diverse students, Reeves (2006) surveyed 279 high school teachers in multiples subject areas to assess their attitudes toward including English-Language Learners (ELLs) in mainstream classrooms. Teachers from 12 high schools in four school districts in a southeastern city in the U.S. Statistical revealed that the majority of teachers (72%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I would welcome the inclusion of ESL students in my class” (p. 136). In addition, 75% of teachers reported that the inclusion of ELL students in their mainstream classrooms “created a positive educational atmosphere” (p. 136). However, analyses of specific prompts designed to probe teachers’ attitudes toward working with ELL students reveal less positive attitudes. Teachers were reluctant to work with students who lacked a minimum level of English proficiency and further, did not have time to meet the needs of ELL students. Even more, only slightly more than half of survey respondents felt that inclusion of ELL students in general education classrooms benefitted all students.

These studies demonstrate persistent, ambivalent to negative attitudes toward teaching students from a variety of non-mainstream backgrounds. That is, students who present different cultural, linguistic, and cognitive backgrounds and experiences from the majority of today’s primarily White, middle-class, monolingual female workforce are seen as challenging to teach, in comparison to mainstream students. These differences become apparent when prompted to think about diversity, inclusion and students ELL students using the terms such as “diversity,” “students with disabilities,” “inclusion,”

“inclusive practices,” or “ELL.” These studies demonstrate consistent trends in teachers’ dispositions toward particular groups of students. These existing associations may limit possibilities for teachers’ visions.

Teacher Actions that Promote Equitable Access to Instruction

In part to combat negative attitudes and dispositions as cited above, research and practice have demonstrated that culturally responsive teaching practices support students from nonmainstream backgrounds in gaining greater educational opportunities and outcomes. While this body of literature is extensive, addressing both preservice teacher preparation (Irvine, 2003; Sleeter, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) and in-service teachers (Grant & Sleeter, 1988; Villegas & Lucas, 1999) or both groups (Hollins & Oliver, 1999), it is especially helpful to review seminal work in this area. Ladson-Billings’ (1995, 2009) and Gay’s (2000) work serve a foundational role in this area of research and practice.

Culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching. The emergence of Ladson-Billings’ (1995, 2009) culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and Gay’s (2000) culturally responsive teaching (CRT) provided teachers with frameworks for considering students’ background and cultures as assets and resources for instruction. While not the first researchers to propose such work, these frameworks provided tangible, practical frameworks for teaching in classrooms. Since then, researchers and practitioners have used and modified these frameworks to apply to a wider range of diverse students. As such, these two approaches to teaching are widespread and represent the theoretical grounding for much teaching for students from culturally non-dominant backgrounds.

Ladson-Billings' (1995) CRP proposes a pedagogy that successful teachers of African American students in their instruction in order not only to teach students, but also to empower them as they navigate within oppressive and dominant institutions. She writes, "culturally relevant teaching must meet three criteria: an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (p. 483). Specifically, culturally relevant pedagogy addresses three aspects of teaching: Conceptions of Self and Others, Social Relations, and Conceptions of Knowledge.

Conceptions of Self and Others refer to general teacher dispositions. Teachers practicing CRP exhibit beliefs about the capabilities of their students and teachers' roles to help them achieve success. Operating under the assumption that all students are capable of success, these teachers approached teaching as an art, "always in the process of becoming" (p. 478), and saw themselves as part of the communities in which their students lived, positioning teaching as a way to give back to their communities. CRP includes the Freirian belief of teaching as mining; that is, teaching as a process of pulling out or uncovering students' own knowledge as a basis for learning. When engaged in CRP, teachers also maintained social relationships with their students that demonstrated a connectedness with all learners as well as developed a learning community in which collaboration and collective responsibility for learning was established. Last, teachers practicing a culturally relevant pedagogy held particular conceptions of knowledge. They believed that knowledge was not held only by teachers but also by students. Furthermore, teachers believed that knowledge should be viewed critically. Teachers' role was to scaffold instruction to ensure for student learning, and assessments of this learning were

multifaceted and varied. These characteristics of CRP provide broad theoretical areas for teachers to address when using a culturally relevant approach to teaching.

Gay's (2000) framework for CRT provides another framework for equitable teaching intended for the access to educational opportunities for students of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. This framework involves four elements that contribute to this teaching approach: caring, communication, curriculum, and instruction. Caring involves teacher actions that connect and concern themselves with students holistically in their academic, personal, and social lives. Communication refers to both using culturally responsive discourses for and in teaching, as well as with students and families. A culturally responsive curriculum uses students' backgrounds as instructional resources as well as choosing high-quality diverse texts relevant to students' lives and interests. Finally, instruction bridges knowledge from students' backgrounds to instructional content using varied media and instructional styles. It considers multiple factors of the classroom environment including mode of instructional delivery, organization, student motivation, student perceptions, and social knowledge.

Using CRT practices in these four areas validates, empowers, and transforms student experiences (Gay, 2000). The curricular content and varied instructional approaches in culturally responsive teaching provide students with acknowledgement and legitimization of their cultural heritages of different ethnic groups. In addition, teachers and students in classrooms interact as an extended family unit in which all members support each other to achieve academic success in a holistic manner. The multidimensional aspect of CRT involves exposing and critically examining a wide range of resources and assessing knowledge in a variety of ways. CRT is empowering in that it

provides for students supports and expectations to become academically successful. These supports and high demands for success coupled with scaffolding instruction using student background and knowledge provide a transformative experience for students. This transformative experience liberates students from conventional ways of thinking in order to become critical thinkers and active participants in their learning.

Caring, communication, curriculum and instruction. One example of enacted CRT is presented in Valenzuela's (1999) book, *Subtractive Schooling*. This three-year ethnographic study uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the relationship between academic achievement and schooling orientations for Mexican-American high school students. In this study, Valenzuela conducts a series of interviews, observations, and surveys in which she collects and analyzes information regarding student performance, achievement, and perspectives. In her role as participant-observer, Valenzuela further develops her concept of subtractive schooling, a process through which "school-based relationships and organizational structures and policies [are] designed to erase students' culture" (p. 10). This process devalues student identities and takes from them valuable social ties and informational resources necessary to academic success.

Interview and survey data reveal trends in student and teacher attitudes toward them that contribute to their negative school experiences and, therefore, poor academic achievement. Teachers maintain low expectations for students and draw assumptions and interpretations about student interest and engagement in school based on their behaviors. In fact, teachers who invest time and energy in students are reportedly discouraged to do so "since the kids aren't going anywhere anyway" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 64).

Valenzuela's data reveal that students perceive schooling in ways parallel to that of schools in Mexico. That is, "students view caring, or reciprocal relations, as the basis for all learning. Their precondition to caring about school is that they be engaged in a caring relationship with an adult at school" (p. 79). Her findings illuminate the importance of teacher caring as a fundamental necessity to student school engagement. One student voices this exact concept:

I just can't get into my classes this year. They're all so boring and no one seems to care if I show up. And then they talk down to you when you do show up.... It's like all of our teachers have given up and they don't want to teach us no more....
If the *school* doesn't care about my learning, why should *I* care? (p. 88)

This comment not only illustrates Valenzuela's argument regarding the importance of caring, but also captures the student-perceived significance of this element of multicultural education.

While students in Valenzuela's (1999) study identify specific examples of teacher disinterest and lack of caring, they also identify those teachers who they feel are effective. Once again, these students identify teacher interest in students, both personally and academically, as key components to their positive school experiences:

Ms. Aranda is the best teacher I ever had. I never got bored in her class. And I learned so much. I came to respect her even more after she helped out this friend. She wanted to drop out of school and missed a lot of homework and tests. Other teachers flunked her but Ms. Aranda helped her catch up. If something like that came up with me, I know I could go to her with it. (p. 102)

Ms. Aranda's approach to teaching allows this student to stay engaged in her class. Furthermore, this student perceived academic supports combined with flexible deadlines positively. Showing personal interest in students and valuing them as individuals also surfaces in student comments:

Ms. Novak is the best teacher I ever had. The way she laughs at us makes us happy, you know, like she *really* likes us. I learn easier that way. . . she's doing everything she can to make sure that we learn and that we're happy about learning, too. Even when I'm sick, I still come to school to be in her class because she makes you feel nice, you know, like you're wanted or something. (p. 101)

Another student comments:

I like the way Ms. Arnada is nice to the ESL students. It's like they just got here and they need special help. They got to do some stuff [assignments] in Spanish and we all learned. It's nice to see your language be part of your learning. It's like, wow! That's me, my culture, my language. . . . She's *gente* [good people]! (p. 102)

This inclusion of native language into the classroom acknowledges student background and includes it as a valuable part of the learning experience. These student-identified teacher actions all characterize Gay's (2000) CRT components of caring, communication, curriculum, and instruction.

Teacher Vision: A Tool for Understanding Thoughts and Actions

In this section I present the construct of Hammerness' (2006) teacher vision construct in more detail, outlining its elements and dimensions as well as sharing research that uses this framework.

Vision. Hammerness' vision (2006) construct includes five writing prompts across five elements of practice: (a) classroom environment, (b) teacher's role, (c) students' role, (d) curriculum, and (e) societal goals. Specifically, she asks:

1. What do you see, feel, and hear when you walk around your ideal classroom?
2. What are you doing in your ideal classroom? What is your role? Why?
3. What are your students doing in this ideal classroom? What role(s) do the students play? Why?
4. What kinds of things are the students learning in your ideal classroom? For instance, what topics or texts are they working on? Why are those important for them to learn?
5. What is the relationship between what goes on in your ideal classroom and the kind of society you would like to see in the twenty-first century?

Using these prompts, teachers create vision statements and engage in conversations with Hammerness regarding the vision statement and observations of practice. While these five areas do not encompass all aspects of teaching, as her research demonstrates, the conversations that accompany work with teachers and their visions provides complex and detailed information about teachers' thinking and practice.

In a qualitative case study, Hammerness (2006) explores the vision of four teachers, uncovering their intentions and ideals as well as the tensions presented between their ideals and practice. These four portrait cases illuminate the utility of vision as well as its complex nature with respect to guiding teachers' practice.

In the first case, Andrea, a first year high school English teacher, highlights the importance of context in supporting and enacting teachers' visions. Andrea articulates a

specific vision that includes a focus on subject matter – teaching her students to engage in literature. Her vision includes higher critical thinking in discussions, roomy collaborative classroom space and a teacher facilitator role in which she encourages students to think deeply and critically analyze their texts. And yet, while Andrea articulates this vision, she simultaneously recognizes the students she works with daily do not have a history of academic success; thus, Hammerness (2006) uses vision and practice to unveil a central tension for Andrea between the subject matter she wishes to teach and the students she serves.

In addition, Andrea's school's culture and available resources – in addition to the curricular mandates – contribute to her difficulty maintaining a commitment to teaching and to her initial vision. Hammerness (2006) writes:

Andrea's first few years teaching could suggest that for her (and teachers like her) it can be particularly problematic to consider subject matter and students in opposition. It seems to leave such teachers with an untenable choice between lowering expectations for students and sticking to standards that seem impossible to reach. (p. 12)

Yet over time, Andrea balances this vision and reality. She adjusts her vision to fit the context in which she taught. Hammerness explains:

Talking about adjustments and calibrations may seem abstract and ambiguous to some, but for Andrea, the experience of tuning her vision to her students' needs, capabilities and ambitions represented a daily and concrete challenge, as well as one that called up considerable questions, doubts, and fears. (p. 18)

At the same time, discussing her vision unveiled Andrea's belief that it was her responsibility to teach her students; she did not assign blame to them for their academic challenges. She voiced emotional aspects of her vision, as well (such as guilt and shame) about not attaining her vision with her students.

In another focus case, a high school science teacher, Kelly, possesses a clear vision of her classroom as an investigative hub for independent, student-driven scientific inquiry. At her school, Kelly feels that she and her colleagues align in their visions of teaching and that her students are capable of achieving this vision. However, this optimistic perspective is simultaneously shadowed by anxiety regarding her state's new assessment mandates. Thus, vision inquiry in Kelly's case highlights a tension between her vision and context. At the same time, Hammerness (2006) explains:

... Kelly's experience demonstrates how a deep relationship between students and subject can feed one another, strengthening one's teaching vision. In turn, that vision enables a teacher like Kelly to make informed decisions about how to best negotiate her various contexts – not only those that support her vision but those that seem in conflict with it. (p. 30)

In this case, Hammerness' use of vision enabled her to identify the complex elements that reinforce and deepen Kelly's images of ideal practice (context, students) as well as those that challenge it. Vision is also used to guide Kelly's own development and understanding of how close her practice is to her imagined ideal.

In a third case, Jake, a sixth year high school social studies teacher, vision informs Jake's process of decision-making regarding his professional goals and contexts. As he progresses through his career, Jake changes schools in order to find a context in which his

vision would be most closely realized. In addition, Jake's vision guided his decision-making regarding PD and growth opportunities. Throughout, Jake's expectations of his vision realization are measured; he does not expect his vision to be consistently realized. Rather, he believes that evidence of vision actualization occurs in moments. Hammerness (2006) explains, "Because Jake does not expect his classroom to reflect his vision all the time but rather to occur in moments that he works up to over time, over weeks and even months of scaffolding, Jake does not lose faith in his vision or in his practice" (p. 45). In this manner, Hammerness reveals that as a tool, vision provides both the researcher and participant with a framework for understanding thinking and practice as well as a yardstick to measure his own development as a teacher.

In the final teacher case, Hammerness (2006) describes the broad vision of one teacher who articulates a social purpose in his teaching. In Carlos' case, his purpose in teaching is to improve his community. Not only did Carlos become a teacher in order to return to his community to teach, he recognizes that this goal is one that will require decades of work. Hammerness states:

While he has a strong sense of how his classroom and his teaching fit into this broader vision, his vision extends far beyond one class or even one school.

Carlos's vision is also indisputably a very distant one. It involves a particular population gaining more economic, political, and educational access. (p. 62)

In this case, Hammerness demonstrates how vision can be simultaneously specific and broad, short-term and long-range. It also demonstrates the role vision can play in a teacher's professional and personal lives, incorporating an emotional, social justice purpose in one's daily work.

While Hammerness (2006) unpacks the utility and complexities involved in using vision as a construct for understanding teachers' thinking and practice, notably absent from her study is an analysis or inclusion of the role of teachers' own identities in their vision formations. While she does mention students' racial and socioeconomic characteristics she does not disclose the racial identities or the backgrounds of her participants any more than to say that the students were from different cultural backgrounds or different from individual teacher participants. This absence neglects to recognize the central role of race and other forms of identity in the formation of one's own identity that informs perspective on personal experiences. In addition, this omission from her analysis does not allow for a deeper understanding of how all contextual elements – including students' identities and backgrounds – factor into teachers' classroom experiences as they strive to enact their visions.

Blind spots. While teachers' visions provide a gateway to understanding, clarifying and reflecting upon beliefs and practices, some visions also include areas of contradiction, vagueness or underlying stereotypical beliefs that serve to undermine progress toward achieving visions in reality (Hammerness, 2001; Turner, 2012). Vision provides opportunities to identify these blindspots and further confront or challenge these areas of vagueness in order to develop clarity in these areas.

Using vision to unveil teachers' culturally responsive beliefs. While vision illuminates teachers' beliefs generally, one study in particular uses this construct to examine preservice teachers' beliefs about culturally responsive literacy instruction. Turner (2012) uses visioning as a process to examine and capture preservice teachers' visions of culturally responsive literacy instruction at the end of a literacy instruction

course. Turner's descriptive study of preservice teachers revealed five main areas of focus as well as two blind spots. Specifically, these areas of focus were characterized by five main beliefs. Turner describes these as: (a) the belief that elementary classrooms should serve as literacy communities, (b) the belief that literacy teachers should "orchestrate" literacy instruction through designing and implementing accessible learning experiences, (c) the belief that students should play an active and empowered role in the classroom learning community, (d) learner-centered curriculum as essential to literacy development, and (e) encouraging students to develop ownership of their own literacy development. In this case, vision provided access to these teachers' beliefs about culturally responsive literacy instruction in clear and concrete ways.

Vision also revealed two blind spots – contradicting ideals – in teachers' images and understandings of culturally responsive literacy instruction. First, preservice teachers' visions presented contradictory sentiments about classroom management in culturally diverse schools. Specifically, while expressing the important role of classroom management in creating nurturing and encouraging literacy communities, these teachers exposed underlying colorblind approaches to such management. Turner (2012) states, "... they did not discuss how cultural backgrounds may shape teachers' and students' expectations of classroom behavior" (p. 19). Furthermore, over half of these teachers believed that classroom management concerns would no longer surface if enacting culturally responsive literacy instruction.

Teachers also revealed blind spots in the area of parental involvement. This blind spot became apparent when, despite teachers' voiced belief that positive parental-teacher partnerships and parental involvement played a critical role in successfully implementing

culturally responsive literacy instruction, 85% of teachers blamed challenging parental partnerships on unsupportive parents and lack of educational values. Simultaneously, the remaining 15% of teachers cited barriers to forming parental relationships while also offering strategies for successfully engaging in these relationships. All students, however, did expect relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse parents to be challenging. While Turner's (2012) study focuses on culturally responsive literacy instruction generally, it is apparent that examinations of vision reveal underlying beliefs and dispositions toward culturally and linguistically diverse students and families.

Definitions and Terms

Several terms are used repeatedly throughout this study. To ensure for clarity, I define the following terms briefly here: *teacher dispositions*, *preservice teachers*, *in-service teachers*, *CRT* and *vision*. *Teacher dispositions* refer to both teachers' underlying beliefs about students' capabilities as well as their attitudes toward students based on these beliefs. These beliefs are developed through teachers' personal experiences and include their perceptions of students as well as their expectations of them based on these perceptions. *Dispositions*, therefore, is a broad term used in this proposed study to encompass related psychological constructs involved in interpreting student behavior and forming opinions and attitudes toward students based on these interpretations. *Preservice teacher* refers to teachers who are still engaged in preparation coursework and experiences; these teachers are not yet considered teachers of record in their classrooms. *In-service teachers*, on the other hand, have either completed their teacher preparation experiences or currently serve as teachers of record or assistant/partner teachers in alternative routes to certification. Regardless, these teachers teach full-time. While I

outlined two different but related approaches to equitable teaching (culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching), this study uses the abbreviation *CRT* in reference to my coding framework based on Ladson-Billings' (1995, 2009) framework. In doing so, the coding framework also inherently includes Gay's (2000) areas of culturally responsive teaching as well, although codes are based specifically on Ladson-Billings' approach. Finally, teacher *vision* refers to their ideal images of practice.

In addition to the above terms used throughout this dissertation, the following terms are specific to this study and will be used in subsequent chapters.

Construct. A construct refers to a thematic group within the CRT framework. Three constructs exist: Conceptions of Self and Others, Conceptions of Knowledge and Social Relations. Within each CRT construct there are elements that define the nature of each construct.

Element. An element refers to more descriptive parts of each CRT construct. There are varying numbers of elements within each construct (see pp. 120-122). Each element within the analysis consisted of multiple codes for each teacher, depending on what emerged from data.

Dimension. Hammerness (1999) identifies five parts of vision. These parts are referred to as *dimensions*. These dimensions include: classroom environment, role of teachers, role of students, curriculum and societal goals.

Groundedness. Within the qualitative data analysis (QDA) software, Atlas.ti, groundedness refers to the frequency of individual codes labeled within a project. This frequency is a measure of intensity with which the code occurs. This measure is

represented graphically by the first number within braces (e.g., {0, 5}) within the software.

Density. Within the QDA software, Atlas.ti, density refers to the measure of connectedness codes have with other codes. This measure is represented graphically by the second number within braces (e.g., {0, 5}) within the software.

Robustness. Refers to relative presence of a code when compared to other codes. A higher relative presence (higher groundedness) signals greater robustness when compared to codes with lower groundedness.

Co-occurrence. Refers to a function within Atlas.ti during which the software examines two or more codes that overlap after the user has coded a set of data.

Network. Refers to a function within Atlas.ti in which the researcher can create and manipulate relationships between codes in a visual graphic based on interpretations of data. Relationships are represented graphically as arrows and text; each relationship connection is calculated toward a code's measure of density.

Code family. Refers to a group of codes created by the researcher that have a theoretical, conceptual, thematic relationship as a collection based on interpretations of the data.

Summary

Elements of the existing literature demonstrate that teachers' dispositions toward students influence differential student treatment in classrooms and subsequent differences in academic performance and placement related to this treatment. This differential treatment is based on teachers' perceptions of student characteristics such as SES and race and perceived academic abilities (Cook 2004; Ready & Wright, 2011; Rist, 1970).

Simultaneously, literature examining teachers' attitudes toward cultural, linguistic and academic diversity – three types of student difference in today's classrooms – identify patterns of current thinking about these two components of difference. Both areas of literature demonstrate at best ambivalent and at worst negative attitudes toward teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds or students with disabilities. While teacher preparation programs have begun to incorporate coursework, immersion experiences and diverse recruitment strategies to change the current population's experience with and disposition toward students, attitudes continue to show these trends (Sleeter, 2001).

A contrasting body of literature offers positive approaches to teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students and students with exceptionalities more equitably (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). These culturally responsive and culturally relevant approaches focus on student backgrounds as assets to structuring learning experiences. Finally, existing literature – while limited – presents the potential for using vision as a conceptual tool for revealing teachers' understandings about not only their planned and enacted teaching but also dispositions toward students (Hammerness, 2006). In doing so, vision has begun to reveal teachers' conceptualizations of diversity and equity through illuminating color-blind ideologies and deficit views of students and families (Turner, 2012).

Rationale for the Current Study

Existing literature on teacher dispositions and student performance make clear the important role teacher thinking plays in providing equitable learning opportunities for students thus providing justification for examining teachers' thinking (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Altogether, the bodies of literature reviewed in this chapter present a

theoretical narrative that connects teachers' internal processes and dispositions to providing equitable opportunities for all students in classrooms. As these studies demonstrate, how teachers engage students in the learning process varies differentially depending on a number of factors including their dispositions toward students, attitudes toward diversity, implementation of equitable instructional practices, and visions of teaching.

However, gaps exist pertaining to our knowledge of diversity and equity understanding related to in-service teachers' thinking and practice. First, the bulk of existing literature examining teachers' dispositions focus on preservice teachers, and those studies examining in-service teacher attitudes primarily do so using survey data. Thus, more work is needed to understand in-service teachers' dispositions toward nonmainstream students, particularly using qualitative methodology to investigate this phenomenon in depth. In addition, little is known about the ways in which teachers' visions and practice consider diversity and equity within their overall instructional decision-making. Turner's (2012) study begins examining the combination of these two concepts, but the examination is limited to the area of literacy instruction for preservice teachers.

I argue that examination of vision using CRT for in-service teachers is critical to understand further, as such investigation not only uncovers underlying dispositions toward students but also illuminates the extent to which teachers implement equitable practices. This study addresses these gaps in existing literature by building upon Turner's (2012) qualitative investigation combining vision and culturally responsive practices. Like Turner's study, my dissertation combines vision and CRT in its framework;

however, it examines visions of three in-service teachers and also examines their practices. Furthermore, my dissertation utilizes Atlas.ti to examine the presence of CRT considerations as well as the centrality of this thinking and enactment within the wider scope of their visions. I argue that such an analysis is necessary to better understand how centrally teachers consider diversity and equity as classrooms become increasingly diverse nationwide.

The next chapter will describe a pilot study conducted prior to the dissertation. In doing so, it outlines the study's design and findings; it also describes ways in which the pilot informed the design and approach for this dissertation study.

Chapter Three: Pilot Study

In 2011 I conducted a pilot study at an independent school to explore potential dissertation ideas. This chapter outlines its design, methodology and findings and explains how the pilot informed the theoretical framework, scope and design of my dissertation. Conducting the pilot led me to refine the methodology I used in my exploration of teacher thinking and practice, particularly the use of teacher vision as a main construct for examining this relationship. I discuss more specific considerations that informed the dissertation at the end of this chapter.

I sought to better understand how teachers conceptualize classroom diversity and educational equity theoretically and in practice in my pilot study. Specifically, I asked:

1. What are teachers' conceptions of diversity and equity?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' conceptions and their classroom practice?

While there were three participants at the beginning of my pilot, this chapter reports the case of a single teacher. Data from this participant provided the most informative and helpful ideas to inform my dissertation design and methodology.

School Context

I collected data over the course of a three-month, equity-focused PD program with three teachers at Hillard School*, an independent, co-educational school in a suburban town in the Mid-Atlantic Region. While Hillard is an independent school whose population does not parallel the percentages of racial and socioeconomic diversity among the national public school population, Hillard's student demographics do include 34% students of color (see Table 1), a higher percentage of students of color compared to

* Pseudonym

national data on independent day schools (25.7%; National Association of Independent Schools, 2011). As an independent school, Hillard is not obligated to adopt national or local performance standards, curricula or standardized testing processes. As such, teachers have great flexibility to create and adapt curricula and assessments.

Table 1.

Hillard School Student Demographic Data (AY 2010-2011)

Category	Percentage
Boys	51
Girls	49
Students of Color [†]	34
Foreign Nationals	1
Receive financial assistance	29

Study Design

During this three-month pilot, three teachers participated in an equity-focused PD group meeting for an hour and a half after school on several occasions. The group met four times, and I visited each teacher’s classroom once between group meetings. During group sessions, I served as the professional developer, and participants discussed issues of equity broadly, as well as equity dilemmas that they faced in their classrooms. Each teacher identified a single equity dilemma in her class about which she decided to focus her thinking and practice over the course of the PD program. During classroom observations, I served as an observer, focusing on the equity issue identified by the teacher being observed. Teachers engaged in post-lesson reflections using a secure interactive website. I then responded to teachers’ reflections, posing questions to clarify

[†] Self identified by parents as “African American,” “Asian American,” “Latino Hispanic,” “Middle Eastern,” “Multi Racial” and “other”

teacher thinking as well as offer ideas to support them as they struggled to provide equitable experiences for their students given their previously established equity dilemmas. In these ways, I used electronic teacher reflection notebooks to record teacher thinking as well as the dynamic written interactions between individual teachers and myself.

I collected qualitative data from four sources over the three-month duration of the study. These sources included observations of classroom practice, electronic teacher reflection journals, professional development sessions, and teacher interviews. Data from observations included field notes (running records) and observational summaries completed post-observations. Teacher journals included reflections during two professional development sessions as well as reflections in response to my prompts after teaching each observed lesson. I also video recorded PD sessions as another source of data.

Methodology

I used qualitative methods to explore, describe, and examine in-depth a bounded “case” as it existed within an authentic context and extended period of time (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Due to the complex nature of teachers’ conceptions of equity as well as the dynamic interplay between conceptions of equity, classroom practice, and the needs and characteristics of students in the class, this methodological approach appropriately aligned with this study’s research questions. That is, case study allowed for rich investigation into the bounded phenomena of a teacher’s conception of equity and the relationship between this conception and classroom practice – within the natural setting in which the case occurred using multiple forms of empirical evidence.

Participants

While all teachers at Hillard Elementary School were encouraged to participate in this study, three teachers expressed interest in participating. All three of these teachers participated and received support from their Principal to do so. Participants received a stipend of 150 dollars for participating after completion of the study. Although three teachers began the study, one teacher was unable to complete the study due to termination of her employment. In addition, after data analysis was complete, I eliminated a second participant from the study as the analyzed propositions did not have substantial robustness of evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The remaining participant, Eliza, remained a focus for this examination as there was a preponderance of empirical evidence collected for analysis of her conceptualization of equity and its relationship to her practice. Eliza's case thus became central to informing the subsequent design and methodology for this dissertation.

Eliza. At the time of the study, Eliza was in her 18th year teaching, including two years of student teaching. She earned a Bachelor's of Arts degree from a small liberal arts college in the Midwest region of the U.S. as well as a Master's in Education from an accredited local university. She worked in three different schools over the course of her career but worked at Hillard for the past 11 years. When asked about her teaching approach, Eliza stated, "I really try to build a rapport with my students. I try to understand them. Also, I don't like to do the same things over and over, so I try to do new projects and activities each year" [Personal communication, February 2011].

Eliza taught language arts and social studies for 32 fifth-grade students in two sections, one section at a time. During the course of the PD program, Eliza chose to focus

on one section of 16 students for this work. She identified a particular equity dilemma that she faced for this section: there appeared to be a disparity in academic performance and intellectual engagement between the boys and girls. While the class ratio of boys to girls was 8:7, Eliza noted that girls were much less engaged and appeared less motivated in her classroom. This issue became the focus of our work over the course of the PD program.

Analysis

Analysis began by hand, organizing data chronologically in their raw form. Next I summarized the data, being sure to include my reflections on summaries as well as questions that these data generated with respect to my research questions. While engaging in multiple readings of the data, I used an inductive analytic approach to create descriptive, interpretive, and pattern codes based on meaningful and inferential units of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I completed multiple readings of the data, looking for evidence of relational aspects in order to categorize and cluster these initial codes. After I began this hand coding process, I learned about QDA software, Atlas.ti, and decided to transfer my analytic process to this software.

In Atlas.ti, I then combined, revised, deleted, broadened, or further developed codings in order to more accurately represent Eliza's conceptualizations based on evidence in these data. Atlas.ti supported me in organizing these codings and subsequent analyses. The number of code occurrences (robustness) were generated through Atlas.ti and used to substantiate analytic propositions. Finally, I looked for converging data across sources to ensure for robustness while also looking for disconfirming evidence of analytic propositions during the analysis process.

Findings

The case described here serves as an illustrative description of how Eliza understood and conceptualized diversity and equity at the time of this study. The following vignettes illustrate ways in which she conceptualized diversity and equity, followed by examples of the relationship between these conceptions and her classroom practice.

Eliza conceptualized equity in terms of meeting students' individual classroom needs. Simultaneously, she strove to intellectually engage all students; therefore, to Eliza, equity related to making constant considerations about how to differentially engage students. To understand this relationship, it is first necessary to understand how Eliza conceptualized intellectual engagement. Therefore, in the following section, I first outline Eliza's conception of equity, followed by a description of her conceptualization of intellectual engagement. Lastly, I illustrate how Eliza's conception of equity relates to her practice by supporting students to become intellectually engaged in the classroom.

Eliza's conception of equity: Meeting individual students' needs. Over the course of the PD program, Eliza's conception of equity remained consistent. Educational equity to her centered around meeting students' individual needs in order to intellectually engage them in academic tasks. Both her pre- and post-professional development definitions of equity illustrate this individually based conception. When asked to define the term "educational equity" in April she responded:

Educational equity, to me, is giving the kids what they need as individuals. I don't mean sameness or fairness but I do mean equity in terms of opportunity, respect, etc. Sometimes this is mandated – like when kids have educational testing...

Other times, it's subtle and harder to notice, but those [quieter] kids need attention, too." (PD Session, April 26, 2011)

In this way, Eliza's conception of equity in the classroom revolved around her individual students; this concept is different from "sameness", suggesting that equity involves differential treatment while maintaining a certain level of opportunity and respect for all students. Furthermore, Eliza identifies two ways in which equity manifests in everyday schooling – equity through providing mandated accommodations for educational testing and equity in noticing student needs and attending to them.

For Eliza, equity is also inextricably linked to both "good teaching" and diversity that also reveal individual students as a basis for centering instruction. Good teaching involves:

... trying to reach the kids where they are and bring them forward or upward or onward.... I also think it's about explicitly teaching the skills they need and holding them to standards; I don't mean that everyone should meet the same standard, but I think that kids need to push themselves to do their best. (Journal, April 26, 2011)

This understanding of good teaching reveals Eliza's underlying conception of equity through meeting students at their individual skill levels and supporting them in their further development. This description of good teaching also reveals an individual-based conception of equity through her expectation that students perform at particular, differential levels of performance standards and be supported to reach differential but challenging standards, as well. Similarly, embedded within her description of good teaching lies an understanding of diversity that includes considerations of individual

students to achieve a level of classroom equity. Eliza explicitly describes her conceptualization of the relationship between diversity and equity. She states, “Equity and diversity are related because they tend to be mentioned together all the time. In any one classroom, there are diverse students who each have different needs” (Journal, April 2011). Furthermore, she explains, “Equity and diversity are completely related, in my opinion, because all learners are different. Each child comes to the classroom with a unique perspective and unique needs” (Journal, June 2011). In these ways, student diversity – as defined by students’ individual learning characteristics, personal perspectives, and varying needs – directly relate to Eliza’s conception of classroom equity and, consequently, her definition of good teaching.

By the end of the professional development, Eliza provides more detail about her conception of equity, maintaining a focus on meeting individual students’ needs. She states, “To me, educational equity implies that students’ needs are met. This is a constantly changing factor, and so there must be on-going assessment (both formal and informal) to evaluate what the needs are and how to meet them” (PD Session, June 2011). Again, Eliza focuses on individual needs, this time identifying the constant, changing challenge in accomplishing this task. Nevertheless, her conception of equity as well as its relationship to diversity and good teaching remain.

Eliza’s teaching goal: Intellectual engagement. In an effort to understand the relationship between Eliza’s conceptualization of equity and her teaching practice, a distinct goal of teaching emerged – that of intellectually engaging her students. This goal was distinctly related to equity in how she engaged with her students and how she interpreted levels of engagement. Therefore, it is necessary to first understand how Eliza

conceptualized engagement as her teaching goal in order to better delineate the ways in which her conceptualizations of equity related to her practice.

Both observations of Eliza's practice and her reflective journaling reveal her goal of holding students to high standards, particularly with intellectual engagement. She possesses a clear vision of what engagement looks like in the classroom:

To me, [engagement] means the kids' thinking about and caring about what they are doing – and actually doing it. And that's the magic thing. They are actually doing what they are supposed to be doing and caring about it and first thinking about it.... And I've seen it in various things that we have done more so than in others. And sometimes I just measure an activity by how engaged they are. You can just tell. It's so easy to see. (Interview, June 2011)

While Eliza defines her conceptualization of engagement as “thinking about and caring about” the tasks in which they participate, she also differentiates between participation and her conceptualization of engagement:

Because participation, like there is a girl in my class this year who is the participation queen. And she puts her hand up and she wants to answer the question and she wants to be right. Great. And there are a lot of them like that. They just want to – or they want to read aloud because let's say we are reading something out loud and they want to have their voice heard. But they are not *engaged*. I can do a read aloud to my class, and I can read a book and not be thinking about it at all. I can just do that. But some of them can do that, too. They can answer the question and give you the right answer but they do not at all care about why or maybe not even how that relates to anything else we are talking

about. It's just like, "Oh yeah, she's looking for this, so I'm going to say that so that I can hear praise for being right, or just so that my classmates know that I know it." This I think is different. It's all about thinking about it and concentrating on it. (Interview, June 2011)

While Eliza recognizes students' efforts to participate in classroom activities, she makes it clear that participation alone does not qualify as engagement. To her, solely contributing to class activities (participation) does not necessarily equate to intellectual engagement. Rather, her goal of engaging students involves an intellectual component that requires students to think and concentrate on the task at hand.

Eliza's perceptions of students' intellectual engagement involve three main components: staying on topic or task, asking probing questions, or making genuine, thoughtful connections. These behavior markers signal to Eliza that students are intellectually engaged. While she transparently delineates these markers of engagement in interviews, she also reflects upon engagement as the primary focus of her lesson reflections. In an April post-observation journal entry, she writes of girls' disengagement in the lesson she taught. "They weren't focused – staring off into space, wiggly, making faces at each other, not following along, etc. I could tell by their eyes that they were elsewhere" (22 April, 2011). Similarly, she again reflects on her students' levels of engagement (and disengagement) in May. "They were somewhat engaged in the project/lesson, and I felt that they were doing something useful.... Again, [the equity issue is about] engagement and interest. The boys are more "into" it and the girls are just dutiful about doing the work" (Journal, 5 May 2011). These reflections demonstrate Eliza's interpretation of particular student behaviors (e.g., staying on task, showing

interest) as intellectual engagement and others (e.g., unrelated physical movement, staring off into space, participating without showing interest) as disengagement.

These interpretations of student engagement become apparent in observations of practice when Eliza redirects a girl who asks a series of questions unrelated to the lesson's topic ("We're going on a field trip? When are we going to the museum? Do we have to wear uniforms?"). In addition, she compliments a group of boys working on-task (i.e., completing the task at hand while not distracting others with unrelated comments or questions). With this goal and standard for intellectual engagement, Eliza's concept of educational equity (meeting students' needs and pushing them forward) then serves as a vehicle to differentially support students in demonstrating particular behavior markers that represent Eliza's conception of intellectual engagement. In these ways, Eliza's conception of student engagement as well as how she interprets students as engaging in tasks characterize "sameness." In other words, for Eliza, student engagement involves particular behavior markers for *all* students. These markers form a basis for her assessment of individual student's engagement and set a particular standard for how she assesses the quality of her instruction.

Equity in practice: A "constant battle" to engage students. Equity was consistently considered when Eliza thought about her practice. While Eliza maintained particular standards of engagement for all students, she also considered how to support individual students in demonstrating these high levels of engagement. To this end, she tried to engage students differently depending on their individual characteristics in order to achieve the standards for engagement outlined above. While she differentially engaged

students, she identified this differential engagement in terms of equity. In this way, Eliza demonstrated equity in engaging her students.

First, Eliza believed a teacher's role in providing equitable experiences to engage students in the classroom is to know students and their needs in order to support them according to these individual characteristics. She states, "Our job, I think, is to figure out what each [student] needs and work to meet that need. Some needs are more apparent than others" (Journal, 26 April 2011). In a PD activity, Eliza's efforts to know students and understand their needs became apparent as she reflected upon each student in her classroom. In her reflections, Eliza consistently demonstrated her detailed knowledge about various characteristics of students, their interests and their families. Each student reflection included information about the student's family members (e.g., parents, number of siblings), student attitudes toward academic and extra-curricular activities (e.g., "loves to read" or "loves to sing or play the guitar") as well as social interactions in the classroom and school (e.g., "loves to please and wants everybody to like her"). In addition, Eliza included information on students' self-concept (e.g., "super self-conscious") and effort (e.g., "hard-worker). Less often mentioned were students' academic needs (i.e., students' readiness level in particular skill areas). Nevertheless, these reflections reveal a detailed understanding of students' individual, personal characteristics upon which Eliza is able to base instructional decisions to engage students differentially.

At the same time, however, Eliza recognizes that meeting these needs is a challenging task. "Some needs are more apparent than others. It's challenging to meet the needs of some without taking attention away from others; sometimes I do this well and at

other times I fail miserably” (Journal, 26 April 2011). Her admission that this approach to equitably meeting the needs of all her students is challenging speaks to the struggle Eliza identifies in her practice in relation to supporting them to engage in their work.

Eliza’s conception of equity often related to her teaching in three areas of instructional practice, all in relation to supporting students’ individual needs in order to intellectually engage them. These areas include: (a) choosing appropriate content that will interest individual students, (b) allotting time in equitable ways to managing students and differentially support them instructionally, and (c) considering student self-concept in attending to their needs.

Eliza continuously examined and re-examined the content she chose for her lessons and reflected upon how the choices she made may have engaged some students and not others. She explicitly identifies this choice of subject matter as her main equity issue for one of her lessons:

The main issue is the subject matter. The boys in the group are very into the whole Revolutionary War subject, and they are naturally engaged in it. They also have a great deal of background knowledge due to their independent reading, interest, and probably the fact that they watch the History Channel a lot. The girls are just BORED with the whole thing. (Reflection, April 22, 2011)

While she identifies the lesson topic as a point of interest and disinterest for certain students, she also acknowledges students’ background knowledge and particular interests as reasons why they differentially engage in the lesson itself. In journal reflections, she consistently identifies the content and the materials she uses to engage students as tools that she can control that differentially engage students to promote equitable access to

learning opportunities. Her thinking about engagement and the decisions she makes about curricular content and materials all include considerations of equity both in her planning and reflection of practice.

Eliza consistently faced an equity dilemma when considering how to allot her time with students, depending on the instructional activity and student grouping. In her efforts to intellectually engage students, she considered equity in her time spent with students for two purposes: classroom management (“crowd control”) and instructional support.

Eliza reflects upon her constant considerations of time use after an observed lesson in which students worked in pairs to identify character traits and significant contributions of historical figures known as “firebrands” during the Colonial Era. Their assessment of this task took the form of a “Wanted” poster of the assigned firebrand, listing the reasons why he was a threat to the public, including the historical events in which he participated. On the first day of this lesson, students identified the character traits and significant contributing events. During the second day, students were tasked to finish their posters so they could share about their historical figures. In a post-lesson electronic journal conversation, I asked Eliza, “I wonder how you decide which groups to attend to when you’re circulating?” (Journal, May 2011). She responded, “I was just trying to get to each group an even number of times” (Journal, May 2011). This response seemed counter to Eliza’s conception of equity as *not* sameness, so I probed this response. In our post-PD interview, she elaborated on her comment and expanded on her thinking:

.... if we were working on a research project and each kid was working individually, I would probably spend a lot more time with certain people than others. And other people I might only visit once just so that they have some clue that I am somewhat focused on them. Do you know what I mean? Because so-and-so really can't understand how to read this and get anything out of it whereas these people can be fine. So I don't need to deal with that and I don't consider that to be unfair. But if everyone is doing the exact same thing in a partner or group activity, and it's not a valid instruction on how to do it, it's more monitoring and crowd control, then it will probably be more *equal* time. (Interview, July 2011)

Here, Eliza differentiates her use of time under two different contextual circumstances:

(a) circumstances during which students are completing a task in partners or small groups, and (b) circumstances during which students independently complete a learning task which may require differential support and, therefore, teacher's time. This differentiation demonstrates a relationship between Eliza's conception of equity as not only individually responsive to her students, but also *circumstantial*, based on the context of classroom activities. For activities that require students to complete partner or group work that is not a newly-acquired skill, she considers equity in time allotment more along the lines of equal, or same, for all groups in order to ensure for their engagement in the task. However, when classroom activities require students as individuals to complete an instructional activity, Eliza's conceptualization of equitable time allotment is based upon individual students' – particularly students who are academically struggling – needs.

Thus, Eliza's changing justifications for how she uses her time with students embodies a

circumstantial equity conception, one that is fluid in nature and dependent upon the context in which students are working, as well as the activity's content.

Not only do students' background knowledge and interests factor into Eliza's considerations of practice, but she also considers students' self-concept in relation to the learning activity when attending to students' needs in order to provide equitable access to instruction. In reflecting upon a lesson in which she attended to all student pairs as equally as possible, she shared her rationale for how she allocated her time. She mentions that, "Ronald and Trevor didn't really need me – neither did Oliver and Steve, but I didn't want the girls to think they couldn't do it alone" (Reflection, May 9, 2011). In another reflection, she writes:

I think the girls don't see themselves as being as capable [as the boys], so they are reluctant to take risks. I tried to give them adequate wait time and encourage them to use their resources rather than resort to calling on a boy who knew the answers." (Reflection, May 26, 2011)

These comments represent some ways in which Eliza considers students' self-concept in her decision-making when attending to students' needs, particularly the needs the girls who do not engage as much as the boys in her class.

Final reflections: Equity as simply complex. A final written reflection further illuminates Eliza's conception of equity as not only meeting individual student needs, but also simultaneously simple and complex in nature. In a final reflection, she writes:

... I was trying to reach the girls in my room, despite their intentions to the contrary. I think that I learned that this was both harder and easier than I thought it would be. In other words, I already knew that I needed to consider so many

factors (from partnerships and dynamics between kids to the actual processes involved in the lesson), but it is a constant battle that not only changes day to day but minute to minute. (Journal, June 2011)

In trying to equitably teach the girls in her classroom, Eliza's ever-increasing attention to individuals, their needs and the ways in which they engage (or disengage) from classroom activities and each other seemed both simple and complex. The process involved in "reaching" all her students likened an ever-changing "battle" in the classroom.

Discussion

In this section, I discuss how this analysis of Eliza's conceptions connects to broader issues in providing educational equity. I then highlight the usefulness of these analyses as well as consider ways in which Eliza's conceptions may be problematic in achieving equity in classrooms.

Eliza's conceptualization of equity as meeting individuals' needs, as well as the ways in which this conceptualization relates to her classroom practice align with what Sleeter and Grant (2009) characterize as an approach to multicultural education that they term, *Teaching the Exceptional and the Culturally Different*. In this approach to multicultural education, teachers view classroom diversity as a reality that positions their work as adaptive; that is, "multicultural education might mean adapting how one teaches exceptional or culturally different students to enable them to achieve in school and better meet the traditional demands of U.S. life" (p. 43). These adaptations take the form of curricular and instructional modifications that meet the needs of individual students in order to support students in achieving particular standards of performance or

achievement. In practice, teachers who believe in this approach adapt curricula and instructional materials to the diverse needs of their students with the eventual goal of scaffolding skills until these scaffolds are no longer needed. In other words, curricular and instructional modifications are individualized in order to bridge understandings between what students know and what they need to learn, and faded until individual students can complete targeted tasks independently.

While this approach recognizes and addresses students' various and varying forms of diversity (e.g., cultural background, language, learning style, or learning ability), Sleeter and Grant (2009) pose that this approach to schooling not only does little to address the broader injustices that permeate society (and, therefore, schools,) but it often leads teachers to adopt either a *deficiency orientation* or *difference orientation* toward students, both of which subscribe to mainstream assimilation as the goal of education. The assumption with an assimilationist approach is that one type of cultural knowledge and demonstration of that knowledge is valued, subsequently devaluing the knowledge and experiences of students in non-dominant groups. Furthermore, the Teaching the Exceptional and Culturally Different approach "ignores structural and institutional bases of oppression" (p. 77) that sustain many of the life conditions that disadvantage particular populations, particularly students of color. Sleeter and Grant further note that:

.... most of its acceptance has been by White, middle-class teachers who take their own background and culture for granted and are searching for a way to incorporate or deal with those backgrounds and cultures they view as different. (p. 78)

While the bases for Eliza's conceptualization of equity were beyond the scope of this study, Sleeter and Grant's assertion that this approach to address diversity in classrooms is most often adopted by White, middle-class teachers poses particular risks and challenges considering the preponderance of White, female, middle-class teachers who make up the majority of today's teaching force.

Support for the contention that this conceptualization of equity applies to Eliza comes from the realization that while Eliza demonstrated thoughtful consideration about her students as individuals, noticeably absent was any mention of students' race. This noticeable absence as a component of diversity or equity aligns with the theory of color-blind racism that exists today in our schools. This theory problematizes the idea of color-blindness; that is, seeing people for "who they are" and intentionally ignoring rather skin color as a component of one's identity to recognize. According to Bonilla-Silva (2010) the color-blind perspective does little more than continue to bolster "sincere fictions" in which race no longer factors into social, economic, academic, and other aspects of mobility and success. That is to say, this well-meaning teacher, through focusing solely upon particular aspects of students – academic and extra-curricular interests, family supports, social interactions, etc. – continuously neglected to mention race in any conversation about knowing her students or meeting their needs.

Moreover, rather than considering the multiple layers of possible intersecting identities presented within each student (including characteristics of race and/or ethnicity), the noticeable silence about and around race simultaneously ignores an important aspect of students' identities. Pollock (2005) identifies this silence as one component of a greater "colormute" culture in schools in which race talk – or the silence

around race – perpetuates inequitable systems and structures that prevent students from equitably accessing educational opportunities. While Eliza did not express an outward unwillingness to consider race among the many layers of students’ identities, the noticeable absence from including race in her considerations about instruction or ways to differentially engage individuals speak to a larger cultural and systemic issue of colorblind racism and colormute ideology.

It would be remiss not to point out that Eliza embodies multiple characteristics of teachers to be admired. In fact, she possesses a multitude of desirable traits that lay the foundation for effective teaching. These characteristics include a deep sense and ethic of care for her students (Noddings, 1992), willingness to reflect upon, question, and change her own practice, respect for students and confidence in their abilities to learn, and commitment to seek new solutions for new challenges (Banks et al., 2005). She continues to seek professional development opportunities, demonstrating a disposition toward teaching as a learning profession. However, despite these traits, Eliza’s Teaching the Exceptional and Culturally approach and colorblind, colormute ideologies become evident through this study’s analysis.

Such evidence further highlights a need for a shift in policy and practice away from singular conceptions of diversity and schooling as “meeting students’ needs”. Rather, schools need to focus increasingly on social justice approaches to education that empower schools, teachers, and students to question oppressive structures that continue to reproduce inequitable opportunities both inside and outside our schools. Sleeter and Grant (2009) describe this approach as Multicultural Social Justice Education. According to these authors, this approach:

.... starts with the premise that equity and justice should be goals for everyone and that solidarity across differences is needed to bring about justice. The notions of equity and justice point to not just a goal of equal opportunity but also to one of equal results for diverse communities. This means that in an equitable and just society, the various institutions of society will enable diverse communities to sustain themselves, and will ensure basic human rights (including decent housing, healthcare, quality education, and work that pays a living wage) for all citizens. (pp. 197-198)

Through beginning with an equity- and justice-centered goal, schools become situated within the larger societal systems that affect students in and out of schools. This situated context is necessary in order to provide equitable and empowering education for all students.

Informing the Dissertation Study

As noted earlier, this pilot study informed the current dissertation's focus, design and methodology. Specifically, the pilot informed this dissertation's theoretical framework, site selection, protocol design, data collection and data analysis. The following sections describe these considerations in more detail.

While the focus on teachers' thinking about diversity and equity continued to interest me after this study, I needed a more structured theoretical framework for examining these aspects of teaching as well as the relationship between the two. This need arose from challenges I encountered analyzing my pilot data; while doing so I felt unclear about my theoretical framework. I began exploring frameworks that examined teacher thinking, practice and the connection between them. This exploration led me to

Hammerness' (2006) construct of teacher vision. I also decided to use a culturally responsive framework to analyze the diversity and equity considerations in thinking and practice. Again, this decision was made as a result of my experience during my pilot analysis. While I analyzed the data for diversity and equity conceptualizations I came to realize that the codes and themes that emerged from the data aligned with already existing CRP and CRT frameworks. Ultimately, Gloria Ladson-Billings' (2009) framework includes elements that illuminate asset-minded orientations best aligned with phenomena I was interested in examining for my dissertation.

In addition to these shifts in theoretical framework, my pilot also informed thinking about site selection. At the conclusion of my pilot, I wondered whether as an independent school, Hillard School's context was the type of school in which I wanted to conduct my dissertation study. Might public school teachers hold different orientations toward students than at a private school? As a researcher interested in informing public school policy and practice, I decided I would try to secure a public school site for my dissertation inquiry.

My pilot also informed interview protocol prompts. While the intended focus for this pilot study was to understand teachers' conceptions of diversity and equity, the direct prompts used in the journal protocol did not provide deep understandings of teachers' conceptions. When asked about her definition of educational equity, Eliza's answers were broad and theoretical. As shared earlier, this definition included designing instruction based on students' individual needs; however, this definition was limited in its scope. It was difficult to understand the complexity of her diversity and equity understandings and decisions without first understanding her broader thinking about teaching in general.

Thus, for my dissertation, I used Hammerness' (2006) vision prompts as the initial interview protocol. These prompts captured teachers' overall thinking about their practice and also allowed me to analyze thinking in systematic ways by combining vision and CRT elements as analytic tools. As a result, this combination allowed me to deeply understand and describe the nature of teachers' conceptions of diversity and equity as well as how these conceptions inform their instructional decision-making.

My pilot experience further led me to make two major data collection changes. The first change included types of data I collected. After analyzing my pilot data, two methods of data collection seemed sufficient for the investigation; interviews and observations provided adequate information. In the pilot study, teachers did not complete journals consistently unless they were doing so while we met. When they were completed, responses were often short with surface-level (rather than deep) content. They seemed rushed, not thoughtful. In addition, the group conversations from professional development sessions were not only difficult to schedule, but they also did not provide much more information about teachers' individual understandings than the interviews and observations. As a result, the dissertation study included only individual interviews and observations as primary data sources with no group teacher gatherings.

The second design change included restructuring data collection to include ongoing interviews and observations over the course of one unit of study for each participant, rather than over a few months across different units. Working with teachers once a week over the course of the spring semester resulted in my observing different units for each teacher during the pilot. Although data collection occurred over three or four months, the difference in content provided a somewhat disjointed perspective into

teacher thinking and practice. While the students remained the same over time, the instructional content and lesson design shifted dramatically from unit to unit. In order to dig more deeply into teacher thinking and practice for my dissertation, I decided to collect data within one unit for each teacher. While this focus included more intense data collection over a shorter period of time, it provided a more consistent context for understanding the phenomenon of interest. This change provided a more consistent understanding of teachers' thinking and practice (rather than three months of disjointed lesson observations and accompanying conversations).

Analytically, the pilot study used an inductive, iterative process for coding, followed by frequency counts of these codes (groundedness) generated by Atlas.ti to determine salient themes. When I used this software for my pilot analysis, I taught myself how to use the software through online tutorials. At the time, I knew that I was not fully tapping the software's powerful potential as I only utilized the code tagging and robustness functions. After attending a two-day workshop on Atlas.ti, I recognized a more in-depth and complex process was available to identify richer connections between codes through the use of the software's network function. While frequency counts provided one level of data analysis, when designing my dissertation I considered a more in-depth analysis using Atlas.ti's network tool. In addition, the workshop provided me with invaluable understanding regarding the use of analytic memos and an iterative theory-building process for generating findings than I had during my pilot analytic process. As the next chapter explains, Atlas.ti was used much more intentionally and powerfully for the dissertation, allowing for more structured, systematic and complex analyses than in my pilot.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the design, implementation, analysis and findings from a small pilot study preceding the dissertation. As a result of this study, my dissertation's theoretical framework primarily draws upon vision (Hammerness, 2006) and CRT (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The site selection focused on securing a public school. Protocols for the dissertation shifted to include individual interview prompts rather than electronic journals. These prompts align with Hammerness' vision prompts. My pilot led me to focus data collection on one unit of study per participant and to only interview and observational data as primary sources of information. Finally, my experience using Atlas.ti QDA during my pilot and my increased understanding of this software influenced my analytic process for the dissertation.

Chapter Four: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers conceptualize diversity and equity through their visions of practice and how these conceptualizations related to classroom practice. Specifically, I asked:

1. What beliefs about diversity and equity are revealed through teachers' visions and practice?
2. How central or peripheral are beliefs about diversity and equity within teachers' overall visions?

My conceptual framework, pilot study results, and purpose for exploring existing phenomena led me to select a qualitative design for this study. Therefore, in this chapter, I outline my research approach and discuss the site selection, researcher positionality, and participant selection, with background information on each teacher. Finally, I outline data collection, data analysis and interpretation processes.

Philosophical Assumptions and Methodology

I positioned this study within particular philosophical assumptions that subsequently guided its design. Epistemologically, I assumed a constructionist reality; that is, that meaning is created as humans engage with their surrounding world rather than existing in the world itself or residing entirely within the subjective interpreter (Crotty, 1998). I took an interpretivist theoretical perspective, in which “man is suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). In this way, I held a major assumption that individuals create meaning as they engage in their surrounding environments. This meaningful engagement with the world required a methodology that allowed for rich and deep examination into the identified phenomena.

Creswell (2007) argues that qualitative approaches to inquiry are well suited to such an examination.

Research Design

By employing a qualitative case approach I examined meaning and understanding of phenomena within a bounded system. Miles and Huberman (1994) define the qualitative case abstractly as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p. 25). The phenomena under investigation (study focus) required rich understanding and examination within their “real-life” contexts. In this study, three teacher participants each can be seen as a case that is bounded by both the context of their classrooms and by the length of one unit of study they taught. The focus sitting at the heart of each case was teachers’ beliefs about diversity and equity as revealed through their visions of practice.

The interpretivist theoretical perspective guiding this study also made case study a suitable design. Assuming that individuals interact with their surrounding contexts and construct meaning through their culturally-derived and historically-based perspectives (Crotty, 1998), a methodology attending to the individual meaning-making processes for each teacher was necessary. Case study allowed for analysis of each teacher’s vision and practice as a single, bounded case that was situated within a specific context – each classroom. Specifically, in this study I used the intrinsic case study approach (Stake, 1995) that allowed me to consider individual teachers as individual cases. Within each case, the units of analysis were teachers’ voiced understandings of their visions and practice (Figure 1). In effect, this design allowed me to focus on each teacher case while

simultaneously considering how they construct meaning within the contexts of their classrooms and school.

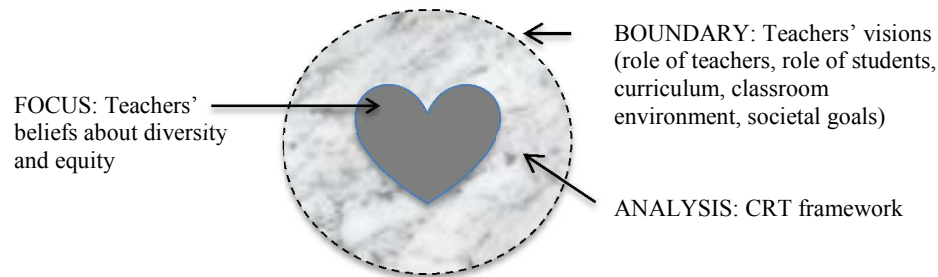


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

School Context

Groundspring Elementary School (ES) is a public Pre-K – 5 elementary school located in a metropolitan area in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. I selected this school after considering several other schools based on the Principal's philosophy and ability to develop a strong sense of community among all stakeholders. The fact that this elementary school demonstrated commitment to developing both academic and social skills in its students, and the Principal expressed her commitment to supporting teachers in serving the multiple needs of their students meant that the school would likely support my goals for this study. In other words, these commitments created structures within and outside the school that allowed teachers to work in an ongoing fashion on teaching topics related to diversity and serving diverse student needs.

While Groundspring's student population was predominantly White (see "Student population"), I selected it due to the Principal's strong support for me to conduct this study there. The school's strong academic performance and the Principal's strong support

of this study allowed me access and approval for research through the school district's rigorous approval process.

Connecting teachers to others outside the Groundspring community was an important consideration for the Principal. This interest signaled her commitment to professional growth for all teachers. In addition, the Principal developed an informal network with Principals from eight other schools in the same school district to create a within-district cohort of schools that shared resources, PD and ideas for instructional practices. While the schools are all located in different areas of the same district, each had specific needs and resources. The administrators and teachers from each of these schools meet monthly to share practices and learn from each other reciprocally.

Groundspring was an ideal site to conduct this study because its initiatives and overall philosophy of teaching and learning aligned with my personal values in teaching and learning. That is, the Principal and teachers set high expectations for students while also committing to the belief that all students could learn. As a foundation to this learning, teachers believed that safety – both emotional and physical – was a necessary precursor to engaging students in learning. Teachers also believed ongoing PD was a critical component to teaching students well.

Due to these philosophical alignments, conducting this study at Groundspring ES allowed me to approach teachers and discuss their practice from similar perspectives. I was thus able to probe teacher thinking from a common pedagogical stance, allowing them to discuss and reflect upon their own thinking and teaching and sharing their thoughts and classrooms with me.

Serving just under 300 students, Groundspring is a four-time recipient of the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Award, the most recent time was two years prior to this study, a national award recognizing academic excellence in public schools on standardized measures of learning. The school is located in an upper middle-class neighborhood near a local university and retail sites. Most students who attend the school are from the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, about 90% of the students attend school when it is in session. At the time of this study, the school facility itself included two to four homeroom classrooms per grade level (PK-5) as well as an art room, music room, library, community auditorium, media center, science lab and outdoor recreation space (playground, turf playing field, small running track) as well as a school community garden.

Student population. Student demographic data from the school district's website showed that Groundspring's families overwhelmingly classified the students as White. However, the student population included a number of international families whose identities were not captured in the demographic data shared on the school's website. Table 2 (see next page) illustrates student demographic data from academic year 2011-2012 using the descriptors provided by this website.

Academics. At the time of this study, throughout the school district standardized summative assessment of student achievement was administered annually to students in grades 3 through 5 in reading and mathematics. In 2012 when the study was completed, 83% of students at Groundspring ES met or exceeded math standards and 87% of students met or exceeded reading standards on the state's annual standardized learning

assessment, compared to the overall district’s performance of 46% in math and 43% in reading.

Table 2

Student Demographic Data for Groundspring ES (2011-2012)

Demographic Descriptor	Percentage
Race	
Black	8
Hispanic/Latino	9
White	71
Asian	6
Pacific/Hawaiian	0
Native/Alaskan	0
Multiple races	6
English language learners	9
FARMS	9
Special education	4

Curriculum. Groundspring ES’s strong academic performance on annual standardized tests allowed the Principal to give teachers more flexibility in their curricular planning than teachers in other lower performing schools in the same district. While teachers planned curricula around standards, goals and objectives, the specific content and manner in which instruction was delivered and assessed (outside of the aforementioned standardized assessments) was determined by individual teachers. As such, teachers held a great deal of control over their instructional content, delivery and means of assessment on a day-to-day level. In addition, the school’s strong academic performance allowed the Principal flexibility to offer a range of subject areas in which

students engaged in addition to language arts and mathematics, including physical education, science, social studies, foreign language, visual arts and music.

All teachers at Groundspring implement a social curriculum, The Responsive Classroom (RC; Responsive Classroom, 2015). This approach includes seven guiding principles and accompanying school practices:

1. The social and emotional curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
 2. How children learn is as important as what they learn.
 3. Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
 4. To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn a set of social and emotional skills that include cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
 5. Know the children that we teach – individually, culturally, and developmentally – is as important as knowing the content we teach.
 6. Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children we teach.
 7. How we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.
- (Responsive Classroom website, 2014)

As a RC school, Groundspring also adopted particular RC practices. These included routines such as holding a daily Morning Meeting in homeroom classes, creating rules as a class community, and using guided discovery processes to introduce classroom materials. They also included cultural components such as using positive

teacher language that promoted active learning, self-discipline and a sense of community. The RC model also emphasizes school-family partnerships, encouraging participating schools to create clear means of communication to hear parents' insights as well as for families to learn about the school's philosophy and teaching. These RC practices and approaches occurred across the school.

Teacher evaluation. All teachers in Groundspring ES's school district engaged in a teacher performance system. This assessment incorporated multiple forms of data to determine teacher effectiveness: student achievement on the state's summative standardized assessment, formal and informal observations, and data to assess teacher collaboration and professionalism based on administrative observation.

Community. The school Principal prioritized creating a sense of community by spending a great deal of her time and effort on community building within the school and among families. The connections and dedication families had to the school were evident through Groundspring's parent organization. This organization was very supportive of the school as evidenced by high levels of parent participation in informal and organized events as well as through their fundraising. The time and financial resources dedicated to the school by the parent organization funded salaries for teaching assistants in every homeroom classroom in the school. These assistants – called “partner teachers” – supported each homeroom teacher with curriculum development, lesson preparation and various teaching tasks. While partner teachers provided assistance in each classroom, the homeroom teacher was the one responsible for the primary teaching role and accountability for student achievement.

In addition, there was an all-school “community assembly” each Friday morning. During these assemblies, all members of the school community gathered in the school auditorium and engaged in musical activities as well as shared aspects of the curriculum that students wanted to share. When asked about these assemblies in a one-on-one interview, the Principal stated that the focus of these weekly gatherings was to develop a deep sense of community. This community building also extended to teachers, where she resisted highlighting individual “star teachers.” Rather, she stated, “I try to put forward the sort of community” (Principal, Interview 1). In this way, she wanted to develop a collective approach to the school’s work. Through her efforts in these assemblies and through her partnership with the school parent organization, the Principal developed a sense of collaboration rather than competition among the students, teachers and families at Groundspring.

Researcher and Positionality

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe the qualitative researcher as an interpretive “bricoleur and quiltmaker” (p. 4). As researcher, the interpretive bricoleur “understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting” (p. 6). I held an ethical responsibility for engaging with my participants authentically and representing their voices as authentically as possible (Lincoln, 1997; Weis & Fine, 2000). This responsibility required that I attend to my individual positionality within the study as well as my personal values and perspectives. Doing so allowed me to consider seriously the ways in which I engaged with participants and their community and how my engagement might have been influenced by my personal biases.

During the process of collecting evidence for this study, I attended to the ever-present aspects of my individual identity, beliefs, and values as they interacted with those of the participants. Identifying my potential biases and cultural perspectives at the study's outset also allowed for a more valid and reliable interpretation of data and findings (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln, 1997). These personal considerations are outlined below.

As an outsider to the participating school community, I recognized that I brought an outsider perspective about the participating teachers; this positionality required relational effort in order to establish trust between teachers and myself. Working as an outsider as well as a "university researcher", I carefully considered my positionality in this study as I negotiated relationships with research participants, particularly with respect to power dynamics in our interactions (Lincoln, 1997; Maxwell, 2005; Weis & Fine, 2000). Developing trust was a necessary component to my data collection process in order to understand teachers' authentic understandings and to represent them authentically (Weis & Fine, 2000).

I identify as an Asian-American, heterosexual female. I grew up in a high income suburb of Boston, Massachusetts and attended public and private schools for my K-12 education. In many ways, my school experience was similar to that of children at Groundspring, although I struggled academically in school. I was also one of two Asian children in my grade of 60-70 children during my elementary school years. As such, I am particularly attuned to the experiences of children who may feel *otherized* (Fine, 1994) themselves or who struggle with school academically.

Professionally, I taught for seven years as an elementary school teacher in independent and public schools in urban, rural and suburban areas in both wealthy and

resource-limited neighborhoods. This variation in teaching contexts provides me a wide range of educational experiences to draw upon in order to relate to and understand participants' personal and professional experiences. My professional experience has been primarily in upper elementary grades. After attaining my initial elementary (1-6) teaching certification, I taught for seven years, and then deepened my own understanding of teaching by earning a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) at the elementary grade levels as well as a Master of Arts in Education (M.Ed.) in special education while teaching fulltime. My interest in creating more equitable classrooms continued thereafter through my role as an instructional and curriculum coach. For one year I served in this capacity part-time in addition to teaching. I then decided to pursue my PhD. in hopes of contributing to research to support teachers in teaching more equitably.

My prior experiences and training provided me with familiarity with some aspects of my participants' content areas and less familiarity with others. Therefore, I put forth extra effort into understanding early elementary and early childhood educational approaches, particularly for Mr. Drumm's Pre-K classroom for this study. I developed this content knowledge by completing additional readings about early childhood education and asking for clarifying information from Mr. Drumm and early childhood specialists at the University of Maryland. Through these efforts, I felt more comfortable in my understanding of Mr. Drumm's approach to teaching as well as how it aligned with or differed from predominant approaches to early childhood education.

In my interactions with each teacher participant, I attempted to work reciprocally. I allowed for as much flexibility as possible in scheduling observations and interviews. I also listened as much as possible without imposing my own values or analyses of their

teaching. In addition, I tried to be helpful in supporting teachers in ways that would not influence their visions or practice. These means of helping included cutting out materials with the teacher while engaged in discussions or making last-minute Xeroxes at the copy machine as needed. As much as possible, I attempted to demonstrate my appreciation of their time and openness in sharing their classrooms with me so intimately and intensely. At no point did I position myself as an expert in teaching or in PD, although the Principal did introduce me as a researcher from the university.

My role during data collection was as *observer as participant* (Merriam, 1998). As such, I was an observer known to the community (teachers and students), but I interacted as little as possible with them during lessons. For this reason, also, it became imperative that I established trusting relationships with participating teachers.

Participants

While all teachers at Groundspring ES were invited to participate in this study, of the five who initially expressed interest, three were purposefully selected for maximum variation sampling to ensure the widest possible range of varying instances of teacher experiences (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). As noted in chapter three, past research has demonstrated a relationship between teachers' identities, backgrounds and experiences and subsequent diversity and equity conceptualizations; therefore, the individual identities, backgrounds and experiences of the five teachers who were interested in being participants in this study factored into consideration for maximum variation sampling. As such, the final set of three participants differed in their identities and backgrounds, particularly with respect to race, gender, sexual orientation and prior teaching experiences. In addition, I was able to study different disciplines

across the three participants: Ms. Atkins focused on a social studies unit; Mr. Drumm focused on a multi-disciplinary tree monument unit; and Ms. Perkins focused on a diversity unit.

Serena Atkins. Ms. Atkins identified as a homosexual Black British woman. While she received her teacher certification in Great Britain, she also earned her teaching license in the U.S. After teaching in independent schools in New York, Arizona and Maine, she then taught in independent and now a public school in the Mid-Atlantic region.

At the time of this study, Ms. Atkins was a long-term substitute in a second grade classroom at Groundspring ES and hired permanently for the following year at Groundspring as a kindergarten teacher. The year of the study was Ms. Atkins' fifteenth year of teaching.

Personal background and upbringing. Ms. Atkins grew up in London. Her parents, who are Jamaican, are of Indian and Cuban descent. She grew up traveling within Europe two or three times a year, often to Spain.

Ms. Atkins had a female life partner with whom she adopted a son who attended their local public elementary school. In her role as educator and mother of a Black boy, Ms. Atkins was familiar with the cultural biases faced by many boys of color in schools. She thought about the stereotypes that Black boys in particular faced in schools and talked openly with parents to help support them in supporting their children. She shared:

I also have very real conversations with parents. So I talked to Isaiah's mom and I said, "He is a bright boy in a very white environment." I said, "And that comes with all kinds of problems, and it may be cute or not seen as serious now, but as a

fourth grader being physically aggressive it will be interpreted differently, not just by his peers, but by the adults around him.” I think whether the parent pays attention to it or not, it’s important that they know this because there’s going to be a shift.... it’s confusing for the kid, too, because they go from, “Oh, he’s sweet, he’s cute,” which comes up with a lot of African American [boys], “He’s so cute.” I get that with my son, “He’s so handsome,” and I say, “He’s also awesome at reading.” (Interview 5)

Here, Ms. Atkins shared her personal experience as a mother and teacher that demonstrated her commitment to working with parents to support children, particularly Black boys.

Professional experiences. As a teacher trained in Great Britain, Ms. Atkins was trained to teach language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, physical education, art and religion. Her focus always remained in the early elementary grades (Pre-K through first). She shared that her teacher training focused more on planning by outcomes and differentiation than had been her experience in the States.

Ms. Atkins shared that in her previous position at a local independent school, she was the only black faculty in a predominantly White school, Foxwood[‡] School. She remarked on this experience particularly during admissions tours when prospective families toured the school.

And then [Foxwood School] began to use me as – I became, I suppose, the token black because I was the only black teacher.... they would do tours and they would come to my classroom and be like, "Ta da!" And they would just stand there. You

[‡] Pseudonym

don't know how many times that happened and I thought, "What the heck?" I suppose because I was in the younger years I was leading their kindergartens. So when you come in, your child will have a black teacher. And she's from England, so then she's smart? (Interview 2)

In this case, Ms. Atkins' shared her own struggles as a teacher of color in this all White school community. These experiences still resonated with her even two years after teaching at Foxwood.

Scott Drumm. In comparison to the two female participants, Mr. Drumm shared much more information about his personal and professional background. Much of that detail is shared here as it informed his vision, beliefs and pedagogy. As he reflected upon his background, Mr. Drumm focused primarily upon two aspects of his personal experiences – experiences with others around race and ethnicity and experiences growing up struggling with his own sexual orientation.

Personal background and upbringing. Mr. Drumm grew up in rural south Louisiana on the Bayou in what he described as a “poor white Southern Baptist” family. His family spoke Cajun French in his home; rarely did they speak English. He identified first as a White Cajun-American man.

Drumm grew up in a context that was deeply divided and defined by race. He described his hometown as a “black and white” town. He described this town as filled with family-oriented, fun-loving people. Simultaneously, the culture was incredibly insular and wary of outsiders. As he talked about this town he explained his understanding of and affection for his hometown and culture. He said, “There are more good people there than not” (Interview 6). He shared about how everybody in his town

knew each other and how families lived there for generations.

At the same time, however, he described the perspective of most individuals in his hometown as narrow. “It is very racist,” (Interview 6) he stated. He recognized the reality of his community’s deep-seated racism, sharing that it was not uncommon for people to use “the N-word” when talking about or to African-Americans. He recognized that this perspective was not one with which he agreed, but he did not blame his community for holding these beliefs. Instead, he described how it results from decades-old cultural belief systems.

Drumm described his own parents as non-participants in this type of language use and explicit cultural racism. “My mom’s not that way, and I don’t think my dad was,” he explained. “He was a man of very few words. I never heard my dad make racial remarks or slurs or – he didn’t say bad things about people. And my mom didn’t either, so it just – I don’t know – I guess it was just the environment that we lived in” (Interview 10). According to Mr. Drumm, the racist culture in which he grew up did not manifest in his parents’ language use at home.

Perhaps more so than these contextual factors, Mr. Drumm voiced an intense struggle with his identity with respect to his sexual orientation. He felt this struggle both within his own family as well as outside his home throughout his childhood and early adulthood. Within his own home, he described his personal struggle trying to figure out who he was, even while he knew he was different. He explained:

I never knew – this sounds so crazy – but I never really kind of knew – I knew I was different, but I didn’t know how I was different because none of that was ever talked about. I didn’t even know the word gay or – well, it was never gay; it was

“queer” or “homosexual” – what that meant. Because no one ever talked about that; and I grew up on a farm. Maybe if I had been in a city or school, but that was never mentioned – ever. I mean I didn’t even know what that meant.

(Interview 10)

Mr. Drumm struggled so much with this particular aspect of his identity that for years he engaged in a number of different “therapies” including wearing a rubber band around his wrist whenever he thought about men and praying that he would not be gay. She described:

I would kneel down in my bed as a teenager and I would pray to God to change me. I mean, no one asks to be gay. Nothing ever happened. Where was my miracle?... So then again God doesn’t love me because I don’t have faith, but I’m not getting what I asked for. You know, all that is probably not true, but it’s what I lived with. (Interview 6)

Within his family, Drumm described his parents as loving and also conflicted about what to do with him. He stated:

I never wanted to be the person who I hate my family because they did this to me. They did the best they could. It’s the best they could do. They loved me. There was never a doubt in my mind. I mean, my dad I think often didn’t know what to do with me. He loved me, I know he loved me, because he gave in. He took a second job, my mom and my dad both, to buy me a piano, because I wanted to learn piano. Under the Christmas tree one year, I remember my dad saying never under the Christ have a doll. So again, they were kind of – they struggled too. They had a son they didn’t know what to do with. (Interview 6)

It took many years for Mr. Drumm to embrace his own sexual orientation without guilt. While he struggled throughout his childhood and early adulthood with his identity and sexual orientation, now as an adult he expressed no ill will toward his family or hometown even while his experiences were not always positive.

Otherization. Mr. Drumm’s experiences feeling different while not knowing the nature of that difference aligns with what Fine (1994) terms as *otherization* – a feeling that one exists outside the predominant culture, resulting in feeling less valued or apart. In addition to his otherized experiences in relation to his sexual orientation, he also experienced “otherness” with respect to his Cajun identity. When he first moved out of Louisiana to New York City, he encountered people who had never met anyone Cajun before. He recounted some of his experiences:

People asked me really strange things like, “Can you take off your shoes? Do you have webbed feet because you live in the Bayou? Do you eat mud bugs? Sole fish?” I was in New York very early on as a summer missionary. But I actually thought, “They asked me about Gumbo,” and for me it was, “Wow, they’re interested in my culture.” (Interview 9)

Here, Mr. Drumm shared his own cultural conflicts and experiences with otherization as a Cajun man. He recognized that all these experiences were related to his teaching somehow, sharing, “So I think those things have shaped a big part of who I am internally in my struggles, but hopefully also in making me tougher and making me, you know, who I am” (Interview 6). As will be discussed in the interpretation of findings for Mr. Drumm, his experiences with otherization, particularly his sexual orientation, likely bring a focus on gender equity in his classroom that otherwise would not necessarily be present

were it not for these personal experiences.

Professional experiences. Mr. Drumm attended undergraduate university in Louisiana and became a certified teacher in Louisiana afterwards. He began teaching in rural Louisiana, which he loved, even while it was challenging. He did missionary work in New York as well as Nigeria. He spoke of both of these experiences fondly and with great appreciation.

In addition to his elementary certification, Mr. Drumm held certification in gifted and talented education (although he “hates that term”) as well as a Master’s degree in Theology and Psychology and a Master’s degree in Education Administration. He began a doctoral program but never finished due to an experience he had in a statistics course when the professor publicly humiliated him during class about his lack of content understanding. At the time of this study, Mr. Drumm was in his sixth year teaching at Groundspring and his 37th year teaching.

Brenda Perkins. Brenda identified as a heterosexual White woman from Tennessee. During the time of the study, Ms. Perkins was in her 17th year teaching. After earning her Bachelor of Science degree in Art Education, she moved to New York City where she taught at a children’s art museum. Ms. Perkins then moved to her current city where she had been teaching in private and public schools since. At the time of the study, Ms. Perkins was in her 15th year teaching at Groundspring ES. The summer following this study, she was awarded the 2013 Academic Excellence in Art Education Award at her graduate institution.

At the time of this study, Ms. Perkins was completing coursework and beginning her thesis for a master’s degree in Art Education. Over the two years of attending this

program, Ms. Perkins explained that her thinking about teaching transformed. “Now,” she explained, “I’m transforming into this other way of thinking” (Interview 1). This new way of thinking included a heavy emphasis on art educator Olivia Gude’s (2007) *Principles of Practice* and as such is discussed later in chapter seven.

Data Collection

After participants were finalized, I worked with each to find mutually agreeable times to engage in pre-observation conversations about their practice as well as to determine the best unit of study for me to focus on. For each teacher, the focus unit for this study was determined collaboratively. I then worked day-to-day and week-to-week with each teacher to determine when the next lesson in the identified unit would take place. We typically scheduled a time to debrief and discuss the lesson on the same day that I observed it. With few exceptions, I attended each lesson in the focus unit.

I began each interview by asking teachers about their visions of practice using Hammerness’ (2002) protocol (see p. 53). Once lessons began, interviews resembled fluid conversations clarifying teachers’ intentions for the activities I observed and how they thought about the lesson’s implementation. Other follow-up questions probed information about individual students – how the teacher was interpreting their actions and what they based these interpretations upon. As such, these interview conversations allowed teachers to deeply reflect upon the lesson and what occurred with their students as well as talk about upcoming plans. At times, teachers would ask me advice about various teaching decisions they were working on. These questions ranged from specifics about how to manage students (“What do you think I should do with [X] student?”) to general feedback about my observations (“How do you think that lesson went?”). During

these moments, I tried not to suggest my own ideas so as to preserve the integrity of their own thinking and practice. These responses often asked the teacher to share more about the student, context, or their goals, so as to elicit more reflective thought from her rather than share my own opinion. If directly asked what my opinion was of an observed lesson or plans for the next lesson, I provided short, direct responses that affirmed and supported their practice, attempting to focus my opinion in ways that aligned with their voiced vision and/or intended outcomes for instruction, so that my comments did not introduce new ideas that might influence their existing visions or practice.

Sources of Evidence

As an *interpretive bricoleur*, a maker of quilts, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe the interpretive researcher's role as producing "a pieced-together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (p. 4). Piecing together the complex nature of this study's examined phenomena required collecting multiple forms of evidence to create the larger metaphorical visual quilt that would support interpretations made about the data. This section will first describe methods for collecting these multiple sources of evidence, followed by a description of each type of evidence and how this evidence aligned with my research questions. Finally, I describe and discuss my analytic approach to interpret these sources of evidence.

I collected three primary sources of evidence: (a) teacher interviews, (b) observations and (c) lesson artifacts (i.e., lesson plans, student work). In addition, I used two secondary sources of evidence (analytic memos and a post-study electronic survey to gather feedback on participants' experiences). These data sources provided me with ample evidence of teachers' visions both as voiced by each participant as well as enacted

in practice. Table 3 (see next page) illustrates the relationship between each research question, method of data collection and type of data collected.

To collect contextual information on the school level, I also conducted three interviews (see Appendix A for Interview Protocol) with Groundspring's Principal. These interviews occurred during the same period as teacher data collection and provided evidence about school context that informed the earlier section about the school. I also conducted observations of the school through attending Friday community assemblies on occasion. The following sections describe each data source in more detail.

Teacher interviews. Individual interviews with teachers were conversational in nature. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed within a week of their collection. Initial interviews focused on relationship building, learning about teachers' backgrounds and understanding their visions in response to the initial protocol. During these interviews, teachers also identified a focus unit for the duration of this study. Subsequent interviews were conducted during the course of the unit between observed lessons. The content of these interviews focused on teachers' visions broadly as well as how their visions manifested specifically within the focus unit and observed lessons. By discussing teachers' ideal visions of practice as well as the specifics of observed lessons over time, I was able to gather information about teachers' ideal philosophical visions as well as contextualized manifestations of these visions in their specific daily practice. Interview length ranged between fifteen and sixty minutes.

Immediately after each interview, I imported the audio recording into Atlas.ti (<http://atlasti.com/>), then listened to the audio recording and began coding. Next, I created an analytic memo based on my reflections and initial thinking in response to and

about the interview. This memo also included questions to guide my observations and upcoming conversations. All interviews were then professionally transcribed (via Verbal Ink, LLC). Upon receipt of each transcription, I checked the transcript against the audio recording for accuracy. These transcripts were then imported into Atlas.ti for further analysis as described in the Data Analysis and Interpretation section later in this chapter.

Table 3.

Research Questions, Sources of Evidence and Data

Research Question	Source of Evidence	Type of Data
1. What beliefs about diversity and equity are revealed through teachers' visions and practice?	Teacher interviews Class observations Document collection	Interview transcripts Analytic memos Field notes
2. How central or peripheral are beliefs about diversity and equity within teachers' overall visions?	Teacher interviews Lesson observations Class observations Document collection	Interview transcripts Analytic memos Field notes Lesson documents

Lesson observations. To clarify my understanding of teachers' visions and how they related to practice, I observed multiple lessons within each focus unit. These observations allowed me to understand how teachers enact upon their visions within the specific context of the bounded focus unit. They also provided me with context to ask specific questions about teachers' practice, allowing me a deeper understanding of how teachers enact upon their visions when teaching individual students in a specific classroom. During these observations, I recorded field notes in the form of running accounts. Observations ranged in length between 15 and 60 minutes.

During lesson observations, I took field notes in the form of running accounts, noting the duration of the overall observation. While field notes documented overall

events and occurrences during the lesson, particular attention was paid to elements of practice related to my conceptual framework encompassing vision, diversity and equity.

Classroom and school observations. I conducted observations of general classroom activities whenever possible and attended five all-school assemblies to gather additional data on classroom and school contexts. As with lesson observations, I took field notes during these observations and reflected upon these observations thereafter in the form of analytic memos. These field notes included running records of the lessons' activities as well as questions my observations generated. When particular activities or interactions occurred that related to my conceptual framework, I also inserted interpretive statements to examine in further observations and subsequent analyses.

Teaching artifacts. Lesson plans and other teaching artifacts were collected for analysis as relevant to the line of inquiry for this study. Such artifacts included handouts for student work, written communications to parents related to the focus unit, and Xerox copies of student work when relevant. These documents also served as corroborating or disconfirming evidence of the phenomena under investigation.

Lesson artifacts were also collected electronically when possible and imported into Atlas.ti. These visual data included photographs of charts, student work, white boards, and class projects related to each lesson. These data served as reminders for my own recollection of lesson events and also served as forms of reference for conversations with teachers.

Analytic memos. I wrote analytic memos within 24 hours after the completion of each interview and each observation. These analytic memos summarized my immediate thoughts and initial analyses about conversations and observations. In addition, these

memos clarified initial understandings as well as generated additional questions or topics for future interviews with each participant. During data analysis, I also created analytic memos both while coding as well as completing coding for each interview. These memos were used in my process of theory building to support my findings.

Timeline

All data were collected during the spring of 2013. For each participant, an initial interview was conducted prior to the identified focus unit for this study. In order to understand how teachers' visions and conceptualizations of diversity and equity within these visions relate to practice, I met with teachers consistently over the course of one unit. This bounded period of time allowed me to collect data to understand teachers' thinking and decision-making over the course of this unit.

Teachers decided on the focus of the target unit in this study collaboratively with me, checking to ensure that it was appropriate for this study. Once a topic for the focus unit was identified, I met with each teacher individually before the first lesson and then before and after each subsequent lesson, with few exceptions. During these interviews, teachers' discussed ideal practice and scheduled upcoming or debriefing sessions.

All data were carefully organized and tracked using a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet documented the point of data collection, type of data, summary of content/topic covered, and duration of the conversation or observation when relevant. Table 4 (see next page) provides a summary of total data collected as well as approximate timelines when data collection occurred.

Member check. A post-survey instrument (Appendix B) for each participant gauged each teacher's level of comfort working with me over the course of my time with

them. While the survey offered a four-point Likert scale for responses, all responses were in the “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” categories. Results demonstrate that participants were overall comfortable with my presence in the classroom and with the conversations we had. As previously discussed, this relational component of the participant-researcher interaction is important to consider when gauging the authenticity of their responses to my questions and engagement in our conversations.

Table 4.

Data Collection Timeline and Total Data Collected

Teacher	Time Collected	Type of Data	Number of Collections	Total Duration (hours and minutes)
Drumm	February 2013 - March 2013	Interviews	10	5:00
		Lesson Observations	9	3:23
		Class Observations	10	7:10
Perkins	March 2013 - April 2013	Interviews	7	3:15
		Lesson Observations	4	4:00
		Class Observations	n/a	n/a
Atkins	May 2013 - June 2013	Interviews	9	4:35
		Lesson Observations	8	6:00
		Class Observations	1	0:30

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Coding was conducted iteratively during and after data collection. I used an inductive and comparative coding approach to analyze data that was guided by my conceptual framework, beginning with general categorization and moving into deeper and more specific inductive coding. I used Atlas.ti QDA software to organize my data sources and codes, run analyses related to my research questions, and as a tool for theory building. This software provided me a tool for organizing all my primary sources of data

(i.e., audio files, transcriptions, field notes, analytic memos) as well as create and organize my codes. The query tool provided me opportunities to cross-reference overlapping codes (i.e., co-occurrences) and quantify the number of these occurrences (i.e., groundedness) in order to address my first research question. The network function provided me a tool for building relationships among codes in order to determine the inter-related nature of codes within teachers' vision. Thus, the QDA software provided me a means of manipulating code relationships based on the data to build theoretical propositions. Atlas.ti quantified the number of these connections, demonstrating the relative connectedness of codes. This relative connectedness (i.e., density) addressed my second research question related to the centrality of equity considerations within teachers' visions.

The following section describes the coding and analysis process in more detail. While the process for coding remained consistent across cases, all codes did not. Thus, only codes that were intentionally used as a priori codes related to my theoretical framework across all cases are defined in this chapter. Codes individual to teachers themselves (as identified inductively through open coding) are defined in subsequent findings chapters. In addition to the codes outlined below, general codes to capture aspects of teachers' backgrounds were used (e.g., "teacher background", "teaching training"). These codes are not defined as they functioned as logistic labeling for me to capture teachers' past experiences in this report rather than functioning as an analytic component of the study.

Initial coding. According to Merriam (2009) case study allows for concurrent ongoing analyses of data during data collection in order to guide inquiry into the

phenomena of investigation while they occur in authentic contexts. As noted earlier, during data collection audio recordings were imported directly to Atlas.ti software. I then listened to these audio files and coded them broadly. The purpose of this initial coding was to identify areas of interest and to determine follow-up questions to deepen my understanding related to teachers' visions and diversity/equity beliefs. Based on this initial coding, I generated follow-up questions or areas to focus upon in my subsequent observations. This approach allowed me to develop temporary theoretical propositions. I captured these initial theoretical propositions in the form of analytic memos in Atlas.ti.

More thorough analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti once data collection for each participant was complete and interview transcripts were received and imported into the software. I used a systematic approach to my coding and analysis process. This process included a priori and open coding, networking, and writing analytic memos to capture theoretical propositions. I repeated this process, grouping codes into a priori and emergent thematic families and adjusting network relationships, until data became saturated. Figure 2 captures this cyclic, ongoing, iterative process. As I coded and created relationships emerging from the data, Atlas.ti calculated each code's groundedness as well as density. With each code occurrence, the software produced two digits in the braces (e.g., {1, 5}). The first digit captured the number of code occurrences while the second captured the number of connections I found between codes. Thus, Atlas.ti allowed me to analyze the number of code occurrences and relationships emerging through my ongoing analyses.

The following section describes this process in further detail.

A priori vision coding and open coding. By using a priori and open codes, I allowed for multiple possibilities presented by data that described the phenomena under investigation both within the vision framework I identified while also allowing for the specifics to teachers' visions to emerge. In order to capture and analyze data related to teachers' visions, I coded broadly using a priori codes for teacher vision dimensions.

Vision dimensions. Vision, as defined by Hammerness (1999), includes five dimensions. Each of these dimensions were used as a priori codes during the first round of analysis. These codes are defined below.

Classroom environment. Classroom environment includes sights and sounds of the classroom - the manner in which teachers imagine the look, organization and structure of the room.

Role of teachers. The teacher's role includes how the teacher views her position as the primary adult in a classroom. It also includes how the teacher works within the structure of the classroom and as a contributor to the learning process. It also includes how the teacher sees her role in this learning process.

Role of students. Role of the students includes how students are positioned within the classroom's structure and the learning process.

Curriculum. Curriculum includes content and structure of learning activities as well as the relationship between the curriculum and students' learning.

Societal goals. Societal goals captures the relationship between the classroom and the kind of society the teacher would like to see in the 21st century.

Open coding. In addition to assigning a priori codes, I engaged in an open coding process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to capture the nature of teachers' visions. This open

coding allowed me to identify and analyze emergent and recurrent concepts related to my research questions that were specific to each participant case. Corbin and Strauss describe this approach to coding data as allowing the researcher to “open up the data to all potentials and possibilities contained within them” (p. 160). Due to the emergent nature of these codes, initial open coding created between eighty and one hundred codes per participant. As the analytic process continued, these codes were combined based on conceptual relationships and/or increased clarity around themes.

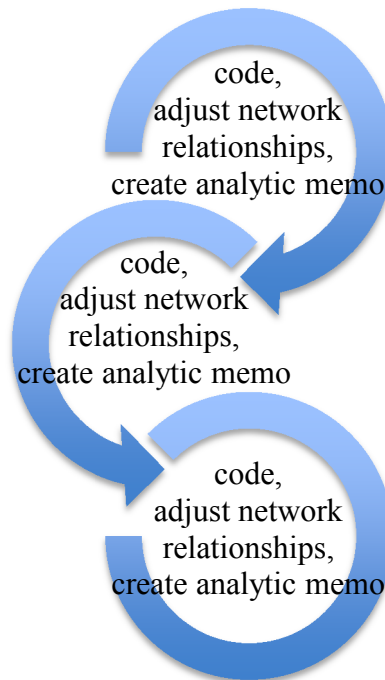


Figure 2. Process of coding, networking, and theory building.

Code organization. I organized codes both for logistic and analytic purposes. Logistically, I included a prefix for each teacher’s codes (i.e., “D: Curriculum” for Drumm’s curriculum vision code; “A: Curriculum” for Atkins’ curriculum vision code) to separate codes within the QDA software by case. This prefix ensured that any analyses run by Atlas.ti could be separated by case. Even though the vision dimension codes

remained consistent across all participants, these prefixes allowed me to use the QDA software to run separate analyses within each set of teacher data. For analytic purposes, as codes emerged I grouped them into code families based on their thematic and conceptual relationships. At times, when open codes appeared to become redundant (e.g., “community of differences” and “embrace differences”), I merged codes into one code. Thus, during earlier coding a teacher may have over one hundred codes associated with her data analysis. By the end of the analysis process, these codes may have been reduced or organized based on relationships seen in the data.

Culturally relevant pedagogy a priori codes. During the second round of analysis, open codes were grouped into another set of a priori code families. These a priori families were defined using culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP; Ladson-Billings, 1998) and culturally responsive teaching (CRT; Ladson-Billings, 2009). These families were organized in three constructs as described in chapter two (see pp. 48-49, 60): Conceptions of Self and Others (CSO), Social Relations (SR), and Conceptions of Knowledge (CK). These families are defined below.

CSO – student success. This code captures indicators that teachers believed all students could succeed, regardless their home or personal situations. All students are capable of academic success, and failure is not an option for students.

CSO – pedagogy as art. This code marks indicators that teachers approach their teaching pedagogy as always in the process of becoming; it is neither formulaic nor prescriptive. Rather, teachers respond to students’ expressed understandings or misunderstandings and adjust instruction spontaneously based on these expressed beliefs.

CSO – members of community. Teachers see themselves as a part of the community in which they teach rather than separate from it. They intentionally come to the community to interact with others through leisure activities or through engaging in services provided by the community.

CSO – giving back to community. Teachers see teaching as a means of serving the community from which their students come.

CSO – teaching as mining. Teachers believe that teaching is an act of uncovering students' understandings and building off of these rather than depositing – “banking” – knowledge into students' minds.

SR – fluid relationships. Teacher-student relationships are both reciprocal and equitable. Students have opportunities to act as teachers themselves and identify expertise among students to serve as teachers to others.

SR – connectedness. Teacher demonstrates connectedness with all students, not just those similar to him/herself. She makes an explicit effort to initiate and develop these relationships with all students in the class.

SR – community of learners. Rather than developing competitive and individualistic rewards for learning, all students are capable of learning, and all students are excellent students. There is a sense of community and that all students, as well as the teacher, are learning together.

SR – learn collaboratively. The teacher creates a classroom in which all students are responsible for each other's learning. The teacher also encourages students to learn from each other through both formal and informal learning collaborations. Each person's success is a class success, as well.

CK – knowledge is not static. Teacher recognizes that knowledge is not held by the teacher alone; all students bring knowledge and expertise to the classroom. This knowledge is taken seriously and shared among the class as valuable information to learn. Such knowledge can include information directly related to content at hand or outside knowledge about areas in students' lives outside school.

CK – critical stance. Teacher recognizes that knowledge must be examined critically, particularly knowledge that is oppressive or supports hegemonic ways of thinking or doing. This critique may apply to policies, school curricula or other areas of traditionally accepted cultural or political knowing that can be challenged to offer alternative ways of thinking and understanding.

CK – scaffold, bridge. Teacher uses her knowledge of a student's knowledge and understanding to connect to new information. New learning occurs when the teacher takes the time to understand individual students in order to make these connections in intentional and individualized ways.

CK – multifaceted assessment. Teacher uses assessments in varied ways to gauge student learning; these assessments include a variety of forms of excellence to determine student growth. At times, teacher may include the student to determine forms of assessment or evidence of learning to include in such assessments.

While each of these code families were utilized across all cases, the specific codes included in these families varied from teacher to teacher. Subsequent findings chapters will illustrate the specific codes for each teacher included in each CRT code family.

Networking. To determine both the nature of diversity and equity beliefs as well as the centrality of such beliefs within teachers' visions, I used Atlas.ti's capabilities to

determine code *groundedness* (i.e., the number of codings) and *density* (i.e., the number of connections to other codes). These calculations are represented in braces {} next to the code name (see Figure 3). The first number represents a code's groundedness (i.e., the number of times code was applied to data segments). The second number represents density – the number of links (relationships) the code has with other codes. While groundedness provides a frequency count (and, therefore, the prevalence of a concept within a teacher's vision,) density provides a measure of relative centrality or connectedness a code concept holds within the analyzed data set.

Network procedure. Upon completing a round of coding (typically after coding one pass of one data source), I commanded the software to produce a network view in Atlas.ti for a particular code of interest. This command immediately created a graphic that included a bubble with the identified code name housed within. I then examined all co-occurring codes – that is, any codes that overlapped with the code I chose to network. Each code is represented on the network graphic by text enclosed in a bubble. When these co-occurring codes appeared I created relationships between and among these codes based on concepts emerging from these data. Visually, uni- and bi-directional arrows represent these relationships with text from bubble to bubble. I could manipulate the text to describe the type of relationship codes had with each other based on the data (i.e., “is part of,” “contradicts,” “is associated with,” etc.). As I connected codes and defined these relationships, Atlas.ti counted the number of relationships occurring for each particular code (i.e., density). Finally, I created an analytic memo for each of these rounds of coding and analysis.

During earlier phases of analysis, the network graphic included limited numbers of codes and connections (Figure 3).

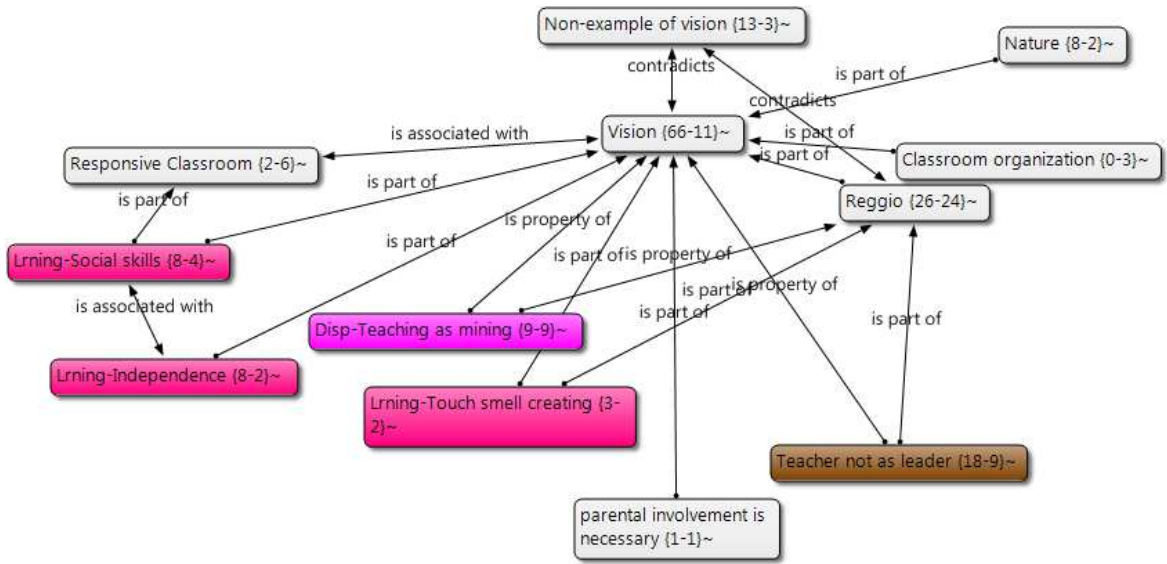


Figure 3. Sample code network during early phases of coding and analysis.

Toward the end of my analysis process, a much more complex network graphic was created (see Figure 4).

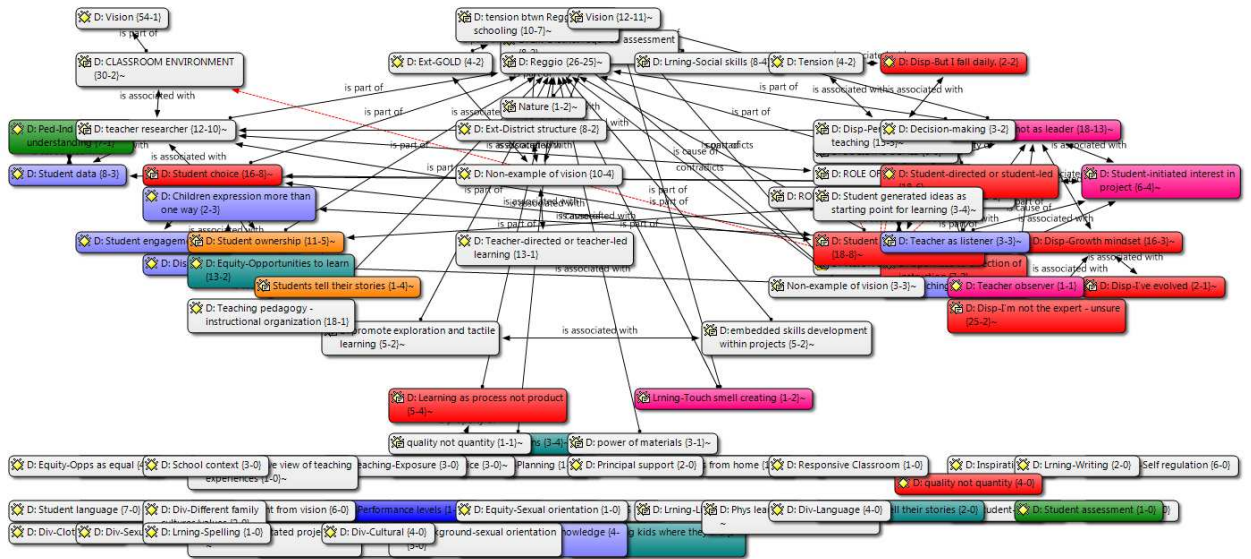


Figure 4. Sample code network during second phase of coding and analysis.

As I progressed through each form of data, I engaged in this same process of coding, networking and theory building. I then continued coding transcripts multiple times, each time undergoing this same process. As themes emerged from data, codes were grouped into code families and, when relevant, codes were merged or separated as they became more defined.

I then organized codes by groundedness and density in order to address my three research questions. Organizing codes in this manner allowed me to examine the relative presence of diversity- and equity-related codes within teachers' visions and practice (i.e., robustness; RQ1) as well as the relative importance of these codes within teachers' visions (i.e., density; RQ2). By analyzing each code's relative density and groundedness, I was able to analyze the complexity of each teacher's vision, as well as substantiate (or disconfirm) theoretical propositions related to my line of inquiry. I continued this iterative process of coding and analysis until my data were saturated; that is, until no new codes, relationships, or understandings could be gleaned from data sources regarding phenomena of investigation.

Internal coding validity. To ensure for internal coding validity, I created a definition for each code when the code was created as well as conducted multiple passes of the data. Definitions were stored in Atlas.ti and visible whenever I coded. In this way, I ensured that data were coded as consistently as possible from coding session to coding session. All the while, I conducted multiple passes of the data, matched patterns in coding and thematizing, built a chain of evidence to substantiate claims, addressed rival explanations, and attended to both confirming and disconfirming evidence presented in my ongoing analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Challenges in Data Collection

I encountered three challenges when conducting my data collection and analysis for this study. First, collecting data for three teachers posed a logistic challenge. At times, teachers taught during the same times of day. Other times, my commitments at the university conflicted with ideal observation periods. Regardless, I attempted to collect as much data as possible for each lesson within a focus unit.

Another challenge I encountered involved learning to use Atlas.ti while engaging in this project. While I used the software previously for my pilot study, I did not know how to exploit its features fully until I attended a two-day workshop mid-way through my data collection process. Still, using it for analysis posed a challenge since there were no expert Atlas.ti users available to me when I encountered complications in running or organizing my analyses. I used time researching approaches to using the software online and within manuals.

Finally, the theft of my personal laptop computer in January 2013 resulted in loss of data, including the only copy of several audio files and interview transcripts, particularly for Ms. Perkins. Some preliminary data analyses were lost, as well, delaying writing her case and the final comparative analysis.

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

Chapters five, six and seven present each teacher case for Serena Atkins, Scott Drumm and Brenda Perkins. Each chapter begins with a description of the classroom context and focus unit. Following, I summarize the teacher's overall vision based upon an analysis of the five vision dimensions. I then present findings related to the CRT constructs that emerged through teachers' vision analyses. These findings address both

the presence of these CRT elements and diversity and equity considerations (RQ1) as well as the relative centrality of these considerations within their visions (RQ2). With each teacher case, unexpected findings emerged through my analyses; these are included in each chapter, as well. Chapter eight concludes with a discussion of cross-case findings and implications as well as contributions to the literature, limitations of this study and possibilities for future research and practice.

Chapter Five: Serena Atkins

Overview

In this chapter, I describe the findings revealed through analysis of Ms. Atkins' vision and practice. After providing a description of her classroom context and unit, I illustrate her practice with one descriptive vignette – a snapshot of her teaching that is a representative example. I then provide a summary of Atkins' overall vision, followed by specific findings related to her diversity and equity beliefs with evidence from the data.

Data Collection

I collected data for Ms. Atkins' second grade class during a two-and-a-half week period in June 2013. These data included nine individual interviews, eight lessons from the focus unit for this study, and one observation of general classroom practice (a beginning-of-the-day morning meeting). Each interview or observation lasted between 15 and 50 minutes, with a total of four hours and five minutes of interviews, six hours of lesson observations and a half hour general classroom observation. Overall, I attended all but one lesson in the focus unit and was present almost daily during the two-and-a-half week duration of the unit.

Classroom Context

Ms. Atkins' classroom was organized into different functional spaces. The room exuded positivity, high expectations and embracing of children. Visually, it was a mosaic of primary colors from the flooring to the furniture and bulletin board content. Everything in this room appeared student-centered in its decoration. While Ms. Atkins determined the function for particular areas of the room, each area's substance and utility centered

around engaging students or displaying their thoughts and work. This second grade class – the “Participating Popcorn” – included 25 students, 13 female and 12 male.

The classroom was organized and colorful. There were five small round tables, each with four or five blue plastic chairs around it. Each chair had a blue and red cloth seat pocket hanging on its back, where students organized their materials. Each had a student’s name on it, and there were various loose papers within the large pocket. On the round table, there sat a plastic caddy containing shared materials – scissors, pencils, erasers, and markers. The room was full of color. The orange and white-checked linoleum floor clashed perfectly with the winter melon green bulletin board backgrounds layered around the room. Shelving was brightly colored, as well, in a warm sunshine yellow that matched the bulletin board borders. Above one wall large cutout letters read, “RESPONSIBILITY” in rainbow hues. One wall had three enormous windows that reached from a child’s eye level to the ceiling, about 15 feet high. There was a rolling easel that held materials and large chart paper for morning messages and lessons.

In one corner of the room there sat a large floor rug with a colorful map of the United States. This area doubled in function as a general meeting space as well as a reading area. This area’s corner housed shelves with an assortment of books – both picture and early reader – and one bulletin board accompanying it titled, “Reading” with a subtitle, “Talking About Reading.” Colorful prompts covered this board such as, “I wonder....” and “Another example of that is...” or “I agree/disagree because....” or “I thought something different. Here’s why....” Above the bulletin board an alphabet strip with student created high frequency words (“been,” “before,” “bring,” etc.) below each letter lined the tops of the bulletin boards. Just above this letter strip sat another strip of

months of the year, with student made paper balloon cut-outs decorated with each class member's name placed over his/her birthday month marking each child's birthday

On the opposite wall from that with windows, there hung a large chalkboard with the day's schedule and a monthly calendar. There was no teacher desk; rather, Ms. Atkins floated from space to space meeting with children as needed.

Table 5.

Atkins' Ancestors Unit Outline

Lesson	Content	Description
1	What is an ancestor?	Assessing prior knowledge; introduction
2	Coming to America	Read aloud; history of people on the north American continent
3	Where are our ancestors from?	Sharing where student ancestors are from; world map of flags with children's names on them
4	Coming to the United States	Learning things that might be new about coming to the States as an immigrant
5	Preparing interviews	Children prepare questions to ask an "ancestor" in their family for a formal interview
6	"Where did it originate?"	Identifying foods common in the U.S. that originated from other countries
7	Ancestry feast	Class feast; Children bring traditional foods from home
8	Celebration and closing	Reflecting upon the unit as a class

Unit of Study: Ancestors

Atkins' school district mandated that students complete an ancestors unit in second grade. The content standards were broad, however, (e.g., "Identify food, customs,

sports, and music that originate in other countries and are found in the United States today,") therefore Atkins possessed the freedom and flexibility to teach the unit as she pleased. She planned to incorporate research skills, including gathering information from texts and primary resources. She also created the skeleton of a timeline on which students included multiple events in history. Table 5 lists Ms. Atkins' lesson sequence and the topics covered for each lesson during this unit. The following vignette captures the first lesson I observed, the second in this unit, in which students discussed the concept of culture and family traditions.

Vignette

It is the second day of the Participating Popcorn's Ancestors unit, and the class begins to settle on the rug in a nondescript blob formation. Once they settle in and give Ms. Atkins their attention, she begins.

"Alright, so let's just have a quick review. We know that ancestors are members of our family who lived a long time ago. Usually we call ancestors people who lived before our grandparents. What we're going to do is look at ancestors and our family, so each of you will look at your own family and begin to find out a little more about your heritage: your history as a person, your life, things that make up who you are before, and you're actually going to interview someone in your family. Raise your hand – don't talk, this is a silent response – raise your hand if you have a grandparent who is still alive."

Almost all hands rise.

"William, you don't have a grandparent who is still alive?"

"I don't know."

"Okay, you're not sure. That's fine."

“So who can tell me what culture is? What’s culture, Minjung?”

“It’s kind of the way you live and the way you dress and, I don’t know....”

“Yes! Exactly! What a great way to say it! It’s the way you live – the food you eat, the clothes you wear, the music you listen to, the arts that you might be interested in. I can tell you now that a hundred years ago people weren’t listening to rap music - ”

The class gasps loudly in dramatic and childlike horror. Ms. Atkins laughs.

“I’m glad you love it, but culturally that was not happening a hundred years ago. So cultures, do they stay the same or do they change, I wonder?”

“They change,” interjects the class.

“Let’s see... and then we read about different people’s clothing and artifacts in their cultures. And did we read this page?”

A chorus of “No”’s echoes through the group.

“Okay. This is an important one.....” Ms. Atkins goes on to read more about how some people come to a new country. These people are called immigrants and they find new jobs and find new ways to do things. The book talks about Ellis Island, and she asks the class whether anyone knows where Ellis Island is. An eager boy raises his hand, and she calls on him. He answer accurately that it’s in the state of New York. She continues on with the book, half reading and half commentating.

“Immigrants who come to this country from a new country bring their own culture, too. They bring different ideas, they might bring different foods that they eat. I know in England, we like to have what we call bangers and mash, which is sausages and mashed potatoes for dinner. That’s a part of English culture that I bring with me. When I came to the U.S. So I don’t go, ‘I’m going to forget all about England now, it’s all about

America!’ I still do a lot of the things that I would do in England like eat bangers and mash.”

“I see you connecting,” she pauses as she notices a child showing the silent “connecting” sign with her hand. “Can you say how *you* do things from your culture?”

“Um, I make and eat *manti*.”

“Which is from...?”

“Uh.... Russia. Kyrgyzstan.” A number of hands also shoot up as this conversation begins.

“Kyrgyzstan? All right. Ooo! I see lots of hands. Good. Let’s do a turn and talk. But wait. Listen. If you have something in your culture that you think might be different that you and your family do, turn and talk to share that.” She barely finishes this sentence when children begin to engage eagerly in excited conversations with a neighbor. After a few minutes, she directs children to refocus on her.

“Wow, I did not know there were so many cultures in our classroom,” she states excitedly. “Who might be able to say whether their parents or grandparents were born in a different country and what country they came from?”

Students again excitedly raise their hands and begin sharing as Ms. Atkins calls on each individually:

A boy shares, “Every Orthodox Easter we color eggs with natural dye.”

A girl shares, “On New Year’s Eve, everybody has a big party. Everybody buys fireworks and shoots them off at midnight. People jump off the couch to jump into the New Year, and the Queen gives a speech”

“The queen of which country?” Ms. Atkins asks.

“The Queen of Denmark,” she replies.

“Of Denmark! Okay! That’s a huge tradition! I think we can learn a lot about each other and our cultures.”

Summary of Ms. Atkins’ Overall Vision

Ms. Atkins’ vision included a classroom environment that above all allowed children to feel safe, comfortable and cared for. There was a deep level of respect throughout the culture of the classroom, and Ms. Atkins believed that students should “own” the classroom space. Their work should be displayed throughout the space. In her ideal classroom, students work together cooperatively to solve problems and challenge each other in their learning. There are moments of silence and moments of concentrated discussion as well as much laughter.

As a teacher, Ms. Atkins played the role of the firm but caring leader, listener, and learner. As a leader, Ms. Atkins believed that she must hold high, clear expectations for all students, pushing them to be their best while also letting them know that she cared about their success. She also believed that students were always watching her as a role model and learning from her behavior whether or not she was “teaching” at the moment. In her listening role, Atkins believed that students’ voices and thoughts were important to hear, recognize, and respect. It was also important that she listen for any disrespectful comments or any comments that needed to be further questioned or discussed. Ms. Atkins believed she was a learner, too. She did not hesitate to share with the class that she did not know the answer to a question and that she was excited to learn more. She also let children know when they taught her something, as well. Finally, in her learner role, she did not hesitate to make mistakes and openly told children that she made them, too.

In Ms. Atkins' vision, she saw students as excited and interested learners who eagerly participated in classroom activities individually and as a community. They were respectful of each other and proud of who they were individually and as a class. In this vision, students took responsibility for their learning and that of each other's. Students also had the responsibility to be honest about what they were thinking and should take risks in sharing these ideas. Lastly, students possessed infinite possibility for growth.

Ms. Atkins' vision of curricula included skills development in context with content that related to students' experiences. Curricula included enough structure to provide intentional experiences for skills development, but at the same time there should be enough freedom so that children could have a sense of ownership over the tasks. Learning should be fun, too. Ms. Atkins liked to incorporate games and as many hands-on activities as possible while still ensuring that students had enough experiences to arm them for "traditional" schooling.

In their futures, Ms. Atkins hopes that her students will be able to navigate the world as independent and sensitive people who respected those similar to and different from themselves.

Presence of CRT Elements in Atkins' Vision

Analysis of Ms. Atkins' vision revealed a range of CRT elements. This vision revealed the highest groundedness in her role as teacher (107), followed by curriculum (62), role of students (59), and then classroom environment (30). The fifth vision dimension - societal goals - did not yield any CRT elements. Table 6 (p. 137) illustrates the number of co-occurrences for each CRT element within each CRT construct and vision dimension. Table 7 (p. 139) illustrates the assignment of Ms. Atkins' open coding

with CRT a priori codes organized by CRT construct and element. The following section details the nature of each CRT constructs' findings within each element. Findings are reported in order of groundedness. For each vision dimension, I group findings by CRT construct (e.g., Conceptions of Self and Others, Social Relations, Conceptions of Knowledge), then CRT element. Each code's groundedness is represented in parentheses next to each CRT element heading.

Role of Teachers

Within her vision, Ms. Atkins possessed the most clarity and presence of CRT elements within the dimension of role of teachers. Ms. Atkins envisioned her role as both enforcer of high expectations and advocate for student success through understanding her students deeply, supporting them in equitable ways and ensuring that her expectations remain high for all. Her vision and practice revealed thinking and action across all three CRT constructs: Conceptions of Self and Others, Social Relations and Conceptions of Knowledge.

Conceptions of self and others. Three elements within Conceptions of Self and Others revealed themselves through Ms. Atkins' vision: student success (32), pedagogy as art (16) and teaching as mining (9). The nature of these findings revealed that above all, she believed all students could achieve at high levels and that her role was to understand students individually both personally and academically in order to develop learning experiences that met students where they were developmentally and supported them toward achieving these high expectations.

Table 6.

Atkins' Vision-CRT Co-Occurrence Query Results

Vision	CRT Construct	CRT Element	Number of Co-occurrences
Role of teachers	Conceptions of self and others	Student success	32
		Pedagogy as art	16
		Teaching as mining	9
	Social relations	Connectedness	15
		Fluid relationships	15
	Conceptions of knowledge	Scaffold	13
		Critical stance	7
Role of students	Conceptions of self and others	Teaching as mining	14
		Pedagogy as art	12
		Student success	9
	Social relations	Fluid relationships	10
		Learn collaboratively	8
	Conceptions of knowledge	Scaffold	6
	Curriculum	Conceptions of self and others	Teaching as mining
Pedagogy as art			8
Conceptions of knowledge		Critical stance	7
		Scaffold	6
Classroom Environment	Social relations	Learn collaboratively	14
		Fluid relationships	9
		Community of learners	7

Student success (32). Ms. Atkins believed her role was to support students by ensuring that she maintained high expectations for all regardless their life experiences. She held a deep belief that children would meet high expectations when they were clearly articulated and age-appropriate. She stated:

See, I think it's all about expectations. My expectation is that at this point in the year, I should be able to just sit in my seat and know that you're going to do it.... I also really believe that kids will rise to the expectations if they're reasonable and achievable. I always set the bar high because I know kids can do it, and I think other teachers may not. (Interview 6)

In this comment, Atkins explained how her role was to determine the expectation for children and to hold them to it, as long as the expectation was appropriate. She also recognized her own belief in children as capable, demonstrating an asset-minded disposition toward students. Finally, she also recognized that her expectations and beliefs might not have been aligned with those of other teachers at Groundspring ES.

While she believed holding students to high expectations was part of her role, Ms. Atkins simultaneously believed she should support students in reaching these expectations by being firm with them. She shared that her classroom was often the one where misbehaving students were sent from other classes. She reflected upon this, identifying her firmness as a reason why she found success with more challenging students:

I suppose I'm very firm. I am. I'm firm, I think more assertive or stronger than other teachers in early childhood, and they felt like anyone who misbehaves they would put in my class, and somehow it works. I just think it's about being clear with kids – following through and say what you mean and mean what you say. (Interview 5)

With a combination of firmness, clarity, and consistency in follow-through, Atkins revealed her belief that students were capable of achieving success when a teacher performed this role and function.

Table 7.

Atkins' Organization of CRT and Open Codes

CRT Construct	CRT Element	Codes
Conceptions of self and others	Student success	Affirming student thinking Boundaries Commitment to success High expectations Hold students accountable Asset-minded disposition Specific positive feedback Teacher as noticer
	Pedagogy as art	Self-reflective disposition Flexibility in teaching Student excitement or interest Students know what they know Teacher as facilitator
	Teaching as mining	Listening disposition Students learn about selves Students-sense of pride/celebrate selves Students being seen Students share knowledge
	Part of community	Parental involvement is necessary
Social Relations	Community of learners	Community of differences Celebrate culture/NOT paper pencil task Class structure turn and talk Growth mindset/interest in learning Pushing students to embrace

		differences
	Connectedness	Teacher as making mistakes Balancing care Know students' lives Relationships with students
	Fluid relationships	Teacher pride in students Maintain student integrity Learn sensitivity and respect for others Student directed/student led Students as teachers Teacher not as leader
	Learn collaboratively	Teacher not expert Classroom climate- community Classroom climate- responsibility Class structure-share out Pedagogy-who speaks? Student ownership
Conceptions of knowledge	Critical stance	Boys of color Lean into discomfort Counterstories
	Knowledge/learning passion	Growth mindset/interest in learning Personal challenges in teaching Self-reflective Teacher learning
	Multifaceted assessment	Experiential learning
	Teachers scaffold	Access to curriculum Content meaningful Independent support for understanding Student individual needs

These high expectations and firmness were visible in her practice throughout observations. Atkins demonstrated high expectations by reiterating the expectations she wanted and reminding students of these expectations constantly, both behaviorally and academically. She did so using a combination of pre-correction before activities, explicit

reminders while an activity was underway, and explicit debriefing after activities. Typical in a lesson, she might remind students warmly and firmly that they should redirect their attention to her.

In one instance, Ms. Atkins supported a transition from talking in partners to engaging students in a whole group discussion. She said to the class, “Okay, let’s re-cap. Make sure your eyes are on me.” When students were not all attending to her, she repeated, “Make sure your eyes are on me,” six times, attempting to make eye contact with those whose attention seemed elsewhere until all students gave her their attention (Lesson Observation 3). As she did so, she engaged those whose attention she had, as well as tried to get the attention of those whose eyes were not yet directed toward her. She did so in a friendly, respectful manner, and eventually the entire class had her attention. The students who did not give her attention at first smiled playfully and in complete recognition that they should have been attending to her request. The critical component here was that she did not continue until her request was completely granted; she would not continue until the statement, “Make sure your eyes are on me,” became reality for each student. In this way, she set a high behavioral expectation and supported all children to meet it.

While she provided students with these explicit directions and supportive, corrective reminders to meet them, Ms. Atkins also provided consistent positive, specific feedback about behavior she noticed that met expectations. In one thirty-minute lesson, she provided specific feedback comments approximately six times in whole-group settings. When circulating to individual one-on-one, the number of positive, specific comments increased, although the exact number of comments was difficult to count given

the varying levels of clarity in hearing these comments when delivered one-on-one.

These comments ranged from, “I love the way you guys are thinking!” to “I notice a lot of silent connections,” or:

I thought that was going to be a hard task, and I wanted you to know that I was paying attention. I thought, ‘With all the sorting that needed to be done and with all the tasks that you needed to complete, can this group do it?’ And I want you to know that I was thoroughly impressed.” (Lesson Observation 4)

Throughout all lessons, she identified countless moments to provide individuals and the group with positive feedback on their performance. Doing so communicated to students that they were successful in their actions and that Ms. Atkins recognized these successes.

This high expectation and support was seen specifically through her work with one particularly challenging child, Jeremiah. Throughout my time in her classroom, Jeremiah struck me as a particularly unique child. Jeremiah presented as an African American child with a “Mohawk” hairdo who was larger than the other boys – both in height and weight. He often physically separated himself from the group during whole class time on the carpet. Often, this self-separation included physical movement – spinning around on the floor, picking up something found on the floor and playing with it in his hands, finding a book on the adjacent bookshelf and browsing through it. He required redirection from Ms. Atkins at multiple times during lessons, both to participate in discussions as well as to complete assigned work tasks.

When asked about Jeremiah, Atkins described his history before her arrival as having “meltdowns” in various classes for unpredictable reasons. Such meltdowns included physical actions (i.e., throwing chairs, hitting other children) and verbal

comments (i.e., calling the Principal an “idiot”). During his three years in this school, Jeremiah continued engaging in these behaviors with no punitive consequence from the school. She shared with me that Jeremiah would have physically aggressive meltdowns to the point where physical restraint was used almost regularly to control his behavior.

Atkins explained:

I think for him he’s been allowed to do whatever, so he wants to know how far can I go. I think when call someone an idiot, yeah, you get sent home. He comes back and no one even talks to him. He’s still not sure of, “How far can I push this?” He threw a chair at the Principal, and he pushed over the table.... So I just came in and I wanted him to know I cared about him, and I see that he’s smart, and I love him just the way I would love any other student, but I’m very clear about what will and will not be allowed in the classroom. The first two weeks he would go off and I would just ignore him. I’d say, “You have to leave if you can’t control yourself,” and ever since then we’ve never had to physically restrain him” (Interview 5)

In the absence of boundaries, she implied, he continued to behave a particular way. Here, Atkins contextualized Jeremiah’s behavior within the context of the school’s response to his disruptive behavior. She further explained how teachers’ responses to him included multiple conversations but no action. “I think when you do all of the talking – you know, two years in and you’re still saying, ‘You know that’s not okay,’ what are you saying? What message are you sending? I think he’s had very soft teachers” (Interview 5). Once again, Atkins explicitly related Jeremiah’s behavior to the expectations and boundaries set for him by the adults in the school. These school expectations sit in

contrast to how she envisions her role as a teacher – providing both clear, high expectations and firm boundaries to ensure that students achieve the success she feels confident they can.

Pedagogy as art (16). In her thinking and practice, Ms. Atkins remained flexible both in her management of behavior and in instruction. While she planned intentionally, she also gauged students' excitement and interest, their energy levels, and their levels of connectedness to the curriculum to adjust her plan. In her thinking, she explained:

I think my teaching, although you have plan, it depends on how they respond. So, I had this wonderful plan and this is what we're going to read and what we're going to learn about today. And then they come in and they're not settled and you just have to change it.

(Interview 2)

On one afternoon, this flexibility in response to students' energy levels became apparent in practice. Children returned to Ms. Atkins' classroom after Physical Education class. Atkins' plan for the day was to read the book, *Coming to America*, and then engage in a discussion about the creation of the United States as a history involving many people from different places. Once she sensed the students' high level of energy, her plan for how she engaged them in this topic changed. She reflected upon this decision-making process:

.... my plan was to read the book, *Coming to America*, and do this [handout] and to talk about "America was created from this." But we went into the review, and I had some of those key words up there and I thought, "Well, let's just go with that because I think this is longer. With that book, there's so much to discuss. I think I have to break the book down into two or three sittings." And they were so antsy,

too. They had just come back from PE, and they weren't going to sit without making foolish comments. I felt like this is serious to me, and you really have to be paying attention, so I moved to the turn and talk a lot more and go off and do this and come back. (Interview 2)

In this reflection, Atkins' thinking process revealed her ability to recognize students' lack of focus and high energy levels and her willingness to adjust the lesson's activities to ensure that students still engaged in the lesson appropriately. Rather than staying with her plan, Atkins adjusted while still moving students toward the objectives she set out for them to achieve.

Teaching as mining (9). During one observation, I noticed Atkins using Spanish to redirect a student. When asked about this choice, she stated:

So, Nadia and Sebastian both speak Spanish. And especially for Nadia, she's much more responsive to Spanish than she is to English. So sometimes, I'll give her a direction in Spanish so that she's responsive, but also so the students are all going to have to know that you need to sit down now and you need to quickly. So, I think it's a way of showing sensitivity to her and relating to her in a way that shows that I value her language too, and it's just important. Gosh, I wish I could speak it to her all day. So it's kind of multifaceted in that way. (Interview 7)

In this reflection, Atkins revealed her intention to support Nadia in following directions by using her home language. In addition, she expressed her positive attitude toward Spanish and using it in the classroom. In these ways, Atkins demonstrated her commitment to learning about Nadia and using her knowledge of Nadia's background as an asset to her instruction.

Similarly, Atkins also saw her role as bridging students' personal experiences to learning experiences. During one lesson, Atkins engaged the class in a game, *Where did it originate?* in which students sat in groups with an assortment of cut-out countries, one to each strip of paper. There was a Bingo-like board at the front of the room, and students were asked to determine from where each of the items listed on the Bingo board came. In each cell of the giant poster, there was a picture and word for a part of current "American" culture. These items included: pizza, sushi, baseball, yoga, popcorn, hot dog, checkers, spaghetti, tea, tacos, drums, and tacos. Also included in each cell was a list of four different countries. For each turn of the game, Ms. Atkins asked the class to work in their groups to determine from where they thought the item originated.

When reflecting upon this lesson, Ms. Atkins responded to my questioning about her design for the game:

I based it on what the kids like, so they could relate to it. Food was easier, and then maybe with countries that I know that we have ancestors from. It was more about something they could relate to, something they might use or like so that it would be something that they remember. (Interview 8)

Here, Atkins explained how her planning for this activity intentionally considered the personal connections students would have to it. In effect, she was creating the activity based on what she thought students knew in their lives.

Social relations. Both in Ms. Atkins' vision and practice, evidence emerged demonstrating her belief that her role was highly relational; she must know her students well and connect with them, work with them reciprocally toward goals, and work

collaboratively with the class to learn. These two CRT elements – connectedness (15) and fluid relationships (15) – are outlined below.

Connectedness (15). While Atkins provided explicit expectations and boundaries in her role she was also careful to maintain a sense of respect and integrity for each child. She did so by knowing each child deeply and was constantly reading their behavior and listening to their words, interpreting their behavior to understand them even deeper to inform how to interact.

By knowing her students, she also knew how to engage them and how to communicate to them that she cared. These care statements looked and sounded different for each student. For some, care included checking in in the mornings privately. For others, care involved reminding them of the high expectations she held for them, communicating that she knew they could meet these expectations and ensuring that she held them accountable for meeting them.

In Jeremiah’s case, she explains her approach to caring for him:

I feel like I’m really good with kids like that because kids are safe and they know what’s expected. They know the boundaries.... So I’m just very firm and very serious but also making sure it’s balanced with nurturing and loving and, “I know you can do this,” and he’s been great. I haven’t had any problems. (Interview 5)

In Atkins’ explanation, her high expectations and boundaries were simultaneously communicated to Jeremiah as framed through a lens of caring. The caring was an essential component of communicating her expectations and holding him accountable.

Fluid relationships (15). Even though Ms. Atkins was certainly the adult in the classroom who orchestrated learning experiences, she also maintained reciprocal and

equitable relationships in the manner that she maintained respect for students and listens to them. She did so by welcoming comments from students to offer their own experiences and expertise, physically interacting with them on their levels, expressing interest in students and encouraging all students to be sensitive to their differences.

Her willingness to listen and learn from students appeared in one particular lesson. During this lesson Ms. Atkins was discussing with the class what flags from different nations looked like and what they would do with these flags during the lesson. The following scenario then ensued:

A: Yes?

Student: See these dots on the side of my head? That's the Danish flag.

A: Oh, really? I didn't know that about you.

Student: See, there are four little dots?

Other students: Other side....

Student: Oh, other side. [He then gets up to the board to attempt drawing a Danish flag.] It looks like that. But different colors. So you see these four dots? They're actually squares if you look really closely.

A: Oh!

Student: Yeah. So I was born with my flag on my head.

A: You're born with your flag on your head. Wow. If I did I'd have stars and stripes and all sorts of... [The class erupts in giggles] (Lesson 3)

In this small moment, Atkins took time to listen to what this student had to share during the lesson, taking seriously the knowledge he had to share. This moment demonstrated her willingness to listen to what students knew and to hear what they had to share about

themselves. While during this lesson a student shared a personal fact, moments such as these occurred throughout her lessons as Atkins engaged students in conversations about curricula. They shared related and supplemental information that enriches the discussion and learning experience throughout these conversations.

Conceptions of knowledge. Ms. Atkins' vision demonstrated her belief that her role was to scaffold learning experiences (13) so that all students could access them. In addition, she engaged her students in taking a critical stance (7) toward traditional narratives.

Scaffold (13). Atkins' vision and practice revealed an attentiveness to meeting individuals' personal and academic needs in order to support them in their success. As the teacher, Ms. Atkins believed that it was her responsibility to do so. When reflecting upon some of the challenges in finding resources for the ancestors unit, she thought about the many different reading levels in her class whose needs she met in order to support them to learn.

I feel like there's not enough different ways that students can go off and do their research in the classroom, work independently on their grade level. So then I went to the public library and I got tons of books and we did stations, but it was still hard. And on their grade level how do you differentiate for the Jeremiahs who roll around on the floor? Or Owen, his style of learning is he prefers to see written directions versus auditory. And there are the 23 other personalities, some that are very dominating. (Interview 1)

In this conversation, Atkins shared how she attempted to meet each of her students' needs. The fact that limited resources prevented her from providing all students with

access to the curriculum caused her frustration. Later, she remarked, “I think we need to look at being able to use multiple approaches. You can’t teach any one way to everyone. Everyone can’t learn all in the same way” (Interview 5). In this way, she recognized the learning differences presented in her classroom and saw her role as meeting these differences to support learning.

Critical stance (7). In her classroom, Atkins intentionally normalized race conversations and provided students with opportunities to reflect upon their own racial identities when race talk occurred.

During the first lesson observation, Atkins asked the class, “Who remembers what an ancestor is?” Students offered a number of responses. One child stated, “Someone who has the same color skin as you.” Atkins responded, “I would say someone who *sometimes* has the same color skin as you” (Lesson Observation 1). For Atkins, she took the opportunity to respond in a way that accepted the child’s comment to a certain degree and pushed the idea a little further.

When asked about this moment in a post-lesson interview, Atkins described her experience in that moment.

It totally surprised me. Well, because my automatic instinct is absolutely not, that's bad. So, I'm feeling that inside, but I don't want to humiliate – I was very conscious then about – it was important that I respond in a way that everyone knew that it's safe to make these mistakes, even though inside I'm like, *Where the heck did he get that from?....* It was shocking.... I just didn’t want to make a big deal of it. It was just, "Oh, yeah. Actually, no." And what I will do is now, I want to be able to provide a visual example of, "Oh, here. This is so-and-so's ancestor,”

another way to reinforce or to help him work through it. No, they don't have to be the same color. I need to find a way, another way, without saying, "No, that's not right." I have to have him see that ancestors don't have to be the same skin color. Now, it's not something I was planning on. I didn't think anyone thought that, so that's a way I think students guide your teaching because now I know there's this myth for him that I have to somehow disprove. (Interview 2)

This classroom moment illustrated one of many moments in which Atkins responded to a student comment related to race in a manner that accepted and furthered the topic of conversation on an age-appropriate level. In this debriefing, she teased apart her own personal responses, tempering her instinctive reaction in an intentional way to respond to the child in a way that most importantly preserved the safety of this classroom space for him to share his thoughts freely, even if they were not accurate.

Pedagogically, Atkins used this student's comment as a piece of information to inform future steps in her teaching to support the child's own race understanding in relation to ancestors. This unexpected comment was one that she took seriously in terms of developing the student's understanding about ancestry and skin color. While her goal was for him to understand how his comment was erroneous, she puzzled through the most effective process to support this child to come to that conclusion. In the forefront, she wanted to preserve his sense of safety. This thinking demonstrated her own sensitivity to his response – in essence, she wanted to avoid shutting him down by openly and directly disproving his remark and intentionally planning a means of disproving his misunderstanding later.

When asked about this moment, Atkins revealed how she experienced moments such as these at other points of the year. She recounted a conversation that occurred in the classroom earlier in the year:

.... we have a biracial girl, Rachel, whose mom is black and whose dad is white. And she said, "Well, I'm Black." And they looked at her and said, "No, you're not." She has this straight hair. And she said, "Yes, I am. My mom is Black and I'm Black." And then someone said, "But your dad is White and you don't look like your skin is brown." And they had this dialogue and I froze for a minute because I thought, *Good for you. Yes, I am. How dare you.* And then I was kind of like, "Let's talk about what this means and how it affects you." And then Nico, whose parents are from Lebanon, said, "Well, am I black?" I think kids have to have their own identity. I said, "Well, what do you think? What makes a person black and what doesn't?" We had those dialogues and they're comfortable. So, it's that kind of thing. I feel like you don't think about it. It's a no-brainer and when it comes up, you talk about it, and then you keep it moving. (Interview 2)

Atkins' inner reflection and experience of this particular moment included an internal emotional response. However, from her recollection, the conversation flowed smoothly without hesitation. Her ability to separate her personal emotional responses from her apparent demeanor and visible reaction spoke to the intentional manner in which she responded. This intentionality maintained a culture of open conversation and promoted safety among the group to engage in race talk in a productive manner to counter students' misunderstandings.

Unlike the previous instance, this example demonstrates Atkins' support of both the individual development of a student's racial identity as well as that of the class'. She observed the students' interactions, allowed for children to advocate for themselves when possible and facilitated the conversation when necessary.

In both cases, the process by which students gained deeper understandings involved Atkins' facilitation of understanding rather than direct teaching. Rather than simply explaining the relationships of skin color, race and identity to children directly, in both instances she encouraged them to think about their current understandings through questioning these voiced understandings. Through questioning, she pushed students to think more deeply and critically about their current knowledge and assumptions. This questioning and engagement in race conversation was normalized as part of typical, daily practice. Her explanation, "We had those dialogues and they're comfortable. So, it's that kind of thing. I feel like you don't think about it. It's a no-brainer and when it comes up, you talk about it, and then you keep it moving" (Interview 2) demonstrated the integration of this conversation in her practice as a matter-of-fact embracing of these dialogues. In short, by normalizing race conversations, Ms. Atkins intentionally attended to stereotypes and/or misconceptions regarding race in her classroom.

Role of Students

Analysis revealed Atkins' vision of students' roles across two CRT constructs: Conceptions of Self and Others and Social Relations. Ms. Atkins envisioned the role of students as active participants in the learning process who brought to the classroom their own personal experiences, adding richness to the classroom. Part of this richness resided in the diverse differences they brought. In addition, students were responsible for

everyone's learning and everyone's success. Finally, their role was to serve not only as active participants, but learners and teachers, as well.

Conceptions of self and others. Atkins' vision included students building each other's positive sense of self through recognizing and valuing each other's identities. In addition, they should play an active role in developing the curriculum. These two aspects of how students should conceptualize self and others included mining each other's experiences and contributing to pedagogy as art.

Teaching as mining (14). Atkins verbalized her belief that students should develop their own identities and that these identities should be affirmed and celebrated in the classroom. As such, one of students' roles was to bring their full selves to the classroom space. She stated explicitly, "I think kids have to have their own identity" (Interview 2). Particularly, analyses demonstrated that Atkins attended to students' racial, national, cultural, historic and learning identities. She explained a particular portion of the unit, in which each student interviewed someone older in the family. She stated, "I think it's a just a way to celebrate themselves and their ancestry in a way I don't think has been done or they've been used to" (Interview 7). Here, Atkins identified celebrating students' identities – their selves – as an intentional goal of this particular activity as well as an educational gap in her students' own schooling experiences.

Atkins used this unit as an opportunity for students to share about the known origins of their particular ancestors. "... I think it's really good for kids to know their heritage but also understand that their parents and their ancestors came from somewhere else" (Interview 2). In this way, Atkins demonstrated her belief that students should develop respect and positive disposition toward students' own backgrounds and family

experiences. About midway through the unit, Ms. Atkins described how one student demonstrated her own excitement about learning about her family heritage. She shared:

Bennett brought in a book of her grandfather and information about him in the war. She hasn't come to me and said, "Oh, I did this," or "I'm excited." She's not that kind of girl, but her bringing you this thing she wants to share shows "This is important to me." (Interview 7)

After this student brought in the book, Ms. Atkins had her share it with the class at the beginning of the day's social studies lesson. Doing so demonstrated her commitment to having students share their own knowledge and background – in effect having students dig into their own backgrounds and take ownership of this exploration was another role they played in the classroom.

Pedagogy as art (12). Atkins believed that students served a role in contributing to the artistic component of teaching by offering supplemental activities, extending them, or contributing unexpected ideas to lessons. They did this when they felt excited or interested in the work. She explained how children demonstrate this excitement through extending their learning independently:

I think going off and doing some things independently that you weren't asked to do. A few kids came in the next day and said, "I've already done my interview. It's right here." If they weren't interested, it would be the last thing that they do. Natalie emailed me herself to say she was interviewing her grandmother via Skype, I think. And I think just that independent reaching out, sharing, this is what I found out, and independent research is my marker for enthusiasm. (Interview 7)

Through developing positive attitudes about themselves and toward others in their families, students were allowed to explore outside of the curriculum that Atkins provided. She viewed this as a positive part of the teaching process.

Students also played a role in directing instruction in unexpected ways through their comments. When reflecting upon the student comment about ancestors having the same skin color, Atkins remarked, “I didn't think anyone thought that, so that's a way I think students guide your teaching because now I know there's this myth for him that I have to somehow disprove” (Interview 2). Her willingness to adjust her instruction and her recognition that students direct instruction at times aligned with seeing students as participating in the flexible and artistic component of teaching.

Social relations. For Ms. Atkins, students had a role in the community in two defined ways. First, they played an active role as teachers and learners in the community, taking ownership of their learning; and second, they were responsible for ensuring that everyone learned. These two beliefs within her vision aligned with CRT's Social Relations construct, specifically the elements maintaining fluid relationships (10) and learning collaboratively (8).

Fluid relationships (10). Another role students played in Atkins' vision and practice was to take ownership of their own learning. Toward the end of the school year, Atkins took a morning meeting share opportunity to ask of students, “What are you most proud of this school year?” Students responded in a number of ways. One said, “My rocket math because I feel more confident about my math skills” (Classroom observation, June 4, 2013). When asked about this morning share, Atkins shared:

... a lot of my shares or the morning message activity, where they write on the board, will be where they can take ownership for their learning and be proud of it and celebrate... So giving them more ownership and responsibility for their own actions, learning, and being part of the community is huge, I think. Really important. (Interview 1)

In this way, Atkins created space for students to take responsibility for their learning, therefore demonstrating reciprocal roles as teachers and learners.

Learn collaboratively (8). Atkins envisioned students' roles as holding themselves and others accountable for everyone's learning. This particular approach allowed Atkins to position students in the class as experts, knowledge creators and teachers.

I think it's good for them to know that they can also learn from each other. I'm not the only teacher there. Miss Donnelly is not the only teacher. And we use that language a lot. We're not the only teachers. "Lindsey is gonna teach you something about how she thinks such-and-such." (Interview 1)

By recognizing that all students have potential to take on a teaching role, Atkins reinforced the notion that all students were teachers in the community.

Curriculum

For this particular unit and in her teaching in general, Ms. Atkins believed that the curriculum should tap students' knowledge and experiences as well as be led by their interests and enthusiasm. In these ways, curricula should positively reflect all students individually so that they saw themselves and those different from themselves in the curriculum.

Conceptions of self and others. Ms. Atkins' vision of curriculum presented evidence of two CRT elements – teaching as mining and pedagogy as art – within her Conceptions of Self and Others.

Teaching as mining (19). Atkins supported students' attempts in sharing information about themselves and their lives through her own curriculum. When speaking about share time in the mornings, she explained, “What we've done is each month we've done a specific share, where they go home and they do research on someone they respect and admire the most or one of the best moments of their life” (Interview 1). This remark demonstrated Atkins' interest in providing curricular opportunities for students to bring a part of their own lives into the classroom to be recognized by others.

Ms. Atkins saw these curricular opportunities as additional ways to support students in developing pride in themselves. About this particular unit, she shared:

So, we have a girl whose grandfather fought in the World War. He's still alive. He's 98, and the mom said she has paid no interest in him and all of a sudden, she's beaming, she's proud. I think for them, it gives them a sense of pride. Oh, this is who I am. This is who's in my family. Someone in my family made a big impact in this way. So, I think it's just a way to celebrate themselves and their ancestry in a way I don't think has been done or they've been used to. (Interview 7)

Here, Ms. Atkins not only shared her thinking about how this unit supported students' development of pride but also shared her impression regarding the scarcity of these experiences for children in schools.

There was a wide range of national and cultural backgrounds represented among

the children in this class, and Ms. Atkins worked to incorporate those aspects of their identities into the curriculum. One homework assignment required students to find out more about where their ancestors originated. They came in the next day excited to share their countries, and Atkins listed them. The list was long – 39 different countries – and she decided to represent this cultural diversity visually through representing them on a world map. To do so, she pinned a world map onto a bulletin board. She then had students color small paper flags. These flags were then pinned up around the map with a string connecting the flag and the country on the map. Finally, she wrote each child's name on a sticky note. She then put this sticky note next to a corresponding flag noting that the student's ancestors originated from that country. Then, students' names were placed adjacent to multiple flags. This activity resulted in a vibrant visual display of nationalities and children's names. As such, Atkins designed an activity that visually captured and recognized the national origins related to student's identities.

Pedagogy as art (8). In Ms. Atkins' vision and practice, curricula were responsive to students' engagement and interest. It was changeable. She explained, "... my plan, my unit, it's never set in stone because I often have to gauge what the kids are getting, what they're enjoying, what they're not" (Interview 9). Throughout her unit, Ms. Atkins reflected daily and tweaked the next day's activities in response to how children engaged the day prior. This responsiveness and flexibility demonstrated a commitment to refining teaching and learning experiences in an artistic manner consistent with CRT.

Conceptions of knowledge. Ms. Atkins' conception of curriculum included two CRT elements that emerged in patterned ways. First, curriculum supported critical

understanding of knowledge. It also provided accessible, scaffolded content to connect to students' experiences and lives.

Critical stance (7). Ms. Atkins intentionally chose curriculum to counter traditional narratives. In this case, she decided that the ancestor unit would focus on the theme of immigration. Specifically, she explained:

So we did kind of this beginning of what an ancestor is and then we're kind of gonna look at the fact that we're all immigrants living in America, and there's no, "This is our country and these people came." And I think that's really an important part of them understanding themselves as an American but also as an immigrant, too. (Interview 1)

As this comment illustrates, Ms. Atkins decided to frame this unit using it as an opportunity to demonstrate how essentially everyone was an immigrant to this land. This intentional choice demonstrated her decision to teach against the traditional narrative and current political nationalization occurring in our culture that frames immigrants as foreign "others" who may not have a right to join this country.

Classroom Environment

In vision and practice, Ms. Atkins created a highly relational classroom. In this classroom, students and teacher played critical roles in contributing to a safe environment for all community members. Specifically, patterned evidence revealed thinking and practice within social relations' elements of learning collaboratively (14), creating and maintaining fluid relationships (9), and creating a community of learners (7).

Social relations. Ms. Atkins' vision and practice included patterned focus in her relationships with students and among students themselves. These relationships supported

positive development of all individuals in the class as well as for the class collectively.

Learn collaboratively (14). Atkins' rooted her classroom environment in CRT practice through her ability to create a safe environment for students to work together and support each other to be successful. She did this particularly by creating an environment in which mistakes were recognized without penalty. Specifically, she allowed students to make mistakes in their behavioral actions, their academic output and in their conversations. In this way, Atkins' classroom allowed for full potential to grow through risk-taking in all these areas within a safe environment. Atkins explicitly acknowledged this area of her practice, stating:

... they watch you more than you realize, how you respond to others making mistakes. I think that's the biggest piece is being okay with making mistakes. Sometimes we do it on purpose in here, and sometimes we don't. And it's being okay and saying, "Oh, my gosh," or "I rushed." In fact, when I make mistakes now, they always say, "You always tell us to slow down and take your time. You need to do that." And I say, "You're so right." And so I think it's balancing your response to their mistakes and also how you handle the mistakes that you make, acknowledging you make mistakes, acknowledging you don't know everything.

(Interview 4)

Atkins intentionally promoted a classroom dynamic in which mistakes were expected, acknowledged and yet not reprimanded. Instead, they were part of her everyday activities, and she encouraged children to acknowledge them and reflect upon them themselves. Students' own recognition of the mistakes that Atkins made – telling her to

slow down, for example – demonstrated a transfer of understanding from Atkins to her children.

Fluid relationships (9). Atkins also spent enormous time, thought and energy in developing sensitivity and respect for others. She did so in two ways: first, by explicitly teaching students how to support each other; and second, by providing open opportunities to engage in discussions about difference in ways that embraced individuals. She explained how she thought about students supporting each other:

The comfort level and the safety also is about how their peer will respond. So early in the year, the first six weeks, of course, is vital, but handling situations when others – or teaching them strategies on how to be supportive. Usually, it's through story for me or as something arises or complementing someone on doing something and putting the language together with it like, "Wow, that's what a good friend does. You are a really good friend." (Interview 4)

By noticing student behavior and pointing out this behavior in positive in specific ways, she provided students with feedback that continued to encourage students to make decisions that supported each other.

Across the unit of study, Atkins took advantage of a number of learning opportunities to ensure that students behaved respectfully and with sensitivity toward one another. She infused high levels of sensitivity to difference and respect for others throughout her lessons. When speaking about her culminating unit celebration – a feast featuring foods from each student's household – she explained not only why she chose to engage the class in this activity, but also how it reinforced her goal to develop students' acceptance of other's cultures:

And I think it's also about celebrating culture and diversity in a way that doesn't have to be a book or a pencil and paper. I think there's multiple ways to share who we are and what makes us who we are. I think it's also going to be good for them to be trying foods they probably haven't tried before. And like it or not like it, but understand that foods like this come from different places. And being respectful, I think that's going to be a part of it because Neisa said, "But what if I don't like it?" And so, we'll have a talk about there are things that we don't like and there are things we do, and it's okay, but this is important for somebody else. So it's a way to promote sensitivity. (Interview 7)

In this explanation, Atkins illuminated an intentional choice to create a classroom experience in which students tapped the diversity among students in the class, stretched the experiences of their classmates, and developed respectful ways to engage each other in trying something new from others' cultures, whether they experienced it positively or not. Ultimately, she identified this activity as a way to "promote sensitivity" – to reinforce the development of skills that children need to understand those different from themselves (the "other") in ways that openly acknowledged difference and diversity.

And yet, this sensitivity and respect went beyond tolerance. She stated, "I don't like the word tolerance at all. I don't think we should tolerate anybody. I think we should be accepting, and so to show you like that [food] and I like that [food] and this [food] is fine... that will be an important piece [of the feast activity]" (Interview 7). To Ms. Atkins, there was a distinction between *tolerance* and *acceptance*. This difference was defined by a passive versus active engagement in responding to others.

Community of learners (7). Atkins worked to create a community in which

differences were not only present but also served as an integral component to its richness. Of difference, she explained:

... each of us are different and have different family traditions, things we like to do, ways we look, maybe something like that to ensure that they understand we are a unit and a community, but we all bring something different to make the community what it is. (Interview 2)

This explanation demonstrated Atkins' belief that the differences children bring from their individual backgrounds created the community itself. Furthermore, the community was defined in part by the differences these individuals bring, not only by individual's similarities. This foundation to her approach to community reinforced an understanding that differences among those in the community were valuable, for it was these differences that were essential to the definition of the community itself. As part of the community's own creation, Atkins approached the community as one defined by those in it, not by external structures of school or society.

Atkins also extended an embracing of community of differences to the world outside. When asked about the intentions for the Bingo game, *Where did it originate?*, Atkins explained that each of the items chosen to include on this game board originated from a country where students in the class had ancestors. She further stated, "So they come from other places where their ancestors were. So the American culture really is a combination of multiple cultures all together" (Interview 8). This intention to include the multiplicity of identities that students' own identities bring to their classroom community further affirmed students' unique differences through highlighting their countries of ancestral origin in a positive, interactive game. This game not only highlighted the

countries from which students' ancestors came, but affirmed their country's contributions to forming parts of U.S. culture with which all students were familiar. By stating that the current culture in which students live was a composite collection of multiple cultural, national contributions, Atkins further reinforced the normalization of a culture made of differences. If, in fact, the culture in which students all lived were itself a culture created by contributions from different countries, and these varying contributions made aspects of the culture itself, then a community of differences was in fact an everyday reality for students. In this way, Atkins extended the community of differences notion from the classroom context to that of students' out-of-school world.

Further evidence of Atkins' embracing of difference became evident in her everyday comments in class discussions. After an opening discussion and sharing of students' own family traditions, Atkins stated, "I love that there are so many traditions in our families. What we did look at when we were talking about all the countries that our families were from was that they were from all different parts of the world" (Lesson observation 3). Rather than highlight similarities, Atkins chose to highlight the different countries mentioned in this discussion. Again, she did so in a positive way, voicing her enthusiasm for learning of these different countries of origin.

Centrality of CRT Presence in Atkins' Vision

Final analysis of Atkins' practice included a total of 110 codes. Table 8 (see next page) illustrates the number of codes and densities. Of these codes, 75 connect to other codes (have densities). Figure 5 (see next page) shows a network view displaying all codes (24) with a density count of seven or more. Of these 24 codes, 22 lie within the CRT constructs, as denoted by the colored bubbles in the network view.

Table 8.

Ms. Atkins' Number of Codes per Code Density Count

Density Count	Number of Codes
0	37
1	14
2	10
3	9
4	8
5	5
6	5
7	6
8	8
9	3
10	2
11	0
12	1
13	1
14	2
15	0
16	1

Table 9 (next page) reports the highest density codes with seven or more connections, the number of codes with the reported density count, the codes represented by these counts and the CRT construct in which the code falls.

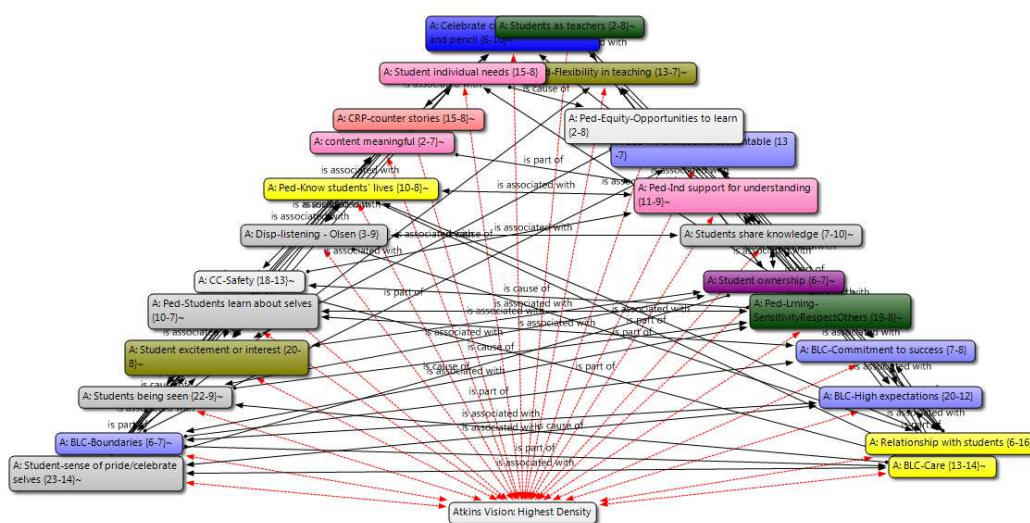


Figure 5. Atkins network view for codes densities.

Table 9.

Density Counts and CRT Constructs within Atkins' Vision

Density	Number of Codes	Code(s)	CRT Construct
16	1	Relationships with students	SR-connectedness
14	2	Student sense of pride/celebrate selves BLC-Care	CSO-mining SR-connectedness
13	1	CC-Safety	n/a
12	1	High expectations	CSO-student success
10	2	Celebrate culture/NOT paper and pencil Students share knowledge	SR-comm. of learners CSO-mining
9	3	Ped-Ind support for understanding Students being seen Disp-listening - Olsen	CK-scaffold CSO-mining CSO-mining
8	8	Student individual needs Students as teachers Ped-Know students' lives Ped-Lrning-SensitivityRespectOthers CRP-counter stories Student excitement or interest Ped-Equity-Opportunities to learn BLC-Commitment to success	CK-scaffold SR-fluid relationships SR-Connectedness SR-Connectedness CK-critical stance CSO-art n/a CSO-student success
7	6	Ped-Students learn about selves Content meaningful Flexibility in teaching Hold students accountable Boundaries Student ownership	CSO-mining CK-scaffold CSO-art CSO-student success CSO-student success SR-learn collaboratively

Conclusion

Analysis of Ms. Atkins' vision and practice reveals nine CRT elements within the three CRT constructs. Within Conceptions of Self and Others, Ms. Atkins' vision includes three elements: her commitment to student success, pedagogy as art, and teaching as mining. These elements were present in her thinking and practice within the vision dimensions of her role, the role of her students and her curriculum. Most notably, the highest number of co-occurrences within her vision related to CRT surfaced within this construct in the form of her commitment to student success as envisioned within her own role (32 co-occurrences).

Ms. Atkins' vision and practice also revealed evidence of CRT's Social Relations construct; specifically, these included connectedness, fluid relationships, learning collaboratively and creating a community of learners. These four elements presented within Ms. Atkins' three vision dimensions: her role in the classroom, the role of her students, and the classroom environment she creates.

Finally, Ms. Atkins' vision and practice include elements of CRT's Conceptions of Knowledge. Two elements within this construct – scaffolding knowledge and taking a critical stance – appeared across three vision dimensions (role of teachers, role of students, curriculum.)

These analyses revealed that within Ms. Atkins' vision dimensions she possesses positive beliefs about diversity and equity, particularly with regard to the ability of students to succeed and her role in contributing to that success. In addition, her own envisioned role, includes a commitment to forming positive relationships with her students and facilitating critical conversations among them, especially with regard to race

and racial identities. Students also play a role in the classroom to participate positively in activities by holding positive views of their experiences as well as the experiences of others, learning from each other and encouraging success. Within the curricular dimension of vision and practice, Ms. Atkins believes that students should see themselves in curricular content. This content should also remain flexible depending on how students engage in or disengage from what is presented. The curriculum also plays a role in providing a critical stance about knowledge. Finally, within her envisioned classroom environment, Ms. Atkins envisions a highly relational atmosphere in which students are responsible for each other's learning and take on a role in teaching each other, as well. Finally, network analysis reveals that these CRT considerations are quite central to Ms. Atkins' vision and practice, as 22 of 24 most dense codes lie within CRT constructs.

Overall, Ms. Atkins inclusion of nine CRT elements across four areas of vision dimension demonstrates Ms. Atkins' asset orientation toward diversity in her classroom. As the CRT analysis reveals, she possesses positive views about diversity and difference. These positive views reinforce positive messages related to racial and cultural identities as well as differences in learning styles in her thinking and practice. Her commitment to understanding students' experiences and characteristics also demonstrates an asset dispositional orientation toward her students. Indeed, her belief that all students can meet high expectations includes attention to the individual needs of her students to inform the types of support necessary to ensure students meet these expectations. As demonstrated in Ms. Atkins' vision and practice, she believes these forms of support are appropriate and equitable even though they differ from student to student based on his particular needs. Furthermore, network analysis revealed that these CRT considerations exist

centrally in her practice. In these ways, a CRT analysis of Ms. Atkins' vision and practice revealed her positive beliefs about diversity and equity, particularly related to supporting student success, developing positive racial and cultural identities, and in creating a curriculum and classroom environment that support these aspects of her teaching.

Chapter Six: Scott Drumm

Overview

In this chapter, I describe the findings revealed through analysis of Mr. Drumm's vision and practice. I first provide the context for this teacher's classroom and focus unit, including the amount of data collected for this study and the context of his classroom (physical set-up and general routines). Next, I describe the unit I focused upon for this study. I then provide a summary of his overall vision, followed by specific findings related to his diversity and equity beliefs with evidence from the data collected.

Data Collection

I collected data for Mr. Drumm over the course of eight consecutive weeks during the spring of 2013. These data included 10 interviews, 10 classroom observations and seven lesson observations specific to the focus unit for this study. Each data collection lasted between 15 and 75 minutes with a total of 5 hours of interviews, 3 hours and 23 minutes of lesson observations and 7 hours and 10 minutes of lesson observations. Overall, I was present two to five times a week over the eight week period as a participant-observer (Merriam, 1998) in his classroom.

Classroom Context

At the time of this study, Mr. Drumm taught Pre-Kindergarten and was developing as a Reggio Emilia-inspired teacher. This approach – developed by Loris Malaguzzi in Reggio Emilia, Italy, during post-World War II – focuses on a child-centered approach to discovery and learning (North American Reggio Emilia Alliance, 2015). This philosophical approach attends to the early years of human development as foundational to human growth. At its core, the Reggio approach assumes that children

hold knowledge themselves and, thus, the role of the teacher is to provide an environment in which they can explore their surroundings, express themselves in different ways (e.g., “a hundred languages”), develop relationships with materials through multiple sensory activities, and co-create learning experiences with the adults (both teachers and parents) in their lives. Thus, Reggio-inspired classrooms include a great deal of student-directed learning activities and themes based on the interests they express.

Mr. Drumm’s room was a mix of children’s school materials, natural objects from the outside world, and projects made by the children. Cubbies and shelves filled one wall and another wall faced the outdoors with windows overlooking part of their field and playground area. The room was organized but not overly structured. There were different play areas and centers around the room: a nature center with a water and sand table that included tree stumps to sit on, branches from the outdoors, leaves and other objects from outside; a construction area with cardboard brick-like boxes and tubs of Legos; a block area with an area rug for building; a light table; a table with a hermit crab tank; a flexible center usually used for art projects; a long table used flexibly for art or other projects; a bathroom for children; a supply closet; and a table with two chairs for Mr. Drumm and his partner teacher. There was also a large rug area in the middle of the room on which children took their afternoon naps and where whole-class meetings, read-alouds or other activities occurred. Over the construction area, there was a large, solid wood loft where children engaged in dramatic play.

There were 20 students in Mr. Drumm’s class: 13 boys and 7 girls. Four students qualified for special education services. Four students were born outside the U.S. Two

children's families identified as Hispanic on school registration forms. All other students were classified as non-Hispanic White.

Unit of Study

Earlier in the year, Mr. Drumm's class witnessed one of their favorite trees on school property being cut down. In response to their concerns about this action, he led his students outside to speak with the workers. During this conversation, they learned that the tree was 117 years old and sick; so they had to cut it down as not to infect surrounding trees. While brainstorming what to do with this situation, he and the class decided that they should create a monument for the tree to celebrate its life and memorialize it.

Consistent with the Reggio Emilia approach, Mr. Drumm did not have a specific outcome or structure for the monument. Instead, they secured a part of the tree's trunk and brought it back to the classroom. He knew that the tree monument project would be a co-constructed design and experience with students, as per his Reggio philosophy. Over the course of the unit, he engaged small groups of children to contribute to the brainstorming and designing process. As Table 10 (see next page) illustrates, each lesson progressed from "What is a monument?" to the eventual design of the tree monument: a mosaic pattern on top of the tree stump with a sign, reading, "We loved this tree."

Mr. Drumm shared that this type of unit was more structured than a "pure" Reggio approach. Since he did work in a public school system with standards for student outcomes, literacy and numeracy development were constantly on his mind. As such, he interwove skills development in these areas in each lesson. Simultaneously, he always attended to children's overall social and academic development.

Table 10.

Mr. Drumm's Tree Monument Unit Outline

Lesson	Content	Description
1	“What is a monument?”	Exploration of books with pictures of monuments; lead to definition of a monument
2	Building tree monument models	Using blocks and materials to model ideas for their tree monument
3	What is a sign? What should our sign say?	Literacy exploration: brainstorming ideas for sign, then writing activity using inventive spelling
4	Designing tree monument mosaic patterns – drawing	Exploring different mosaic pieces, capturing designs in their drawings
5	Designing tree monument patterns – mosaic	Putting mosaic tiles on tree stump
6	Assembling monument	Finalizing tree monument mosaic pattern
7	Closing – celebration of monument	Celebration of final assembled monument and tree sign

Summary of Mr. Drumm's Overall Vision

Mr. Drumm's vision was captured across the five dimensions of vision: classroom environment, role of teachers, role of students, curriculum and societal goals. Overall, his ideal classroom environment included an open room with various areas for student exploration. It was bright and had easy access from inside to outside, allowing children to explore the indoors as much as outdoors and to bring materials in from outside. Dynamic interactions among all individuals existed occurred throughout the day.

Mr. Drumm's vision of his role as a teacher exemplified a researcher and facilitator role, examining children's learning and facilitating ideas. As a researcher, his role was to listen and watch intensely. Consistent with the Reggio philosophy, while doing these observational tasks, his role was both to notice and document what children expressed through words, movement, choice-making, and other forms of "language" expression. He also facilitated and supported the independent self-regulation of their social interactions as well as emotions and communication skills.

Within his vision of his classroom, students played an integral role in the direction and nature of learning. They explored and demonstrated their understandings through the activities in which they choose to engage, how they engaged, and how they disengaged from these opportunities. Ideally, the content of their learning experiences would be completely student-directed and supported by the teacher. Physically, students moved freely about the classroom, and socially they worked together whenever they liked. They also worked independently, depending on their preferences.

Curricula ideally would be completely self-directed, and skills development, while guided by Mr. Drumm, would ideally focus on the process of engaging experiences rather than producing products. From the beginning of one exploration through deeply engaging in that exploration, his vision of curriculum is one of unveiling ideas and explorations. This deep exploration ideally the focused the day's activities rather than determined by Mr. Drumm. He sensed immense tension between this ideal vision and the demands of teaching in a public school system, but he recognized this tension and intentionally chooses to remain in the public schools. Still, he constantly navigated between his desire to attain his ideal curricular vision and his reality.

For his children, Mr. Drumm hoped for them to become confident, independent, individual members of society. He wanted for them to live joyfully with understanding of themselves and each other, able to navigate any challenge set before them. While these goals seemed distant, he knew that the foundation he laid with them during pre-kindergarten directly set a trajectory toward their long-term development. Overall, Mr. Drumm focused on the entire child's development individually and as a member of the larger global community.

Presence of CRT Elements Revealed Through Drumm's Vision

Analysis of Drumm's vision revealed presence of all three culturally relevant teaching constructs: Conceptions of Self and Others, Conception of Knowledge and Social Relations. Within these constructs, four elements emerged in patterned ways: teaching as mining, pedagogy as art, teachers scaffold, creating community of learners and fluid relationships. These elements emerged across four vision dimensions: role of teachers, curriculum, role of students and classroom environment. Table 11 illustrates the relationships among these varying components of the co-occurrence analysis across vision dimensions and CRT elements.

The following sections describe each vision dimension and the CRT elements revealed within. Overall, the groundedness of CRT codes occurred in the following order of vision dimensions by greatest groundedness: role of teachers (71), curriculum (46), role of students (26), and classroom environment (21). Findings that follow are described in order of groundedness by CRT construct. Each element's groundedness is presented in parentheses by its heading.

Role of Teachers

Through his documentation, observation and relationships, Mr. Drumm served as a facilitator of learning experiences in his classroom. Analysis of this vision dimension – role of teachers – revealed the most co-occurring evidence of CRT elements within Mr. Drumm’s vision. Within this dimension, six elements surfaced across all three CRT constructs (Table 11). The following section describes the nature of each CRT element as presented within this vision dimension.

Table 11.

Drumm’s Vision-CRT Co-Occurrence Query Results

n	Vision Dimension	CRT Construct	Element	Co-occurrences
e	Role of Teachers	Conceptions of Self and Others	Pedagogy as art	28
		Social Relations	Teaching as mining	19
		Conception of Knowledge	Fluid relationships	17
			Teachers scaffold/bridge	7
t	Curriculum	Conceptions of Self and Others	Pedagogy as art	18
		Social Relations	Teaching as mining	9
		Conceptions of Knowledge	Fluid relationships	12
			Teachers scaffold	7
n	Role of Students	Conceptions of Self and Others	Pedagogy as art	15
		Classroom Environment	Teaching as mining	11
			Critical stance	4
o	Classroom Environment	Conceptions of Knowledge	Teachers scaffold	5
			Conceptions of Self and Others	Pedagogy as art
f		Social Relations	Fluid relationships	4

Conceptions of self and others. Mr. Drumm's vision and practice revealed the most consideration of his role in the teaching-learning process as a flexible art form that functioned in order to mine students' individual experiences and understandings.

Pedagogy as art (28). Throughout the Tree Monument unit, Drumm consistently engaged in the teaching-learning process (both in planning and in practice) as an ever-changing art form that was unpredictable. Overall, this aspect of his vision and practice presented the highest groundedness (28). In his role as facilitator, he approached each day's activities with both intentionality and flexibility. While possessed an intention for the direction of a project, he also recognized that the process of engaging in the project would be determined in partnership with students. He explained this process:

What I'm doing is reviewing the project, where it began. I think I spoke to you somewhat about how the project began. I'm not sure where it's going to lead. We thought we had a design, but we've since redesigned, and we may redesign and redesign and redesign again.... But again, I think I have a vision of where I want to go, but it might not be where they want to go. Often I think sometimes I'm guiding, but maybe it's not where they want to go. (Interview 2)

Drumm attended to both the intended direction of a lesson or unit that he believed the learning should take, but also remained open to redirecting this trajectory as he engaged in the teaching-learning process with his students. He demonstrated flexibility in both the content of these learning experiences as well as the pace of instruction.

When reflecting upon his teaching, Mr. Drumm maintained flexibility in his pace of instruction as guided by his students. He explained:

If you ask me right now where this is going, I have a lot of questions. We could hurry this and finish it in a month or next week. We could keep this going forever. In my head, I would like to see this, maybe, wrapped up sometime by the end of March, sooner, maybe later and have it out by April, but I don't know. We'll see. And, again, I want it wrapped up because I want to finish our boards. I want it to look nice. I want to show it to parents. I want to celebrate with them. But as I go back and as I read the leaders in Reggio Emilia, it's not about the finished product. It's the process, how we're getting there. (Interview 3)

In this manner, he openly voiced the tension he experienced between his desire to complete a unit and the pedagogical commitment he held to embrace the student-led pace of instruction. This intentional commitment to remaining flexible aligned with CRT's pedagogy as art rather than approaching teaching as a scripted, robotic task. In his role, he listened as a researcher and interpreter of students' actions. He also acted as a facilitator to support the direction that students wanted to take based on his research. This listening stance emerged both through his continued reference to "we" (he and his students) throughout the unit as well as through his voiced recognition that he did not want to determine the trajectory of the learning process on his own without student input.

Teaching as mining (19). Consistent with the Reggio approach, Mr. Drumm's stance as a teacher was positioned from the perspective of a researcher; this perspective allowed him to listen deeply to what children brought to the classroom and to how they engaged in learning activities. Of this researcher stance he stated:

I began to see myself as a researcher, which I loved because I always thought people like you who got PhDs were the researchers. But it just turned my whole

practice around, and I saw it more as, “This is great.” (Interview 1)

Table 12.

Organization of CRT and Open Codes for Mr. Drumm

CRT Construct	CRT Element	Codes
Conception of Self and Others	Teaching as mining	Children express in more than one way Disposition – listening Funds of knowledge Using student data Teacher as listener Student engagement
	Pedagogy as art	Teacher growth mindset “I’m not the expert” “I’ve evolved” Teacher self-reflective Openness to direction of instruction Student choice “But I fall daily” Learning as process not product Quality not quantity Student excitement or interest
Conception of Knowledge	Teachers scaffold/bridge	Connections Performance levels Opportunities to learn
	Critical stance	Gender equity
Social Relations	Fluid relationships	Student-initiated interest in project Teacher not as leader Teacher observer

Repeatedly, Mr. Drumm discussed ways in which he continually tried to listen to his students and understand what they presented about their current understanding and ideas.

Upon reflection, he talked about the comments children made during the lesson that

signaled to him their interest and level of understanding.

Analysis of Mr. Drumm's vision and practice also revealed that his rigorous attention to documenting children's words and actions align with Freirian (1960) mining. He documented students' "languages" – the ways in which they demonstrated their understandings of the world and the ways in which they engaged in and responded to the surrounding environment and explorations. This documentation served as evidence of students' thinking. He believed it was his responsibility to capture such documentation and analyze it to make sense of what students knew and what prior knowledge they brought to the learning environment. He captured the ways that children expressed themselves in handwritten transcriptions of student comments, pictures of their engagement, pictures of their work, and audio and video recordings of activities. He deeply reflected upon these multiple types of data, cross-referencing them to ensure that he accurately analyzed what children knew, what connections they made, and how they interpreted new discoveries. "You just, you keep digging. And searching. And moving. And finding. And making headway, or just backing up" (Interview 8). These analyses occurred daily, and Mr. Drumm spent hours each night trying to understand the data he captured across each day's activities. This information and analysis then guided his structure for the next day's activities.

Mr. Drumm's mining revealed itself through his interactions and work with one particular student, Pedro who came to his class with no prior schooling experience and with limited English. In prior years, Pedro stayed at home with his mother who spoke Italian. During one lesson, Drumm invited children to create monuments using small blocks of various shapes and sizes. In this activity, Pedro and his partner created a

structure with similarly shaped blocks surrounding the monument in a circular fashion. When Mr. Drumm asked the pair to talk about what they created, Pedro said, “These are guardians. Egyptian guardians.”

Upon reflection, Mr. Drumm thought about this moment, trying his best to understand what it was Pedro tried to communicate. He explained:

And I think the one who wowed me the most with words was Pedro. Guardian – Egyptian guardians being statues – and as I’m going through this many times [in my head] as “protection.” He still goes back to volcanoes and other kinds of things that it’s gonna take probably me, because I’m slow and I can’t get inside his head, to understand what it is that he’s trying to tell me. (Interview 3)

Rather than dismiss Pedro’s comment as a tangential, unrelated idea, Mr. Drumm delves into understanding its meaning. In effect, Drumm tried to deeply understand what Pedro knew to guide his next steps in instruction; he was “pulling out” or “mining” Pedro’s knowledge.

Social relations. Mr. Drumm existed in his classroom as the figure of authority by default, not by choice. Analysis of his vision and practice role revealed his intentional efforts to establish reciprocal, equitable relationships with students. In addition, he hoped to create a community in which all children collectively engaged in learning as a community.

Fluid relationships (17). Drumm’s vision and practice revealed his attention to creating equitable relationships with students. As a facilitator of learning – not simply an expert knowledge transmitter – Drumm positioned himself and those in his classroom as co-constructors of learning experiences. Students determined the direction in activities,

and Mr. Drumm often valued this input above his own desires for the direction of instruction. When describing his practice, he reflected upon the ways in which he first observed, then built off what children did and said. He wondered, “How do we help that work to go forward when they get stuck? But not be the leader, so to speak?” (Interview 1). This vision recognizes all children as valuable assets to the learning community both in what they bring to the classroom through their prior knowledge and experiences as well as the power they have to influence the direction and pace of instruction. This stance is an equitable rather than hierarchical one.

Mr. Drumm also took direction from students to initiate new projects in the classroom. He described the precipitating event that sparked the tree monument unit. He explained how the children heard a buzz saw outside their window and how they saw workers begin cutting the tree:

[They told me,] “That’s a tree we used to play with, Mr. Drumm, what can we do?” And “The tree is falling. How can we make them stop?” Before I would have probably said, “We can’t. It’s just happening.” Well, this time we put on our coats, and we marched outside down [the hill], and I was trembling in my boots, because I’m not so aggressive. And I said, once we got down there, “What should we do?” And they said, “Well, go talk to the man.” And I said, “What man?” So I went to the arborist and, trembling, said, “I have 20 four-year-olds who are quite upset at what’s happening here....” (Interview 1)

In this scenario, Mr. Drumm looked to his children for direction, and in doing so, he considered their suggestions seriously. Even though he was not an aggressive person himself, he valued the voices of his students to the extent that he channeled confidence

and power from listening to their requests. Such attentive listening and respect signal a relationship between him and his students in which voices and concerns were valued equally.

Conceptions of knowledge. Mr. Drumm's vision revealed evidence of his commitment to connecting students' understandings to learning. This conception of knowledge aligned with CRT's element, teachers must scaffold.

Teachers must scaffold (7). By nature of his approach to researching students' knowledge and understandings, Mr. Drumm's vision and practice included a commitment to scaffolding these understandings to in-class experiences. He referred to this scaffolding approach as supporting students in "telling their stories". "It's all about telling your story," he explained, "And so as long as everyone has a chance to be introduced to [an activity or material] then it becomes out there" (Interview 2). By approaching instruction from the standpoint of students telling their stories, he saw his role as honoring and drawing upon what students knew as a foundation to creating their learning experiences. His role, then, was to introduce them to new materials through which they could communicate these stories.

When thinking about learning explorations, Mr. Drumm considered students' experiences and current understandings to connect them to the learning experiences he structured in the classroom. His considerations spanned both how he solicited understanding as well as how he structured experiences and assessments of this understanding. He explained:

Everything is either small group or individualized, because they're all at different levels. And personally, at this age, four years, it doesn't matter to me a whole lot

if they're reading or writing.... We should be helping them with self-regulating, working in small groups, beginning to learn to sit in a circle, to get ready for a more rigid, maybe, or longer periods of time in doing that. (Interview 1)

In this reflection, Mr. Drumm recognized the individual needs and developmental levels in his classroom, highlighting his intention to develop skills for fostering independence rather than strictly traditional academic ones.

Curriculum

Within the vision dimension of Curriculum, five CRT elements emerged across all three CRT constructs. These elements included pedagogy as art (18), teaching as mining (9), fluid relationships (12) and teachers scaffold (7).

Conceptions of self and others. Within Drumm's vision of curriculum, two elements of this CRT construct emerged in patterned ways: pedagogy as art and teaching as mining.

Pedagogy as art (18). Mr. Drumm's vision revealed evidence that curriculum is not prescriptive; it is fluid and changeable depending on how children engage daily. He saw their knowledge and engagement as foundational to structuring both the type of activities as well as their content.

During one session during which students created mosaic patterns for the tree monument, a child held up a tile and stating, "Look! A dinosaur!" Mr. Drumm responded, "Oh, dinosaur. The tree's really old and dinosaurs are really old. Maybe you could talk – maybe you could be a dinosaur tree." When asked about this interaction in a post-lesson conversation, he stated:

So I'm always kind of looking to where the next level can be, and the dinosaur – what are they meaning? Are they meaning is it old or are they meaning – are they making a connection with prehistoric? Do they know that dinosaurs lived way back when? What is their thinking about dinosaurs?That could be a stepping stone or that could be a shoot off into a whole new study like you and I are talking about it, as I listen to the audio, let them listen to the audio. We go back. We revisit it. What connection will we make with the tree, with this tree and dinosaurs, could be an interesting study. Where that goes I don't know.

(Interview 7)

This response explained how Mr. Drumm's practice responded to students as they engaged in classroom activities. In his role as researcher-facilitator, he supported children in extending their own explorations even when the trajectory of these explorations was unknown.

This explanation also demonstrated his thoughtfulness and attentiveness to reviewing the student comments he captured through notes and recordings. By listening to the substance of their statements, Mr. Drumm embraced and built off them in order to devise a plan to further extend this new connection during the next class. He also explained how he brought students into this process by having them listen to the comments, as well, therefore co-constructing the direction of the unit based on students' comments. In this manner, his curriculum worked dynamically and in concert with students' learning; it was not something set in stone.

Teaching as mining (9). As much as possible, the topics covered in Drumm's curriculum stemmed from students themselves. In this way, his curriculum mined their

knowledge and experiences. He explained that the Tree Monument project was an outcome of students' expressed interest. After their encounter with the arborist and the workers cutting down the tree, Mr. Drumm explained how he mined that experience as a springboard for exploration:

.... [I can] take that experience that they felt very passionate about, and bringing that in and letting that just be a mammoth learning experience, where I can take social, emotional, academic – and just have it all right there going on. (Interview 1)

In this explanation, Mr. Drumm demonstrates how the interest and passion children expressed (unexpectedly) during school led him to explore further the topic they identified. This interest then led to the Tree Monument project that ensued that spring. In this way, the interests that his students held served as the basis for determining the curricular content. That is, the topic for this unit was mined rather than predetermined or imposed by the teacher or other external sources.

Social relations. Mr. Drumm's curricular vision and practice revealed reliance upon the relational components of his classroom to teach successfully. In addition to determining the content of their work, relationships in his class served a foundational purpose to all learning. These relationships between teacher-student as well as student-student, revealed one element of CRT within his vision of curriculum: fluid relationships (12).

Fluid relationships (12). Analysis of Mr. Drumm's vision of curriculum revealed his commitment to fluid relationships through the way he engaged children in the direction of instruction. This engagement was reciprocal in nature. Even though he

planned the day's activities for this unit, he remained open and flexible to the ideas and proposed direction offered by his students. In one interview, he shared his reflection about the direction of the tree monument unit itself:

And all along in my head what I envisioned was this being more decorative, more kind of beautiful. Instead of looking at this and seeing a tree, part of a tree trunk or a tree limb, something with beads or tile or - I don't know. That was kind of my vision. But in speaking with the children.... it seems like my vision is not what their vision has been. And so they kind of trumped me in that, what's wrong with the tree just the way it is in its natural beauty? Let's just put it there, and let's not worry about grinding it down or sanding it down and putting glue on it, which could be picked off or fallen off. (Interview 3)

Even while he engaged in the tree monument unit in a flexible manner, Mr. Drumm realized that he maintained an assumption that the tree monument would be more complex than what his students envisioned. Upon realizing this difference, he listened to his students and considered their suggestions about the type of monument they should create. By considering their suggestions, he demonstrated a commitment to giving students power in determining curricular content even when it stood in contrast to his own vision.

Conceptions of knowledge. One particular element was revealed through Mr. Drumm's vision and practice with regard to curriculum and conceptions of knowledge – the role of curriculum in scaffolding learning experiences.

Teachers scaffold (7). Mr. Drumm demonstrated a commitment to scaffolding curriculum to meet the needs of his students and to connect them individually to whatever

task they engaged in. In his practice, this scaffolding became apparent across his lessons. In one particular lesson, he sat with a group of four students to talk about the tree monument sign. After brainstorming their ideas about what the sign should say, he realized that students in this particular small group had difficulty understanding the concept of a sign. He immediately changed his instruction to meet this need.

“What is a sign?” he asked. “Show me a sign in our classroom. What does it mean?” (Lesson Observation 3). In response, children pointed to different signs in the classroom and explained what they directed students to do. Once he assessed each child’s level of understanding for this concept, they brainstormed words for a sign as a group. Then each child drafted a tree sign individually. “Write what you hear,” he told students as they began to design their signs with hearts and words such as, “I loved you,” and “Hugs.” Mr. Drumm worked with each student as she worked through this project. As he did, he provided individual support and feedback based on demonstrated levels of phonemic understanding in their signs. During this lesson, both his willingness to adjust his initial instructional objective and his willingness to work individually with each student demonstrated his commitment to scaffolding instruction.

Role of Students

Within the vision dimension Role of Students CRT analysis revealed evidence of four CRT elements: Conceptions of Self and Others – teaching as mining (11) and pedagogy as art (15); and Social Relations – fluid relationships (11) and community of learners (7).

Conceptions of self and others. Two elements within this CRT construct – teaching and mining and pedagogy as art – emerged in patterned ways.

Pedagogy as art (15). Students in Mr. Drumm’s classroom contributed to the artistic components of teaching; that is, they played an active role in dynamic instruction. For him, his vision of students’ role revealed his hope that students develop curricular content in an iterative fashion with him.

Students influenced the curricular content in Mr. Drumm’s classroom. When describing a sign activity or the tree monument, he shared his thinking as he planned this activity. He talked about his desire to provide them the opportunity to design the monument on the first day that he hoped to provide students an opportunity to explore mosaic tiles to place upon the tree stump:

So just looking at what it could look like. So I’m going to let them – I’m going to give them some of these ceramic tiles, mosaic tiles, and let them come up with a pattern and let them draw the pattern. I’m not going to tell them – we’ll just see what they do. And then my goal is to let them – several groups – move up to what we think the tree monument is going to look like. (Interview 5)

Mr. Drumm’s intention here was to allow students opportunities to determine the design of the tree monument. His vision demonstrated a commitment to co-creating this monument with them, ensuring that he worked with them as facilitators of learning, as well. In this way, he envisions and supports their role as participants in the artistic process of curricular explorations.

Teaching as mining (11). Drumm’s vision also revealed his belief about students’ own role in mining their interests to further guide instruction. Students played an active and engaged role in the process of learning and bringing their own interests into the classroom. This process was in partnership with the teacher, whose role was to provide

the space, time and structure for these student-led opportunities while students engaged in their own learning. This dynamic relationship between teacher and student roles is iterative in nature as Mr. Drumm created opportunities, allows for student exploration. Meanwhile, he observed and listened intently to understand what students expressed. This listening – “researching” – then guided his interactions with students as well as his thinking about structure for the next opportunity for engagement.

Classroom Environment

Mr. Drumm’s vision revealed a strongly student-directed classroom environment both in its organization and culture. In his vision he described a colorful room with multiple activities going on simultaneously. In the most ideal world, this environment would be one in which “They’re kind of all just moving about, just working, playing” (Interview 8). Within this vision dimension, four elements emerged in patterned ways: CK-critical stance, CK-teachers scaffold, CSO-teaching as art and SR-fluid relationships.

Conceptions of knowledge. Analysis of Mr. Drumm’s classroom environment revealed four quotations that encompassed evidence of CRT’s critical stance toward knowledge construction.

Critical stance (4). Lesson and class observations revealed Mr. Drumm’s critical stance toward societal messages regarding gender norms. He enacted a critical lens toward gender equity throughout his classroom. This commitment to gender equity emerged through observations of practice as I lived in his classroom over the course of his tree monument unit. It became apparent slowly, first as isolated comments by individual students, then more apparent as a part of the fabric of his classroom

environment. This was an unexpected discovery that presented throughout his daily interactions.

Individual comments began during lesson observations and morning meetings. At multiple moments, students left their activities and sought Mr. Drumm's attention to let him know that something in their activity was pink. "Look, Mr. Drumm! Pink! Your favorite color!" students would state, then promptly return to their activities. During the tree monument unit specifically, I noticed children voicing these observations when they explored mosaic tile patterns during the fifth lesson. At one point, he circled to the tree monument group. Alexander remarked, "This one is pink!" Drumm responded, "That's right. My favorite color."

When asked about these comments, Mr. Drumm exposed an underlying and foundational belief about his role in the classroom. He made intentional choices to counter social gendered norms related to colors. He explained:

So that's my mission – not my mission, but that's – pink is not my favorite color, but I always – the kids say, "Mr. Drumm, your favorite color is pink," because boys can love pink. Boys and girls can explore whatever they want to explore.... And that's – I mean, we have recently, last week, a dietician came in to do a program with the kids, and she had little – she said blue are for the boys, little blue people, and the pink are for the girls. And I said, "But one of my favorite colors is pink." But I want guys in drama. I want girls in blocks. I want everyone to know the sky is.... It's just – you can do whatever you want to do. It's yours.

(Interview 6)

Through this message, he created the cultural norm in his classroom to critically counteract widely accepted and legitimated norms associated with color and gender. In this way, he positioned himself as a cultural norm-setter who critically examined the manner in which knowledge was constructed around gender and subsequent student possibilities. He connected these color associations with barriers to children's imagined possibilities along gendered lines. His comments imply that through countering this gendered norm, the possibilities for students to explore activities and, therefore, develop into anything they want were infinite. Thus, in this way, Drumm's classroom serves as a liberating space for children to explore their own developmental possibilities without oppressive norms along gender lines.

His orientation toward breaking down these gender-specific color associations along also extends to those who visit his classroom. Mr. Drumm explained that during a visit by a dietician, he countered these gender norms when they arose:

Last week a dietician came in to do a program with the kids, and she had little people [figures]. She said blue are for the boys, little blue people, and the pink are for the girls. And I said, "But one of my favorite colors is pink." I want guys in drama, I want girls in blocks. I want everyone to know the sky is – It's just – you can do whatever you want to do. It's yours. (Interview 6)

His comment models how he took a critical stance to counter gendered color norms when the opportunity presented itself in his classroom. In doing so, he demonstrated created a classroom environment that aligns with his vision to provide children more opportunities to explore their own identities whether they were male or female.

Conceptions of self and others. Mr. Drumm's classroom environment

incorporated cultural elements that support pedagogy as art (8).

Teaching as art (8). The highly self-directed structure of Mr. Drumm’s classroom allowed students to work flexibly to determine what type of learning activity they wanted to experience as well as the nature of that experience. Student choice drove the majority of learning experiences as students were empowered to choose their center for learning that day. In his vision, Drumm reveals his ideal structure:

You know, if people weren’t in here, Laura, I would be letting kids play, I would be sitting back. I’d be observing. I’d be making notes, and hopefully take those notes and look at them for next steps. (Interview 6)

This ideal vision of his classroom presented an environment in which children entirely self-directed their learning and allowed exploration based upon their interests. The student-directed nature of this aspect of his vision presented a classroom structure that intentionally supported students’ own connections to content. In this manner, his structure intentionally relied upon students’ experiences.

Social Relations. The structure and culture of Mr. Drumm’s classroom environment also revealed evidence of his focus on maintaining fluid relationships regardless of the learning activity in which children were involved.

Fluid relationships (4). Within Mr. Drumm’s vision of classroom environment created conditions that supported reciprocal teaching and learning roles. As students worked in their centers, they did so collaboratively as experts, learners, co-creators, and observers themselves. He described what visitors would see around his ideal classroom. “You’ll see areas around the room where students are just working” (Interview 2).

Indeed, with each visit, students engaged in various projects at the different centers around the classroom. As they entered the class in the morning, they chose their initial activity by moving their name on a clip to the name of a particular center on a board. They then began to “work” at the center. During this study, students chose to participate in the project for that day. Mr. Drumm allowed for this choice to be theirs. In this manner, he structured his classroom to empower students in their choice making.

Centrality of CRT Presence in Drumm’s Vision

Final analysis of Drumm’s vision and practice included a total of 81 codes. Table 13 illustrates the number of all codes and associated densities. Among all codes within Mr. Drumm’s vision and practice, 51 connect to other codes (have densities). Figure 6 shows a network view displaying codes with a density count of five or more. Of these 13 codes, nine lie within the CRT constructs, as denoted by the colored bubbles in the network view. This level of connection suggests that Mr. Drumm’s consideration of these aspects of vision and practice possess a central rather than peripheral purpose. Table 14 (see next page) illustrates the relationship between open codes, CRT constructs and codes

^w Table 13.

ⁱ *Density and Number of Codes within Drumm’s Vision*

^t	Density	Number of Codes
h	0	29
	1	12
	2	11
	3	5
d	4	9
	6	1
e	7	2
	8	3
n	9	1
	10	1
	11	3
	12	0
	13	1
	24	1

sities of 6 or more. As noted in this table, these most dense codes include those that align with four CRT elements: fluid relationships, pedagogy as art, teaching as mining and community of learners. Thus, these equity considerations serve a more central than peripheral purpose within his vision.

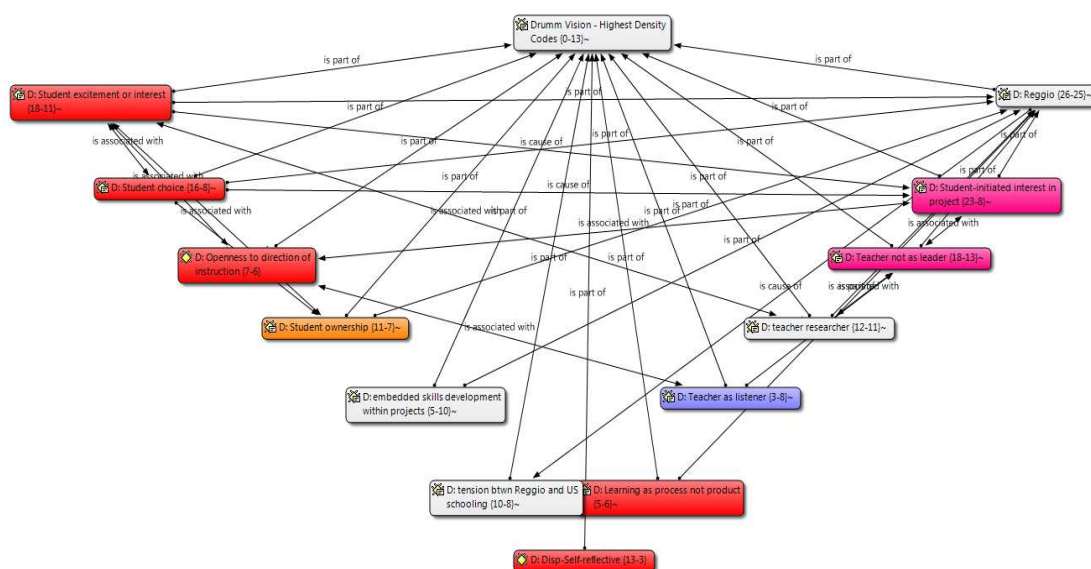


Figure 6. Drumm network part view for highest density codes.

Table 14.

Density Counts and CRT Constructs within Drumm’s Vision

Density	Number of Codes	Code(s)	CRT Construct and Element
24	1	Reggio	n/a
13	1	Teacher not as leader	SR-fluid relationships
11	3	Disp: self-reflective Student excitement/interest Teacher researcher	CSO-pedagogy as art CSO-pedagogy as art n/a
10	1	Embedded skills dev.	n/a
9	1	Student choice	CSO-pedagogy as art
8	3	Teacher as listener Tension Reggio/US	CSO-teaching as mining n/a

		schooling Student-initiated interest	CSO-pedagogy as art
7	2	Openness to instruction Student ownership	CSO-pedagogy as art SR-community of learners
6	1	Learning process not product	CSO-pedagogy as art

Tensions

Mr. Drumm's vision also revealed a tension between the district mandated curricular goals and his own belief that curricula should be determined by students. He explains:

And you will often see me – we have this program called Gold, and you heard me speak about that, where the district says that at this stage in a four-year-old's life, three-year-old going to four, four going to five, there are these colored bands, and this is where the average child should be. This is what we see. Well, I need to plug in those – there are like 90. They're objectives and dimensions – I need to assess those. And as I assess those, I need to tag along with that assessment some data typed in there that says, "I observed this on this date at this time." I am in the United States of America, and our system is different [from Italy's]. There is definitely a tension. And when those coaches ask what is difficult for you to implement, I'd probably rather not have to do Gold. Yet, I think when we love Reggio, we need to be careful to have a balance. I think that Reggio is amazing. It's an amazing way for all age groups to learn. But I'm not in Italy. I'm in the [city] in an urban school setting that pays my salary, and I choose to stay here. If I'm so unhappy, I should leave. So I need to merge the two. (Interview 1)

In this reflection Drumm recognized the tension between the district-mandated structures

that required him to assess his students' learning and his own ideal vision of how learning should occur. Simultaneously, he also recognized the reality as a teacher who chose to teach at Groundspring. This felt tension illuminated one barrier – school system mandates – that he experienced, preventing him from fully realizing his vision to support student-driven explorations in ways that mine students' interests.

Conclusion

Mr. Drumm's vision and practice revealed evidence of his commitment to five elements of CRT practice across all constructs. These five elements occurred over four vision dimensions: role of teachers, role of students, curriculum and classroom environment. Within Conceptions of Self and Others, his vision and practice revealed two elements: pedagogy as art and teaching as mining. These elements were present within his vision of his role, his students' roles, curriculum and his classroom environment. Within Social Relations, Mr. Drumm's role, curriculum and classroom environment revealed evidence of his commitment to CRT's fluid relationships. Finally, within the construct of Conceptions of Knowledge, his vision and practice revealed his commitment to two CRT elements: teachers must scaffold and critical stance. These elements appeared within his role of teachers, curriculum and classroom environment vision dimensions.

Overall, this analysis surfaces Mr. Drumm's pedagogical approach as highly flexible and responsive to students, as evidenced in the highest co-occurrences within his vision with CRT's pedagogy as art element (69 out of 164 vision/CRT co-occurrences.) Analysis also revealed his vision and practice are highly relational; he focuses on developing relationships with children to inform the direction and content of instruction

in order to co-create learning experiences with them. In particular, his vision included a focus on creating equitable relationships in his role with students as they, too, facilitated learning explorations. All the while, he took a particular critical stance toward gender equity in his classroom. Finally, network analysis revealed 9 of 13 most dense codes in Mr. Drumm's vision aligned with CRT codes; therefore, Mr. Drumm's vision and practice considered these CRT elements more centrally than peripherally.

The analysis of Mr. Drumm's vision and practice using a CRT lens revealed his positive orientation toward diversity when diversity manifested as children's differences in individual experiences, interests and areas of enthusiasm. In doing so, he approached his teaching thinking about individual ways of understanding, learning and growing. He possessed a positive attitude toward meeting these individual differences in ways that supported children equitably through tailoring learning experiences and activities based on their interests and readiness levels. In fact, he believed it was his responsibility to do so.

In addition, Mr. Drumm's vision and practice demonstrated an intentionality regarding gender equity. Specifically, he worked to counter oppressive cultural norms that typify and define masculine and feminine identities. Furthermore, a network analysis revealed that his CRT considerations existed more centrally than peripherally in his vision and practice, as evidenced by the number of codes (9 out of 13) that possessed high densities within his vision and CRT analysis. Thus, the CRT analysis of Mr. Drumm's vision dimensions and practice revealed his positive beliefs about diversity and equity, particularly related to individual's different interests and in creating curricula and

a classroom environment in which he mined these differences and ensured for gender equity in the process.

Chapter Seven: Brenda Perkins

Overview

This chapter outlines the findings for Brenda Perkins' vision as well as the presence of CRT elements within dimensions of her vision. I first summarize data collection activities. I then provide Ms. Perkins' classroom context, including the physical layout of her room and a description of the focus unit for this study. Following that summary, I present Perkins' overall vision and specific findings related to CRT and her diversity and equity considerations.

Data Collection

Data were collected over an eight-week period during the spring of 2013. Data for this study included four lesson observations and seven individual interviews. Lesson observations all occurred for one class period (30 minutes each). Interviews ranged from 15 to 45 minutes in length for a total of four hours of interviews. No other classroom observations were collected, as Ms. Perkins had no homeroom class. I was present in the classroom each week to observe the lesson for one particular fourth grade class and spoke with Ms. Perkins before and/or after the lesson, depending on our availability. While the unit occurred over eight weeks, I was only able to observe six lessons. Two lesson observations were lost when my laptop computer was stolen. Consequently, this analysis

includes only four lesson observations. The school's spring break occurred during data collection for this teacher, leaving a gap of one week for data collection.

Classroom Context

Ms. Perkins' classroom was filled with art projects, materials, and shelves of student work. Large windows lined one side of her classroom, making the space bright and cheerful. On the opposite wall, a whiteboard hung with selected paintings and other work relevant to the particular lesson she was teaching. The classroom was organized into workspaces and storage spaces for materials and artwork. A rolling flipchart easel also sat near the front wall. Eight rectangular tables with chairs were arranged in the center of the room, usually in pairs, allowing for small groups of up to four students to work at a time. Depending on the lesson, these tables would be covered with butcher paper for clay work or painting. Two doors opened from the hallway into the classroom. Children entered through one door and lined up to exit the other at the end of each class.

For the fourth grade art classes, students at Groundspring ES were grouped based on their academic performance in reading or math. This grouping resulted in uneven types of classes in art in terms of student behavior. According to Ms. Perkins, the group I observed for this unit was her most challenging group in terms of behavior and work production. In this class, students did not readily engage in discussions nor did they work for extended periods of time on the tasks she assigned. It was her first of four fourth grade art classes for the day each week. The class met once a week for the entire year. In the section I observed, there were eight students – four girls and four boys. They often sat at tables of two or four students, depending on the activity for the day.

Each class was structured in the same way. They began with a short meeting in which Ms. Perkins checked in on students and explained the plan for the class period. Students then engaged in work for the majority of the thirty-minute class. If time permitted, the class concluded with a short meeting, as well, debriefing the work session. This debriefing meeting addressed student behavior (positive or negative) during the class as well as students' thinking about the topic or material they explored that day.

Unit of Study

Ms. Perkins developed a new unit to focus on for this study based on a unit she taught the previous year. In its prior incarnation, the unit focused on narrative artwork related to the Civil Rights Movement. While she felt students' final projects were well executed before, this year she wanted to ensure that students completed the unit with a deeper understanding of diversity. As such, this year she planned for the unit to highlight diversity of materials and diversity in artists' stories. Her goals for this unit were for students to: (a) explore different materials, (b) take risks with new materials, and (c) make intentional choices about the materials they used in order to visually represent and share a personal experience.

During a recent class for her graduate school coursework she learned about Understanding by Design (UbD; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), a framework for unit and lesson planning. As a result, she wanted to redesign this unit using this new approach with a focus on the diverse stories represented by students in her class. In doing so, she developed an essential question for the unit: What intentional choices to artists make to express themselves about their experiences? The unit began with a discussion about diversity. She then shared artwork with students that represented a range of artistic

experiences and mediums. Students then explored paint, clay, collage and diorama then identified a personal experience to represent in their final projects. They then made choices about materials to use in order to best communicate this experience in visual form. The unit culminated in a gallery exhibit and peer critique of their work. Table 15 outlines the unit's sequence of lessons and activities.

Table 15.

Ms. Perkins' Diversity Unit Outline

Lesson	Topic	Content/Activities
1	What is diversity?	Discussion, open question
2	See, Think, Wonder	Respond to artwork Brainstorm experiences
3	Exploring materials	Explore paint, clay, collage, diorama
4	Work session	Work on final project
5	Work session	Work on final project
6	Work session	Work on final project
7	Presentation	Exhibit, gallery walk, feedback and critique session

Summary of Ms. Perkins' Overall Vision

Ms. Perkins' vision was evolving as she learned new approaches to art education through her master's program. She saw her role as facilitating a process by which students explored materials and personal stories. Her students' role was to bring their experiences and a willingness to explore to the classroom. In terms of her classroom environment, Ms. Perkins envisioned an organized space with "good space and lighting"

(Lesson Plan, March 2013). Her curriculum ideally allowed for students to explore materials and create a personal connection to the work they create. She saw a direct connection between art and society, as art is a reflection of contemporary culture. She hoped that students would develop a visual vocabulary to deconstruct culture as well as develop positive cultural spaces.

Ms. Perkins' vision was heavily influenced by Olivia Gude's (2007) *Principles of Possibility*, which she shared during our first meeting. As a self-proclaimed visual (rather than verbal) communicator, Ms. Perkins shared this document to help me understand her practice. The follow summary explains Gude's principles.

Gude's (2007) framework for art education includes nine principles: personal play, exploration, "others" points of view, attentive living, deconstructing art and culture, and reconstructing social spaces. Gude writes, "The essential contribution that arts education can make to our students and to our communities is to teach skills and concepts while creating opportunities to investigate and represent one's own experiences – generating personal and shared meaning. Quality arts curriculum is thus rooted in belief in the transformative power of art and critical inquiry" (Gude, 2007, p. 6). First, art begins with *personal play*; that is, not with the intent of mastering media or problem solving. Rather, this process should begin with a creative exploration of materials, an exploration that is deeply personal in nature. Next, art must provide students with opportunities to *explore their personal development*. Gude writes, "Quality projects aid students in exploring how one's sense of self is constructed within complex family, social and media experiences.... Through a repertoire of projects in which students use diverse styles of representation and various symbol systems to explore various aspects of

experience, students become aware of the self as shaped in multiple discourses, giving students more choices about consciously shaping self” (p. 7). According to Gude, art should also provide opportunities for students to *investigate community themes*. Drawing from the work of Freire (1970) teachers should structure curricula to allow students engagement in exploring authentic life issues and call attention to these issues through visual language. Another principle of art education is that art should demonstrate the *points of view of “others”* in nuanced and individual ways rather than stereotypical representations of cultural groups. Gude writes, “Do represent “others” for your students as dynamic individuals and groups who are changing and evolving in contemporary times. Explore complexities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and class (p. 10).” Through *attentive living*, students are able to draw connections between everyday life and artistic aesthetic and design. Understanding theories behind design, aesthetic and culture can provide students a critical eye to interpret their contemporary world, in effect encouraging them to consider the interrelated connections between art and culture today. Such considerations can explore discourses of design and consumerism and other themes that relate to students’ everyday lives. In addition to these principles that focus curricula on *deconstructing art and culture*, Gude’s Principles of Possibility include a focus on *reconstructing social spaces* in which “caring, courageous communities can emerge (p. 13).”

Ms. Perkins attempted to keep these principles of possibility constantly present in her thinking and practice. To do so, she included these principles on each document she created as well as taped them to her computer screen.

Presence of CRT Elements Revealed through Vision

Analysis of Ms. Perkins' vision revealed presence of CRT elements within two constructs: Conceptions of Self and Others and Conceptions of Knowledge. Within these two constructs, evidence of diversity- and equity-related thinking surfaced through how she scaffolded learning experiences, engaged in pedagogy as art, mined students' experiences and committed to student success. Co-occurrence queries of Ms. Perkins' vision and CRT codes yielded evidence of CRT considerations across two vision dimensions (groundedness in parentheses): role of teachers (31) and curriculum (30). Table 16 presents the groundedness of each element within each vision dimension, and Table 17 illustrates the individual open codes assigned to each CRT element for Ms. Perkins' analysis.

Table 16

Perkins' Vision-CRT Co-Occurrence Query Results

Vision	CRT Construct	CRT Element	Number of Co-occurrences
Curriculum	Conceptions of self and others	Teaching as mining	14
		Pedagogy as art	6
	Conceptions of knowledge	Scaffold	6
Role of teachers	Conceptions of self and others	Student success	12
		Pedagogy as art	8
		Teaching as mining	5
	Conceptions of knowledge	Scaffold	6

Curriculum

Ms. Perkins' curriculum presented evidence of diversity and equity thinking within the following elements of Conceptions of Self and Others: teaching as mining

(14), pedagogy as art (6) and student success (4). Within Conceptions of Knowledge, Ms. Perkins' vision of curriculum contained evidence of scaffolding instruction (6).

Conceptions of self and others. Ms. Perkins' vision and practice revealed her commitment to valuing students' personal experiences and incorporating these experiences into her curriculum. For this unit, she did so by structuring the unit through storytelling. While doing so, she also remained flexible in her curriculum to allow students the space to explore the direction of their projects, particularly the materials.

Teaching as mining (14). Ms. Perkins envisioned the art curriculum as an opportunity for students to share their personal experiences through visual storytelling. While explaining her plans for this unit, she shared:

Well, it's a new unit and I'm exploring the new way of even designing it through story telling. The last time I taught it, the end result was, we all used collage. Even within myself, looking at materials in a new way. What could it be? Not being afraid to combine a variety of materials. I'm hoping that they will see that there is a good reason for them to use a material, whether they've haven't tried it before or maybe, like I was saying earlier, maybe if I have these three things that I want to address in my story or my moment, which would be the best material to get that across? (Interview 4)

In this explanation, Ms. Perkins expressed her interest in restructuring the unit through storytelling and allowing students to base their use of materials on decisions that supported communicating their story to others. This focus on students' own stories as a basis for their work demonstrated a focus on the curriculum that mined students' lives.

Pedagogy as art (6). Ms. Perkins structured the curriculum to allow for flexible opportunities through how students engage in it. In this unit, she intentionally planned for students to explore various materials as well as ideas for their projects.

In contrast to her current approach, she also expressed her disdain with her previous approach to art education and approaches that continue that tradition. Such approaches focus on formulaic projects and methods rather than meaning. She explained that such approaches can “get cookie cutter or lack meaning” (Interview 1). She further explained:

So it’s kind of like – and I put it in my thesis, why are we making symmetrical butterflies using warm and cool colors in five steps? Like, why are we doing that? Why am I doing that? Why did I do that in 1998, do you know what I mean? I did it, I guess, to make everyone feel successful and comfortable and confident and learning the routines of the studio, but that might not be – it might not stick, or it may. You know, it’s not that it was wrong. It’s not that I was wrong. You know, they were studying monarchs in second grade in science and they released butterflies, you know, but how could I make the experience of not necessarily butterflies, but any art experience more meaningful? (Interview 2)

This wondering demonstrated Ms. Perkins’ thinking and particular shift in pedagogy. Now her pedagogy focused on bringing meaning more centrally into her curricular considerations and approach to art education.

As a result of this intentionality with regard to meaning making in the curriculum, Ms. Perkins also remained flexible in her planning. When discussing an upcoming lesson,

she referred to the forthcoming conversation as allowing the discussion to open up and then “just see how meaningful it goes” (Interview 3).

Conceptions of knowledge. Within this CRT construct, Ms. Perkins’ vision and practice revealed one element in a patterned manner: scaffolding curricular experiences to connect content to students’ lives.

Teachers scaffold (6). Ms. Perkins intentionally structured her lesson activities in order to ensure that all students had an opportunity to create meaning and access learning experiences. She did this both in her planning beforehand as well as in response to student engagement and comments. For example, in one lesson she provided a graphic organizer to support students in brainstorming their personal experiences. This handout included a prompt for them to think about and three blank rectangular frames in which they could sketch ideas to consider for this project. She explained, “I’ve given them, you know, a template where there is three point squares, and let’s – maybe you get one to three memories. You know, start sketching, because sometimes – you know, multiple ideas surface” (Interview 3). This thinking demonstrates her attention to the possibility that students will not only have different experiences to draw upon but also differential access to these experiences. By providing this graphic organizer, she supports the possibility that students will have more than one experience to draw upon, thereby scaffolding access to this particular component of the lesson.

Role of Teachers

Within her vision and practice, Ms. Perkins also demonstrated patterns of practice aligned with CRT’s Conceptions of Self and Others and Conceptions of Knowledge. Most frequent codes emerged related to her commitment to student success (12) followed

by her approach to pedagogy as art (8) and teaching as mining (5). Evidence also emerged that revealed her commitment to her role as scaffolding students' experiences (6).

Conceptions of self and others. Ms. Perkins' vision and practice revealed a positive disposition toward her students as demonstrated in her commitment to and belief in their abilities to succeed, her willingness to engage in pedagogy as an artistic endeavor, and her interest in drawing upon students' own experiences. Vision analysis revealed that she believed it was her role to draw these aspects out from children and to support them to be successful.

Student success (12). Ms. Perkins believed that students were capable and that it was her role to support them in completing work without lowering expectations. When she reflected upon one particularly challenging student, Jordan, she described an instance when he struggled to complete a partner project during class:

And then Jordan usually sits over here and he's – we have to watch him. He has a big temper. So we're doing these Black historians pop portraits, and they're in partnerships, and they each do two.... And the first day that he did it, he did this [shows me Jordan's portrait work] like his pop portrait with horns and fangs. And I said, "Jordan, you cannot –" I said, "You are in a partnership with Carl and you have to, there's responsibility and there's teamwork and you're supposed to do two [portraits]." He's like, "I can't. I can't." He goes, "I've already done one." And he's all stressed and angry. So I taught him how to take that one and then you rub lead on the back and then you transfer it and then you draw over it and you can get your portrait twice. So it was like that differentiation for him. And then Carl

got super angry because Carl has the skills. So does Jordan. It's just the choice.

So he's like – this is Jordan's here and here. So see, Jordan has the skills, but it is a struggle to get him to cooperate because he's so – *[Laughter]* So finally after saying, “Yes, this is fine but you have a partnership here,” and then teaching him how to transfer with the lead, he did it. (Interview 7)

During this lesson, Ms. Perkins took time to reiterate her expectations for Jordan’s engagement without allowing him to submit work that did not demonstrate his capabilities. In addition, she held him to her expectations about how to engage with Carl in their partnership. While she reiterated these expectations, she also supported Jordan by providing him with an alternative method for transferring his work from one project to another in order to preserve aspects of his original drawing that he wanted to keep. Thus, patience, along with high expectations and support, demonstrated Ms. Perkins’ commitment to facilitating student success even with this challenging student.

Pedagogy as art (8). Ms. Perkins remained flexible in her lessons, ready to respond to individual or group reactions to what she taught. In observations of her practice, she easily extended conversations or ideas based on student comments or followed students’ leads in the direction of the lesson. She also did not hesitate to interrupt a lesson in order to check in with students about how they experienced the lesson. In one instance, she stopped teaching entirely to engage the class in conversation about what she saw in their reactions:

So I just stopped them and I just said, “You know what? I’m wondering if this is really making – helping anybody. I’d like to know if this is really helping anybody.” So four students, you know, said, yes, it is, because I’m seeing

different materials. Colleen, who struggles with finding imagery for her thoughts. She said, “This is helping me figure out, like, actually what to draw here.” So after I heard – then after I stopped, then the conversation got better. So I think if it goes south, for lack of a better word, if it goes downhill, then I’ll stop them and then we can, you know, start again. (Interview 3)

This event demonstrated Perkins’ willingness to switch gears – to go off course for a moment – in order to respond to students’ disengagement from the discussion. This conversation was not planned nor did she steadfastly bulldoze through the intended lesson, disregarding their lack of engagement. Rather, she worked flexibly in response to her students. Doing so in this case allowed her to hear how they were thinking in order to re-engage them in the lesson with renewed focus.

Teaching as mining (5). Ms. Perkins believed her role was to draw out knowledge from students by helping them identify a meaningful experience from their own lives. During one lesson in which student began exploring paint, students thought of one experience to explore for this class. One student – Raychelle – began painting a rainbow. As Ms. Perkins circulated the room checking in on students, she noticed Raychelle. After sitting with her, Raychelle shared that she did not have any experiences to represent in her work. Ms. Perkins attempted to brainstorm ideas with her but was unsuccessful. For the remainder of the class, Raychelle continued to paint her rainbow. Reflecting on Raychelle for this lesson, she says:

Raychelle didn't want to do a family, didn't want to do friends. She had no memories, no stories. It was like empty bucket syndrome. So then I thought, "Alright, I'll talk to her about a time when my brother and I fought." That didn't

work. I told her about how that was okay because family aren't... she was like an empty bucket. (Interview 6)

At our next conversation, she shares that she checked in with the Raychelle's homeroom teacher and learned that Raychelle's parents were going through a divorce. Both Raychelle and her twin sister struggled to engage in school as a result. Ms. Perkins' willingness to sit with Raychelle and try to support her in identifying an experience showed her commitment to and interest in supporting students to draw upon their experiences. Furthermore, her commitment to do so compelled her to reach out to another teacher to learn more. This information then informed Ms. Perkins' decisions about how to support Raychelle moving forward.

Similarly, she voiced a change in her approach to teaching and the knowledge children brought to the classroom. She talked about "shedding" and "editing" her practice to support students in sharing their knowledge:

It's just like shedding, just shedding, and editing. Editing, too, like because it used to be so much filling up, filling the child with knowledge.... There used to be art textbooks in here and we would – I'd use them sometimes, but not a lot. But it was just like filling them up with that. And now it's just, no, having them share their knowledge and then you just channel them to [produce work]. (Interview 8)

In this reflection, Ms. Perkins recognized a shift in her practice from teaching as an additive act to teaching as a process of drawing out knowledge. In this sense, she saw her role as mining their wealth of knowledge and experiences.

Conceptions of knowledge. Within her vision and practice, analysis revealed evidence of Ms. Perkins' recognition that students brought valuable knowledge to the

classroom. Therefore, her role was to use this knowledge and scaffold her instruction to meet students where they were in their understanding.

Teachers scaffold (6). In her vision and practice, analysis revealed Ms. Perkins' belief in valuing and understanding the type of learners her students were. She believed that understanding students' learning styles was an important aspect of tailoring her instruction. When discussing different classes she taught, she talked about this consideration:

With that first group, when I can sense that there's a majority of visual learners, where even at the younger age level, if there's a one and a two and a three, I'll draw what tool they might be using for each step. If they struggle with verbal directions or have to do more demonstration than discussion, then I would use that. (Interview 4)

Table 17

Organization of CRT and Open Codes for Ms. Perkins

CRT Construct	CRT Element	Codes
Conceptions of self and others	Pedagogy as art	Art relevance Making art experience more meaningful Pedagogy-flexibility Pedagogy-letting go of control Students control art
	Student success	High expectations-behavior Providing positive feedback Restart with kids Specific positive feedback Students as critical thinkers Students are capable Supporting individual students T asks critical thinking questions Disposition-asset

	Teaching as mining	Art =getting to know selves Art from students' POV Art is students' expressing themselves Students seen in curriculum Start with S thinking Storytelling Students share knowledge
Social relations	Community of learners	Growth mindset Self-critical
	Connectedness	Teaching to connect We're all different
	Learn collaboratively	Patience Equal student voice

Here, Ms. Perkins shared her thinking about multiple ways to engage and support students in learning, depending on their abilities.

In her practice, as well, she provided individualized feedback that supported students by providing them with information that affirmed areas of their work as well as probed further thinking to support their development. During class, she circulated the room, always meeting with students individually. These conversations consistently involved individualized feedback on their work. After one lesson, Ms. Perkins provided this individualized feedback on sketches of their plans for their final project. She wrote notes to each student, identifying aspects of their visual brainstorms that she found compelling. Taking the time to do so with all of her students demonstrated a commitment to providing individualized feedback to support their artistic process.

Centrality of CRT Elements within Ms. Perkins' Vision

Analysis of Ms. Perkins' vision yielded 63 total open codes. Within these open codes, 35 codes aligned with CRT elements and were assigned to these a priori code families. Of these open codes, 52 connect with other codes. Of these connected codes, only 11 have densities of four or more (Table 18, see next page), leaving the majority of

codes (52) with three or fewer connections to other codes. Figure 7 (p. 218) represents the 11 densest codes within Ms. Perkins' overall vision. Of these codes, nine lie within CRT constructs as noted by the colored bubbles in Figure 7. This level of connectedness suggests that Ms. Perkins' considerations related to the CRT constructs serve a more central than peripheral role in her vision.

Table 18.

Perkins' Number of Codes per Code Density Count

Density	Number of Codes
1	14
2	17
3	10
4	4
5	2
6	1
7	0
8	3
9	0
10	1

Tensions

Two aspects of schooling presented tension between Ms. Perkins' vision of teaching and achieving this vision related to her diversity and equity considerations. Even

while she believed students should have meaningful learning experiences, doing so in her class required time for students to explore their stories, materials, and their processes. Part of this process involved trying new ideas and abandoning old ones to engage in a different direction of their thinking. However, her belief in this aspect of the artistic and meaning-making process conflicted with the time allotted in schools for art class. This felt tension emerged when she reflected upon a particular lesson in which students wanted to restart their projects with a different medium:

It was hard for me to stand firm and not let go of that. Because there is the artist side [of the project], but we don't have three or four years to complete this. You know? So sometimes it's like a question I have of myself. (Interview 6)

In this reflection, Ms. Perkins expresses her discomfort and internal conflict between wanting to support students to start a project over and grappling with the realistic time constraints they have in school. As a teacher committed to supporting children to create art that resembles a personal experience and holds meaning to them, this time constraint posed a tense barrier to her fully enacting upon her envisioned role as a teacher.

Another tension that surfaced was Ms. Perkins' experience of the school district's master educator structure through the evaluation system. She stated that the pressure she experienced from the visit distract her from fully engaging with her children. For the three months' time when the master educator could appear in her classroom, she felt a "dark cloud" hanging over her head. Even though she always performed well on the evaluation, she still found it distracting to her work. She shared:

And they've been nice alright, but they just show up at any time and they have like ten, nine teaching points and I've scored well, I've gotten extra money. I

always do well. Highly effective or whatever, but there's the principle of some things that I cannot stand. It's kind of like that gotcha moment, and it's happened. Like he'll come in and instead of a four I get a three and it's like that "I gotcha" moment, and it's like... we're not working together.... I get so thrown off, then I lose track, then I think about the way it's supposed to be asked, sound, what it's supposed to look like. These people are right in front of me and not think about what I'm doing. (Interview 6)

Ms. Perkins sensed the lack of partnership in the master educator relationship that resulted in her feeling self-conscious about her teaching. This heightened awareness stood in the way of fully engaging with the students she served.

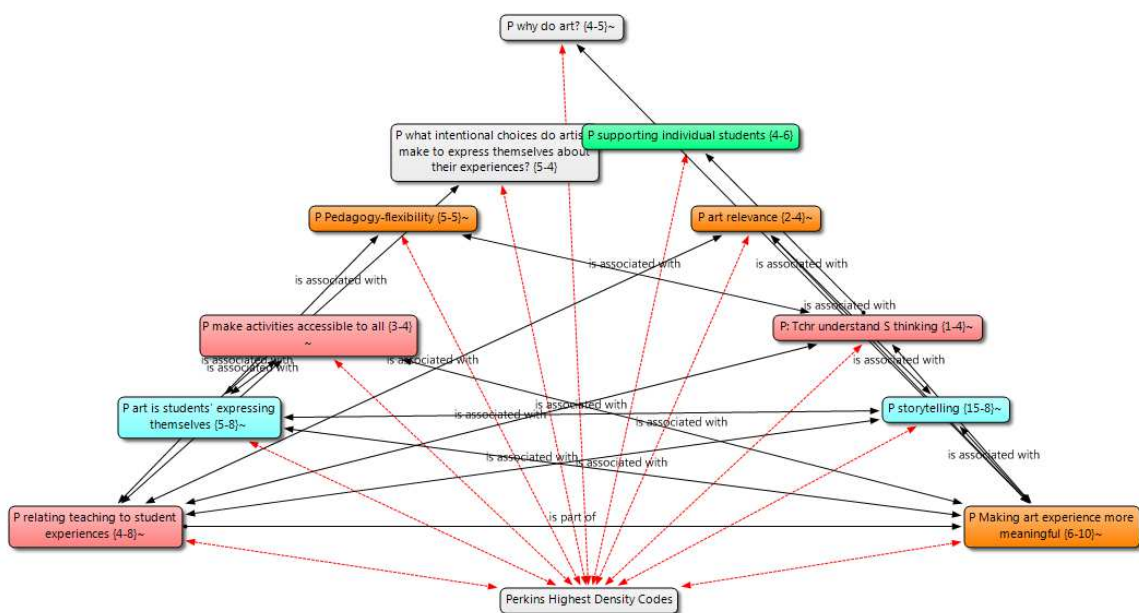


Figure 7. Network of Ms. Perkins' highest density codes.

Conclusion

Ms. Perkins' vision and practice revealed evidence of CRT elements primarily within two areas of her vision: role of teachers and curriculum. Within her conception of her own role, she possessed an asset-minded disposition toward her students as evident in

through her Conceptions of Self and Others. This disposition surfaced within her commitment to student success and her willingness to engage in teaching flexibly in response to how students engaged in lesson activities.

In addition, she valued how students learn and the knowledge they brought to the classroom. The manner in which she scaffolded instruction to meet her students' needs illuminated the respect she held for students' knowledge and experiences.

Within the area of curriculum, Ms. Perkins' vision and practice also revealed an asset approach toward students through two areas of CRT: Conceptions of Self and Others and Conceptions of Knowledge. Within her Conceptions of Self and Others, analysis of her approach to curriculum revealed multiple instructional opportunities to mine what students know and the experiences they brought to the classroom. There were also opportunities for the curriculum to shift in response to how students engaged. Finally, Ms. Perkins structured her curriculum to meet multiple individual needs and experiences, depending on how students presented in the classroom or responded to instruction.

While analysis revealed evidence of Ms. Perkins' CRT-related practices in only these two CRT constructs (Conceptions of Self and Others and Conceptions of Knowledge), density analysis revealed that these considerations played a more central than peripheral role in her vision and practice (9 of 11 highest density codes).

In all, the CRT analysis of Ms. Perkins' vision and practice revealed a positive belief about the diversity students' different experiences brought to the classroom as well as how these experiences informed the work they did in her art class. The diversity in their experiences served as an asset to their learning and development in art; it was a

driver for the content of their work. She also embraced the differences they brought to the class in their skill levels, as evidenced through the presence of scaffolding and mining CRT elements in her vision and practice, coupled with her commitment to supporting student success. This finding suggests a positive belief about equitably supporting students in this way. While analysis of her vision revealed 35 total co-occurrences with CRT elements, the central nature of these codes also suggest that her commitment to diversity and equity remained ever-present within her vision and practice in her role and curriculum.

Table 19

Code Density Counts, Codes and Related CRT Constructs

Density	Number of Codes	Codes(s)	CRT Construct
10	1	Making art more meaningful	Pedagogy as art
8	3	Storytelling Relating to student experience Art=Students expressing themselves	Teaching as mining Teachers scaffold Teaching as mining
6	1	Supporting individual students	Student success
5	2	Pedagogy-flexibility Why do art?	Pedagogy as art n/a
4	4	Art relevance Activities accessible to all Understanding student thinking Intentional choices for expression	CSO-pedagogy as art Teachers scaffold Teacher scaffold n/a

Chapter Eight: Discussion

Introduction

Chapters five through seven presented analyses and findings for the three participants in this study. This chapter summarizes the study, discusses findings in relation to prior literature, and present limitations as well as implications for research and practice.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' beliefs about diversity and equity through an examination and analysis of their visions and practice. Past studies used teacher vision as a framework for understanding teachers' ideal images of practice as well as their thinking related to these ideal images and how their current practice relates to these ideals (Hammerness, 2001; 2003; 2006; 2010; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Other studies use culturally relevant frameworks to support teachers in providing more equitable instruction for diverse student populations (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). However, few studies examine the relationship between teachers' thinking and practice using both frameworks to analyze teachers' thinking and practice in relation to diversity and equity considerations.

Given the important role of teacher dispositions on the enactment of instructional decisions (Ready & Wright, 2011; Rist, 1970), this study utilized vision (Hammerness, 2006) with a culturally relevant framework (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2009) to understand thinking and practice through qualitative case studies of three participating teachers. In doing so, I engaged teacher participants in conversations about their visions of practice generally and specifically with regard to one unit of study. Over the course of this unit, I

observed each teacher's lessons and engaged in conversations with them regarding their visions and practice. Using both a vision protocol for initiating interviews as well as follow-up questions, data were collected in the form of interview transcripts, field notes, and analytic memos. Specifically, this study examined:

1. What beliefs about diversity and equity are revealed through teachers' visions and practice?
2. How central or peripheral are beliefs about diversity and equity within teachers' overall visions?

I primarily used teacher interviews and lesson observations to analyze vision and practice related to these two research questions through inductive and deductive coding processes. Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software was used to organize codes and the coding process as well as to run queries to examine co-occurrences for vision dimensions and culturally relevant teaching elements. The software also supported the theory-building process through the use of its networking function.

Shulman and Shulman (2004) pose that "A highly developed and articulated vision serves as a goal toward which teacher development is directed, as well as a standard against which one's own and others' thoughts and actions are evaluated" (p. 261). As a tool, vision poses great potential in its use as a yardstick for developing thinking and practice. As classrooms become increasingly diverse in ways related to race, culture, and ability particularly, it becomes increasingly important that teacher thinking includes asset-minded perspectives of students and diversity in order to provide equitable learning opportunities. Few studies have examined teachers' visions with the additional framework of CRT to examine diversity and equity related thinking.

Given the important nature of teacher thinking in relation to diversity and equity in classrooms, I utilized teacher vision as a tool to better understand teachers' thinking and actions related to diversity and equity considerations, specifically CRT elements. While vision has been used as a tool in the past studies to examine teachers' overall images of ideal practice in relation to their practice (Hammerness, 1999; 2006), I found it to be useful analytic tool to uncover underlying understandings and beliefs related to equity and diversity. As such, vision provided a framework for teachers to discuss their thinking and practice while simultaneously providing me with information related to diversity and equity.

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed diversity and equity considerations within teachers' visions; these considerations – via CRT analysis – demonstrated dispositional as well as pedagogical beliefs and practices.

Uncovering critical considerations. Using CRT to analyze teachers' visions provided insight into teachers' thinking and actions in a complementary manner. These teachers enacted culturally relevant considerations in ways that asking about these practices specifically may not have illuminated due to teachers' lack of awareness about CRT constructs. By using the vision construct to open conversations about teachers' practices, I had an opportunity to use CRT to analyze their thinking and practice. Thus, diversity and equity beliefs were revealed.

In each of the cases included in this study, vision and CRT analyses revealed teacher thinking and practice related to diversity and equity in ways that illuminated how

teachers enact equitable practices in their classrooms. However, the framework alone does not focus on diversity and equity considerations.

Critical scholars argue that without attention to issues of diversity and equity (particularly as diversity relates to race), practitioners risk perpetuating oppressive schooling structures that create inequities (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). As a framework, CRT supports cultural, political and racial consciousness orientations by recognizing beliefs and practices that “focus on student learning, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 157). While vision provides a framework for engaging teachers in thinking about their instructional decision-making and underlying beliefs, the addition of the CRT framework as an analytic tool illuminates components of vision and practice that speak to diversity and equity in necessary ways.

Similarly, vision complements CRT by providing a framework that teachers from a variety of backgrounds can use to discuss ideal images of practice regardless their context, subject area, years of experience, etc. In addition, it concretizes practice into five distinct areas – role of teachers, role of students, curriculum, classroom environment and societal goals. This organization brings structure to understand teachers’ practice as well as allows for analysis within and across each dimension of teachers’ practice. By capturing teaching into these areas, one is able to analyze the dispositional orientations within and between each dimension.

The combination of both vision and CRT allowed me to examine diversity and equity considerations within the landscape of teaching at one public elementary school

with a central finding that thinking does not always translate into practice and vice versa. Of this misalignment, Shulman and Shulman (2004) state:

We can describe teachers who are ready to engage in constructivist (or other forms of highly engaged) teaching, but lack the will, the knowledge, and the skill to do so. We worked with teachers who possess the understanding of the principles, but lack the will to pursue them or the skill to implement them. We can even imagine teachers who have the requisite skills, but lack an understanding of their purpose or rationale, are unwilling to apply them, and are uninspired by a vision of education in which they are central. (p. 260)

As the authors note, differing levels of vision development, knowledge, skills and motivation exist among teachers in a multitude of combinations. The variations between and among these make it necessary to examine both vision and practice.

Furthermore, using network analysis to analyze the centrality of CRT elements within teachers' vision dimensions permits an examination of the degree to which such considerations permeate teachers' thinking and practice. In an increasingly diverse nation, the importance of diversity and equity thinking and practice becomes necessary to provide more equitable – less oppressive – learning opportunities for all students. It is not enough to simply gauge understanding or practice alone; in our increasingly diverse classrooms, teacher must enact upon equitable thinking and practice more centrally. The analysis of equity understanding and enactment's location within vision and practice provides one form of analysis to assess the degree to which teachers currently possess these understandings and skills within the context of their overall practice.

Unearthing equity. In the case of Ms. Atkins, her vision revealed CRT elements – and, therefore, her beliefs about diversity and equity – were enacted throughout several areas of her practice, particularly relating to student success. Through her reflections of ideal images of practice, she revealed a deep commitment to teacher as cheerleader and standard-setter. Throughout four particular dimensions of vision – role of teachers, role of students, curriculum and classroom environment – her practice aligned with CRT’s asset-perspective on students and committing to their achievement.

Atkins’ particular focus on safety and care complicates traditional notions of these concepts. Caring in Atkins’ case includes more than communicating support and affection. Her commitment to student success includes verbal cheerleading as well as strict and unwavering firmness as she provides boundaries for behavior and high expectations for academic performance. This ethic of care aligns with care theorists who challenge traditional notions of care, noting the implicit colorblind ideologies that accompany them (Nieto, 2008; Patterson & Price, 2008; Thompson, 2009). Such longstanding approaches to care can be accompanied by lowered standards for student performance, deficit views of students and families and hastily incorporated “foods and festivals” approaches to diversifying curricula. Ms. Atkins, on the other hand, embodies a “critical care” ethic that recognizes students as individuals and understands the specific sociopolitical contexts in which students live (Nieto, 2008). In doing so, Atkins and other critical caretakers support students to succeed in their classrooms while also arming them with tools to understand their contexts and navigate their lives successfully.

The combination of interviews and observations using vision and CRT frameworks allowed for probing about instructional decision-making processes that

revealed Atkins' thinking in nuanced ways. Her attention to taking a critical stance toward oppressive language and ideas, as well as her vigilant attention to monitoring her own reactions and biases, demonstrates a level of critical consciousness (Collins, 2009; Freire, 1970) and self-reflection in Atkins' thinking. Such thinking includes, "...thoroughly analyzing and carefully monitoring both personal beliefs and instructional behaviors about the value of cultural diversity, and the best ways to teach ethnically different students for maximum positive effects" (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 162). This critical consciousness is necessary to enact practices that challenge traditionally oppressive ones, particularly for ethnically and culturally diverse students. Utilizing a combination of vision and CRT frameworks for analysis made it possible to reveal this orientation and presence of critical consciousness.

The combination of interviews and observations allowed for deeper discussions that unearthed Mr. Drumm's beliefs, as well. Through conversations, he openly shared thinking related to his practice; however, it was through observations of his particular interactions with students around colors that prompted me to inquire about particular interactions in his classroom. Through this inquiry, his belief about gender equity emerged in what seemed to be a revelatory process to even himself.

In Ms. Perkins' case, using vision with a CRT analysis revealed her commitment to tapping students' own experiences as a source of artistic content. Using these experiences, Ms. Perkins guided students' art skills development, supporting students differently but equitably. While analysis of her interviews did not yield robustness in CRT presence when compared to Ms. Atkins or Mr. Drumm's analyses, the examination

of her vision and practice using my conceptual framework and analysis nevertheless did highlight some of her diversity and equity beliefs.

Across these three teacher cases, two consistent elements of the CRT analytic framework emerged: *pedagogy as art* and *teaching as mining*. These elements represent dispositional attitudes within teachers' Conceptions of Self and Others. Both elements consider students' personal experiences as foundational to design learning experiences. The presence of these elements across all three teachers suggests a common pedagogical commitment to honoring individual students' backgrounds. As a school that allows for more flexibility in its instruction than other schools in the school district (rather than requiring scripted curriculum) this aspect of Groundspring ES' structure likely allows for such practices to occur. Regardless, drawing from students' backgrounds and personal experiences creates more meaningful and long-lasting learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

In all participant cases, vision revealed the commitment that these teachers held to honor students' own experiences. While none were trained formally in CRT, this orientation provides an insight into participants' beliefs about the value of students' lives outside their classrooms and to their commitment to using these experiences as a springboard for instruction. This finding is seen in prior literature on the importance of building instruction on students' experiences. Moll et al. (1992) specifically identify this importance and differentiates the mere inclusion of "cultural" aspects from students' lives from using the specific knowledge students' bring to the classroom from their home lives, a knowledge set they term "funds of knowledge." They state:

Although the term "funds of knowledge" is not meant to replace the anthropological concept of culture, it is more precise for our purposes because of its emphasis on strategic knowledge and related activities essential in households' functioning, development, and well-being. (p. 139)

Ms. Atkins, Mr. Drumm and Ms. Perkins all make efforts to know students and their specific life experiences in order to incorporate these experiences and the understandings that accompany them into their daily curricula.

Centrality of diversity and equity considerations. The CRT analysis provided a framework for examining where within teachers' thinking and practice particular considerations lie – centrally or peripherally. This location can be useful in understanding better a teachers' development in their attention to diversity and equity considerations. All teachers possessed visions that aligned with CRT constructs and elements throughout their practice. Even though they did not speak explicitly about diversity, equity or culturally relevant teaching with regard to their thinking or practice, the analyses uncovered these considerations as quite central to their thinking.

Teacher dispositions. While CRT does not explicitly target teacher dispositions, per se, as a unit of analysis, the use of vision and CRT revealed participants' asset dispositions and orientations toward their students as well as the nature of these orientations in relation to equitable practices. Of dispositions, Ladson-Billings (2009) states, "... conceptions of self, students, students' parents, and community are positive" (p. 58). As such, culturally relevant teachers by default possess asset-minded attitudes and dispositions toward their students through embodying the aspects of conceptions of self and others, social relations and conceptions of knowledge characterized by CRT. The

analyses of these three teachers revealed both a high number of CRT occurrences in their thinking and practice as well as more central than peripheral locations of these considerations within their overall practice. Thus, these teachers possess more asset than deficit-minded orientations toward their students.

Limitations

While this study provided insight into teachers' thinking and practice related to diversity and equity, no studies are exemplary in every way. The following section outlines limitations that are present in the current research project.

Participant selection. While all teachers at Groundspring ES were welcome to participate in this study, these three teachers were volunteers. Their willingness may signal openness to learning and a confidence about their own teaching that does not represent all teachers at this school nor public elementary school teachers in general. As such, findings from this study must be interpreted with an understanding that these teachers are likely different in important ways from the vast majority of teachers who do not want to engage in conversations about thinking and practice and are not eager to participate in PD as a means to do so.

Site selection. While some of the existing literature on student achievement identifies school and family resources as a barrier to creating equitable student opportunities (Lareau, 2011), the location for this study was in a wealthy suburb. In addition, I was unable to gather information about attending students' SES. The absence of such data indicates that findings related to the teacher participants in this study are potentially linked to high SES schools. Future research on teacher vision and CRT

should be conducted with teachers who work at low SES schools to learn more about how SES impacts teachers' vision and CRT.

Methods. While interviews and observations yielded much data, in designing this study I did not consider diversity in methods of data collection in relation to my participants' preferred means of expression. Once I dove into analysis, I realized that Ms. Perkins' interview transcripts were less dense and hence more difficult for me to understand. I realized that as an artist, her primary language of expression is likely visual, not verbal. Had I recognized this beforehand, I would have incorporated a visual component to capturing teachers' visions, much like Turner (2007) does in her study of preservice teachers' visions of practice. In this study, she incorporates a visual component that gathers photographic representations of teachers' visions, taken by teachers themselves. This realization leads me to further consider diversity in my own data collection practices for future studies.

While I attended to the integrity of my coding throughout the analytic process, inherent in code assignments is an element of bias. The steps I took to ensure for internal code validity included keeping code definitions within Atlas.ti, and keeping these definitions open in the program while I assigned codes. However, my own background and experiences bring a particular perspective that may influence the assignment of these codes. For example, as a former teacher and coach, I believe in the capabilities of teachers to teach well in classrooms. I hold an asset perspective toward viewing teaching, always looking for ways to affirm their practice while also bringing a critical perspective to their work. Another researcher using the same methodology as mine in this study may not assign the same codes or interpret these codes in the same way. Such possible

discrepancies are inherent in qualitative research. Simultaneously, I believe that an asset perspective is needed to partner successfully with teachers and further develop their practice.

Culturally relevant teaching, not culturally relevant teachers. While this study used vision and CRT frameworks for collection and analysis, my purpose was not to provide an assessment of how culturally relevant practices were or were not incorporated into the classroom. In other words, my goal was not to provide an assessment of how CRT was or was not enacted in classrooms, per se. While the analysis does reveal such practices, the frameworks are used analytically to understand thinking and practice related to CRT. In effect, this study does not assess whether or not a teacher qualifies as a culturally relevant teacher. According to Ladson-Billings (1995a) culturally relevant teachers must incorporate aspects of CRT into their classrooms with three specific purposes for doing so:

Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. (p. 160)

These three teacher participants did not verbalize these particular purposes, and thus, do not characterize culturally relevant teachers.

Implications for Research and Practice

The areas of diversity and equity focus that teachers enacted were directly connected to the personal experiences they had in these areas. This connection supports prior research examining teachers' backgrounds and the relationship between these

backgrounds/experiences with their diversity understandings (Banks, et al., 2005; Sleeter, 2001; Sleeter & Grant, 2009). Hammerness (2006) notes that this influence between personal experience and vision formation exists; simultaneously, she also notes that these visions are malleable and can change over time.

Fortunately for their students, the teachers in this study possessed background experiences that resulted in positive orientations toward their students and their learning. However, as I outlined in chapter two, we cannot rely solely upon this serendipity to provide equitable opportunities in all classrooms. How can we push teachers to broaden these perspectives, even while we recognize that for some teachers there is already a particular level of diversity understanding and development? Using vision and CRT might serve as a useful tool for teachers to continue exploring their own visions related to their diversity and equity development; this is an area for possible future research.

The CRT analysis of teachers' visions may also be used as a tool for teacher training in preparation and PD programs. By analyzing teachers' visions as I did in this study – examining not on the presence of CRT elements but also the centrality of these considerations – teacher educators may be able to assess preservice and in-service teachers' levels of understanding regarding diversity and equity. These understandings can inform instruction to guide teachers in acquiring more positive beliefs about diversity and equity. Furthermore, they can use network analyses to measure the relative centrality of teachers' CRT considerations. In an increasingly diverse educational climate, I hope teachers' CRT considerations and practices become more centrally connected to their everyday decision-making, noting more positive dispositions toward diversity and equity. In these ways, ongoing collection and analyses of teachers' visions using CRT as I did

here could illustrate teachers' development in the area of diversity and equity understanding and enactment.

Future studies should be conducted to separate analyses of vision and CRT by differentiating thinking from practice. Doing so may make it possible to learn how far apart diversity and equity considerations are, or the prominence of these considerations. Such a comparison might provide a starting point for recognizing where diversity and equity considerations should be recognized and where professional development can support in furthering these understandings and considerations. Shulman and Shulman (2005) ask, "How can vision be guided, enhanced, differentiated, and deepened?" (p. 261). Future studies should continue to combine vision and CRT analyses to deepen, enhance or guide vision and practice related to diversity and equity in thinking and practice.

Vision constellations. In addition to the five elements of vision, Hammerness (2001) identifies three particular facets of vision: *focus*, *range* and *distance*. Focus refers to the areas of interest or concentration of the vision. Hammerness writes, "One's vision may be sharply defined, with distinct images and interactions, or the vision may be blurry, with vague images and indistinct activity" (p. 145). This clarity – or lack of clarity – in one's vision is captured through the focus dimension. Range describes the breadth of a vision's focus; that is the expansiveness or specificity of a vision. A vision may encompass the range of a full community or it may narrow in on a small group of students, a topic or a particular aspect of the classroom. Finally, distance describes the proximity of one's vision to practice. How close or far is one's vision from everyday

practice? These three dimensions of vision provide structure and parameters through which vision can be better understood and analyzed.

Using these three dimensions of vision, Hammerness describes teachers' *constellations* – or patterns – evident in their visions. She states:

Examining the focus, range and distance of teachers' visions provides a means of understanding the way teachers feel about their teaching, their students and their school; the changes they make or do not make in their classrooms; and even the decisions they make regarding their futures as teachers. While teachers' visions varied along each of the three dimensions and varied by context, a closer look revealed four consistent patterns or constellations that revolved around the distance from practice and the degree of clarity of the visions. Each one of these constellations was associated with a particular variation on the role of vision in teachers' lives. (Hammerness, 2001)

These constellations provide structure to better understanding how teachers think about an infinite array of possible teaching-learning elements, including their underlying philosophies of practice and dispositions. In addition, teachers' vision constellations shed light on the relational components of vision as well as how vision serves as a tool for teachers' own reflective practice.

In the same study, Hammerness (2001) deconstructs dimensions of vision for three teachers. This examination and characterization of teachers' vision constellations ("close-cloudy," "close-clear," "distant-clear," etc.) provide the author with an understanding of the role of vision in teachers' everyday practice. For example, three teachers' visions were characterized as "close-clear" constellations: clear focus, narrow

range, and close distance. A clear, narrow focus involved teachers' detailed explanations of imagined classroom practices, including vivid examples. Specifically, teachers articulated curricular materials, pedagogical decision-making processes, current and long-term goals for student learning, and examples of students' and teachers' behaviors and actions. All three of these teachers also expressed beliefs about the close proximity of these visions to everyday practice while still acknowledging a gap between the two. For all these teachers, close-clear visions in supportive of neutral school contexts served as a measure of their own everyday practice and further guided their decisions in order to move toward their ideal images of practice.

Future studies might apply an analysis of vision constellations to describe teachers' diversity and equity considerations. In doing so, vision and practice can be described in these constellation terms, providing teachers with a better understanding of their own visions and where more clarity, focus or proximity can be aligned between visions and reality.

Barriers to achieving vision. Just as in Hammerness' book, there are a number of barriers that can interfere with teachers who attempt to achieve a more fully realized vision of practice. These barriers may include access to resources and external district structures, such as high accountability associated with student benchmarks or other measures of performance. When components of vision are aligned with equity-centered practice, how might these barriers not only serve as barriers to teachers' visions but also simultaneously prevent more equitable practices for students from occurring? What are the possibilities in recognizing these barriers? Answers to these questions in combination with findings from this study may serve as necessary impetus for decisions about what is

mandated within school districts and how such mandates impact students' equitable access to meaningful learning opportunities.

APPENDIX A

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

NOTE: The questions in this protocol are meant to serve as guide for interviews with the school Principal. Questions will be modified in response to participant responses. For that reason, the questions below are representative, but not all-inclusive, of possible interview questions.

1. How would you describe the professional climate among faculty in your school?
2. How would you describe faculty attitudes toward discussing topics about diversity and equity at your school?
3. What are some strengths you feel your faculty offer in the area of teaching students from diverse backgrounds?
4. What are some areas of growth you feel your faculty need in the area of teaching students from diverse backgrounds?
5. In what ways do you feel you support your faculty in teaching students from diverse backgrounds?
6. What do you hope the faculty participating in this study will gain from their experiences?
7. What are some challenges your school community faces when it comes to diversity and equity?
8. What are some school structures you feel support managing these challenges?
9. In an ideal world, how would teaching and learning occur at your school with respect to diversity and equity among students?

APPENDIX B
POST-SURVEY

PARTICIPANT-RESEARCHER RELATIONS

Table B1

Q1: How much do you agree with each of the following statements about your relationship with the professional developer (PDr)? MARK ONE ANSWER PER ROW

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree
(a) I am comfortable sharing my beliefs about teaching with the PDr.	3	0
(b) I am comfortable with the PDr observing my teaching.	2	1
(c) I am comfortable receiving feedback on my teaching from the PDr.	3	0
(d) I feel that the PDr listens to my ideas.	3	0
(e) I feel that the PDr values my ideas.	3	0
(f) I feel valued by the PDr as a professional.	3	0
(g) I trust that the PDr can help me improve my teaching.	3	0
(h) I am comfortable trying new ideas suggested by the PDr.	3	0
(i) I am not afraid to make a mistake with my PDr.	2	1
(j) There is a cooperative effort among my PD group (other teacher participants, the PDr).	3	0
(k) I can get good advice from the PDr when I have a teaching problem.	3	0
(l) I feel encouraged to be reflective about my teaching.	3	0
(m) I feel encouraged to experiment with my teaching.	3	0

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