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Perceptions of K–12 Educators of Color on Ethnic Studies Curriculum and Teaching in Urban Public Schools

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Abstract

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MA, Western Governors University, 2013

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Retention of educators of color (EOC) is becoming a focal point in K–12 education because of the increasing demographic of students of color in K–12 urban public schools; however, a shortage of EOC exists in these schools in the United States due in part to disproportionate attrition rates for EOC compared to White educators. Little is known about the role curriculum may play in retaining EOC in K–12, urban public schools. The purpose of this qualitative critical narrative inquiry study was to explore how ethnic studies curriculum influences how EOC who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. Critical race theory was the conceptual framework that guided this study. The three research questions examined how creating and teaching ethnic studies curriculum contributes to EOC's experiences in the teaching profession and the role ethnic studies curriculum plays in the desire of ethnic studies EOC to stay in their current role and district. The results of the study indicate ethnic studies plays a significant role in positively influencing the participants' perceptions of the teaching profession and their desire to stay in the profession. The findings uncovered barriers to teaching ethnic studies in K–12 that should be further researched, including the role school administrators play in blocking ethnic studies programs. The findings of this study may contribute to positive social changes by supporting attempts to retain EOC in K–12, urban public schools, which may lead to increased positive outcomes for K–12 students.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all my ancestors, of whom I am a product. It is dedicated to all my predecessors who have fought, bled, and died for racial justice. It is for my chosen family of educators and activists who brought me to this place and time. It is for my children, Reuben, Lukas, Elysia, and William. It is for my beloved, Brian Gill, who never doubted I would be here.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Study

Introduction

There is a current shortage of educators of color (EOC) in the K–12 public school system. This shortage exists at a time when the racial and ethnic demographics of students are shifting, with White students becoming the minority in many K–12 urban, public schools (Huebeck, 2020; Long, 2020; Will, 2019). The shortage of EOC is significant because numerous scholars have shown that students of all races prefer EOC (Brown & Tam, 2019; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Gale, 2020; Kohli et al., 2017; Learning Policy Institute, 2018; Neal-Jackson, 2018).

The modern shortage of EOC can be traced back to school integration, when students of color were integrated into White schools and EOC were summarily dismissed (Long, 2020). Prior to the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), 35% to 50% of K–12 schoolteachers were Black in states segregated by race. Today, Black educators make up only about 7% of the U.S. teaching force, Latinx educators make up 9%, and Asian and multiracial teachers make up 2% each. Native American teachers are only 1% of the teaching profession, and Pacific Islander teachers make up less than 1%. White educators are the majority at 79% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). The loss of Black educators after school integration and the shortage of all EOC are significant for students of color who face persistent and devastating racial oppression in schools across the nation (Choi, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Gorski, 2019b; Haynes et al., 2020; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

One reason scholars have identified for the shortage of EOC in K–12 urban, public schools is that EOC experience similar levels of racial discrimination and oppression in the workplace as students do in classrooms. These experiences lead to negative perceptions of the teaching profession, resulting in higher turnover rates (Choi, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Gorski, 2019; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). While a significant amount of effort has been levied toward recruiting EOC with equally significant success, the attrition rates remain three times higher for EOC than White educators (Huebeck, 2020; Issa, 2020; Kokka, 2016). Andrews et al. (2019) argued the attrition rate is partially to blame on administrators and policymakers who have done little to address the structural racism EOC are subjected to.

Andrews et al. (2019) and Ladson-Billings (1998) consider the curricula EOC are required to teach a central component to structural racism in the teaching profession. EOC have reported feeling like commodities in that they are seen only as tools to improve student test scores or to be the disciplinarian instead of being valued for their cultural wealth and ability to connect with and relate to the lived experiences of students of color (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Patterson, 2019; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017; Singh, 2018; Yosso, 2005). EOC have reported frequently feeling dismissed as being less qualified or less rigorous than their White peers. Additionally, EOC have reported feeling pressured to teach a Eurocentric curriculum they know their students of color have no connection to instead of teaching culturally relevant and sustaining curriculum (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Choi, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017; Singh, 2018). When EOC have taken the lead in efforts to transform systems, they often face

retaliation (Castro-Gill, 2020; Donaldson, 2021; Greenberg, 2020; Johnson, 2021; McGee, 2020).

Because curriculum has been identified as a place where systemic racism exists in K–12 education, curriculum may be instrumental in the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools (Andrews et al., 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998). However, scholars who have studied efforts to recruit and retain EOC have written that curriculum has not been considered a tool to do either (Andrews et al., 2019; Haddix, 2017; Ingersoll, et al., 2019). Ethnic studies curriculum could be that tool. Studies conducted on the impact of ethnic studies on students have proven the curriculum to be beneficial for students of color, but little is known about how it may affect the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools (Dee & Penner, 2017; Sacramento, 2019; Sleeter, 2011; Sueyoshi & Sujitparapitay, 2020). Furthermore, Hartlep and Baylor (2016) argued that EOC alone may not be enough to support students of color. They believe EOC must also have a commitment to antiracism and to teaching a curriculum that embodies critical race theory (CRT).

Chapter 1 includes a summary of the literature review, followed by the problem statement. I outline the conceptual framework, linking to both my study and the broader tenets of CRT. This is followed by brief statements about the nature of the study, definitions of terms, assumptions and delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study, including implications for positive social change. The chapter ends with a summary and transition to Chapter 2.

Background

Extensive research has been conducted on how EOC experience racism in K–12 education and at the college and university levels (Choi, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Gorski, 2019b; Haynes et al., 2020; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). Racism that EOC experience on the job contributes to the negative perceptions EOC have about the teaching profession and the disparate attrition rates between EOC and their White peers (Andrews et al., 2019; Choi, 2018; Gorski, 2019b; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). This is a social problem because the negative perceptions EOC have about the teaching profession lead to a shortage of EOC at a time when research indicates all students not only prefer EOC over White educators but also have greater academic success when they have EOC (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Farinde-Wu, 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kokka, 2016; Magaldi et al., 2018). Greater academic success is particularly true for students of color, who lag behind their White peers on academic success indicators such as graduation rates, attendance, and grade point average (Dee & Penner, 2017; Sleeter, 2011; Sueyoshi & Sujittparapitay, 2020).

The way EOC experience racism manifests in a variety of ways and often depends on the racial, ethnic, and gender identities of the EOC. All EOC, regardless of racial, ethnic, or gender identity, have reported experiencing frequent racial microaggressions in the form of the devaluation of their teaching skills or knowledge of the content they teach (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Choi, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). Asian American educators reported microaggressions related to the model minority myth in

which Asian American educators are assumed to only be skilled in teaching science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) content (Choi, 2018). Black and Latino male educators reported being commodified for the sake of disciplining male students of color (Patterson, 2019; Singh, 2018). Black women and Latinas reported being labeled as angry problem makers who are incompetent (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

EOC have reported experiencing racism at all three levels of Jones' (2000) levels of racism framework: personally mediated, institutional, and internal. EOC experience personally mediated racism at the hands of students and colleagues when they are assumed incompetent (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). At the institutional level, EOC experience racism when they are expected to teach a racist, Eurocentric curriculum and be evaluated on their performance against Eurocentric norms that lack a culturally responsive lens (del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The racism EOC experience at the personally mediated and institutional levels frequently leaves them feeling exhausted and questioning their worth as educators, which leads to internalized racism (Fernández, 2019; Gorski, 2019b; Kohli, 2019; Navarro, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017; Sacramento, 2019). These experiences with racism may lead to disproportionately high attrition rates of EOC.

Efforts to recruit EOC have been successful, but little is known about successful programs to retain EOC, largely because little attention has been paid to the systems and institutions that foster the type of racism reported by EOC (Andrews et al, 2019; Haddix, 2017). Ladson-Billings (1998) specifically called out curriculum as a way in which

racism infiltrates education, saying, "Critical race theory sees the official school curriculum as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a white supremacist master script" (p. 18). The author further argued that how curricula are taught is racist, with educators often having a deficient view of students of color, specifically African American students. The ways racism manifests in education institutions justify a critical exploration of the role ethnic studies might play in the perceptions of EOC regarding the teaching profession. The justification for exploration is strengthened by research indicating that EOC share lived experiences and cultural wealth with students of all backgrounds, and that EOC enter the teaching profession to connect with and advocate for students who share their racialized identities (Andrews et al., 2019; Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Kokka, 2016; Magaldi et al., 2018; McKinney de Royston et al., 2021; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

The need for this study goes deeper than perceptions of EOC of the teaching profession. Students of color as an aggregate are becoming the majority while EOC continue to be the extreme minority (Huebeck, 2020; Long, 2020; National Center for Education Statistics, 2020; Will, 2019). If education institutions are to meet the needs of students of color, they need to address the systemic racism experienced by everyone in the system, especially EOC.

Curriculum

To understand how curriculum may influence EOC's perceptions of the teaching profession, it is important to know how various educators and scholars define curriculum. Arguably, how curriculum is perceived and operationalized in classrooms by educators is

more important than definitions assigned by scholars and theorists when trying to understand the role it plays in retention of EOC (Ladson-Billings, 1995). For example, when asked what a curriculum is, different educators may respond with different answers. Some people believe a textbook and all its accompanying materials, like workbooks, assessments, and online tools, is a curriculum (Flake, 2017). Others may indicate it consists of standards, units, lessons, and assessments. *Education Week* recently defined it as a "course of study" (Vander Ark, 2017). For others, a curriculum can be as simple as a framework that guides educators to create and cultivate their repertoire of lessons, activities, and assessments based on their students' needs and interests. The latter has been advanced by advocates of ethnic studies, a racial justice, abolitionist, and culturally sustaining curriculum (Tolteka Cuauhtin, 2019). Some ethnic studies scholars emphasize the need for pedagogy to be incorporated into the definition of curriculum, as they believe ethnic studies curriculum cannot exist without a decolonizing pedagogy (Fernández, 2019).

Ethnic Studies

Ethnic studies is a curriculum and pedagogy unique from other disciplines such as multiculturalism and social justice pedagogies. Unlike most curricula, ethnic studies requires the use of critical pedagogies (Fernández, 2019). Ethnic studies centers specifically on racial justice, which includes the intersections of all other forms of justice including economic justice, disability justice, gender justice, etc. (Crenshaw, 1989; Dee & Penner, 2017; Sleeter, 2011). Additionally, educators who use ethnic studies curriculum and pedagogy can provide tools and strategies to students to dismantle

oppressive systems, including Eurocentric curriculum and White-normed pedagogical practices. Examples of such practices include the banking model of education and curricula that completely omit the histories of people of color (An, 2020; Bybee, 2020; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Dominguez, 2017; Freire, 1968; Kim-Cragg, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Educators do so by lifting what DuBois (1903) referred to as *the veil*. The veil acts to hide racial oppression from White people that is the daily lived experience of Black people and other people of color.

Ethnic studies educators and scholars call for a return to indigenous epistemologies that challenge the erasure of precolonial ways of knowing and being as well as recognition that culture and communities are shaped by dynamic individuals and movements (Dominguez, 2017; Fernández, 2019). For these reasons, ethnic studies is a valuable tool for EOC to demonstrate their cultural wealth and to connect to the cultural wealth of their students. For example, EOC have lived experiences with racism and lived experiences resisting racism and liberating themselves and others from racially oppressive systems and constraints (Ladson-Billings, 1998). EOC have the lived experiences around which ethnic studies centers and tend to enter the education profession to be advocates for students of color (Kokka, 2016; Migaldi et al., 2018; Sacramento, 2019). If EOC feel valued by the curriculum they are expected to teach, their perceptions of the teaching profession may change (del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

K–12 Ethnic Studies Implementation

School districts in several states across the United States are planning for or implementing ethnic studies programs in K–12 schools. The Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI, 2019) assembled a committee tasked with creating a model K–12 ethnic studies curriculum per Senate Bills 6066 and 5023. These bills do not mandate K–12 ethnic studies but rather suggest it. The California legislature led the way with similar legislation, and a model K–12 ethnic studies curriculum was ratified by the state board of education in March 2021 (California Department of Education, 2020). Indiana has created ethnic studies standards for the state's K–12 classrooms, and Texas has adopted a Mexican American ethnic studies curriculum (Indiana Department of Education, 2018; Swaby, 2018).

The implementation of ethnic studies in various content areas and grade levels has a proven record of improving academic outcomes for students of color. In an analysis of ethnic studies research documenting the effect on students of ethnic studies in pre–K through higher education, Sleeter (2011) found common indicators of student success improved when ethnic studies curriculum was implemented (Dee & Penner, 2017; Sueyoshi & Sujitparapitay, 2020). Sleeter's (2011) analysis included a review of research on the implementation of ethnic studies curriculum in disciplines like mathematics, especially for students of color (Dee & Penner, 2017; Sueyoshi & Sujitparapitay, 2020).

Dee and Penner (2017) conducted a quantitative analysis of matriculating ninth graders who were identified as at risk of not graduating from high school. The findings were that, for both Black and Latinx ninth graders, taking one semester of ethnic studies

was significantly related to higher grade point average and attendance, thus reducing the risk of not graduating on time. In a similar study, Cabrera et al. (2014) conducted a quantitative study on the academic outcomes of Latinx students who participated in the Tucson Unified School District's Mexican American ethnic studies program. The researchers found that for students who participated in the program there was a significant relationship to being more likely to graduate from high school as well as reaching proficiency on the state assessment for graduation (Cabrera et al., 2014). At the university level, Sueyoshi and Sujitparapitay (2020) found a significant relationship between taking ethnic studies courses and graduation rates of students of all racial backgrounds, with graduation rates boosted by as much as 72%.

Research on how antiracist and ethnic studies professional development influences the perceptions of educators has indicated that EOC view it as life giving and revitalizing, reminding them why they entered the profession to begin with (Fernández, 2019; Kohli, 2019; Sacramento, 2019). With retention rates lagging recruiting efforts for EOC, policymakers and school administrators need to look for new ways to improve the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession. Improvements will require addressing the working conditions and mitigating racial oppression for EOC.

Problem Statement

Little research has been conducted on how ethnic studies curriculum may influence the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. This is an important gap in the literature to fill because a shortage of EOC exists in K-12, urban public schools, in part because of low retention rates. This shortage exists

despite evidence suggesting students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds prefer EOC

(Andrews et al., 2019; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Haddix, 2017). The degree of racial

discrimination EOC experience in the K–12 environment results in higher turnover rates,

exacerbating the shortage (Kohli, 2018). Andrews et al. (2019) argued that much of the

literature focuses on recruiting EOC while neglecting structural changes to the working

environment, including the curriculum EOC are expected to teach (Ladson-Billings,

1998). As a result, retention of EOC continues to go unaddressed (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

 Racism experienced in their profession negatively influences the perceptions of

EOC who teach in K–12, urban public schools, which leads to lower rates of retention for

EOC than their White peers (Choi, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Gorski, 2019; Kohli,

2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). Improving EOC's perceptions of the teaching

profession in K–12, urban public schools may increase their retention rates. The focus of

research on ethnic studies curriculum is completely on students (Dee & Penner, 2017;

Sleeter, 2011; Sueyoshi & Sujitparapitay, 2020). When research on ethnic studies

curriculum is focused on educators, the topic of the research has been how professional

development, not teaching ethnic studies curriculum, influence the perceptions of

educators (Fernández, 2019; Kohli, 2019; Sacramento, 2019).

 The need for EOC is clear. EOC have strong, positive relationships with students

of color, who are becoming the majority demographic in many places across the United

States (Brown & Tam, 2019; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Gale, 2020; Huebeck, 2020; Kohli

et al., 2017; Learning Policy Institute, 2018; Long, 2020; Navarro, 2018; Neal-Jackson,

2018; Will, 2019). Several scholars have called for a more critical examination of the role

curriculum plays in retaining EOC (Andrews et al., 2019; Haddix, 2017). There is evidence that curriculum and how EOC are evaluated in their use of it add to the racialized stressors of EOC, which negatively influences their perceptions of the teaching profession (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

All teachers, regardless of racial or ethnic identity, point to high-stakes accountability in education policy as the main source of stress and burnout (Ryan et al., 2017). This stress is exacerbated for EOC, who have the added layers of racial oppression to battle, including the Eurocentric curriculum that comes along with these accountability measures (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). EOC report losing touch with their vision of education and why they became an educator: to advocate for and connect with their students of color (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Fernández, 2019; Gorski & Parekh, 2020; Magaldi et al., 2018; Navarro, 2018). Ethnic studies curriculum with its focus on the lived experiences of people and communities of color may change the negative perceptions many EOC have of the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative critical narrative inquiry study was to explore how ethnic studies curriculum may influence how EOC who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools.

Research Questions

RQ1: How does creating and teaching ethnic studies curriculum contribute to EOC's experiences with the three levels of racism (personally mediated, institutional, and internalized)?

RQ2: What role does ethnic studies curriculum in K–12, urban public schools play in ethnic studies EOC's sense of worth in the teaching profession?

RQ3: What role does ethnic studies curriculum play in the desire of ethnic studies EOC to stay in their current role?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that grounds this study is Jones's (2000) levels of racism framework. Jones's (2000) framework further defines a tenet of CRT, the *centrality of racism*, summarized below. In the framework, Jones (2000) builds on the concept that racism is core to every aspect of life by identifying three levels of social systems where racism takes hold.

Jones's (2000) theory is a specific component of the larger CRT framework. CRT dates to the 1970s through legal scholarship that examined how legislation to curtail systemic racial oppression since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s largely failed (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1989). The work done using CRT began to be applied to education in the 1990s by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995). Scholars like Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Solórzano and Yosso (2001; 2002) used CRT to critique policies and practices and to discover remedies for systemic racial oppression in education. The basic tenets of CRT are centrality of racism, challenges to claims of

neutrality, Whites as beneficiaries of racial remedies, centrality of experiential knowledge, and commitment to working for social justice (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lee & Lee, 2021; Sleeter, 2012). CRT scholars believe that refusing to validate the expertise ordinary people hold on their own experiences dispossesses marginalized people and groups (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lee & Lee, 2021). Since CRT was first applied to education, scholars have expanded upon and highlighted the importance of its application:

The centrality of racism rejects the belief that racism deviates from social norms (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Sleeter, 2012). Instead, racism is seen as a common belief that is largely invisible unless purposefully exposed. In education, scholars have exposed racism in the evaluation of EOC, the treatment of EOC by colleagues and administrators, and even treatment by students (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Choi, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

Challenges to claims of neutrality is a tenet of CRT that explains that historical context and de facto racism prevent most laws, policies, and practices from being equally applied to people. Several scholars have argued that what appears to be a neutral curriculum places people of color in deficits or completely erases them, leading the consumer to believe stories that people of color do not exist or are culturally deficient (An, 2020; Kim-Cragg, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998; López & Nikey, 2021; Martin, 2019; Robbins, 2018). Bybee (2020) argued that much of the curriculum seen to be neutral lacks criticality, which is dehumanizing for students and EOC.

The tenet of *Whites as beneficiaries of racial remedies*, commonly referred to as interest convergence, explains that White people only act on racial justice when they will directly benefit from it (Bell, 1980). One example noted by Sleeter (2012) is the mass replacement of Black teachers by White teachers after integration. Au's (2016) research indicated that high-stakes standardized tests are another example of interest convergence in that test makers sell them as a racial equity tool despite data indicating the tests largely benefit White, affluent students.

Centrality of experiential knowledge asserts that the people best equipped to define racism are people who experience it. Additionally, people of color have the cultural wealth to provide counternarratives that dispel the deficit narratives created about people of color by dominant narratives (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Sleeter, 2012). Valuing this cultural knowledge and providing counternarratives is cathartic for both students and educators of color (Fernández, 2019; Kohli, 2018; Martin, 2019; Navarro, 2018; San Pedro, 2018).

Commitment to working for social justice: While some CRT scholars do not see an end to racism, others believe that critical analysis of race and racism will help find a solution. As such, CRT scholars are committed to working toward social justice (Bell, 1980; Sleeter, 2012). Several scholars who have applied CRT to education research have found that EOC entered the teaching profession to advance racial and social justice (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Fernández, 2019; Kohli, 2018; Kokka, 2016; Navarro, 2018).

Jones's (2000) framework identified three levels of racism: internalized, personally mediated, and institutional. The framework also defines how each level of

racism is experienced and relates to one another. The use of a garden metaphor helps

readers conceptualize the levels, describing the gardener as the person causing the levels

of racism. In the case of education, the gardeners would be policymakers and

administrators.

In Jones's (2000) story, the gardener plants pink and red flowers in two separate

pots. The soil in each pot differs greatly, one being nutrient rich and the other being rocky

and devoid of nutrients. The soil represents institutional racism and the disparities that

exist like funding, lack of qualified educators, lack of social services, etc. The gardener

disliked pink flowers so gave more attention and care to the red flowers. This, Jones

(2000) said, is an example of personally mediated racism. In the case of education, this

would manifest as preferential treatment for White educators over EOC. Jones (2000)

anthropomorphized the flowers to exemplify internalized racism when they rejected

pollen from their pink counterparts and pleaded with bees for pollen from the red flowers

instead. In the case of EOC, this might look like feeling incapable of performing their

duties adequately or having formed negative perceptions of the teaching profession, thus

leaving EOC questioning if it is the right place for them.

The tenets of CRT and how they are used to challenge White-dominated systems

make it an indispensable framework for critical narrative inquiry on topics of power and

oppression. Much of the scholarship cited in this study uses CRT as a conceptual

framework, including Burciaga and Kohli (2018), Choi (2018), del Carmen Salazar

(2018), Gorski (2019b), Gorski and Erakat (2019), Kohli, (2018), Rauscher and Wilson

(2017), Sacramento (2019), and Singh (2018). These scholars, all of whom have focused

on the experiences of EOC with racism, used some form of CRT as a conceptual framework to conduct their research.

The logical connection between the framework presented and the nature of my study is that EOC experience all three levels of racism in the workplace. Unless all three levels are addressed, EOC's perceptions of the teaching profession may continue to be negative. Such negative perceptions have been shown to create disproportionately low retention rates among EOC.

EOC are evaluated against and expected to teach White-normed, Eurocentric curricula and thus experience racism at the institutional level (del Carmen Salazar, 2018). Personally mediated racism is experienced when EOC's colleagues and supervisors dismiss their lived experiences (Choi, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). Internalized racism occurs when EOC are made to feel their experiences are less valid (Gorski, 2019; Kohli, 2018). As people of color, EOC are uniquely positioned to teach ethnic studies curriculum, which may play a role in mitigating these levels of racism that EOC experience in the workplace. In my study, I analyzed data gathered from participant interviews using the three levels in Jones's (2000) framework, exploring how ethnic studies EOC perceive ethnic studies curriculum influencing their perceptions about the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools.

CRT and critical narrative inquiry are naturally compatible for research design and data analysis, including the study approach and instrument development. Both CRT and critical narrative inquiry seek to understand the perspectives of people most affected by a topic of study, placing the participants as experts collectively constructing a

narrative (Hickson, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lee & Lee, 2021; Pitre et al., 2013; Sleeter, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT provides a framework to guide a researcher in designing a study, its instruments, and its participants that centers the expertise of people and communities of color; in the case of this study, EOC. For example, Jones's (2000) framework guided me in developing research questions to elicit responses from EOC regarding how ethnic studies may influence how EOC experience the three levels of racism outlined in her framework. I used the tenets of CRT outlined in this chapter to make sense of the data collected and place it in a greater context of racial power dynamics and systems (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lee & Lee, 2021; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Nature of the Study

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study because I was seeking to understand how EOC perceive their profession, and perception is a form of meaning making. Qualitative inquiry is focused on the meaning of phenomena and how humans think about and engage with each other and their world (Patton, 2015). Critical narrative inquiry was chosen as a research design because it most closely aligns with the conceptual framework and the CRT tenet of the centrality of experiential knowledge—in this case, centering the experiential knowledge of EOC (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Additionally, critical narrative inquiry includes an examination of the unequal distribution of power (Hickson, 2016).

In this study, I aimed to center the experiential knowledge of EOC through their narratives and explore how that experiential knowledge shapes the perceptions EOC have

about the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools (Jones, 2000; Lee & Lee, 2021; Sleeter, 2012). Critical narrative inquiry is used to understand the context in which people experience social and cultural phenomena like systematic racial oppression. It is a critical approach in that a researcher must be grounded in a critical theory like CRT and use that theory to contextualize data (Hickson, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2021; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

A researcher's role in critical narrative inquiry is to be reflexive to the context of the narratives. Using critical narrative inquiry requires a researcher to have the capacity to critically reflect on their understanding of the context of the narratives (Hickson, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Aside from my professional roles, I have experiential knowledge as a mixed-race person navigating systems of White supremacy. My father is Mexican American, and my mother is White. I was raised in a Mexican American community and only had White educators until I reached college. My first Latinx educator was a Colombian Spanish teacher in community college. I did not have a Black or Chicanx educator until university. While I was identified as a gifted student, I dropped out of all advanced courses in high school because there was a lack of racial representation in both the curricula and educators. Additionally, despite living in majority Mexican American communities, I was frequently the target of racial microaggressions and race-based discrimination. For example, my giftedness was regularly questioned by educators and administrators despite having passed every test to identify gifted learners, regularly scoring in the top-most percentiles of standardized tests, and receiving multiple honors for academic achievement.

Study participants were selected if they self-identified as a person of color, including racial categories such as Black/African American, Latinx/Chicanx, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous (non-European). I used the demographic questionnaire in Appendix B to ensure racial and ethnic representation was equally present. To be selected, participants needed to work and teach in an urban, public K–12 school. To qualify for the study, potential participants needed to work directly with children delivering instruction daily. Participants could teach any grade level and any content area if they could demonstrate they were incorporating ethnic studies curriculum.

The data for this study were collected using interviews with questions created based on the alignment matrix included in Appendix D, which are aligned to the research questions. Follow-up or clarifying interview questions varied depending on the interviewee. Interviews were conducted via a secured Zoom account and were audio recorded. I analyzed the data to identify themes that emerged (see Babbie, 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I kept regular notes of thought processes during the data collection process. This practice is necessary according to the tenets of critical narrative inquiry methodology to apply CRT and to minimize the bias of the researcher (Hickson, 2016; Pitre et al., 2013; Saldaña, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). My journal notes reflected my understanding of CRT and how data may be interpreted through the conceptual framework.

Coding of data began during data collection to identify emerging patterns and determine saturation. This allowed me to critically reflect on all data as they were being collected. Coding was conducted manually using primary and secondary cycles (see

Saldaña, 2014). Codes were identified through emerging patterns in the data using Jones's (2000) CRT conceptual framework as a guide.

Definitions

The following terms and their definitions are provided to assist the reader in contextualizing the terms throughout this study.

Antiracism: A personal practice of unlearning racist ideas (Kendi, 2019). When applied to a system, antiracism is most frequently defined as a verb in that it is engaging in actively dismantling systems and structures of racial oppression (Ray, 2020).

Culturally relevant pedagogy: A practice relevant to students of various cultural backgrounds and that includes content students from various cultural backgrounds can easily access and contextualize, including being able to critically engage with, challenge, and act upon the content (Ladson-Billings, 2017).

Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A practice that not only provides culturally relevant pedagogy and content but provides opportunities for students to define and sustain their cultural identities, recognizing that culture is dynamic (Paris & Alim, 2017).

Culturally disruptive pedagogy: A practice that intentionally and explicitly disrupts White supremacy culture and White-normed pedagogies (San Pedro, 2018).

Cultural wealth: The histories, knowledge, experience, and wisdom related to cultural epistemologies that people bring with them to a situation (Yosso, 2005).

Curriculum: The entirety of the teaching and learning process (Fernández, 2019; Kim-Cragg, 2019).

Educators of color (EOC): People who work to educate youth who do not identify as solely a descendant of European ancestors. This includes but is not limited to people who identify as Asian, Black, and Indigenous. This includes people from Latin America who do not solely identify as a descendant of European ancestors. This term does not include people who identify as Jewish who are also White (Franklin et al., 2008; Schraub, 2019).

Ethnic studies: A course of study that centers on the experiences, histories, stories, struggles, and perspectives of racially minoritized groups. Ethnic studies consists of culturally relevant content and culturally sustaining pedagogies, making it a holistic curriculum (Dee & Penner, 2017).

Fugitive pedagogies/fugitivity: The reality that antiracist educators work within oppressive systems while trying to dismantle those systems. Often paired with abolition, which is the call to abolish and recreate existing systems of education, fugitivity is an act of subversion meant to liberate people (Caldas, 2021; Coles et al., 2021; Givens, 2021; McNeill et al., 2021).

Racial battle fatigue: The negative psychophysiological symptoms many people of color experience in predominantly White institutions (PWIs; Smith et al., 2011).

Tone policing: A phenomenon in which a speaker is dismissed because they are too emotional when telling their story. The person doing the policing is centering their own comfort, which prevents key ideas from being communicated (Finders & Kwame-Ross, 2020).

Whiteness: A hegemonic structure of power that benefits White people (Kim-Cragg, 2019).

White supremacy culture: The ideology that White people and the culture they have created in the United States is superior to the people, culture, and beliefs of people of color (Plummer et al., 2021). Whiteness, White supremacy culture, and colonial epistemologies are used interchangeably in this text.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made in the current study. One assumption was that EOC prefer to teach ethnic studies. Another assumption was that all EOC have the cultural wealth and ability to teach ethnic studies. Some EOC may have been assimilated into White supremacy culture and believe in a colorblind ideology, rendering them void of any cultural wealth other than White supremacy culture. I assumed that participants would provide honest and accurate accounts of their experiences and perceptions. I also assumed that participants would accurately identify themselves as K–12 EOC who teach in urban public schools.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the current study was limited to understanding the perceptions of EOC who teach ethnic studies in K–12 urban, public schools about the teaching profession in one state. These delimitations were chosen because the focus of this study is on how the ethnic studies curriculum EOC use may influence their perceptions of the teaching profession. EOC were chosen as the focal group because the literature indicates a need for and lack of EOC in K–12 education.

White educators and EOC who do not teach ethnic studies curriculum were excluded from this study because the research did not indicate a need to focus on perceptions of White educators about the teaching profession in K–12 urban, public schools, and this study was focused specifically on educators who use ethnic studies curriculum. These parameters limited the transferability of the findings of this research study to EOC who teach ethnic studies in K–12, urban public schools. The state of Washington was chosen due to the convenience of the location for the researcher.

Limitations

This study may not be transferable to regions outside of Washington state or areas that do not value ethnic studies curriculum. The findings may not be transferable to schools or districts that define ethnic studies more narrowly than the participants of this study. This study may not be transferable to studies that do not define ethnic studies as an antiracist curriculum. Bias of the researcher may be a limitation as I identify as an EOC and currently serve as the executive director of an ethnic studies nonprofit I founded.

One district represented by several participants had just completed a labor strike before I began interviews. Five of the participants felt the outcome of the strike was unsatisfactory and failed to include what they considered critical support for students of color. Three participants referred to these feelings of dissatisfaction when sharing their experiences with systems of education. Their feelings post-strike may have skewed their responses to the line of questioning around systems.

Significance

This study is significant in that it may fill the gap in the literature on how curriculum may contribute to EOC's perceptions of the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. The data collected in this study may inform policymakers at state and local levels as well as school district administrators in their efforts to retain EOC in K–12, urban public school districts by adding to their understanding of best practices for retaining EOC. Research indicates there are robust efforts to recruit EOC but little effort to improve systemic conditions like work environment and curriculum to retain those EOC (Andrews et al., 2019; Haddix, 2017).

Furthermore, results from this study may help administrators and policymakers understand systemic changes in curriculum needed to increase the retention of EOC. The results may also inform the implementation of ethnic studies programs on a systemic level rather than focusing only on curriculum initiatives. This research may bring about positive change because when EOC retention rates improve, outcomes for students of color may also improve (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Rasheed et al., 2019).

Summary

There is an increase in demand for EOC because the demographics of schools in the United States are shifting with an increase in students of color; additionally, research suggests that EOC are more culturally responsive to the needs of students of color and White students alike (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Huebeck, 2020; Yosso, 2005). Ethnic studies is a curriculum and pedagogy that has proven effective in closing academic disparities among students of color and their peers, but most research on the effects of

ethnic studies measured student success, not educator success or perceptions (Dee &

Penner, 2017; Sleeter, 2011; Sueyoshi & Sujitparapitay, 2020). Though scholars have

indicated that EOC leave the teaching profession at greater rates and cite feelings of

being devalued and experiences with racism, little research has been conducted on how

curricula EOC are expected to teach may influence their perception of the teaching

profession in K–12, urban public schools (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Choi, 2018;

Greenberg, 2020; Johnson, 2021; Kohli, 2018; Patterson, 2019; Rauscher & Wilson,

2017; Singh, 2018).

Using CRT as a conceptual framework, I aimed to understand, through critical

narrative inquiry, how ethnic studies EOC perceive the teaching profession in K–12,

urban public schools. EOC who taught in K–12, urban public schools were interviewed to

ascertain their perceptions of their profession and the role teaching ethnic studies played

in those perceptions. The implications for this study could inform curriculum programs

design and retention efforts for EOC.

Chapter 2 includes a description of the literature search strategy and literature

review of previous scholarship on this phenomenon. Additionally, Chapter 2 provides an

in-depth review of Jones's (2000) CRT framework that situates it within the broader CRT

framework. A discussion on the application of CRT to education is also included in

Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In existing literature, researchers indicated a need for EOC in K–12 schools to meet the needs of students of color and also identified a shortage of EOC due, in part, to EOC's experiences with racism in the K–12 education profession. The purpose of this qualitative critical narrative inquiry study was to explore how ethnic studies curriculum may influence how EOC who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. The specific research problem addressed through this study is a gap in the literature about how ethnic studies curricula may influence the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools.

The major sections of this chapter start with background information on the need for and shortage of EOC. The experiences and perceptions of EOC include an explanation of the conceptual framework used to design this study. The framework is used to explain how racial oppression, including personally mediated, institutional, and internalized levels of racial oppression, may negatively influence the perceptions of the teaching profession for EOC in K–12, urban public schools, which may influence disproportionate attrition rates among EOC (Jones, 2000). A brief definition of ethnic studies is provided, followed by a review of literature on connections between racial justice curricula and perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools.

Literature Search Strategy

The following databases were searched: ERIC, SAGE Journals, and Education Source. The following keywords were used to search for relevant literature on the topic: *teaching profession, perceptions of teachers, retention, burnout, educators, teachers, minority, Black, Latinx, Mexican American, African American, racism in K–12 education, racism in curriculum, curriculum, ethnic studies, urban schools, critical pedagogy and indigenous epistemologies,* and *racial demographics*. An iterative search process was conducted by identifying initial research then reconducting searches using keywords scholars used or cited in the initial research.

Initial searches using key terms uncovered little research on how ethnic studies EOC perceive the teaching profession. Additionally, little research was discovered that linked ethnic studies curriculum to EOC's experiences or perceptions. Because no research could be found on how ethnic studies EOC perceive the teaching profession and research on perceptions of EOC in general revealed few results, I conducted a search on the general perceptions of K–12 educators with an emphasis on the perceptions of the teaching profession among K–12 EOC. A search was also conducted on how race and racism influence the perceptions of the teaching profession among EOC, including professors of color, because there was little research conducted on race and racism in the K–12 teaching profession.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used to research this dissertation was CRT, specifically the levels of racism framework by Jones (2000). CRT was first researched by

Bell (1980), a Black law professor at Harvard. In the 1990s, Black scholars, particularly

Black, feminist scholars like Ladson-Billings (1998), applied CRT to education. There

are five core tenets of CRT: centrality of racism, challenges to claims of neutrality,

whites as beneficiaries of racial remedies, centrality of experiential knowledge, and

commitment to working for social justice (Sleeter, 2012).

Ladson-Billings (1998) argued that CRT is operationalized in education through

curriculum, instruction, assessment, funding, and desegregation. Ladson-Billings (1998)

quoted Swartz: "Master scripting [through curriculum] silences multiple voices and

perspectives, primarily legitimizing dominant, white, upper-class, male voicings as the

'standard' knowledge students need to know" (p. 18). This silencing and erasure affect

both students and EOC, with the latter putting aside their racialized identities and

experiences to teach the master script (del Carmen Salazar, 2018).

Racial stress has been identified as a contributing factor to negative perceptions of

the teaching profession among EOC (Gorski, 2019b; Kokka, 2016; Kohli, 2018;

Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). The CRT tenet, *centrality of race*, particularly in curriculum,

affects EOC on the three levels outlined in Jones's (2000) framework. Jones (2000)

outlined three distinct levels of racism that people of color experience: institutionalized,

personally mediated, and internalized.

When combined with Ladson-Billings's (1998) application of CRT to education,

it becomes clear that EOC experience racism through curriculum, instruction, and

assessment because they are expected to teach the master script, which influences all

three of Jones's (2000) levels. The government decides what EOC are required to teach

and assess and sometimes how to instruct their students, which is the institutional level of racism (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Personally mediated racism occurs when EOC experience racial hostility and microaggressions from supervisors, peers, students, and families who regularly and openly doubt their ability to teach the master script curricula (Choi, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Kohli, 2019). Finally, EOC experience internalized racism when they are made to feel, through the first two levels of racism, that their cultural wealth and personal experiences are not valid or valued, and they must conform to Eurocentric education norms (Anisman-Razin & Saguy, 2016; Burciaga, & Kohli, 2018; Choi, 2018; Kokka, 2016; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017; Singh, 2018). The latter phenomenon is exacerbated by the reality that many EOC report that they entered the teaching profession because they recognize their cultural wealth and their ability to connect with students of color because of it (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Kokka, 2016; Magaldi et al., 2018).

Bias against EOC is confirmed through the evaluation process of EOC that uses Eurocentric measures and finds EOC inadequate (del Carmen Salazar, 2018). What educators choose to teach and how they teach it are part of the evaluation process (del Carmen Salazar, 2018). The current study will add to the understanding of how curricula and CRT intersect by exploring through qualitative critical narrative inquiry how teaching ethnic studies curriculum may influence the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools.

Literature Review

Much of the literature on the topic of how EOC perceive the teaching profession is deficit based and focuses on the negative experiences of EOC and how those negative experiences influence EOC's perceptions of the teaching profession. Researchers like Kohli (2018; 2019) and Gorski (2019a; 2019b) have collected volumes of qualitative data from EOC at the K–12 and university levels. Of the two, only Kohli (2018) researched possible solutions to these negative experiences, focusing on professional development created specifically for antiracist EOC.

Kohli's (2018) research appears promising, but scholars like Andrews et al. (2019) and Haddix (2017) have called for more research on how curriculum may influence EOC's perceptions of the teaching profession because it requires a transformation of the system, not the educators. Ladson-Billings (1998) supported calls to transform systems, not people, explaining how curriculum is a vehicle to perpetuate systemic racism. However, little research has been conducted on how ethnic studies may influence EOC's perceptions of the teaching profession.

The shortage of EOC is well documented, and though research is plentiful on recruiting efforts for EOC, little research exists on effective ways to retain EOC in K–12, urban public schools. Because the research specific to ethnic studies curriculum and the perception of EOC in K–12, urban public schools is so sparse, several emergent themes are used to describe how these two topics are connected. This chapter outlines several themes that emerged from the literature review including the need for EOC and how they positively influence student outcomes; the preference for EOC by all students, regardless

of racial or ethnic identity; racism experienced by EOC; the perceptions of the teaching profession of EOC compared to their White counterparts, including literature on the causes of burnout among EOC and the role Whiteness plays in their burnout; the current state of K–12 curriculum and the role curriculum plays in the perceptions of educators; and a brief overview of ethnic studies.

The necessity of critical pedagogy and the emphasis on indigenous epistemologies in ethnic studies along with the unique positionality of EOC to practice both are included in the literature review as well. This approach was selected because of the lack of research on the topic and because it creates a through line, linking student outcomes to the documented experiences of EOC and how ethnic studies has demonstrated a mitigation of these experiences with students of color, and thus the possibility of influencing the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession. The literature review also includes the racial demographics and conditions for students of color in K–12, urban public schools to understand the importance of ethnic studies EOC in K–12, urban public schools.

Several researchers have documented perceptions among EOC of the teaching profession, including why they chose to teach, what they enjoy about the profession, and their experiences with racism and the burnout associated with racial microaggressions in the workplace (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Kokka, 2016). This is an important field of study because researchers have also found that EOC are more effective with all students, but particularly with students of color (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Magaldi et al., 2018; Sacramento, 2019). The perceptions of EOC of the

teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools are largely based on EOC's personal, racial, and ethnic identities and the microaggressions they experience in racially hostile working environments. These experiences with racism and the negative perceptions EOC have of the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools work to push EOC out of the profession (Anisman-Razin & Saguy, 2016; Gorski, 2019; Gorski & Erakat, 2019; Kohli, 2019; Singh, 2018).

Ethnic studies is a field of study that centers the experiences and knowledge of people and communities of color while challenging racist systems and institutions, including education (Dee & Penner, 2017; Fernández, 2019; Sleeter, 2011; Sueyoshi & Sujitparapitaya, 2020). Counternarratives from lived experiences of people of color and challenging Whiteness as property in K–12 curriculum are central tenets of ethnic studies and CRT (Cuevas, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Martínez, 2017). As such, EOC have unique perspectives on the world and curriculum that position them to be best suited to teach ethnic studies (Ladson-Billings, 1998). However, racism EOC experience in the profession continues to push them out despite the positive influences of ethnic studies curriculum on students (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Choi, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

Ethnic studies programs are being implemented across districts in Washington state in K–12 classrooms, but most of the research on the efficacy of ethnic studies curriculum has been conducted on high school students. Little research has been done on how the curriculum EOC teach may influence their perceptions of the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. In a time of racial justice movements, including racial

justice movements specific to K–12 education, this is an important query: How do ethnic studies EOC perceive ethnic studies curriculum influencing their perceptions of the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools? To help readers understand why this question is important, I start with the current conditions in K–12, urban public schools for students of color.

Racial Demographics and Conditions of K–12, Urban, Public Schools

The post-World War II era saw a rapid expansion of the suburbs to which White, affluent families moved. Racial redlining and White flight from urban centers to restricted, suburban communities created segregated communities. The suburbs became White, and people of color were confined to urban centers (Straub & Richards, 2017). Little has changed since the post-World War II era. Straub and Richards (2017) conducted a qualitative, longitudinal analysis that found that over a 10-year period, 2002-2012, segregation between suburbs and urban centers increased. In 2002, 47.9% of urban residents were White, 22.4% were Black, 22.9% were Hispanic, and 5.9% were Asian. In 2012, the percentage of White residents in urban centers decreased by 14.6%, while Black and Hispanic residents increased by 7% and 8.1%, respectively. The percentage of Asian residents stayed constant (Straub & Richards, 2017).

The increased population density of students of color in urban school districts necessitates a distinction be made in the discussion of the need for EOC. Jang (2020) conducted a quantitative, longitudinal study on the relationships between racial and ethnic matching between students and teachers. Jang (2020) measured and compared data between urban, suburban, and rural schools. Jang (2020) found that Black, Hispanic, and

Asian students are rarely matched with EOC regardless of urbanicity, and that a positive correlation between mathematical achievement and same race and ethnicity matching was most significant for Black students, but only in suburban areas.

Jang (2020) claimed that CRT provides a plausible explanation for this in the interconnected effects of socioeconomic status, urban centers, and race. Poverty, including housing and food insecurity, may limit the ability of many children of color to adequately access learning regardless of the identity of their teachers. Suburban schools, particularly in affluent neighborhoods, tend to be better resourced, which may add to the success of students of color, especially those who are matched with educators of their same racial or ethnic identity (Jang, 2020). Additionally, Jang's (2020) explanation is supported by the findings of a qualitative study by Yu et al. (2017) that indicated affluent, Black families migrate to suburbs to increase their children's chances of higher academic outcomes.

Scholars like Au (2016), Bybee (2020), and Ramsay-Jordan (2019) offer another plausible reason for the difference in achievement between students of color in the suburbs versus urban centers: standardized tests. Scholars have argued standardized tests are an example of *interest convergence* (Au, 2016; Bell, 1980; Bybee, 2020; Ramsay-Jordan, 2019). In his qualitative analysis, Au (2016) argued that the focus on standardized tests intensified in schools with high populations of students of color under the guise of racial equity. The research of Straub and Richards (2017) found that most students of color are enrolled in urban schools.

Ramsay-Jordan (2020) reported in a qualitative study that teachers in urban

schools who were new to the profession found it challenging to implement culturally

responsive teaching practices because of the hyper-focus on standardized test results.

Bybee (2020) argued that this focus on testing resulted in a banking model of education

that focuses on top-down teaching of discrete skills and memorization, void of any

critical thinking or application of culturally relevant pedagogy or content. Bybee (2020)

further argued that the practice of banking education oppressed students and EOC by

removing their humanity from the teaching and learning process. This focus on

standardization that removes humanity from teaching has created an environment that

calls for the re-humanization of education. EOC have the cultural and community wealth

through their personal experiences to rehumanize education for students of color (Cuevas,

2016; Kulago et al., 2021; Martinez, 2017).

Need for Educators of Color

Cherng and Halpin (2016) found that student demographics are shifting. White

students are becoming the minority in many K-12, urban, public schools, and all students,

regardless of racial and ethnic identity, have a significant statistical preference for EOC

(Cherng & Halpin, 2016). The demographic of educators, however, continues to be

overwhelmingly White. In Washington state, 87% of classroom teachers identify as

White, with every other racial and ethnic identity representing less than 5% of the

teaching profession in the state (OSPI, 2019b). In contrast, White students account for

only 52.5% of the student population, with Latinx students having the greatest student of

color population at 24% (OSPI, 2019b). These disparate racial and ethnic demographic

data between students and their educators are contributing to the disparate academic outcomes between students of color and their White peers (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Rasheed et al., 2019).

The majority of EOC teach in urban schools, which tend to have larger populations of students of color (Magaldi et al., 2016). Farinde-Wu (2018) found that Black women purposefully chose to teach in K–12 urban schools because of the higher percentages of Black students and their belief that Black educators have more success teaching Black students. Cherng and Halpin's (2016) research confirms their belief; however, Black educators continue to be the minority in most K–12 urban, public schools. For example, the Black student population in the largest school district in Washington state is 14.4%, while the percentage of Black certificated educators in that district is only 4.6% (OSPI, 2019a).

Cherng and Halpin (2016) found that student academics improved for all students when they had EOC, but the improvements were most dramatic for students of color. This trend seems to be evident in the achievement data for Washington state. Indigenous, Black, and Latinx students have 10%-20% lower high school graduation and attendance rates than their White peers, and Black and Indigenous students are disciplined up to three times more frequently than their White peers (OSPI, 2019b). Recruiting and retaining EOC has to be a top priority to mitigate these egregious disparities in outcomes for students of color, but negative perceptions of the teaching profession caused by racism prevents many EOC from remaining in K–12 urban, public schools (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Choi, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Gorski, 2019a; Gorski, 2019b;

Gorski & Erakat, 2019; Kohli, 2018; Kohli et al., 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

Preference for Educators of Color

Several studies linked teacher–student relationships to academic and social–emotional outcomes for students with a positive correlation between them (Brown & Tam, 2019; Buskirk-Cohn & Plants, 2019; Gale, 2020; Lippard et al., 2018; Valiente et al., 2020). This is true as early as preschool (Lippard et al., 2018). As students grow older and matriculate through grade school, they develop their sense of belonging in their school community. Sense of belonging has been cited as an indicator for successful graduation from high school for Latinx students, but these students are developing their sense of belonging in grades K-5, long before they reach high school (Brown and Tam, 2019). This is significant because Brown and Tam (2019) found in their 2 year study of elementary-school Latinx students that "perceiving discrimination from their teacher in the first year [of the study] was associated with a decrease in feeling like a valued member of school in the second year" (p. 9). The preference for EOC, however, is not limited to Latinx students.

There are significant statistical relationships between having EOC and success for Black students. Gale (2020) found a similar trend for Black adolescents as Latinx students. Gale (2020) and Brown and Tam (2019) found a positive correlation between a sense of belonging and academic outcomes for Black and Latinx students. Gale's (2020) research indicated that teacher-to-student racism can be mitigated when Black students have strong teacher support, but there must be a high degree of support from multiple

teachers. Buskirk-Cohn and Plants (2019) corroborate Gale's (2020) findings at the university level, where students indicated pedagogical caring of instructors had a greater impact on their sense of belonging, and therefore their academic success, than other factors, including grit. EOC are proven to have better rapport and insider perspective with students of color, boosting students' sense of belonging and thus their academic outcomes (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Magaldi et al., 2018; Rasheed et al., 2019; Yosso, 2005).

One reason EOC are more successful with students of color is that they "rely on their personal experiences to understand students' and families' struggles and strengths from an insider's perspective, without stereotype or discrimination against students" (Magaldi et al., p. 314, 2018). In a study on ethnic studies teachers, Sacramento (2019) confirmed this ability of EOC to bridge racial and cultural gaps. Sacramento (2019) observed that EOC found it easier to understand and apply CRT to student experiences than their White colleagues because of their own lived experiences as EOC.

Burciaga and Kohli (2018) found that White educators tend to see the connection EOC have with students of color as a bias toward those students. This perception of many White educators is evidence they do not value the cultural and community wealth of EOC and exhibit jealous behaviors. In turn, EOC respond to this inability of their White colleagues to understand the complexities of racial discrimination and bias with frustration (Sacramento, 2019). What White educators fail to understand is that the connection EOC have with their students is more than just racial and cultural connections; EOC "bring more than their race and act as cultural translators and

advocates for students…,” and are more prepared and capable of engaging their students in discussions of social, racial, and gender inequality (Magaldi et al., 2018, p. 314; Sacramento, 2019).

Racism Experienced by EOC

Racism EOC experience in the workplace is well-documented but generally focused on personally mediated racism such as microaggressions from peers and administrators (Jones, 2000; Kohli, 2018). A study about racism faced by Asian American educators in the workplace focused on microaggressions based on the model minority myth, which frames Asians in a positive light to the detriment of the reality of the lived experiences of Asians and other people of color (Choi, 2018). The two subjects of the study by Choi (2018) taught social studies, but because of the model minority myth claiming Asians stereotypically excel in STEM fields, their expertise was regularly challenged in the social sciences. When Asian American educators speak out against racism they experience, they are labeled aggressive and combative because their outspokenness is counter to the model minority myth stereotype of Asians being submissive (Choi, 2018).

Rauscher and Wilson (2017), however, found that Black and Mexican American educators described racism in terms of systems. They found that Black and Mexican American educators named racial stress as the number one form of stress in the workplace while their white colleagues named student misbehavior as the number one source of stress. Black and Mexican American educators identified racism as manifesting in differential workload, teaching lower-level courses, and receiving less support from

administration than their White colleagues. Black teachers added that they felt intense

pressure to prove their competence to colleagues, administrators, students, and families

(Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

Kohli (2018) also uncovered a systemic racism theme that values EOC as

commodities instead of human beings. In a qualitative study of over 200 EOC, Kohli

(2018) found that EOC believed the education system valued them in terms of improving

test scores for students of color and not for the humanistic element they brought to the

profession in their ability to connect more authentically with students of color. This

commodification "…alienated them from their purpose, passion, and political goals…,"

as educators (p. 325). This alienation may lead to negative perceptions and the burnout

caused by racism outlined by Rauscher and Wilson (2017).

Del Carmen Salazar (2018) offers some insight into the phenomenon of

commodifying EOC and not valuing the cultural and community wealth they bring to the

teaching profession. In their study, del Carmen Salazar (2018) critiques the frameworks

that are used to evaluate educators, including the Danielson Framework created in 1996

by Charlotte Danielson (The Danielson Group, n.d.). Del Carmen Salazar (2018) found

that the Danielson Framework uses white-normed, subjective metrics to evaluate teachers

including structure, respect, active listening, politeness, and fairness. Considering the

racism and microaggressions EOC report in the workplace, it is easy to see the path

leading to negative evaluations for EOC when they are evaluated against white norms

(Choi, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). These white norms, however, are

hidden behind the veil and require intentional disruption (DuBois, 1903). EOC reported

having to submit to Eurocentric standards like a focus on English-only instruction, authoritarianism, and apolitical approaches to pedagogy, all of which are linked to frameworks like the Danielson Framework (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018).

Perceptions of EOC of the Teaching Profession

Various studies have indicated there is a difference in the rationale between White educators and EOC for entering the profession. EOC tend to choose the profession to become role models and advocates for students who share their racial background, and even if they had negative experiences in their K-12 education, there is a sense of hope and optimism in being able to give back to their community (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Kokka, 2016). EOC, particularly Black educators, show a preference for teaching in urban schools because of the student demographics in urban districts, and because many of them attended schools in urban areas during their K–12 education.

Black educators reported viewing their students' behaviors through a cultural lens instead of seeing it as misbehavior as their White colleagues did. Black teachers also saw themselves as role models working in solidarity with their Black students (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Kokka, 2016). This is significant considering Rauscher and Wilson (2017) found that White educators named student behavior as their number one stressor while EOC identified racial discrimination as their number one stressor.

While EOC enter the teaching profession with positive perceptions of the teaching profession and positive perceptions of their self-efficacy, evidence suggests these positive perceptions quickly dissipate in the face of racial discrimination in the profession. EOC

appeared to develop a belief they were ill-equipped to confront racial discrimination by teacher preparation programs. They reported a perception of being commodified and that they lacked support and resources from school administrators (Choi, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Kohli, 2019; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). Educators who use a more critical approach to pedagogy and confront systems of oppression including racism perceive less institutional support to teach their curriculum (Gorski & Parekh, 2020). In addition to racial battle fatigue and burnout, EOC reported increased levels of depression due to personally mediated and systemic racism that leads to greater attrition for EOC than their White colleagues (Choi, 2018; Gorski, 2019b).

One specific way that EOC are commodified in education is tokenization, in which a person is chosen for a specific role to meet a quota or set an example for people who share their identity. Singh (2017) wrote about how men of color are tokenized in education to set positive examples for male students of color. Instead of valuing these male EOC for their cultural and community wealth and their relationship-building skills, they are commodified as tools to encourage compliance from students of color.

A study of all educators found that teacher burnout and stress are significantly linked to high-stakes, standardized testing and accountability measures, which in turn is linked to higher attrition rates (Ryan et al., 2017). Studies on EOC, however, show there is a cumulative stress effect when accountability measures are combined with tokenized commodification of EOC (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Gorski, 2019b; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 20178; Singh, 2018). This distinction is especially significant to make because Anisman-Razin and Saguy (2016) found that

people who recognize they are being tokenized have more negative perceptions of their

jobs.

Kokka (2016) and Kohli (2019) discovered that EOC believed that administrator

support, adequate salary, professional autonomy, and advancement opportunities are

ways to improve their perception of the teaching profession, but Kohli (2019) and others

documented that most EOC do not believe they have access to these opportunities

because of racial discrimination (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Choi, 2018; del Carmen

Salazar, 2018). Kohli (2019) offered suggestions on how to improve the perceptions of

the teaching profession for EOC: "Whether at predominantly white- or minority-serving

institutions, to create teacher education where teachers of color can thrive, programs must

actively reduce racism, facilitate positive racial climates, and be culturally responsive to

teachers of color" (p. 47). San Pedro (2018), however, argues that a space cannot be

culturally sustaining or responsive if the Whiteness causing racism for EOC is not

intentionally exposed, named, and disrupted.

Whiteness Affecting Burnout and Attrition of EOC

When describing their successes, white educators cited luck as the source while

Black educators described having to be, "super heroes," overcoming racial discrimination

(Rauscher & Wilson, 2017, p. 220). This disparate perception of the teaching profession

between White educators and EOC can be traced to why teachers become educators.

EOC reported joining the profession to advocate for students of color, including making

changes to racist systems (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Kokka, 2016). This rationale

frequently puts EOC in the role of racial justice activist, even if they do not recognize it (Kohli, 2018).

According to Gorski (2019a), negative perceptions and burnout of activists are caused by three factors: internal factors, external factors, and in-movement causes. Gorski (2019a) found that activists with a higher sense of emotional connection to their cause burned out at faster rates, especially when they had high degrees of pushback from external forces like education systems that target their efforts. Smith et al. (2011) called this phenomenon *racial battle fatigue*. Racial battle fatigue in EOC helps explain why EOC leave the teaching profession at greater rates than their white colleagues, although evidence suggests EOC stay in stressful environments longer because they are dedicated to their students (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kohli, 2018; Kokka, 2016). For example, White educator attrition is positively correlated with the number of students of color in a school (Kokka, 2016). In other words, it is easier for White educators to leave what they perceive to be a stressful situation because they have less emotional investment.

Gorski (2019b) also found that EOC who teach in PWIs have increased feelings of racial battle fatigue. All antiracist educators in PWIs faced increased resistance from administrators and colleagues, but EOC have the added layer of racism from administrators, colleagues, and even White educators who claim to be racial justice advocates (Gorski, 2019b). According to Gorski and Erakat (2019), White activists take fewer risks than activists of color, lack racial justice consciousness despite having antiracist convictions, and seek validation from activists of color, which places an emotional burden on activists of color. Gorski and Erakat (2019) found,

…patterns of [White activists] (a) embracing unevolved or racist views,

(b)undermining or invalidating the work of racial justice activists of color,

(c)showing a lack of willingness to step up and take action when needed,

(d)exhibiting White fragility in activist spaces, and (e) taking credit for the work

and ideas of activists of color. (p. 17)

These patterns work to exacerbate the racial battle fatigue of EOC who engage in racial activist work for their students.

Racism in Curriculum

López and Nikey (2021) consider the Eurocentric curriculum a war on *les damnés*, or Black and Brown children who are considered "the damned of the Earth." This racist war that plays out in curriculum takes the shape of deficit narratives about students of color and their ancestors at best and erasure at worst (An, 2020; López & Nikey, 2021). An (2020) reminded readers that curriculum is never neutral; it is situated within the sociopolitical context of the time it was written and reflects the legitimate knowledge of the dominant culture. Walker (2020) reminded readers that at the time public education in the U.S. was being created, many education scholars and philosophers opposed offering free, public education to marginalized groups including Jewish and Black students who were believed incapable of learning. Public education in the US, including the concept of curriculum, was created, and is situated in that racist, sociopolitical context.

While López and Nikey (2021) researched racist literacy curriculum and An (2020) critiqued history curriculum, Martin (2019) addressed anti-Blackness in

mathematics curricula. Martin (2019) and An (2020) make similar arguments about the perceived validity of knowledge. Martin (2019) focused on the deficit approach to assigning Black students to remedial mathematics curriculum whicht is taught using rote memorization instead of tapping into the inherent brilliance of Black students. Martin (2019) asked why mathematics lacks cultural relevance that includes the history of Black mathematicians and scientists in ancient and contemporary history.

Ladson-Billings (1998) argued that even when people of color are included in history they are sanitized and whitewashed. She provided the example of Martin Luther King, Jr., who was a radical in his time, being portrayed as a, "sanitized folk hero" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 18.). The normalization of Whiteness in curriculum manifests in ideologies such as Manifest Destiny and the immigrant story, both of which erase the genocide of American Indians, the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the land theft of Mexico, creating a cultural and curricular displacement of American Indians, Black Americans, and Chicanxs (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Oftentimes, when these topics are taught in schools, they are presented in problematic ways that do not allow for students to critically engage in the curriculum. For example, Martin (2019) quoted a fourth-grade math problem: "In a slave ship, there can be 3,799 slaves. One day, the slaves took over the ship. 1,879 are dead. How many slaves are alive?" (p. 464). This math problem and other curricula like it are examples of curricula that provide a false sense of understanding of systemic racial oppression simply because it was mentioned (Sleeter, 2011).

Kim-Cragg (2019) identified and defined three ways in which Whiteness owns curriculum: explicit curricula, implicit curricula, and null curricula. Explicit Whiteness in curricula is explicitly racist and teaches that White people are superior to nonwhite people. An implicit curriculum of Whiteness occurs when Whiteness becomes the norm. This happens, according to Kim-Cragg (2019), through imagery that excludes people of color, texts written by White authors about White characters, and the history of Europeans and White Americans only. The null curriculum of Whiteness, "teaches by not teaching" (Kim-Cragg, 2019, p. 244). The latter is what An (2020) discovered about U.S. history curricula and their exclusion of Asian American history. Kim-Cragg (2019) argues that the exclusion of the histories of nonwhite people teaches that nonwhite people have no value or place in the US. Robbins (2018) refers to the curriculum of Whiteness as a "curriculum of control," a way to replicate historical injustices and perpetuate systemic racism through curricula (p. 59). Ethnic studies curricula is one tool educators can use to uncover, name, and disrupt Whiteness (San Pedro, 2018).

Ethnic Studies in Washington State

Sleeter (2011) defined ethnic studies as "units of study, courses, or programs that are centered on the knowledge and perspectives of an ethnic or racial group, reflecting narratives and points of view rooted in that group's lived experiences and intellectual scholarship" (p. vii). In her analysis, Sleeter (2011) found research indicating that ethnic studies curricula have the power to improve all measures of academic achievement across all grade levels and content areas, and across all racial, ethnic, and gender demographics. The measures of academic outcome included increased levels of engagement in school

and increased feelings of empowerment. Sleeter (2011) went on to state that multiculturalism, or the celebration of different cultures and their attributes, does not go far enough to promote improved academic outcomes for students, and that ethnic studies, specifically, challenges racism and systems of oppression. This claim is supported by San Pedro's (2018) argument that Whiteness or White supremacy culture must be named and disrupted in curricula to effectively dismantle it.

More recent scholarship confirms Sleeter's (2011) analysis on the benefits of ethnic studies for K-12 students. In a quantitative study on at risk, ninth-grade Black and Latinx students in San Francisco, Dee and Penner (2016) found that one semester of ethnic studies in ninth grade led to large and statistically significant improvements for these students. The benefits included improvements in grade point average, attendance, credits earned that year, and on-time graduation.

Benefits, however, are not limited to high school students. Gorski and Parekh (2020) found that multicultural education courses in teacher preparation programs lack critical pedagogy and give teacher candidates a false sense of preparedness to teach in diverse settings. Educators who have a deep understanding of various forms of racism, especially those who have experienced it themselves, are better prepared to teach those experiences with students of color (Gorski & Parekh, 2020; Kohli, 2019; Sacramento, 2019; Sleeter, 2011). When educators can connect with their students through validating their academic perceptions and experiences, students of color show greater academic engagement and achievement (Garcia & Cuellar, 2018).

Several K-12, urban, public-school districts in Washington state are in the planning phase or implementation phase for ethnic studies curricula and courses. The largest school district in the state, Seattle Public Schools, has been working on ethnic studies since 2017 (Seattle Public Schools, 2018). Legislation at the state level included creating a committee in the OSPI to design a model curriculum for grades K–12 (OSPI, 2019). While there is research on the efficacy of ethnic studies for students, there is little research on how teaching ethnic studies may influence the perceptions of EOC.

The research that does exist on the teaching profession and ethnic studies focuses on professional development and preservice teacher preparation programs (Fernández, 2019; Kohli, 2018; Navarro, 2018). Research on this topic may inform both the efforts to implement ethnic studies in K–12 urban, public school districts, and efforts to recruit and retain more EOC.

Curriculum Helps Shape Perceptions of the Teaching Profession

Several scholars have pointed out the gap in the literature on how curriculum, specifically antiracist curriculum like ethnic studies, may influence the perception of the education profession, which may lead to lowering attrition rates and retaining more EOC (Haddix, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019). Haddix (2017) stated, "While the numbers of teachers of color increase there must be an intentional shift to engage culturally relevant and antiracist pedagogies and a mission to cultivate a more racially and economically just society" (p. 146). Haddix (2017) confirms the results from a study by Ingersoll et al. (2019) that EOC attrition rates are up to 25% higher than White educators even though recruiting efforts for EOC have largely been successful.

In their study, Ingersoll et al. (2019) analyzed quantitative data from exit surveys from EOC. The multiple-choice form did not provide space for EOC to indicate racism as a reason for leaving the profession, but 81% of EOC surveyed indicated dissatisfaction with administrators as the reason for leaving. Sixty-five percent named standardized, high-stakes testing; 57% named lack of autonomy; and 56% responded that poor working conditions pushed them out. While none of these reasons explicitly name racism, they confirm the work of other scholars about why EOC have negative perceptions of the teaching profession (Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017).

Navarro (2018) and Fernández (2019) conducted qualitative narrative studies on EOC who engaged in ethnic studies professional development. Navarro (2018) found that when EOC have communities built around social justice and antiracist pedagogies they have a more positive perception of the teaching profession. EOC reported feeling acknowledged, validated, and valued for their efforts and their cultural and community wealth. Fernández (2019) followed EOC engaged in ethnic studies professional development created by the XITO collective, which focuses on indigenous Mexican epistemologies. Fernández (2019) collected *testimonios* from participants who overwhelmingly reported themes of being re-energized about their work and being reminded of why they entered the teaching profession in the first place. One participant testified that,

> XITO has provided me a sense of belonging, rejuvenation, and creation that I use every day in my mission to bring culturally relevant pedagogy and Ethnic Studies to classrooms across my hometown of San Jose and beyond. (p. 185)

These *testimonios* may be related to the research findings of Farinde-Wu (2018) and Kokka (2016) that indicated EOC entered the profession to advocate for students who share their racial identities.

According to several researchers, EOC are more likely to center race in their pedagogy, which is critical for students of color to validate their lived experiences and is key to improving the perception of EOC about the teaching profession (Andrews, et al, 2019; Kohli, 2018; Kohli, 2019). EOC become valued experts on topics of race and racism, which leads to them feeling valued and validated (Andrews et al, 2019). Ethnic studies is a vehicle for this (Sleeter, 2011). Many scholars researching the subject of retaining EOC have called for transformative action on the systems level that includes raising awareness of racism in schools, using antiracist curriculum and pedagogy, and including CRT as a frame for the evaluation of educators in general (Andrews et al, 2019; del Carmen Salazar, 2018; Haddix, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kohli, 2018).

Pedagogy, Ethnic Studies, and EOC

Curriculum is defined as the entirety of the teaching and learning process, so it is important to consider the pedagogies necessary to teach critical, antiracist ethnic studies content (Fernández, 2019; Kim-Cragg, 2019). Indigenous epistemologies are a central feature of ethnic studies pedagogy (Calderón & Urrieta, 2019; Pulido, 2018; Sosa-Provencio et al., 2020). Indigenous epistemologies are those that predate colonialism and the concept of race and that generally tend to view individuals in the context of relationships with themselves, other humans, and nature. Using indigenous epistemologies, educators practice ethnic studies pedagogy to upend colonial educational

epistemologies by asking students to critically examine their geographic context as well as their sociopolitical contexts. This includes asking students to examine their relationship to each other and nature. A critical examination of one's environment requires the implementation of critical pedagogy, which is a pedagogy that asks students to be active agents in their lives instead of passive learners. For example, students may ask what they can learn from their natural environments instead of how they can use natural resources solely as a commodity for learning (Kulago et al., 2021).

Several scholars have argued that colonial educational epistemologies create a disconnect between humans and their natural environment (Calderón & Urrieta, 2019; Kulago et al., 2021; Sosa-Provencio et al., 2020). Part of this disconnect is what Cuevas (2016) calls de-culturalization. Once indigenous people are disconnected from their epistemologies, colonizers can begin to de-culturize them and replace indigenous epistemologies with colonial epistemologies, which is generally synonymous in the US with White supremacy culture or Whiteness (Cuevas, 2016). Scholars like Calderón and Urrieta (2019), Cuevas (2016), Kulago et al. (2021), and Martínez (2017) argued that this de-culturalization is the harm experienced by students of color and EOC because of White supremacy in education. One powerful tool used to mitigate this harm is counterstorytelling, which is a tenet of CRT and ethnic studies (Cuevas, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Martínez, 2017).

EOC are uniquely positioned to apply counterstorytelling and indigenous epistemologies in pedagogy because of their lived experiences and community and cultural wealth (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Sosa-Provencio et al., 2020; Yosso, 2005). One

example is the persistent disparate outcomes between Black students and their White peers in literacy. Diehm and Hendricks (2021) found that African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is excluded from cultural competency instruction in educator preparation programs. This lack of instruction leaves many teachers regarding AAVE as an inadequate form of English, which may contribute to the persistent disparity between Black students and their white peers in literacy (Diehm & Hendricks, 2021). Black educators, however, bring cultural wealth to their classroom that values AAVE as a legitimate form of English and are better equipped to assess language development in their Black students than white educators (Diehm & Hendricks, 2021; Farinde-Wu, 2018).

In an autoethnography, Haynes et al. (2020) found that Black women and Black, queer men, specifically, practiced critical pedagogy despite the racism and hostility they experienced in their workplace, because they maintained hope that their lived experiences and resistance to White-normed pedagogy would create conditions where all people could, ". . . live in the fullness of their humanity" (p. 715). Rojas and Liou (2018) found that Chicanx/Latinx students achieved greater academic success when educators held higher expectations of students, but only when the expectations were grounded in Chicanx/Latinx cultural wealth using social justice pedagogy. McKinney de Royston et al. (2021) confirmed the findings of Haynes et al. (2020) and Rojas and Liou (2018) in a qualitative study about the ability of Black educators to disrupt White supremacy pedagogies in schools because of their experiences navigating it themselves in their daily lives. EOC bring the cultural wealth and understanding to see and affirm the cultural

wealth of students of color using culturally disrupting pedagogies (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021; Rojas & Liou, 2018; San Pedro, 2018).

Summary

A shortage of EOC exists while the student of color population continues to rise. Academic achievement of students of color is positively correlated with having EOC in classrooms (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Rasheed et al., 2019). EOC attrition rates, however, continue to remain significantly higher than those of White educators despite successful recruitment efforts targeting EOC (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Researchers suggest antiracist professional development improves the perception of EOC about the teaching profession, and scholars have called for transformative change in K-12 education, including curriculum, but little research has been conducted on how teaching ethnic studies may influence EOC's perceptions of the teaching profession (Andrews et al., 2019; Fernández, 2019; Haddix, 2017; Kohli, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Navarro, 2018).

EOC bring unique cultural wealth to their classrooms and practice through their personal experiences with racism and Whiteness. EOC are uniquely equipped to teach ethnic studies, which employs counternarratives and indigenous epistemologies. EOC are also uniquely qualified to teach ethnic studies content, which is focused on the lived experiences of people of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Sleeter, 2011; Sosa-Provencio et al., 2020; Yosso, 2005). Evidence suggests that combining ethnic studies with critical pedagogies, indigenous epistemologies, and EOC may have the potential to greatly improve academic outcomes for all students, particularly students of color (Dee & Penner, 2017; Cuevas, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Martínez, 2017; Sleeter, 2011).

The findings of the present study has the potential to fill the gaps and add to the body of literature about how EOC who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K–12 urban, public schools. The results of this study may help to inform policymakers about the best way to retain EOC in K–12 urban, public schools. In Chapter 3, I provide a detailed explanation of the research design and rationale as well as the role of the researcher. I address issues of trustworthiness and conclude with a description of ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative critical narrative inquiry study was to explore how ethnic studies curriculum may influence how EOC who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. This chapter includes the research questions, a justification and definition of the chosen methodology, role of the researcher, protocols for identifying and selecting participants, and an outline of how data will be collected and analyzed. The chapter ends with a reflection on ethical concerns.

Research Design and Rationale

This study sought to deepen our understanding of the answers to the following questions:

RQ1: How does creating and teaching ethnic studies curriculum contribute to EOC's experiences with the three levels of racism (personally mediated, institutional, and internalized)?

RQ2: What role does ethnic studies curriculum in K–12, urban public schools play in ethnic studies EOC's sense of worth in the teaching profession?

RQ3: What role does ethnic studies curriculum play in the desire of ethnic studies EOC to stay in their current role?

I chose the qualitative research method for this study to understand how EOC perceive their profession. Qualitative inquiry is focused on the meaning of phenomena and how humans think about and engage with each other and their world (Patton, 2015). The purpose of this qualitative critical narrative inquiry study was to explore how ethnic

studies curriculum may influence how EOC who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. As such, a qualitative methodology is appropriate to explore and understand the experiences of EOC and how those experiences shape their perceptions (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

I chose critical narrative inquiry design as a methodological approach because it complements the tenets of CRT and the narrative nature of experiencing race and racism while offering opportunities for me to critically collect and analyze data and reflect on my positionality as a former EOC (Miller et al., 2020). CRT can be used as a conceptual framework or a methodology but is being limited to the conceptual framework in this study (see Miller et al., 2020; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). These opportunities for a critical exploration of collecting and analyzing data will help to mitigate researcher bias (Hickson, 2016).

Critical narrative inquiry is what Pitre et al. (2013) called a double-hermeneutic approach to qualitative research methodology. Double hermeneutic asserts that concepts created by social scientists exist because of the understanding participants in research have about their experiences. Critical narrative inquiry is a constructivist approach to methodology in which a researcher and the participants co-create knowledge (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). A critical narrative approach is essential to understanding participants' perspectives because the approach acknowledges that experiences and perceptions do not occur in a vacuum and are the result of place and time, which include sociopolitical context, community, and shared stories (Miller et al., 2020; Milner & Howard, 2013). The narrative approach captures and contextualizes research participants' stories, past

and present, and the critical approach brings in sociopolitical realities and expectations. Data collection methods within critical narrative inquiry methodology vary widely because critical narrative inquiry methodology is constructivist and depends on a shared understanding of phenomena (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Pitre et al., 2013).

Critical narrative scholars insist that data cannot be collected or analyzed without a researcher having a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied or a meaningful relationship with the participants (Hickson, 2016; Miller et al., 2020; Pitre et al., 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). A researcher must incorporate and "examine the forces and conditions that exist beyond the individual, that is, in the wider social and structural context of storytellers' lives" (Pitre et al., 2013, p. 120). Essentially, the researcher becomes part of the narrative.

Solórzano and Yosso (2001) included tenets of CRT, including the centrality of experiential knowledge, to argue that people of color are best suited to narrate their experiences with race and racism. Solórzano and Yosso (2001; 2002) further argued that critical narrative inquiry combined with CRT must include counter storytelling to eradicate deficit narratives of people of color and must work toward dismantling racial oppression. Lee and Lee (2021) built on the work of Solórzano and Yosso (2001, 2002) in affirming the importance of centering the lived experiences of everyday people of color and challenging the belief that their experiences are only legitimate when told by others, particularly White people.

Milner and Howard (2013) and Miller et al. (2020) argued further that counternarratives about the cultural wealth of EOC are necessary to advance educational

equity and recruit and retain EOC. Because little research has been conducted on the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession, the narratives of EOC on this topic can be considered counternarratives to the dominant narratives about teacher perceptions in general by centering the experiential knowledge of EOC (Miller et al., 2020; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001)

Role of the Researcher

A researcher's role in critical narrative inquiry is to be reflexive to the context of the narratives, which requires the capacity to critically reflect on their understanding of such context (Hickson, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Miller et al., 2020). A researcher must have the skill and knowledge to critically analyze how a narrative is told by the participant using their knowledge of the conceptual framework to contextualize the data (Miller et al., 2020). Additionally, a researcher must be skilled in self-reflection, including positionality and their relationships with participants, to account for biases and power relationships (Pitre et al., 2013).

For the current study, this required me to be well-versed in CRT. I needed to be able to assess how the three layers of racism outlined in Jones's (2000) framework influence the participants' stories, including their word choice and body language, while valuing the participant as an expert on their own experiences (Pitre et al., 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). I am qualified to conduct this research using my chosen design because I am a former middle and high school social studies EOC with a bachelor's degree in social sciences and a master's degree in teaching. I taught ethnic studies while I was a practicing educator. I led the formation of a group of educators to

create a K–12 ethnic studies program in a large, urban public school district in a central administration capacity. Of further importance is my experiential knowledge and experiences with race and racism as a mixed-race Chicanx person.

In my previous roles and current capacity, I have been extensively trained in CRT, ethnic studies, curriculum creation, and curriculum program management. In my current role, I work closely with EOC on various projects including professional development, curriculum creation and auditing, and racial equity audits. My status as an EOC and my visibility in Washington state as a racial justice leader and ethnic studies advocate has the potential to create an environment in which EOC feel safe to share their experiences with race and racism in the teaching profession. I am aware of the reality that my status as an EOC and ethnic studies advocate may produce a bias in favor of EOC and ethnic studies, which is why I chose critical narrative inquiry to help mediate this bias and critically reflect throughout the process of the study, intentionally looking for and seeking to disrupt bias (Pitre et al., 2013).

An ethics issue to address was that I recruited participants through my place of employment. Potential participants, however, were not employees of the organization, but members. Members of the organization are members at will; they do not pay dues to join, and they can end their membership at any time without notice. My role in the organization is largely comprised of providing professional development to K–12 educators, regardless of their racial or ethnic identities, so there is no potential conflict of interest in recruiting from our membership. I will not be providing incentives to participants.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Study participants were selected if they self-identified as a person of color, including racial categories such as Black/African American, Latinx/Chicanx, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous (non-European). To be selected, participants had to work and teach in an urban, public K–12 school. To qualify for the study, potential participants had to work directly with children delivering instruction daily. Participants could teach any grade level and any content area if they demonstrated they were incorporating ethnic studies curriculum. The demographic questionnaire, found in Appendix B, supported data collection that was used to help prevent racial or ethnic overrepresentation or underrepresentation in this study. This sampling strategy was used to capture data from EOC who teach ethnic studies in K–12, urban public schools. Participants were recruited through a nonprofit organization via email. Saturation of data was reached after the 12th interview, but I continued to collect data until each of the three racial groups included in the study were near equally represented (see Saunders et al., 2018).

Instrumentation

The data for this qualitative study were collected using interviews. The interview questions began with open-ended questions from the design alignment matrix I developed (Appendix D), which is aligned to the research questions. I asked probing and clarifying questions during the interviews. Follow-up questions were individualized and responsive

to the data provided by participants. Participants were asked if there were any other data they would like to have considered that were not covered by the interview questions.

The design alignment matrix was developed using Castillo-Montoya's (2016) interview protocol refinement framework. The design alignment matrix (Appendix D) was used to ensure alignment between the research questions and the interview questions. I then piloted the interview questions, found in Appendix E, to be sure the questions constructed an inquiry-based conversation as opposed to a simple question-and-answer session (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Patton, 2015).

The pilot study was conducted with personal friends and colleagues who are ethnic studies EOC in K–12, urban public schools. I sent an email asking for volunteers to several individuals. Three individuals answered and were subsequently interviewed.

Immediately after each interview, participants were asked to provide feedback about the clarity of the questions and whether they were compelled to engage in conversation or to simply answer a question. The interview questions in Appendix E reflect the feedback of participants from the pilot. After collecting data from the pilot, I coded and analyzed data to ensure themes emerged that could be used in the study. Several important themes emerged from the pilot of the interview protocol. The themes and data were determined sufficient using Castillo-Montoya's (2016) interview protocol checklist.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Approval was obtained from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants were principally recruited through a nonprofit organization. An email

was sent out to the members of the nonprofit explaining the nature of the study and the

participant requirements outlined above (Appendix A). The email asked the members to

share in their networks to potentially expand beyond the membership of the nonprofit.

Only one participant responded to the email request, so I was given permission by the

nonprofit to use their social media presence to recruit additional participants. Five

participants responded to social media requests, and the remaining participants were

recruited through snowballing.

Interested participants were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire

(Appendix B) to ascertain their qualifications to be included in the study. I used the

questionnaire to ensure one group was not disproportionately represented compared to

others. Participants were asked to submit a signed informed consent form acquired from

Walden University (Appendix C).

I conducted interviews via a secured Zoom account and audio recorded each

interview using Zoom recording features. Participants engaged in one interview that

ranged between 30 and 90 minutes. I began each interview by reading a script that

reviewed the rights of the participant to withdraw consent at any time and asking for

verbal confirmation of consent before the interview began. No interviews were conducted

without express written and verbal consent (Appendix C). Transcription of interviews

were conducted by GMR Transcription Services, who provided a non-disclosure

agreement (Appendix F).

The debrief and exit from the interview are outlined in the interview script

(Appendix E). I notified the participants that I may be contacting them through email for

follow-up questions. Additionally, I encouraged participants to contact me if they had any questions or wanted to add to the data collected from the live interview. Before including any data from transcribed interviews, I conducted member checks with participants to ensure they felt correctly represented. I followed up with participants via email when clarification was needed during the coding process.

I kept regular notes of thought processes during the data collection process. This practice is necessary according to the tenets of critical narrative inquiry, to apply CRT, and to minimize the bias of a researcher (see Hickson, 2016; Miller et al., 2020; Pitre et al., 2013; Saldaña, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). My journaling reflected my understanding of CRT and how I interpreted data through the conceptual framework (Jones, 2000; Miller et al., 2020). Saturation of data was reached after the 12th interview, but I continued to collect data until each of the three racial groups included in the study were near equally represented.

Data Analysis Plan

I analyzed the data to identify themes that emerged (see Babbie, 2017; Miller et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Coding of data began during data collection to identify emerging patterns and determine saturation. This allowed me to critically reflect on all data as they were being collected. I coded manually using primary and secondary cycles (see Saldaña, 2014). Codes were identified through emerging patterns in the data using Jones (2000) CRT conceptual framework as a guide. The narratives created by participants were used to support and explain the themes (see Miller et al., 2020; Milner IV & Howard, 2013).

Primary Cycle Coding

Primary cycle coding, or first cycle coding, is the first step in distilling data into themes. Through primary cycle coding I looked for broad themes emerging from data, going line-by-line through transcribed interviews. The goal of primary cycle coding is to determine the tone of the data and start thinking about how to synthesize broader themes across all data inputs to prepare the data for the secondary coding cycle (Saldaña, 2014). Once primary codes were established, I re-evaluated the codes, synthesizing similar codes into more manageable codes.

Secondary Cycle Coding

The goal of the secondary coding cycle is to make meaning of and further distill the data that emerged from the first cycle coding. Second cycle coding prepares the researcher to identify themes that can be included in the results section of Chapter 4. Second cycle coding is a transitional phase in data analysis in which the researcher begins the actual analysis of data as opposed to simply categorizing data (Saldaña, 2014).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness or validity in qualitative research can be crafted through achieving rigor. Ravitch and Carl (2016) provide a list of ways to achieve rigor in qualitative research: (a) triangulation, (b) member checks, (c) long-term immersion, (d) soliciting feedback, (e) participatory dialogic engagement, (f) audit trail, (g) thick description, (h) situating your study in relation to theory, and (i) attention to and inclusion of disconfirming evidence. The current study includes all these outlined points except long-term immersion. This study includes methodological triangulation in the form of

member checking of data (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I conducted member checks with participants to verify accurate representation of their contributions. I solicited feedback on instrumentation in a pilot. Data collected from the pilot helped ensure the questions I asked evoked participatory dialogic engagement in individual interviews (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The interview questions were written to collect demographic data that helped produce thick descriptions of the participants and their experiences (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I created an audit trail through tracking the coding process and using memos and journals documenting my thought processes, which were used as a tool to consider and include disconfirming evidence.

Furthermore, Ravitch and Carl (2016) argued that critical qualitative research design adds to trustworthiness because it requires a researcher to question each step of the process including design, process, data collection, and data analysis. For the current study, I used critical narrative inquiry that included extensive use of memos and journaling during the data collection process as a way to critically analyze the process and the data while coding the data as it is collected (see Saldaña, 2014). I used CRT as a conceptual framework for this purpose (see Jones, 2000).

Another way to increase trustworthiness is to define key terms and concepts before engaging in research so the researcher, participants, and consumers of the research have a shared understanding of what is to be researched (Babbie, 2017). While some definitions emerged from the data collected, several terms are defined in Chapter 1. Ethnic studies, for example, does not have an agreed-upon definition, but there are several components most scholars agree are central to ethnic studies, including critical

pedagogy, CRT, and anti-racism, all of which are defined in Chapter 1 (Dee & Penner, 2017; Fernández, 2019; Sacramento, 2019; Sleeter, 2011; Sueyoshi & Sujitparapitay, 2020).

Transferability is a measure of the research's external trustworthiness and is determined by how well the research can be transferred to other instances (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The transferability of the current research is limited by the fact that only EOC who teach ethnic studies in K–12 urban public schools will be included. Ethnic studies is a relatively new development in K–12 education, so there are few EOC who fit this description, and many are limited by geography and political will, with conservative regions being inhospitable to ethnic studies curriculum (Acosta, 2014; Fernández & Hammer, 2012; Romero & Arce, 2011). Ensuring the data collected provided a thick description of the phenomenon provides an opportunity for readers to determine the transferability of data to their context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The dependability of qualitative research is a component of its trustworthiness. Dependability is achieved when the research components and processes align with the research question such that the study may be duplicated with similar results that remain relatively consistent over time. For this reason, dependability heavily relies on the expertise of the research participants (Babbie, 2017; Miller et al., 2020; Milner IV & Howard, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The alignment of the research question, design, and data collection were created through multiple iterations that included peer input and evaluations from my academic mentors. Participants will be carefully chosen for their expertise on the topic using the demographic survey (Appendix B).

The confirmability of research adds to the trustworthiness of a study. Confirmability is often compared to quantitative objectivity. Qualitative researchers, however, acknowledge there can be no objectivity in their studies, but confirmability can be achieved by explicitly confronting a researcher's bias and using strategies outlined above like triangulation of data, frequent member checks, etc. (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The use of critical narrative inquiry is the main tool for confronting my bias in the current study (Hickson, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

I consulted with Walden University IRB and made ethical practices a priority. Following the procedures outlined above in consultation with Walden University IRB, I ensured that potential harm to participants was minimized. All participants submitted an informed consent form (Appendix C) as well as provided verbal consent at the beginning of each interview. All participants were over the age of 18 and had the mental capacity to provide informed consent. Privacy and confidentiality were provided to participants by using pseudonyms. Only the transcribing service, who provided a confidentiality agreement found (Appendix F) and I had access to data, and data were stored on a secured, password protected cloud location.

All participants identified as belonging to a marginalized group because of the nature of the study; however, I took steps to keep their identities confidential, and all records including recordings and transcripts will be permanently deleted after 5 years of completion of the study. Participants were primarily recruited through a nonprofit partner

organization. I did not offer incentives to participants and there were no power

differentials between myself and participants.

Summary

The contents of this chapter included detailed descriptions of the research design

and rationale, role of the researcher, and methodology, which included detailed

description of the data collection methods and data analysis. I concluded the chapter by

addressing issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures. In Chapter 4, I discuss details

of the setting, the participants demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of

trustworthiness and the results and summary of the data collection and analysis processes.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative critical narrative inquiry study was to explore how ethnic studies curriculum may influence how EOC who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. To explore the perceptions of EOC, I developed the following research questions:

RQ1: How does creating and teaching ethnic studies curriculum contribute to EOC's experiences with the three levels of racism (personally mediated, institutional, and internalized)?

RQ2: What role does ethnic studies curriculum in K–12 urban public schools play in ethnic studies EOC's sense of worth in the teaching profession?

RQ3: What role does ethnic studies curriculum play in the desire of ethnic studies EOC to stay in their current role?

This chapter is organized by first describing the conditions of the research, including data collection methods, the setting of data collection, and a review of data analysis. This is followed by the results of the research. Finally, this chapter ends with a summary.

Pilot Study

I developed interview questions for a pilot study using Castillo-Montoya's (2016) interview protocol checklist to produce alignment between the research questions and interview questions. I piloted a draft of an interview protocol to ensure the questions created a conversational flow that fostered personal narratives. I also wanted to make sure the questions would produce thick data. The pilot was conducted with personal friends

and colleagues who are ethnic studies EOC in K–12, urban public schools. I sent an email asking for volunteers to several individuals. Three individuals answered and were subsequently interviewed.

Immediately after each interview, participants were asked to provide feedback about the clarity of the questions and whether they were compelled to engage in conversation or to simply answer a question. Participants of the pilot study provided feedback that I incorporated into the interview protocol. The interview questions (Appendix E) reflect the feedback of participants from the pilot. After collecting data from the pilot, I coded and analyzed data to ensure themes emerged that addressed the study research questions. Several important themes emerged from the pilot of the interview protocol. The themes and data were determined sufficient using Castillo-Montoya's (2016) interview protocol checklist. No data from the pilot study are included in the current study.

Setting

Participants represent several different public-school districts in Washington state. Interviews took place in late summer and early fall 2022, as the school year was just starting. One district represented by several participants had just completed a labor strike. Five of the participants felt the outcome of the strike was unsatisfactory and failed to include what they considered critical support for students of color. Three participants referred to these feelings of dissatisfaction when sharing their experiences with systems of education. Their feelings post-strike may have skewed their responses to the line of questioning around systems.

To ensure this study remained focused on EOC, and not one racial group, I made sure to have near equal representation from three major racial groups: Asian, Black, and Latinx. Additionally, participants had to teach ethnic studies, as defined in Chapters 1 and 2, to be considered for participation. As mentioned in Chapter 1, EOC are a minority in the United States, with Black educators representing only 7% of the teaching force (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). In Washington state, the number of Black educators is significantly smaller, representing only 1.5% of the teaching force (OSPI, 2019b). As such, finding Black educators to participate in this study was challenging, especially when they also had to meet the requirement of teaching ethnic studies. In fact, two of the Black educators interviewed for this study referred to themselves as unicorns, implying Black educators are mythical or rare, and three of the Black participants reported being the only Black educator in their schools. Table 1 includes the racial demographics for both students and classroom teachers in each district represented by the participants of this study from the Washington state OSPI (2022) for the 2021–2022 school year. These data are relevant when considering the student and colleague demographic the participants of this study work with.

Table 1

Racial Demographics for Students and Teachers by District

District	Race	Student %	Teacher %
No. 1	American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.9	0.4
	Asian	0.4	1.8
	Black/African American	1.5	0.5
	Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	17.4	2.8
	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0.3	0.2
	Two or more races	8.9	1.3
	White	66.1	92.5
No. 2	American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.2	0.5
	Asian	24.6	4.9
	Black/African American	2.3	0.7
	Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	13.1	0.4
	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0.2	0.2
	Two or more races	9.1	3.4
	White	50.5	89.8
No. 3	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.1	0.7
	Asian	7.0	3.5
	Black/African American	5.0	1.1
	Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	22.2	3.9
	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	2.8	0.9
	Two or more races	16.1	2.6
	White	45.9	87.2
No. 4	American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4	0.5
	Asian	12.6	7.6
	Black/African American	14.9	5.2
	Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	13.4	4.7
	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0.4	0.5
	Two or more races	12.4	1.9
	White	45.9	78.7
No. 5	American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.7	0
	Asian	24.4	12.4
	Black/African American	19.1	4.7
	Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	34.4	7.1
	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	4.3	1.2
	Two or more races	6.0	2.9
	White	11.1	71.8

Demographics

For this study, I recruited a total of 17 participants: six Asian, five Black, and six Latinx. Table 2 provides a breakdown of relevant demographics for each participant. Female participants were disproportionately represented, comprising 88% of the participants, compared to 12% male participants; however, in Washington state, 74% of classroom teachers identify as female and 26% identify as male, which is only a 14% difference between the actual teaching force and the teachers represented in this study (OSPI, 2022). The names listed for participants are pseudonyms used to protect their identities.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Race	Name	Gender	Level	Years in education	Years in current role
Asian	Apple	Female	High school	17	17
	Honey	Female	Elementary school	11	3
	Hon Min	Male	High school	8	6
	Minh	Nonbinary	High school	2	1
	Sarah	Female	High school	10	1
	Xie	Female	High school	13	7
Black	Laurie	Female	High school	13	13
	Rosie	Female	High school	14	1
	Starla	Female	High school	32	18
	Tiffany	Female	Elementary school	20	9
	Traci	Female	High school	15	3
Latinx	Elaine	Female	Middle school	20	8
	Javier	Male	Middle school	5	5
	Julietta	Female	High school	20	4
	Margarita	Female	High school	10	3
	Violet	Female	High school	15	2
	Xitlalli	Female	Elementary school	12	6

While participants were required to teach ethnic studies, they were not required to teach a course titled ethnic studies. This selection of participants was intentional because Washington state is taking an interdisciplinary approach to K–12 ethnic studies, suggesting that every teacher in the state incorporate ethnic studies tenets, practices, and content regardless of the title of their course (Ethnic Studies Advisory Council (ESAC), n.d.). Table 3 provides information on the courses taught by the participants of this study. These data are provided separately from other demographic data to help protect the confidentiality of the study participants.

Table 3

Content and Grade Band of Participants

Discipline	Number of educators
Art	2
Black studies	1
English literacy	2
Ethnic studies	1
Humanities (social studies and English literacy blend)	2
Dual language immersion K–5 general education (Spanish)	1
Latinx studies	1
Math	1
Multilingual literacy	2
Science	1
Social studies	1

Data Collection

Each participant engaged in one semi structured interview ranging from 40–120 minutes. The interviews took place via Zoom, which was also used to record the interviews. Recorded interviews were transcribed by GMR Transcription Services. Follow-up questions were asked and answered via email as needed.

I sent an email to members of the nonprofit organization I partnered with, which resulted in one volunteer. I was granted permission to post on the organization's social media channels to ask for participants, which resulted in 5 volunteers. The other 11 participants are the result of leads from participants for snowball sampling.

Data Analysis

As the interviews were transcribed, I conducted primary coding strategies. As I read, I highlighted quotes that stood out as larger themes and aligned these themes with notes I took during the interviews. The primary coding themes were short phrases that summarized the core ideas of the interviews for each participant. Once the primary codes were created, I distilled them down to shorter themes during the secondary coding process. For example, when asked what unique value she brings to the teaching profession, Laurie said,

> I'm an educated Black woman. I'm a lot of [school leaders' and administrators'] worst nightmares. Like I really am. I have my ancestors' wildest dream. But I'm your worst nightmare because I know what the fuck I'm talking about. When I come at you, my behavior might seem crazy because I get pretty passionate as you know. But if you listen to what I'm saying, I'm making sense. I think that's a threat to some people. But I think I bring a sense of empowerment to my students because I let them know that they can be. They don't see a lot of Black teachers.

In the primary coding cycle, I coded this as "an educated Black woman is intimidating to racists." When I combined Laurie's statement and my primary coding to find emergent themes for the secondary cycle, this statement naturally fit into the troublemaker theme

because every participant interviewed shared that they are perceived as a threat, a bully, or a troublemaker in their schools and districts.

The questions in the interview protocol (Appendix E) led to data that naturally fell into three, broad categories: (a) racism the participants experience in the teaching profession; (b) values, both their personal values and how they felt valued as an educator; and (c) their perceptions of the teaching profession, broadly, and ethnic studies, specifically. In terms of racism experienced by participants, two specific themes emerged that are both related to how the participants felt valued by the teaching profession as a system. Every participant reported not being valued by the system and being perceived as a threat by colleagues and leaders in the systems they work in. All participants reported having worked in toxic environments because of this lack of being valued. The two themes are: (a) a systemic lack of value of EOC and ethnic studies, and (b) the troublemaker.

The participants all expressed a value of what they commonly referred to as "authentic" ethnic studies and the importance of "rehumanizing education"; therefore, two more themes emerged from these data: (a) authentic ethnic studies, and (b) rehumanizing education. Themes about how EOC perceive the teaching profession and ethnic studies are that first, ethnic studies is more than curriculum; it is a shift in values for the system and individual educators. Second, participants all agreed that ethnic studies is so important for themselves, their students, and society that they would fight to keep it, even if it led to being imprisoned. These perceptions led to the final two themes: (a) ethnic studies requires a shift in values, and (b) fugitive pedagogy (see Givens, 2021).

No discrepant cases emerged in the data. There were two educators who reported working in a school that has prioritized ethnic studies, and these educators indicated feeling more supported than the rest of the educators. These two educators had more positive things to say about their colleagues and their experiences in education. These participants reported experiencing racism in the profession but reported that it had significantly decreased in the schools they taught in at the time of their interview.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

All the credibility strategies mentioned in Chapter 3 were implemented. There was no need for adjustment. Member checks were conducted in several forms. First, I asked clarifying questions during the interview process, often summarizing what I heard and checking if my understanding was correct. When I came across statements in the transcripts that were unclear, I emailed the respective participant and asked for clarification. Participant responses were added to the data and coded. Participants were sent their transcripts and my primary codes to make sure the primary codes were correct and addressed the points raised in their interviews. Participants were provided opportunities to adjust language or remove language from the transcript as necessary to help conceal their identities. Lastly, participants were provided with a draft of this chapter to check for accuracy and minimize the risk of their identities being exposed. The multiple opportunities for member checks created the necessary verification of data, which provides a high degree of confirmability (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The average length of the interviews was approximately 60 minutes. This provided enough time to have a dialogue with the participants and for them to share

stories, creating narratives required for the critical narrative inquiry. The narratives, along with the demographics collected, produced thick descriptions of the participants' experiences and perspectives. Ensuring there was nearly equal representation from each racial category I chose to focus on also helped to create thick descriptions. The transferability of the current research is limited by the fact that a limited number EOC from only three racial categories who teach ethnic studies in K–12 urban public schools were included; however, the thick description provided in this study will help readers determine if it is transferable to their contexts.

Because this study centered on the experiences and perceptions of EOC, the use of a CRT framework situated the study within an appropriate conceptual framework. The audit trail I created using memos and journals included reflections on how the data aligned with or did not align with the Jones (2000) framework, as well as the work of other CRT scholars like Ladson-Billings (1998). The expertise demonstrated by participants on the topics of racial identity, CRT, and ethnic studies is evidence of the dependability of the study.

Because I recruited EOC through existing K–12 ethnic studies networks, my recruitment process resulted in people who self-identify as ethnic studies educators vs people who are assigned to teach an ethnic studies course. This is a necessary distinction to make, especially because there is no licensing requirement or prerequisite to teach K–12 ethnic studies in Washington state. Any educator with any background and credentialing may be assigned to teach an ethnic studies course. If future research follows

the method of recruiting self-identified ethnic studies educators, regardless of the title of

their course, results should remain consistent

Results

I organized the results by themes that are directly related to the research

questions. The research questions addressed three distinct perceptions: racism the

participants experienced in the teaching profession; values, both their personal values and

how they felt valued as an educator; and their perceptions of the teaching profession,

broadly, and ethnic studies, specifically. Two themes emerged from each of those lines of

questioning, resulting in six themes which are described in this section.

Table 4

Summary of Themes by Research Question

RQ	Themes
1	A systemic lack of value of EOC and ethnic studies
	The troublemaker
2	Authentic ethnic studies
	Rehumanizing education
3	Ethnic studies requires a shift in values
	Fugitive pedagogy

Racism Experienced by Ethnic Studies EOC

Every single participant indicated they have experienced racism in the teaching

profession. Intersectional oppression was part of the experiences reported. I probed

participants with intersecting identities about how they knew the microaggressions they

shared with me were racially motivated. They responded that they had no way to tell.

Minh, an Asian educator with several intersecting identities responded,

How do I know it's race and not something else? It's kind of hard to separate, I think. At this point, it almost feels like you shouldn't be separating them, because that's like slicing me apart and I don't think I can do that.

Xitlalli, who identified as Latinx spoke of her intersections of race and language, saying,

There's microaggressions and racism that I've faced because of how I look, and then, there's others that I've experienced based on how I sound and how I speak. And so, how I present myself into a space, there's already assumptions about my background, about my education, about where I come from, where I belong and where I don't belong, and often whether I deserve to be in certain spaces.

Traci talked about how being a mixed-race Black woman muddled her intersections. She presents as Black, so people assumed things about her based on her physical appearance.

There's been, also, assumptions about me in terms of how I grew up and, you know, I didn't grow up stereotypically like with Black culture or rooted in Black culture, because I was raised by a White mom, single mom. So, it always cracks me up when people put me in a box that is very clearly to me not a box that I belong in.

Eight participants explicitly stated that they felt that protecting and advocating for students of color was part of their job. Because these participants had this belief, they considered racism perpetuated against their students as racism perpetuated against themselves, personally. Javier shared an example of racism against his students that he took personally.

I remember I was on my way back to my class early in the morning, and the

principal had been in a meeting with me earlier – the week prior to that. And they

overheard me responding to a student who was like, "Oh, what are we doing for

the last few days of class in your class?" And I was like, "Oh, we're just gonna

relax. We just finished our finals. We're not gonna have any work." And then the

principal met up with me the week after and was like, "I overheard you saying

that you didn't have any work to do for those last few days. Here, at this school,

we need to be using every minute 'til the end of the school year to work and to

teach." That was very much like a system-wide thing where there was no

conscious effort to understand these students that have gone through a pandemic,

number one. Number two, have been getting sick this whole year, on and off,

trying to do their best. Going through all this hard work, and then, after finishing

our finals and everything, just being told, "You still need to work." And to me, it

goes back to this whole idea that students and schools, they're workers to

produce. And that goes a long way back when it comes to the history of racism in

schools. Seeing students of color, and in my particular understand[ing] of Latino

students, feeding them down a line of, "You always need to work. You need to go

on and just become a worker, basically."

Javier further explained that he has experience with the trope of Latinx people as manual

laborers, and because he had a shared identity with most of his students, he took the

principal's response as a personal microaggression.

Systemic Lack of Value of EOC and Ethnic Studies

The data demonstrated direct links between the values of EOC, their perceptions of education and ethnic studies, and how they defined and described racism they experienced. These connections were most apparent when participants shared their experiences with and feelings on the education system, whether that was at a state, district, or school level. For example, nine educators made statements like, "Ethnic studies is who I am," "Ethnic studies taught me who I am," or, "I don't know another way to teach." Margarita shared how, not only was ethnic studies part of her identity, but learning about teaching ethnic studies gave her permission to be her authentic self in the classroom.

> After ethnic studies, it was kinda like that invitation to like, well, you could be yourself, fool! What are you doing? What the fuck? As the kids would say, "The fuck?" So, literally it was that shift of, I can actually be my authentic self, like who I am at home. I can be that way in the classroom. Oh, that's how it should be. That's how – oh, that's authenticity. Oh, cool. Okay. They don't teach you that in teacher college, which I am still paying for.

As such, when participants felt that the system, including district administrators, various policymakers, or union leaders, lacked an understanding of, or did not value ethnic studies, they took it personally, because they considered ethnic studies to be integral to their personal identities.

Some ways this lack of systemic value manifested were EOC feeling isolated and tokenized by the system. Thirteen participants reported that district administrators will

ignore or actively target them because of their work on ethnic studies and antiracism but use them in the district's racial equity propaganda. Laurie shared such an experience.

So, I had a principal, [Dr. X], who told me when they asked me to be the department chair, as an example, and had never expressed any interest in anything I was doing before but asked me to be department chair. And one, she wanted me to co-chair it with another individual, a white male. And it was clear to me it was because I'm Black, and she was trying to diversify. And so, I called her out on it. I said, "Well, don't think I don't realize that you're tokenizing me." And she said, "Yes, I am." And I said, "Okay, now we're on the same page. I know what you're up to." I said, "Because it benefits me, I can put it on my resume. I get the experience. I can do what I want in my department and everything, but know that you're using me, but you're being used also." So, the look on her face was just worth the whole conversation.

Similarly, Apple shared that her school is consistently attacked and threatened by school district administrators for centering ethnic studies and antiracism but will gladly tokenize her in their messaging.

For many years I was the only POC [person of color] on staff and it was very tokenizing. I would always be in the school brochures. People would always try to showcase that there is a POC in the building and it was really like, "Uh."

Honey said the feelings of tokenization and isolation occur because district administrators only see EOC as valuable for pushing students of color through a racist

system instead of valuing their ability to dismantle it. When I asked how the racism she

reported experiencing affected her sense of self-worth, she replied,

> In short, it makes me feel immeasurably valuable and, paradoxically, disposable.
>
> Educators of color often talk about the 'brown tax' and how we are often over-
>
> relied upon to connect with students of color. I feel able to problem solve and help
>
> students of color in the moment, but the barriers and challenges they're facing are
>
> often systemic and, for better and worse, I am part of that system. It's exhausting
>
> trying to find the best way through a system: the objective of which is in direct
>
> conflict with how I am trying to support students. The system holds white
>
> supremacy at its center and as an educator of color in this system, at best, I feel
>
> like a band-aid for our students. At worst I feel doomed for burn out in the face of
>
> the school machine, to be replaced by a fresh batch of educators of color trying to
>
> support our kids.

Worse, however, than these feelings of isolation were the toxic work

environments this lack of systemic value created for all of the participants of this study.

Of the 17 EOC interviewed, 9 reported that they had been under formal investigation at

some point in their career or were pushed out of schools by administrators. All 9 of the

EOC who reported these experiences indicated it was because they taught about race and

racism or advocated for the rights of students of color. This is particularly disconcerting

considering that all the districts represented by the 17 participants of this study have

racial equity policies and publicly claim to be antiracist school districts. This disconnect

between district administrators' policies and actions caused four participants to report

they did not wish to stay in their current districts. Xie shared that she believed she was the target of attacks at the hands of district administrators, because her expertise on antiracism and ethnic studies was more advanced than district administrators.

> I feel like my expertise has outgrown the district, and that me spending my time there trying to convince them that they need to do more work in this direction, and that I would be a leader in that field for them is not helpful. They're not at that level. They're not ready to learn. They're not ready to accept the work that they need to do. So, I feel strongly that I am a valuable educator. I just don't feel like the district itself values that in me.

The four educators who did not report being targeted or pushed out all shared stories of their experiences with microaggressions and being intimidated by colleagues or principals. Some microaggressions included questioning the EOC's ability to do their job, micromanagement, and tone policing. Sixteen of the 17 EOC shared that having to navigate these potential microaggressions caused them to be in a perpetual state of heightened alert, which then led to feelings of fatigue. This fatigue was described similarly to racial battle fatigue as described by Gorski (2019b) and Smith et al. (2011). The one educator who did not report stress from dealing with colleagues was Javier. He also frequently stated he was grateful that his content was free from conventional content standards, and that he was not expected to work closely with colleagues in his school.

The participants shared the feelings of isolation they felt came from not knowing which colleagues they can trust. Some referred to a phenomenon they called, "performative wokeness." This was described as colleagues who say the right words, but

act in different, often racist ways. Rosie shared how someone she considered a friend and thought she could trust turned on a dime after one disagreement.

> So, a woman that I would have considered a friend and, we taught together - her room was right across from mine - we had a disagreement about something stupid. We were trying to decide whether or not civics should go in the senior year or in the 9th grade year. And I agreed. She felt it should go in the senior year, and I agreed with her, but her reasoning was that 9th graders aren't able to handle complex issues or hard issues. And I said, "You know, I disagree. The first time I was called the N word, I was 8, and I had to go home and have a really hard and complex conversation with my mom. And that was the first time I realized what race was and I was grappling with this idea of race and racism since I was 8, and talking about it since I was 8." So, I disagreed. I think that 9th graders can handle complex issues. She didn't like that we had that disagreement even though I was technically agreeing with her.

Here we can see that Rosie is dealing with two forms of racism in the first part of her story. First, she must use her own traumatic experiences to try to convince a White colleague who lacks that lived experience, and second, her White colleague dismissed that experience and became angry at Rosie for sharing it. Rosie went on to say,

> And so, at lunch the next day, she was talking to fellow colleagues of ours and she called me a Black bitch. And one of my friends who was at that lunch came and told me the next day. And yeah, I was really upset about it because again, I considered her a close friend. I didn't take it any further. I just said, "Okay," in

my mind. "I know who she is. We are not friends anymore. I'm not — we're just

done." Right?

This section of the story is an example of explicit racism: being called a racial slur. It is

also an example of the emotional labor Rosie had to exert to navigate her colleagues'

White fragility. She thought this person was a friend that she could trust, so the emotional

toll of this colleagues' fragility on Rosie was multiplied by a sense of betrayal.

Unfortunately, the story continues.

Somebody else at that lunch went and they spoke to admin, my administrators,

about it and they called her in and put her under investigation. And it's so

interesting because when they brought me down to tell me that this was

happening, I was like, I don't want that. And I'm still processing this. I don't

know why I process this way. But I was like, I don't want that. And they're like,

well, 1) it's done, and 2) this is the process. And I was like, you have to

understand, I never want to be a problem. And I, I'm the only Black teacher here.

I'm already a problem. Always people see me as a problem. And now it seems

like this is my fault. I didn't even say anything. I didn't tell you this.

It's so interesting because after literally they call her down to investigate her, it's

lunch. She comes up to where I'm having lunch with some other people, and she

comes in. And she's like trying to apologize and all this stuff. And I was not ready

to hear it. So, I set aside a time to have a further conversation with her. And in

that conversation was all the things a White person could possibly say about being

White, she managed to say. It was awful. And at the end of it, and again she kept

apologizing throughout. And I was like, "Thank you. I'm not ready to accept that

apology." But as she was walking out, she was like, "Were you the one that told?"

And I was like, "This is what this is really about. You're not even sorry."

The fact that Rosie's colleagues acted without consulting Rosie or asking her permission

is another microaggression. The actions of Rosie's colleagues affirmed the feelings Rosie

already had of being the Troublemaker, and created a racially toxic environment in which

she was forced to interact with the perpetrator. The toxicity was furthered by the

insincerity of the offender's apology.

An interesting way the systemic lack of value manifested were stories the

participants shared of dealing with the internalized oppression of colleagues of color,

especially administrators of color. Starla believed that hiring educators and administrators

of color simply because they are people of color can be more damaging to students of

color than hiring White educators with some level of antiracist consciousness.

Oftentimes what they do in schools is say, "Get people of color!" and it's like oh,

this is a teacher of color, and they could be a dumb jackass, but they're of color,

and so you do more damage when you set that in front of a kid. You need to make

sure they know what the hell they're doing, or at least help them learn so that they

understand what they're doing. You bring somebody in and they half ass do their

job. I don't want them in here! I don't care if they are [of] color. Get them the hell

out of here, because you're teaching the kids the wrong thing that I want them to

learn!

Starla also reported that much of the targeting she experienced came from Black

administrators and other colleagues of color. Four other educators made similar

statements, suggesting their colleagues of color suffered from internalized racism or had

become institutionalized into the racist status quo.

Ethnic Studies EOC as the Troublemaker

Responding to the racism the participants and their students experienced often

earned the EOC the label of the Troublemaker. Ethnic studies EOC being perceived as

the Troublemaker showed up in two distinct ways. First, six participants told stories of

their colleagues feeling personally threatened by the practices of EOC who taught ethnic

studies. Hon Min said,

> So, for example, if I speak vocally and positively about ethnic studies and the role
>
> that it can play in transforming a classroom, or even a teacher's own mindset, they
>
> will feel sometimes – or my perception is that they will feel kind of insecure or
>
> inadequate, or feel a need to defend themselves, even though I'm not attacking
>
> them or even saying, "You need to do this." I'm talking about what I do. But
>
> somehow, that becomes a negative reflection on them. And then at the building
>
> level, when I was advocating for ethnic studies – especially at [my previous
>
> school], but even a little bit at [my current school] – there was this feeling of,
>
> "You're trying to tell me how to do my job, and you're not my boss," or that
>
> because I'm advocating for something that's new like ethnic studies, that that
>
> must mean that what they're doing right now is terrible. And maybe it is. But I'm
>
> not in the classroom, and I don't judge people on that, because I don't see it. But

that's the immediate pivot that kind of happens in their mind. And then without

my knowing, that kind of sets up a somewhat antagonistic relationship going

forward. Because in their mind, I've now made a judgment about who they are as

an educator and their curriculum.

Sarah shared a lot about the leadership roles she had taken on in her school on

antiracist initiatives. She became *that person*, the person that is always talking about and

advocating for antiracism, including calling attention to when it occurs and advocating

for students of color who experience racism. Sarah shared a specific example of being

wrongfully accused of calling attention to an act of racism. Her colleagues assumed it

was her simply because they saw her as *that person*.

Other examples are when we were having issues with our Black educators being

the most vulnerable during COVID and standing up for those Black educators.

We were just holding a small action when we got back, and that was that we

weren't going to go into the buildings because we didn't know it was safe. So, we

were going to do our trainings outdoors with masks on. . . . So, we were going to

sit outside and do it and still do our jobs, just not go into the buildings, simply as

an act of solidarity for our Black educators. And 90 percent of the white women

in our building just went right past, straight into the doors. I didn't say anything. I

was just taking a lap with another colleague who is a white woman. And that

white woman yelled at the other white women for what they were doing. And I

just stood there. And later, those white women came to me and yelled at me for

making them feel bad, even though I wasn't the one who said anything. They took

the white woman's words, put them in my mouth, and then took their guilt, discomfort, and aggression out on me, and told me that I was divisive, that I was aggressive, and that this is why I'm so burned out.

While Sarah said she felt burnt out by the way she was treated by her peers, she also considered being the Troublemaker a value she brings to the profession, saying, "I really don't like it, but I guess it's a value I offer too, being the abrasive personality that people see me to be. I am capable of breaking things down for somebody else to build them up."

The second way this theme showed up was EOC feeling as though they were perceived to be a threat to the system of education, itself. In fact, three of the five Black educators interviewed felt that simply existing as a Black educator was seen as a threat. Rosie explained she felt this way because being Black gave her a completely different way to understand education than her White counterparts, and simply advocating for diversifying curriculum using a Black frame of reference challenged the system.

It's really interesting, because my first year of teaching — actually, sorry, my second year of teaching, I got switched from teaching on-level US history to teaching AP US History. And it's blocked with honors English. And they always read Moby Dick. There were no books by people of color at all. And I didn't want to read Moby Dick. I have nothing against it, I just don't want to read it. And I was like, "Well, we have no books of color. Beloved is my favorite book. I don't understand why you don't have any books. This would be a perfect fit." And you

could just see. It was all White men. Everybody in the room was just sweaty. Instantly sweaty. And I wasn't even thinking.

It's so funny, because I became a teacher for this specific reason. Sometimes [I] say things, and I think it's just the most natural thing in the world to say. Again, even to this day, after years, and years, and years of this, I keep forgetting that I have a different point of view than other people. And it's normal for me that I am a minority in the room. And so, it's abnormal, literally for everyone else in the room. So, I always feel like I'm saying things that make people uncomfortable. And I don't want to. I'm not a contrarian. I'm not a contrarian at all, but because I always have ideas [that] are different than other people's, I always feel like I am the contrarian. And you always have people [say], "Well, if you play devil's advocate . . ." I'm never playing devil's advocate. I'm literally saying, "Well, what about this? Because if we think about these people, or these people . . . thinking about myself as a student." And so, it's always been, "Oh, well, Rosie's gonna think . . . ," or, "Rosies's the angry black lady. Don't make Rosie mad." And so, yes. I've always felt like the problem.

All participants described ethnic studies as a tool to challenge systems of oppression, including education. They felt it was their responsibility to not only challenge conventional education, which they perceived as oppressive, but also motivate their students to do the same. The participants believed that this value they held led to the Troublemaker label, but it also created a sense of feeling perplexed. They did not

understand why wanting to end oppressive practices would be seen as a negative value to have.

Elaine said she had been labeled the Troublemaker in her school and shared a story about being part of a district-wide cohort of ethnic studies educators who worked on creating curriculum and professional development for the rest of the district. She said it was a space where she felt her cultural wealth was being valued, but it became the target of district administrators and was eventually dismantled.

Those are the kind of spaces that I find incredibly helpful for me personally, because I need to talk stuff out. I need people to push back on me in a respectful way. I need to be able to do the same because these are topics that we need, like I need that from the group of people around me. I don't feel like the district is in support of that. I feel like every time any type of group is trying to make progress towards that, that district shuts it down and we go 10 steps backwards. And, I don't understand why. I don't understand why work disappears. I don't understand why there's not even access to some of the things that have been done before. I don't understand why the professional developments now are as incompetent as they are. I have not gotten a single -- there was almost no positive feedback that came out about the 'ethnic studies' professional development that was offered by the district last year for us.

These examples shared by participants strengthen their claims that district administrators' actions are not aligned to district policies. Though each district has policies that include advancing racial equity, anti-racism, and recruiting and retaining

more EOC, these educators' experiences are diametrically opposed to the districts' stated goals. This disconnected leads to the next theme, values.

Values

I asked each EOC to share both how their curriculum is an expression of their values and how they feel valued by the teaching profession. The most apparent theme to emerge from the data is the value for authentic ethnic studies. All participants expressed a lack of faith in systems to get ethnic studies right, using words like, "appropriation," "whitewashing," and "re-whiting" to describe what they observed happening in their schools, districts, and in the state. Four participants expressed a need to protect ethnic studies from being coopted by education leaders.

Part of how the participants described an authentic ethnic studies program included what they referred to as rehumanizing education. As such, I made rehumanizing education a second theme under values. All participants expressed that rehumanizing education included a move away from what they described as an obsession with numbers and outcomes over human interactions. They shared values that included confronting oppression, lived experience, cultural wealth, identity, relationships, community, and more.

Regarding how they felt valued as educators in the profession, all the EOC agreed they do not feel valued by the system, naming district administrators and school principals most frequently as agents of the system. The participants reported feeling valued by their students, their students' families, and like-minded colleagues, and that

they stay in the teaching profession despite the lack of systemic value because of the relationships they have with their students and their students' families.

Authentic Ethnic Studies

All participants were very adamant about what they referred to as, "authentic ethnic studies." This term came up so frequently that I followed up with each participant about how they defined authentic ethnic studies. Table 5 below includes the most frequently used terms to describe authentic ethnic studies.

Table 5

Descriptors and Frequency of "Authentic Ethnic Studies"

Term	Frequency used
Connections/relationships	17
Community/collaboration	10
Identity	10
Empowering students/challenging oppressive systems	7
Student-centered/redistributing power	7
Creating empathy	5
Critical thinking	5
History	5
Healing/nurturing	4
Humanizing/rehumanizing	4
Joy/love	4

The participants felt a need to express a difference between what they considered ethnic studies and what school leaders and policy makers were trying to pass off as ethnic studies. Several EOC were concerned that institutionalizing ethnic studies will destroy it. Violet shared a conversation she had with her students who were frustrated that their school was not providing ethnic studies courses. She asked her students, "If you solely

rely on [your school] or any institution to give you ethnic studies, what version of ethnic

studies do you think they're gonna give you?"

I asked Violet to provide some context for that statement - what did Violet

consider the institutional version of ethnic studies, and what was her version, instead?

She responded,

I believe I was referring to the push to standardize and align ethnic studies to

social studies standards as well as [the] effort to remove any mention of CRT

from ES [ethnic studies] . . . [In my experience] there was such a push among

certain [colleagues] to remove any 'controversial' language from the [program]

… so that it would be more readily accepted by teachers and communities

(according to them). Similarly, the alignment piece - . . . leadership basically

arguing that, 'If 'ES folxs' (*sic*) wanted to institutionalize ES in K-12 public

schools, then they need to understanding (*sic*) that standardization of ES is part of

that."

The best I could distill of their understanding of ES was a watered-down

effort at multiculturalism, that considered ES another secondary subject (elective)

area that could be reduced to a few voyeuristic units on the experiences of People

of Color. While there were a few champions for a more radical vision of ES in

[the district], once the 'elective' was established, district leadership didn't show

much of an interest to do much more. We keep asking – what about K–6? What

about teacher [professional development]? What about just bringing the high

school teachers together on [professional development] days for some collective

strategizing? We received no response and, if we did, it was simply to say that teachers are overwhelmed and there are other priorities right now. Again, once the elective was established, they were like, 'Ok, ES is a class now. We can move on.'

In their approach to ES, district/state-level leadership fail to understand that ethnic studies is about movement-building - a process that builds off of generations of radical thought and action (praxis) led by people of color. ES demands that we embrace that ethic of movement-building in our visioning and practice of ES now and into the future, especially in K–12. ES never has been, nor will it ever be 'just a class' – it's an embodiment of a political stance that centers POC epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies (which is NOT multiculturalism) in the ways we approach a critical rendering and analysis of history, in how we come to know the world and each other (through multiple modes – science, math, the arts, language – not just social studies), and in building the futures we desperately need. This requires an intimate reckoning with our relationship to power at multiple scales, and a commitment to heal from and refuse the White supremacist settler colonial bullshit that attempts to mediate our existence and that of our communities. There is a whole lot more I can say here and probably much more articulately. But, for me, ES is love of self and love of community embodied in a collective practice of constant struggle and learning . . . It's a reconnection to what has been stolen from us, or as [a colleague] would say – it's about getting our 'shit back.'

Thus, at minimum, we need K–12 to invest in learning communities that are willing to constantly struggle with these demands of ES – demands that are not just intellectual or academic in nature but also about our own relationship to power. And as the context shifts in schools and society (which we know it will), we need [professional development] and learning spaces for educators that allow us to strategize, to devise new tactics that advance a more radical and critical vision ES (*sic*), refusing watered down versions and nurturing critical practices of care for each other.

I chose to share Violet's response because it succinctly captured what every other participant expressed when I asked them to share how they would describe authentic ethnic studies. As Table 5 demonstrates, relationships, community, identity, and challenging oppression were used frequently to describe ethnic studies. All of the participants described authentic ethnic studies as being participatory; ethnic studies is not a subject to learn about, it is an action to take to make the world more just. As Xie described,

Authentic ethnic studies is exercising criticality in ways that challenge systems of oppression - racism, misogyny, homophobia, ableism, ageism, etc. - to rehumanize thinking and being in every sector of society and every aspect of institutions within society from education to healthcare, from the criminal justice system to housing.

Additionally, seven participants stated that ethnic studies demands more from educators, not only in what they teach and how they teach, but how they view themselves

in relation to their students. As Starla pointed out, simply being a person of color does not qualify an educator to teach ethnic studies. Hon Min provided a description of what he considered an authentic ethnic studies educator.

> I believe an authentic ethnic studies educator is someone whose teaching persona is an authentic reflection of who they are as a person. In other words, an ethnic studies educator is authentically themselves when teaching. They aren't putting on a mask. And students can tell and appreciate the difference, especially once they have had a teacher who is authentically themselves when teaching.
>
> In addition, an ethnic studies educator is someone who is committed to continuous growth, both as a person and as an educator. Lastly, an authentic ethnic studies educator works to create conditions in their classroom that empower students to be authentically themselves as well, both inside and outside the classroom. None of this is easy and the journey never ends, but these qualities (as forever works in progress) must be alive in you and your pedagogy if you choose to self-identify as an ethnic studies educator.
>
> Lastly-lastly, calling yourself an ethnic studies educator is worth jack-shit if it isn't alive in your teaching, your classroom, and your students. If your students do not experience, affirm, and validate the ethnic-studies-ness of your class (in their own words, expressed in their own way) then you're really just full of shit.

Sarah shared a similar sentiment, stating, " . . . being an ethnic cities educator is not just a curriculum or an approach to teaching, but really a way you kind of live your

life." Xitlalli spoke of the need to collaborate to have authentic ethnic studies at her school saying, "We constantly – it's part of that ethnic studies, I would say, philosophy. In that work, there's a lot of community and collaboration . . . " Tiffany believed ethnic studies requires more of educators because it should be interdisciplinary and about practice more than content saying, " . . . how our district views ethnic studies because the district sees it as one subject matter, and I see it as like, it needs to be incorporated into everything that you do, and it's a pedagogy."

None of the participants believed an educator had to be a person of color to teach ethnic studies, but when asked about what unique value they bring to the teaching profession, twelve participants named a shared cultural, ethnic, and racial identity with their students as one of the most important things they brought to the profession. Two participants, Violet and Starla, indicated that they needed to have White educator allies in the work, because White educators were taken more seriously by administrators and punished less frequently or less severely for teaching about race and racism.

Rehumanizing Education

My favorite question to ask the participants was how their curriculum was an expression of their values. Their body language and tone shifted immediately to express pure joy and pride. Below are the first sentences of each participants' responses to this question. Four educators had trouble articulating their feelings at first, because it was so physically apparent how much joy was swirling around that question.

Sarah: "I think my value system is all about connection and humanity."

Apple: "I got into teaching specifically to work with public school kids, specifically to teach [students of color] . . . "

Minh: "Ethnic studies starts with the land and the identity of the people on the land."

Hon Min: "I think very much so."

Honey: "Oh, my God."

Xie: "So, my values as an educator are deeply rooted in liberatory education and democratic-based systems."

Javier: "I just think that's how my brain works."

Margarita: "Oh, that's my favorite part, though."

Violet: "Man, wow."

Elaine: "Ah, I love my curriculum!"

Xitlalli: "I think it's a reflection of the hopes and aspirations that I have for my students, for the things that I want them to be able to do in the world and be able to identify."

Julietta: "It's a lot, because I love the framework."

Laurie: "It's all my values."

Rosie: "It's literally everything, because I believe in that power of story."

Tiffany: "Oh, I think it's all the way an expression of my values."

Starla: "I think my values as an educator . . . [are] that idea that there has been oppression that is a legacy that has been generational oppression, and my value is we have to teach people how to push back against that . . . "

Traci: " . . . I think not occupying every single minute of every period is a way that that shows up."

The descriptions the participants provided of their values were nearly identical to their description of authentic ethnic studies. They spoke a lot about relationships, community, and human connections. Violet said, "I will say that for me, when I think about ethnic studies, I think about it as a profound statement of love." They believed that the relational aspect of ethnic studies was itself, rehumanizing, and an antidote to the dehumanizing aspect of conventional education that focused almost entirely on numbers, productivity, and decontextualized outcomes. Nine educators shared how they rediscovered who their authentic selves were because of teaching ethnic studies. In other words, the rehumanizing effect of ethnic studies was very personal to them as individuals, not just as educators.

Sarah explained how ethnic studies helps her be a better human and a better educator:

But man, being an ethnic studies educator has changed my life. It has provided me with insight to my own heart and soul. It has opened doors for me to understand and learn about my own trauma and process it and let it go and have peace in my heart. It has allowed me to see that the difficulties in my life were not my fault. And that I didn't deserve them. But I can accept that I had them, they happened to me, and that I can move beyond them.

When I asked the EOC what unique value they bring to the teaching profession, thirteen participants answered racial representation and shared lived experiences with

their students and communities, citing the shortage of EOC, particularly in urban schools.
One of the more depressing responses came from Hon Min but was echoed by other
educators.

> Number 1, I don't need any convincing that our students of color matter. I
> genuinely believe that there are some White educators who have yet to be
> convinced of that, which is crazy. Like, truly, in my mind, crazy. But I don't need
> to be convinced of that.

Laurie shared a similar story about a specific student. She explained why she was
able to see and value this student differently than her White colleagues because of their
shared lived experiences as Black Americans.

> For example, I had a student a few years ago, and he was one of those kids that I
> heard his name his freshman year. I don't have freshman, but he's one of those
> kids that you just hear. And then they end up on your roster and you're like why
> me? Because his reputation has preceded him.
>
> So, I had him as a junior. And again, I saw his name on the roster, and I
> was like okay it's going to be one of those years. And the thing is we never had an
> issue. And part of it, I will say, [is] because he had matured over time. And so,
> that was part of it. He was still a lot of him. That doesn't go away as you know.
> You're an educator. It doesn't go away. He had found other ways to address it.
> But I'm trying to figure out how to say this. I just understood him.
>
> He's one of those kids that I realized that one of the things that he got in
> trouble a lot for in class was blurting out, for example. And teachers would

respond with, 'In this class we raise our hand,' and, 'In this class, we don't blurt

out. Wait your turn. I was talking,' that kind of thing. Things that teachers do.

And I know I've been guilty of that myself, because one of the things I hate the

most is when I'm talking, don't talk when I'm talking.

So, however, I've come to realize that when kids blurt out like that,

they're engaging with what you're saying. They're like, I've got to get this out

now. And it happens a lot in the Black community because that's who we are. We

come from call and respond (*sic*). That's our church. It happens in our house. This

is who we are. If you watch Black people together, this is what we do.

And there's no room for that culture in public schools, because public

school is very White based. It's very based on White culture. They make room for

Asian cultures because Asian students tend to be more – because of the culture –

the teacher is talking, we listen, we're paying attention, we're eyes forward, that

type of thing because that's the culture, and there's that respect for the teacher.

And I get it, and we make room for that because it works within how we see

school. But Black, and I want to say even Brown culture, too, because I think my

Latino students are very much the same, Black and Brown kids - that's not innate

to us. I guess that's what I'm trying to say.

The emphasis on rehumanization of education, described as human connections,

relationships, and stories may explain why, when asked how they felt valued by the

teaching profession, every participant responded they feel valued by their students, their

students' families, and like-minded educators. Every respondent reported they did not

feel valued by the profession as a system or institution. In fact, thirteen respondents indicated they felt exploited by the system. Honey expressed this the best by saying,

> I think I am of value when my shit gets a positive spin. When I make [the district] look good, then they want to coopt all this shit and celebrate all of it. And so as long as I don't ruffle too many feathers on the journey, if I can pull it off, right? Then they want to celebrate. I feel very tokenized by the teaching profession, and it's only investment in our children, and the joy of that that keeps me in it, because the profession itself is fucked.

Honey's statement highlights the extractive relationship participants of this study felt existed between them and the teaching profession. They found joy in teaching ethnic studies because they felt it brought human connections back into their experiences as educators and the experiences of their students. And, as Laurie's story highlighted, every participant shared the value of human interactions and meaningful relationships with their students and communities - rehumanizing the act of teaching and learning.

Perceptions of the Teaching Profession

Participants were asked to share their perceptions of the teaching profession both prior to and after teaching ethnic studies. Fifteen participants were able to identify a shift in their practice, though two indicated they had always taught ethnic studies, even if that is not what they called it at first. The two educators who felt they had always taught ethnic studies, however, were able to articulate how they perceived the profession when they were students or parents, and how they knew what they were doing was different than conventional education. All the participants saw ethnic studies as far more than a

curriculum, and even more than a shift in practice. There was consensus that ethnic studies needs to be a systemic shift in values, so that is the first theme that falls under perceptions.

Participants were asked how ethnic studies influenced their decision to stay in the profession. Fifteen of the EOC interviewed had been in the profession far longer than the average EOC, so it was interesting to hear them report that ethnic studies had almost everything to do with why they stay. I also asked them what they would do if they were no longer allowed to teach ethnic studies, which seems plausible with the current anti-CRT rhetoric spreading across the country (Liou & Alvara, 2021). Of the 17 educators, only 2 indicated they would quit the profession, and one of those 2 who said they might quit also said they would probably fight for it. The rest of the participants said they would keep teaching it anyway until they got caught or in trouble, and even after that, they would get more involved in politics and activism to save it. This led me to the final theme that emerged from the data, fugitive pedagogy.

Ethnic Studies as a Shift in Values

The participants of this study all described ethnic studies as an antidote for all the ways they perceived conventional education to be oppressive. The values they expressed such as relationships, community, combating oppression, etc., were all seen as missing from conventional education. Eight educators, however, wonder if it is even possible to implement authentic ethnic studies in conventional systems of education. None of the educators had faith that the conventional systems could be changed. Xie said,

The more that I've gotten professional development on ethnic studies and the more I incorporate it into my classroom, the more I see that the framework of ethnic studies is impossible to fit into a standard K through 12 American system of education; that it is almost diametrically opposed to what conventional education is. And I can see the connections as to why young Black men are being underserved, and getting disciplined more, and ending up in the criminal justice system. There's just a conflict, culturally, between White supremacy and the face of, or the demographic of, students today.

All the participants agreed that ethnic studies takes a lot more effort in the beginning, because it requires educators to stay relevant and make a commitment to first unlearning what they had been taught, and then lifelong relearning. Tiffany explained how her teacher preparation program left her ill-equipped to teach her students.

I was trained like everybody else was trained; to think one way, and think of classroom management as like, it has to be punitive, and negative, and all of that. And it wasn't about building relationships, and it was about behavior. And I had to unlearn that to really get to the root of ethnic studies. So, there's a lot of unlearning.

Starla echoed the need for relearning while critiquing the staleness of most teaching practices. "With ethnic studies, you really do learn that the more you know, the more you know you don't know. That's how the experience was for me."

Though participants regarded ethnic studies as more labor intensive than conventional pedagogies in the beginning, all the educators interviewed unanimously

agreed that the reward is far greater than using conventional teaching methods. Violet said,

> And there's so many kids, and I know this has been said over and over by a lot of our colleagues, like you could feel it day one, like these kids have been devoid of love by these institutions. And to watch what that does, right, is something really profound. And it happens, actually, a lot quicker than we think. We think we need like all this time, and obviously healing is lifelong, but I think that to watch how quickly some of the students are able to step into a different kind of relationship the moment an educator creates that space for them is pretty profound, right?

Ultimately, all the participants described conventional education as top-down conformity, more concerned with the compliance of students and educators than the humanity of students or educators. They described the conventional curriculum as outdated, about, "dead white men," stale, disconnected from real life, and therefore, humanity. Three educators talked about the capitalist interest in standardized testing and producing complacent workers instead of human beings with agency over their lives, whose learning is measured in their actions, not test scores. As such, they expressed the belief that ethnic studies is, again, more than a curriculum, and required to make the shift in values of current education systems.

Fugitive Pedagogies

Fugitive pedagogies, or what is often referred to as fugitivity in education scholarship, was an unexpected theme I found in the data. Fugitive pedagogy is described by McNeill et al. (2021) as living and teaching in a contradiction. On one hand, the

educators I interviewed expressed they are entrenched in oppressive institutions, and on the other hand, they are committed to dismantling those institutions. Fugitivity works alongside abolition to create relational accountability instead of economic or meritocratic accountability. Abolition, as it relates to education, is an escape from the oppression the educators in my study reported they and their students of color experienced (Coles et al., 2021). Together with abolitionist practices, fugitivity is considered an act of subversion; working within oppressive spaces, against the forces of normativity, to reimagine education that liberates everyone (Caldas, 2021; Coles et al., 2021; McNeill et al., 2021).

This concept of being a fugitive educator was taken a step further by some participants of this study. When I asked what the participants of the current study would do if ethnic studies became illegal to teach, which is a real probability in the current sociopolitical climate, many educators said they would continue to do it until they were caught or punished (Liou & Alvara, 2021). Sarah said she would be willing to face jail time to continue to teach ethnic studies. Two participants pointed out that the outlawing of ethnic studies has only ever taken away a title. Ethnic studies has survived several attacks from those who benefit from conventional education (Acosta, 2014; Cabrera et al., 2014; Fernández & Hammer, 2012; Romero & Arce, 2011). Violet pointed out that ethnic studies has always been seen as outside of the control of institutions.

> And so ethnic studies never began at institutions. It will outlive institutions. And I
> know that if I were banned from doing it inside schools, doesn't matter. I think
> that I'd find places to do it. I mean, this is the under commons, the underground,
> the places that – I mean, we've been outlaws before. It's not like we haven't been

there and don't have savviness to figure it out. Of course, we'd have to figure out some creative ways to live and survive and get paid and all that jazz, but the work would absolutely still continue.

Ethnic studies was reported to be so important to the educators who teach it, every participant said they would fight for it in various ways, both within the system and outside of it if it were threatened. Elaine would fight as long as she could, saying,

Ethnic studies has almost everything to do with me continuing to be an educator. I love that I get to use that in my curriculum. I love that I sort of, for the most part, have departments where we're okay with this. Where we can look at our curriculum and we can change it and we can update it. I have that support. If that were to go away completely, if it was a no from admin and a no from my team, I don't know how long I would be able to fight. I think I would try, but that would be really hard because ethnic studies keeps me in education.

Laurie said,

It's the only way I know how to do this job and keep my sanity, because it's about feeling impactful. Because part of teaching is yes, I care about kids, yes, I care about learning, and I love reading and writing and all of that, but there's still that part. And I think a lot of teachers, you want to be impactful. At least I do.

Starla agreed.

I stay in teaching, like I said, because I feel that ethnic studies is an avenue to activism. Teaching ethnic studies is activism and it's probably the best platform

that I can really think of, especially if I can influence other teachers to take that

approach.

Margarita added, "Ethnic studies really does make me stay because it's the only way I

can see to be creative. It's the only way I can see to be innovative, new, relevant." Javier

asked, "[Without ethnic studies] how we are we creating a society where people are cared

for, supported, and given a quality lifestyle to explore their potential and live in a just

way?" When these data are added with the examples of racism shared in previous themes,

it becomes clear that the participants of this study saw the current system of education as

oppressive and harmful for themselves and their students, to the point they would fight to

defend the one thing they felt disrupts and corrects that - ethnic studies.

Summary

The data collected from the EOC interviewed answered all three research

questions. RQ1: How does creating and teaching ethnic studies curriculum contribute to

EOC's experiences with the three levels of racism (personally mediated, institutional, and

internalized)? Teaching a curriculum that focuses not only on race and racism, but also

actively dismantling all forms of oppression, has caused each participant to experience

institutional and personally mediated racism. Institutional racism was evident in

participants' stories of being targeted, pushed out of schools, tokenized by district

leaders, and not being supported in implementing ethnic studies, a program that all

districts represented in this study explicitly state as a goal. The participants experienced

personally mediated racism from explicit use of racial slurs to assumptions made about

their abilities and motives. Teaching ethnic studies, however, has been a way for these

educators to combat any internalized oppression they felt prior to teaching ethnic studies, with nearly every participant reporting that ethnic studies helped them remember or affirm who they were.

RQ2: What role does ethnic studies curriculum in K–12 urban public schools play in ethnic studies EOC's sense of worth in the teaching profession? Each educator described their personal values and their understanding of authentic ethnic studies using similar words: relationships, rehumanizing, confronting and combating oppression, community, activism, etc. The data indicated that teaching ethnic studies allowed them to act upon their values, which gave them a high degree of self-worth as an educator, particularly when it came to their relationships with students, most notably, students of color.

RQ3: What role does ethnic studies curriculum play in the desire of ethnic studies EOC to stay in their current role? The EOC I interviewed unanimously agreed that teaching ethnic studies was either the only reason or the greatest reason they have stayed in education. Additionally, all the educators reported they would fight for ethnic studies if it was ever removed as an option, with several stating they do not know how else to teach.

In Chapter 5, I go deeper into discussing the findings to answer these questions and align the data with Jones' (2000) CRT framework. I outline how my findings confirm or disconfirm scholarship from Chapter 2 and make recommendations for both policy and further research. I also consider the limitations and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of the Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative critical narrative inquiry study was to explore how ethnic studies curriculum may influence how EOC who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K–12, urban public schools. I chose a qualitative research design for this study because I was seeking to understand how EOC perceive their profession, and perception is a form of meaning making. I chose critical narrative inquiry as the research design because it most closely aligns with the conceptual framework and the CRT tenet of the centrality of experiential knowledge—in this case, centering the experiential knowledge of EOC (see Ladson-Billings, 1998).

The key findings of this study are that EOC who identify as ethnic studies teachers, which the EOC of this study described as curriculum and pedagogy that explicitly challenges systems of oppression, have experienced institutional and personally mediated racism. Teaching ethnic studies, however, has helped the participants work through any internalized oppression they may have had and helped them understand the systems involved in their negative racialized experiences. Additionally, ethnic studies was reported to help clarify, solidify, and affirm their racial and ethnic identities and their racialized experiences. The identity-affirming nature of ethnic studies is in contradiction to conventional education standards that expect participants to assimilate to White norms.

The personal values each participant held were similar to their descriptions of ethnic studies content and pedagogy. The similarities between their values and ethnic studies made their teaching practice a creative outlet to act on their cultural and moral

values. The ability to act on their cultural and moral values is in direct opposition with what the education system, including policies, curriculum, and administrators, expect from them as educators.

Every participant in this study, except two, indicated they would continue to teach ethnic studies in some capacity if they were told they could no longer teach ethnic studies, even if that included going to jail for doing so. The two who said they would leave the profession altogether said they would fight for ethnic studies in the political arena after leaving teaching. The EOC participants interviewed for this study unanimously agreed that ethnic studies is what keeps them in the teaching profession, which is significant because all but two of the educators have been in the profession longer than the national average.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings from the data have confirmed studies in the literature review in various ways. This section returns to the relevant key concepts found in the literature review. I describe how the data of this study confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline.

Racial Demographics and Conditions of K–12, Urban Public Schools

In this study, I did not focus on the experiences of students of color, so the data collected are not applicable to some of the literature review specific to student experiences, but the data about the demographics of educators compared to student populations did confirm much of the literature. For example, Jang (2020) discovered that racial segregation between urban and suburban areas has increased over time. Table 1 of

Chapter 4 provides evidence of this in Washington state. Districts 3–5 have a majority of

students of color, and Districts 1 and 2 are nearly even. For context, Table 5 provides

racial demographic data for the United States and Washington state (U.S. Census, 2021a,

2021b). Just as with the racial demographics of classroom teachers, Washington state's

percentage of White residents is higher than the national average. These data may explain

the anomaly in data for Districts 1 and 2.

Table 6

Racial Demographics of the United States and Washington State

	United States %	Washington state %
White	75.8	77.5
Black or African American	13.6	4.5
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.3	2.0
Asian	6.1	10
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	0.3	0.8
Two or more races	2.9	5.2
Hispanic or Latino	18.9	13.7

Jang (2020) also found that students of color were rarely racially matched with

EOC who shared their identities. The data in Table 1 may help explain why students are

rarely matched with EOC, especially in Washington state. White classroom teachers are

overrepresented when compared to their student population in every district represented

in this study.

In terms of the conditions of schools the participants taught in, their narratives

confirm the research of Ramsay-Jordan (2020) and Bybee (2020). Every single

participant of this study described conventional education as a top-down banking model.

While Ramsay-Jordan (2020) found that new-to-the-profession educators were

challenged in implementing culturally sustaining practices, all the educators in this study, including the most veteran educators, reported the same thing.

One veteran educator, Laurie, summed it up the best by sharing her frustration with trying to be a culturally relevant ethnic studies educator in a conventional school system. Laurie expressed a belief that the education system is stuck in the past, that everything around education is moving on, but education insists all is well, when the data indicate differently. Laurie believes education is not working for anyone, regardless of their racial or ethnic identities.

Seven of the participants spoke explicitly about standardization and how standard curricula and testing prohibit their practice. Xitlalli spoke the most about standardized testing, confirming the research by Au (2016), Bybee (2020), and Ramsay-Jordan (2020). Xitlalli expressed a belief that education has sacrificed innovation and critical thinking in exchange for standardized curricula and assessment that robs education of its humanity.

The fact that 13 of the 17 participants named shared cultural identities and racialized experiences with their students and communities as a unique value they bring to the teaching profession confirms the research by Cuevas (2016), Kulago et al. (2021), and Martinez (2017). The EOC participants who shared stories of shared identities and experiences connected that to their ability to have deeply meaningful relationships with their students. They expressed that they believe this helps rehumanize the educational experiences of their students.

Need for Educators of Color

The data in Table 1 confirm the research by Cherng and Halin (2016) about the shifting racial demographics of students versus their educators. Even Districts 1 and 2, who have a majority White student body, have disparate racial demographics between students and educators. The severe shortage of Black educators became apparent through my attempts to recruit participants for this study. It was challenging to find Black educators, generally, and even more challenging considering the qualifications needed to participate in this study.

The data confirmed the research by Farinde-Wu (2018), who found that Black educators choose to teach in urban schools because they shared identities and lived experiences with urban students. I found this to be true among all three racial categories represented in this study. EOC in this study reported that they had more meaningful relationships with their students, their families, and members of their schools' communities because of their shared identities and experiences.

Preference for Educators of Color

The data provided by the participants of this study confirm the research by Sacramento (2019) about the ability of EOC to be skillful in bridging cultural gaps and applying CRT to their practice because of their identities and experiences. Margarita, who teaches in an alternative school, told a story about what her students of color say when they come to her from conventional schools. The stories she receives from incoming students almost always begin with students claiming the teachers in their

conventional schools did not care about them or bother to get to know and understand them.

Burciaga and Kohli (2018) found that White educators responded to the relationships between EOC and their students with jealousy, referring to it as a bias EOC have for students of color. This was confirmed by the data in this study. Six of the participants of this study reported experiencing this phenomenon, stating that this type of response from their colleagues created tense working conditions.

Racism Experienced by EOC

This study's findings confirm all the literature cited on racism EOC experience in the teaching profession. Microaggressions, as well as the presence of systemic racism, were clear from the data. I found, however, that Asian educators spoke of the racism they experienced in terms of systems, not just microaggressions, which adds to Rauscher and Wilson's (2017) research on Black and Mexican American educators. I did ask a question directly related to systems-level experiences, and Asian educators' responses were along the same lines as the responses of Black and Latinx educators, including feeling as though they had to prove their competence, even for the two Asian educators who taught STEM subjects, which adds to the research conducted by Choi (2018).

All the educators shared stories of being measured against White norms, which confirms the research by Burciaga and Kohli (2018), Choi (2018), del Carmen Salazar (2018), Kohli (2018), and Rauscher and Wilson (2017). Additionally, Kohli's (2018) research on EOC feeling commodified and del Carmen Salazar's (2018) research on the lack of value for the cultural wealth EOC bring to the profession was confirmed by this

study. This confirmation was best summarized by Honey's quote from Chapter 4 about feeling as though her only value to the education system was pushing her students of color through a system of White supremacy that expected them to assimilate or continue to flounder in a system not created for them.

Perceptions of EOC of the Teaching Profession

While there was a strong sense of negativity present in much of how the EOC in this study perceived the teaching profession, there was also a strong sense of hope for the future of education. All the EOC in this study believed it was their job to support their students' agency, both now and after their K–12 education. This sense of hope confirms the research by Farinde-Wu (2018), Kohli (2018), and Kokka (2016), who found that EOC choose to become teachers to be role models and advocates for students of color.

The stories Black educators told in this study confirmed the research by Farinde-Wu (2018) and Kokka (2016) who found that Black educators see their Black students through a Black cultural lens. What their White colleagues may have seen as deficits, Black educators saw as strengths and growth. This is apparent, particularly, in the narratives of Laurie and Rosie. However, I also found this to be a strong theme amongst Latinx educators. Javier, for example, shared that he felt comfortable to be himself with his students, who were also predominantly Latinx. He specifically stated the ability to use Spanglish and Spanish slang with his students without fear of being judged as less intellectual as a benefit of the cultural wealth he brings to the profession. Spanglish and slang are often seen as deficits in a White-normed learning environment, but Javier is

able to value their cultural wealth because of their shared identities (Migliarini & Stinson, 2021).

The educators in this study used the term exploitation frequently to describe how they were commodified and tokenized. They reported that their efforts to challenge oppression in the education system were exploited to make their school or district have the appearance of being progressive while the same school or district administrators actively targeted them. This exploitation confirms and adds to the research by Gorski (2019b) and Goski and Parekh (2020) on racial battle fatigue. Kohli (2019) suggested that reducing racism in the teaching profession may improve perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession. The EOC of this study shared that learning about and teaching ethnic studies helped them feel like they are doing something to fix, or reduce, racism they and their students experience, and that ethnic studies was a reason they had stayed in the profession. These data support Kohli's (2019) assertion.

Whiteness Affecting Burnout and Attrition of EOC

The participants of this study shared stories that confirm some of the research cited in the literature review. For example, 14 participants named their White colleagues as either the source of racism they experienced personally, or the source of toxic working environments. This confirms a portion of the research by Gorski (2019a) and Gorski (2019b), but all the educators in the current study except two have been in the teaching profession for longer than the national average, which contradicts the findings in Gorski (2019a). The educators in the current study are not burning out even though they experience many of the phenomena reported in Gorski's (2019a) research. These facts,

however, do confirm the research by Ingersoll et al. (2019), Kohli (2018), and Kokka (2016) who found that educators who feel a stronger sense of dedication to their students stay in the profession longer.

Racism in Curriculum

The stories told by educators in this study confirm all the research about racism in curriculum. Rosie spoke about the lack of representation in literacy classrooms, confirming the research by López and Nikey (2021). Javier spoke about the curriculum of control that pushes Latinx students to be nothing more than laborers, confirming the research by Robbins (2018). Every participant spoke to the lack of stories and histories of people and communities of color, confirming the research by Kim-Cragg (2019) and An (2020) on null curriculum.

Ethnic Studies in Washington State

The ways in which the EOC of this study defined and described authentic ethnic studies adds to the research by Sleeter (2011) and San Pedro (2018) who both argued that ethnic studies has to include confronting and undoing systemic racism and Whiteness. Additionally, the value the participants of the current study placed on their shared lived experiences with their students adds to and confirms the research by Gorski & Parekh (2020), Kohli (2019), Sacramento (2019) and Sleeter (2011), who found that EOC are better prepared to teach about race, identity, and systemic oppression because of their own lived experiences. How the participants of this study described and defined ethnic studies is especially relevant for implementation of K–12 ethnic studies in Washington state, because the state legislation defines ethnic studies as an interdisciplinary program.

The fact that the participants of this study all described and defined ethnic studies similarly, despite their subject or grade level role, should be considered by policy makers and school leaders. This is true for implementation of K–12 ethnic studies as well as retention efforts for K–12 EOC.

Curriculum Helps Shape Perceptions of the Teaching Profession

The average length of time in the profession of the EOC in this study was approximately 13 years. Ingersoll et al. (2021) found that 44% of new-to-the-profession teachers leave the profession before five years regardless of race, and Kokka (2016) reported that attrition rates for EOC are three times higher than their White colleagues. The EOC in this study provide exceptions to those data, and each participant named ethnic studies as one of the reasons they have stayed in the profession longer than the average EOC.

Even though the participants of the current study confirmed the findings by Andrews et al. (2019), Ladson-Billings (1998), and others cited in Chapter 2, including feeling commodified and not valued for their cultural wealth, they continue to stay in the teaching profession. Not only did they stay in the profession, they continued to center teaching about race, identity, and systemic racism and oppression, even though they all reported being targeted or mistreated by colleagues for doing so. This confirms the research by Andrews, et al. (2019), Kohli (2018), and Kohli (2019) who found that EOC are more likely to center race in their curriculum and pedagogy than White educators because of their lived experience.

The stories of the EOC in this study confirmed the findings by Navarro (2018) and Fernández (2019), whose participants reported a sense of rejuvenation and purpose when engaging in ethnic studies professional development. Though the current study focused on curriculum and pedagogy instead of professional development, the participants used similar language to describe their practice as did the participants of Fernández's (2019) participants in their *testimonios*. Each participant in the current study found a sense of purpose and dedication through their ethnic studies practice.

Ethnic Studies, Pedagogy, and EOC

The word relationship, or some form of it, was used 17 times by participants in this study to describe ethnic studies. It was, in fact, the most frequently used term to describe what the participants referred to as authentic ethnic studies. This adds to the research by Calderón and Urrieta (2019), Pulido (2018), and Sosa-Provencio et al. (2020) about the centrality of indigenous epistemologies in ethnic studies pedagogy. Challenging oppression was the third most frequently used ethnic studies descriptor by participants of this study, which aligns with the research by Kulago et al. (2021) on the importance of critical pedagogy in ethnic studies.

Many scholars cited in Chapter 2 argued that colonial educational epistemologies, or what Xie referred to as "conventional education," is used to disconnect people from their identities and cultural mores. All of the participants of this study agreed and shared that telling their own stories and bringing their cultural wealth and norms into the classroom disrupted that process. Starla explicitly named the power of story. Laurie and Rosie spoke of valuing Black cultural norms, such as call and response. Javier and

Xitlalli spoke of valuing "Spanglish." Every participant in the current study shared examples of culturally disruptive pedagogies, or the act of disrupting White supremacy culture in education, adding to the research by McKinney de Royston et al. (2021). Rojas and Liou, (2018), and San Pedro (2018).

Conceptual Framework Analysis

I chose Jones' (2000) *Levels of racism: A theoretical framework and a gardener's tale* to frame my research because much of the literature focused on the fact that racism pushes many EOC out of the profession. Additionally, the literature I reviewed covered various types of racism experienced by EOC in the teaching profession, including personally mediated and institutional racism, which the participants of this study confirmed. Jones' (2000) framework includes concepts of CRT, which further frames this discussion within the broader concept of systemic racial oppression.

In the framework, Jones (2000) uses a garden metaphor to describe three levels of racism: institutional, personally mediated, and internalized. Personally mediated racism is the type of racism most people think of when they think of racism; it is a person-to-person action—what many would call a racial microaggression. Institutional racism occurs when policies and practices result in disparate outcomes by race. Internalized racism is the result of personally mediated and institutional racism; it occurs when the target of racism believes and internalizes negative stereotypes about their demographic.

In this section, I analyze the results of the current study according to Jones' (2000) three levels of racism. I revisit the research questions, which are rooted in Jones' (2000) framework and discuss any answers gleaned from the data. My analysis includes

how ethnic studies influences the perceptions of EOC about the teaching profession, since all the participants of this study indicated ethnic studies is a tool they use to dismantle systems of oppression, specifically racism.

Institutionalized Racism

Jones (2000) begins the garden metaphor with two flowerpots, one gardener, and two different colors of the same flower. The gardener, having a bias for red flowers, plants those seeds in the pot with the rich, fertile soil. They plant the seeds for the pink version of the flower in the pot with the rocky, poor soil. The pink flower seeds represent the EOC in this study. They are trying to grow in institutions full of Whiteness—in pots made for White educators and students. The containers in which they are trying to grow inhibit their growth by not feeding or valuing the cultural wealth they come to the containers with. White supremacy culture starves them at the roots.

The institutional racism the participants of this study have experienced has pushed them out of schools, out of positions, and out of leadership roles, but they continue to stay in the profession and fight for their students. Ethnic studies is one tool they use to do this. They enrich their poor, rocky soil with their own cultural wealth, and the cultural wealth of their students. They have learned that building relationships among other like-minded educators and building community with their students and their families has made room for their values and has disrupted White supremacy culture.

Minh reported that before they taught ethnic studies they struggled with finding purpose in their life, providing a profound example of the importance of ethnic studies and making space for this culturally sustaining pedagogy. Xitlalli said ethnic studies

provided her a kind of intellectual sustenance. Ethnic studies, then, is the organic

nutrients needed in the pot with the rocky, poor soil.

Personally Mediated Racism

Every single participant of this study was able to share at least one example of

personally mediated racism. There were examples of personally mediated racism between

the participants and their colleagues and between participants and their administrators.

Only one participant shared an example of personally mediated racism between the

educator and a student, and two participants included examples of personally mediated

racism coming from students' families.

Jones' (2000) fictional gardener plucks the heads off the pink flowers before they

can go to seed. For the EOC of this study, it is their colleagues who try to prevent them

from dropping their progeny into the soil. This was evident in the stories told about

fellow educators becoming defensive or jealous when the participants of this study shared

their work on ethnic studies. It was apparent in Rosie's story about Black author

representation in literacy courses. It was present in Javier's story about his

administrators' admonition of Javier's plan to give his students a break after working

hard all year.

Despite being pushed out of schools and positions, these EOC stay. Like Starla,

many participants believed they still had work to do to provide their students with tools to

dismantle oppression. Laurie, who thinks about quitting daily, has not, yet. She stays

because she knows her students need her, and she is often the only Black teacher they

will have in their K–12 experience. Minh stays because they believe that ethnic studies is

the only way to fix oppressive systems because it provides the how and why of systemic

oppression, which can then lead to the removal of barriers students face. The EOC of this

study have stayed in the profession longer than the average educator because they have

found a way to work past the personally mediated racism they experience in the

profession through teaching ethnic studies.

Internalized Racism

Internalized racism can be found in an EOC's sense of worth. For that reason,

RQ2 was designed to elicit responses that may uncover any internalized racism of the

participants. In Jones' (2000) story, the pink roses rejected pollen bees carried from other

pink roses and begged instead for the red rose pollen. In this study, the EOC rejected the

pollen from the red roses, and instead centered and celebrated the pollen from pink roses.

The participants of the current study explicitly stated that ethnic studies helped

them undo any internalized oppression they entered the teaching profession with.

Margarita's story is a good example of how teaching ethnic studies helped her step back

into her true self as an educator. Julietta spoke of how she had to unlearn what she had

learned in her K-12 experiences. When she became a teacher, she was praised for

teaching advanced placement courses that she believed perpetuated systemic racial

oppression. She had to fight the urge to keep receiving the red flower pollen, and in doing

so, she found herself again. Honey reported that ethnic studies opened her eyes, which

allowed her to understand and begin to undo the internalized oppression she had

developed as a child who was pushed to assimilate into Whiteness.

Interestingly, when participants did talk about internalized racism, they often spoke of their colleagues and administrators of color. Starla was the most outspoken against her colleagues of color, whom she believed acted from their internalized racism. Javier told a story of a mentor teacher of color who said things like, "All lives matter," during Black Lives Matter at School events. He believed this was an expression of internalized racism in which his mentor had believed the falsehoods about people of color, particularly Black Americans. One of the districts represented by participants of this study has a district office and union leadership that is predominantly led by people of color. When I asked Laurie if this changed her experiences as a Black educator, her response was that she believed most administrators of color had become, "district." Becoming district, according to Laurie, is selling out, assimilating, or internalizing racism—the pink roses accepting bee pollen from the red roses.

Ethnic studies helped each participant identify and undo the various forms of racism they experienced in the teaching profession. This helps explain why they have stayed in the profession so much longer than other EOC, and in some cases, longer than White educators. In addition to helping themselves with racism, the participants felt strongly that they were helping their students of color learn similar skills using ethnic studies. Ethnic studies helped them create spaces of growth and beauty in a profession that does not typically offer either to EOC.

Limitations of the Study

This study may not be transferable to regions outside of Washington state or areas that do not value ethnic studies curriculum. It may not be transferable to schools or

districts that define ethnic studies more narrowly than the participants of this study. This study may not be transferable to studies that do not define ethnic studies as an antiracist curriculum. Bias of the researcher may be a limitation as I identify as an EOC, founded an ethnic studies nonprofit, and currently serve as the executive director of that nonprofit.

One district represented by several participants had just completed a labor strike. Five of the participants felt the outcome of the strike was unsatisfactory and failed to include what they considered critical support for students of color. Three participants referred to these feelings of dissatisfaction when sharing their experiences with systems of education. Their feelings post-strike may have skewed their responses to the line of questioning around systems.

Recommendations

A few recommendations for future research come from the barriers to authentic ethnic studies participants of this study identified. Despite the depth of research on the history, definition, and purpose of ethnic studies, all EOC participants perceived their colleagues to lack an understanding of ethnic studies. They described their colleagues as, "Whitewashing," or "watering down," ethnic studies to simple multicultural education that lacked critical thinking or dismantling of systemic racism. Research on why there is a disconnect between self-identified ethnic studies pedagogues and their colleagues may help reduce some of the barriers to K–12 ethnic studies.

District administrators were another barrier the participants of this study focused on, particularly how they felt targeted by their administrators. To support implementation of a sustainable ethnic studies program, it would be helpful to understand why

administrators target, punish, and push out the EOC most equipped to teach it. An examination of principal preparation programs and school district policies may help with this understanding.

White colleagues were named as creating toxic work environments and labeling the EOC of this study as the Troublemaker. Though Gorski (2019b) and Gorski and Erakat (2019) have done research on how Whiteness and White scholars add to racial battle fatigue, there is little research on how White educators perceive EOC, especially explicitly antiracist EOC. Research on the perceptions of White educators may lead to resolutions to racial battle fatigue.

The stories about the internalized racism of the EOC's colleagues of color were fascinating and not regularly told in previous research. Research on why and how some EOC reject or stymy racial justice in K–12 education would be beneficial. It would be especially helpful to know if it is, indeed, internalized racism or some other phenomenon.

Implications

Some positive implications for social change from this study include, and are not limited to, informing retention efforts of EOC in K–12 education. As cited in Chapter 2, recruitment of EOC is largely successful, but retention of EOC remains disproportionately lower than retention of White educators (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Ingersoll et al., 2021; Kohli, 2018; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017). The results of this study add to other studies that indicate ethnic studies provides opportunities for EOC to showcase their cultural wealth and relationship skills with students of color. These data are important, especially in urban schools, where students of color are, or are

becoming, the majority demographic. Additionally, research indicates that all students tend to have more meaningful and productive relationships with EOC regardless of their own racial identities (Cherng & Halpin, 2016).

The results of this study may help school leaders who are implementing, or considering implementation of, ethnic studies in K–12 schools. The descriptions provided by the participants of this study could inform the work of school leaders, both in what ethnic studies is and who is qualified to teach it. It should also assist school leaders in identifying the type of professional development educators need to create a successful ethnic studies program, particularly in Washington state where ethnic studies legislation has called out a need for an interdisciplinary approach to ethnic studies.

Conclusion

Retention of EOC continues to be an issue in K–12 public schools. EOC currently have a negative perception of the teaching profession due to the racism they experience on various levels. Policies and programs to retain EOC should include systems transformation to remove racially toxic working environments. Curriculum is one way school leaders can improve the teaching environment for EOC, and thus their perception of the teaching profession.

The reasons EOC enter the teaching profession and the cultural wealth they bring to the profession need to be considered in retention efforts. The EOC in this study demonstrated a passion for learning, but with a specific purpose: to change the experiences of students of color and eliminate racism in education. Participants relied heavily on the cultural wealth they brought with them to relate to and build relationships

with their students and their communities. They then used these relationships to flip the paradigm in their practice, centering humanity and connections instead of productivity and assimilation into Whiteness.

If curriculum is the heart of teaching and learning, ethnic studies is the soul. When EOC are provided opportunities to connect the soul with the heart and bring that to their classrooms, instead of feeling like they must hide those parts of themselves they value most, their perceptions of the profession will improve. When EOC feel not only welcomed, but valued for the work they do to eliminate racism and support students' growth in critical consciousness, they will stay in the profession longer. When EOC plant seeds for students of color, those students may grow into educators who center and value humanity, relationships, and their own identities.

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Appendix A: Invitation

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Research
Perceptions of Educators of Color on Ethnic Studies Curriculum and the Teaching
Profession in K-12 Urban Public Schools

 Date: _____

        You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tracy
Castro-Gill, doctoral candidate at Walden University in the College of Education
under the supervision of Dr. Alia Sheety.
        The purpose of this qualitative critical narrative inquiry study is to explore
how ethnic studies curriculum may influence how EOC who teach ethnic studies
perceive the teaching profession in K-12, urban, public schools. Study
participants will be selected if they self-identified as a person of color, including
racial categories such as Black/African-American, Latinx/Chicanx, Asian, Pacific
Islander, and Indigenous (non-European). To be selected, participants must
currently work and teach in an urban, public, K-12 school. To qualify for the
study, potential participants must work directly with children, delivering
instruction daily. Participants may teach any grade level and any content area if
they can demonstrate they are incorporating ethnic studies curriculum.
        Participants will be asked to engage in individual interviews. Individual
interviews will last approximately 45 minutes. You may be asked to share your
lesson plans, curriculum, and/or student work, and any writing you have
completed, such as blogs or contributions to journals. You may also be asked to
participate in follow up interviews via email or Zoom. Your responses will be
kept confidential.
        Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to
participate you may choose to discontinue participation at any time and you may
choose to not answer select survey questions. If you are interested in joining the
study, you will be asked to complete a consent form. Please contact me at
tracygill0224@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to volunteer to
participate.
Sincerely,

Tracy Castro-Gill, MIT

PhD Candidate

Walden University

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

Form description

Name

Short answer text

email address

Short answer text

Do you identify as Black, Indigenous, or person of color?

○ Yes

○ No

Do you deliver ethnic studies content to K-12 students in an urban, public school daily?

○ Yes

○ No

Appendix C: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study about the perceptions of educators of Color on Ethnic Studies curriculum and the teaching profession in K-12 urban public schools. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study seeks 15-18 volunteers who are:
- People of color (Black/African American, Latinx/Chicanx, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and non-European Indigenous)
- Currently teaching in a K-12 public school in an urban setting
- Working directly with children, providing daily instruction
- Incorporating ethnic studies curriculum and pedagogy

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Tracy Castro-Gill, who is a doctoral candidate at Walden University. You many already have a personal relationship with the researcher, but you are under no obligation to respond to this invitation.

Study Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to explore how ethnic studies curriculum may influence how educators of color who teach ethnic studies perceive the teaching profession in K-12 urban public schools.

Procedures:
This study will involve you completing the following steps:
- Complete an anonymous online demographic survey
- Take part in a confidential, audio recorded 40-60 min. interview via Zoom or telephone
- Review a typed transcript of your interview to make corrections if needed
- Speak with the researcher post interview via email, Zoom, or telephone to clarify the researcher's understanding if necessary. Follow-up conversations vary in length depending on the level of clarity needed but should be between 10 and 30 minutes.
- Review sections of the results pertinent to your interview(s) to check for accuracy.

Here are some sample questions:
- How does being an ethnic studies educator of color influence your relationships with your colleagues?
- What unique value do you bring to the teaching profession as an educator of color?
- In what ways has your perception of the teaching profession changed since teaching ethnic studies?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So, everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not. No one at Washington Ethnic Studies Now will treat you differently based on whether you volunteer or not.

If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. The researcher will follow up with all volunteers to let them know whether they were selected for the study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study would pose minimal risk to your wellbeing. If, for any reason, the interview triggers distress or depression, the Washington State Department of Health has a directory of free and low-cost mental health providers here: https://www.warecoveryhelpline.org.

This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The aim of this study is to benefit society by assisting in efforts to retain educators of color in the teaching profession. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by emailing you a summary of the results.

Payment:
There is no compensation provided for participating in this study.

Privacy:
The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential, within the limits of the law. The researcher is only allowed to share your identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy) or with authorities if court-ordered (very rare). The researcher for this study is a mandatory reporter. Any information shared with the researcher that may be evidence of abuse will be reported to the proper authorities. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by replacing the names of participants with pseudonyms and/or gender-neutral pronouns when and storing data in a password protected cloud. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You can ask questions of the researcher by email: tracy.gill@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here**. It expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by replying to this email with the words, "I consent."

Appendix D: Alignment Matrix

Dissertation Alignment Matrix for K-12 Ethnic Studies EOC in Urban Districts		
Guiding Question: How do ethnic studies EOC perceive ethnic studies curriculum contributing to their perception of the teaching profession in K-12, urban, public schools?		
Research Question 1	**Research Question 2**	**Research Question 3**
How does creating and teaching ethnic studies curriculum influence EOC experiences with the three levels of racism (personally mediated, institutional, and internalized)?	What role does ethnic studies curriculum in K-12, urban, public schools play in ethnic studies EOC sense of worth in the teaching profession?	What role does ethnic studies curriculum play in the desire of ethnic studies EOC to stay in their current role and district?
Interview Questions	**Interview Questions**	**Interview Questions**
How does being an ethnic studies EOC influence your relationships with your colleagues? As an ethnic studies EOC, what are your experiences in dealing with various issues within the education system (i.e., administrators, unions, lawmakers, etc.)? Have you experienced racism in the teaching profession? If so, can you share an example? If yes, in what ways has the racism you've experienced in the teaching profession impacted your sense of self-worth as an educator?	What unique value do you bring to the teaching profession as an EOC? In what ways is your ethnic studies curriculum an expression of your value as an EOC? Tell me about the ways in which you feel valued in the teaching profession as an EOC.	What was your perception of the teaching profession prior to teaching ethnic studies? In what ways has your perception of the teaching profession changed since teaching ethnic studies? In what way, if any, does teaching ethnic studies influence your decision to stay in your current role? What would you do if you were no longer allowed to teach ethnic studies?

Appendix E: Individual Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project on ethnic studies curriculum and educators of color. My name is Tracy Castro-Gill, and I am a PhD candidate at Walden University.

This interview will take approximately 30 minutes, be recorded solely for the purpose of transcription, and will be kept confidential. Any data and quotes pulled from this interview will be anonymously attributed and your name will not be associated with them.

Do you agree to these terms?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Thank you.

What is your name?

What are your pronouns?

What are your race and ethnicity?

What is your professional role?

How many years of experience do you have in education?

How many years of experience do you have in your current role?

I would like to start off by asking you some questions about your experiences with racism and being an ethnic studies educator in the teaching profession. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

How does being an ethnic studies EOC influence your relationships with your colleagues?

As an ethnic studies EOC, what are your experiences in dealing with various issues within the education system (i.e., administrators, unions, lawmakers, etc.)?

Have you experienced racism in the teaching profession? If so, can you share an example?

If yes, in what ways has the racism you've experienced in the teaching profession impacted your sense of self-worth as an educator?

Let's transition now to the ways in which you are valued as an educator of color in the teaching profession.

What unique value do you bring to the teaching profession as an EOC?

In what ways is your ethnic studies curriculum an expression of your value as an EOC?

Tell me about the ways in which you feel valued in the teaching profession as an EOC.

Finally, I'd like to understand how teaching ethnic studies may influence your perception of the teaching profession.

What was your perception of the teaching profession prior to teaching ethnic studies?

In what ways has your perception of the teaching profession changed since teaching ethnic studies?

In what way, if any, does teaching ethnic studies influence your decision to stay in your current role?

What would you do if you were no longer allowed to teach ethnic studies?

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Thank you so much.

The next step is to have your interview transcribed. If I have any follow up questions, I will email you. If I pull a quote from your interview, I will share that portion with you to be sure I'm correctly representing you before I include it - anonymously - in the final report.

Appendix F: GMR Transcription Services Non-Disclosure Agreement

GMR TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES, INC. CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made between GMR Transcription Services, Inc., a California Client ("GMR") and GMR Transcription Clients (Client).

Covenants of the Parties: GMR agree to do the following, and the Client agrees to do the following. GMR and the Client both have made these commitments in reliance on the promises of the other as listed below.

1. <u>Nondisclosure of Transactional Information</u>: At all times, both during GMR's services and after the cessation of GMRs service, whether the cessation is voluntary or involuntary, GMR shall:

a. Keep in the strictest confidence and trust, all Transactional Information of the Client, which includes client information, production techniques, technical operations, recording information, transcription information, etc., from any source whatsoever ("Transactional Information"), which is disclosed to GMR in the course of negotiating, discussing the implementation of, or following hiring of GMR's service with the Client; and

b. Not knowingly disclose, use, or induce or assist in the use or disclosure of any Transactional Information, or anything related to any Transactional Information, without the Client's prior express written consent, except as may be necessary in the ordinary course of performing GMRs duties as an service of the Client.
c. Delete all uploaded audio within one (1) week after GMR's completion of the service.

d. Take all precautionary measures to ensure that GMR's computers used for all services is protected from unauthorized personnel by obtaining and properly running an antivirus software, obtaining and property running proper firewall protections, not allowing any other person to access GMR's computers, not allowing any documentation relating to any project of the Client to be backed up by an unrelated source, not allowing any documentation relating to any project of the Client to be backed up onto any device that is not handed over to the Client at the completion of the project, and any other precautionary measures needed to protect the Transactional Information from being released to unauthorized personnel. _____

e. At all times during GMR's service, promptly advise the Client of any knowledge that GMR may have of any unauthorized release or use of the Client's Transactional Information, and shall take reasonable measures to prevent

unauthorized persons or entities from having access to, obtaining, or being furnished with any Transactional Information.

This Agreement is entered into on the date recited above by the undersigned parties in consideration of the foregoing mutual commitments.

GMR Transcription Services, Inc.
2552 Walnut Ave. Tustin, CA 92780
(714) 731-9000 BY:
BETH WORTHY, PRESIDENT