

Georgia State University

ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

Early Childhood and Elementary Education
Dissertations

Early Childhood and Elementary Education
Department

8-8-2023

Quiet as it's Kept: A Critical Case Study of Race Talk in Preservice Teachers' Read Alouds

Carina Windom
Georgia State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/ece_diss

Recommended Citation

Windom, Carina, "Quiet as it's Kept: A Critical Case Study of Race Talk in Preservice Teachers' Read Alouds." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2023.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/35917170>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Early Childhood and Elementary Education Department at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Early Childhood and Elementary Education Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, QUIET AS IT'S KEPT: A CRITICAL CASE STUDY OF RACE TALK IN PRESERVICE TEACHERS' READ ALOUDS, by CARINA A. WINDOM, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

Laura May, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Natalie Davis, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Jennifer Esposito, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Date: 4/26/2023

Susan Auslander, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Department of Early
Childhood and Elementary Education

Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education &
Human Development

Ana Solano-Campos, Ph.D.
Committee Member

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

By presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the advanced degree from Georgia State University, I agree that the library of Georgia State University shall make it available for inspection and circulation in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I agree that permission to quote, to copy from, or to publish this dissertation may be granted by the professor under whose direction it was written, by the College of Education & Human Development's Director of Graduate Studies, or by me. Such quoting, copying, or publishing must be solely for scholarly purposes and will not involve potential financial gain. It is understood that any copying from or publication of this dissertation which involves potential financial gain will not be allowed without my written permission.

Carina Windom

NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All dissertations deposited in the Georgia State University library must be used in accordance with the stipulations prescribed by the author in the preceding statement. The author of this dissertation is:

Carina Aura Christina Windom
Early Childhood and Elementary
Education
College of Education & Human Development
Georgia State University

The director of this dissertation is:

Laura May, Ph.D.
Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education
College of Education & Human Development
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303

CURRICULUM VITAE

Carina A. Windom

ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 13561
Atlanta, GA 30324

EDUCATION:

Ph.D.	2023	Georgia State University, Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education
Masters Degree	2014	Georgia State University, Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education
Bachelors Degree	2007	California State University Long Beach, Department of Africana Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2022- present	Coordinator, Workplace DEI Atlanta Public Schools
2017	Teacher Abu Dhabi Education Council
2015-2017	Teacher Atlanta Public Schools
2013-2015	Teacher DeKalb County School District
2006-2012	Service Manager II Wells Fargo Bank

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

May, L., **Windom, C.**, Santini-Diaz, Y., Harvey-Torres, R. (2021). Connecting Curricula to Families: Guiding principles for using funds of identity to select children's literature. In Wang, Y. (Ed.), *Transdisciplinary Lens for Bilingual Education*, 191-210.

May, L., **Windom, C.**, Santini-Diaz, Y., Schellenberg, M., & Woodbridge, K. (2020). Showing who we are: Content area home/school journals as identity artifacts. *Literacy Research: Theory, Methods, and Practice*.

May, L., **Windom, C.**, Santini-Diaz, Y., Woodbridge, K., Schellenberg, M. (2019, December). Literacy Research Association, Tampa, FL.

May, L. Santini-Diaz, Y., **Windom, C.**, Espinosa, Z. (2018, November). Literacy Research Association, Palm Desert, CA.

May, L., Santini-Díaz, Y., Espinosa, Z., & **Windom, C.** (2018, March). Talking about books at home and school: Utilizing out-of-school experiences as academic language curricula. Paper presentation at Georgia Association of Multilingual and Multicultural Educators, Athens, GA.

Windom, C., & Lankford, M. (2014, April). Creating change-agents through the Problem Solution Project in the 3rd grade. Paper presentation at the Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Conference, Atlanta, GA.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2021: Southern Regional Education Board, Doctoral Scholars Program, Dissertation Award Fellowship, \$20,000

2021: Gates Collegiate Forum: Gates' Notes Deep Dive

2018: Georgia State University's Dean's Doctoral Research Fellowship, College of Education and Human Development, \$163,000

2014: Georgia State University's International Education Fee Scholarship for Study Abroad, Spain, \$1000

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

2018-present	Educational Research Association (AERA)
2017-present	Literacy Research Association (LRA)
2020-present	American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

QUIET AS IT'S KEPT: A CRITICAL CASE STUDY OF RACE TALK IN PRESERVICE
TEACHERS' READ ALOUDS

by

CARINA WINDOM

Under the Direction of Laura May, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the ways in which four preservice teachers enrolled in a culturally responsive teacher education program talked about race during read-alouds. Utilizing an embedded, single case study design, the study draws on critical race theory and racial literacy to answer the research question: How do preservice teachers in an equity-oriented teacher preparation program talk about race with elementary-aged students of color during read-alouds using texts that they have characterized as culturally responsive? The data from field notes, lesson transcripts, and preservice teacher reflections were collected during an intensive 6-week literacy course. Using constant comparative analysis, three themes were constructed: talking but not talking, bridging, and distancing. Findings illustrate that preservice teachers negotiate racial discussions by engaging in superficial conversations that do not move beyond general descriptions (talking but not talking), by separating race from social implications (distancing), and by creating generative connections between themselves, their students, the texts, and race (bridging). Findings also point to constant shifts between bridging and distancing as preservice teachers work to “seem and feel” racially literate. The study suggests that preservice teachers would benefit from teacher education programs that develop racial literacy, particularly in programs designed to prepare teachers to work in under resourced schools.

INDEX WORDS: critical race theory, race talk, racial literacy, teacher education

QUIET AS IT'S KEPT: A CRITICAL CASE STUDY OF RACE TALK IN PRESERVICE

TEACHERS' READ ALOUDS

by

CARINA A. WINDOM

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Early Childhood and Elementary
Education

in

The Department of Early Childhood and
Elementary Education

in

the College of Education & Human Development
Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA
2023

Copyright by
Carina A. Windom
2023

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my first baby sister, Maria Ruby Ana Windom. So much of who I am is because of you. Thank you for teaching me how to be strong and when to let go. I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This goes out to all the professors who poured into me at CSULB, who taught me that I am a descendant of greatness and excellence, who demonstrated what it is to thrive and to unapologetically BE. Thank you, Dr. Lionel Mandy for igniting the spark. Thank you, Dr. Ebony Utley, for being my first example of a fly black woman in academia. You both inspired my journey into academia.

To Dra. Ana Solano-Campos: Thank you for putting this work into perspective, otherwise I might never be finished.

To Dr. Jennifer Esposito, thank you for your patience, insight, and guidance. Your work in critical qualitative methodologies helps to light our path.

To Drs. Natalie Davis and Ghody Muhammad (more fly black women in academia), who challenge me to SEE, to UNLEARN, and to NAME, who push me to give myself permission to find and use my voice. Thank you for helping me to be courageous.

To Dr. Laura May, who never stopped asking the important questions and created spaces for me when I could not see a way. This work would not exist without you. Thank you for guiding me through.

To Chantel, my clubbies, my editor, and co-conspirator: Thank you for truly seeing me and loving me anyway. (Now where you at?!)

To my writing squad, Kate and Lauren. You know the struggles and the triumphs. THANK YOU for everything: the calls, the texts, the writing dates, the understanding, the empathy, and the support. You truly got it when no one else could, and I am so grateful that you both walked alongside me on this journey. Two down, one to go!

To my family: Mommy, Daddy, Bri, Kimya, Bobbie, SisterCousins, Cousin-cousins, Aunties, Uncles, Tasha, Work Family, and to all of you who have lifted me up, fed my spirit, my pockets, my mind, my heart, my soul, my wisdom, my peace, my *sanity*. I love you all.... Every. Single. One. This achievement absolutely would not have been possible without you. I am forever indebted. I promise to nourish the seeds that you have planted in me.

I promise that your love will manifest in my work.

I promise that I will never, NEVER give up. How can I when it is you who believe in me?

“And still, I rise...”

Asé.

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VI
CHAPTER ONE	1
BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM.....	8
<i>Historical Component</i>	16
<i>Economic Component</i>	18
<i>Sociopolitical Component</i>	19
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	21
RESEARCH DESIGN	23
DEFINITION OF TERMS	25
CHAPTER TWO	26
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	26
RACIAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS: IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE	29
<i>Identities</i>	30
<i>Language</i>	32
<i>Race Talk Research</i>	34
<i>Technologies of Whiteness</i>	39
RACE TALK IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS	46
<i>Teacher Educators</i>	47
<i>Making Race Visible in Teacher Education Programs</i>	49
CRITICAL LITERAC(IES) AND RACE TALK IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS.....	53
<i>Critical Literac(ies)</i>	53
<i>Elementary Talk</i>	58

RESEARCH QUESTION	65
CHAPTER THREE	67
METHODOLOGY	68
<i>Subjectivities</i>	72
RESEARCH CONTEXT	75
<i>Literacy Methods Course Context</i>	76
METHODS	79
<i>Data Collection</i>	79
<i>Data Sources</i>	80
<i>Data Analysis</i>	85
CHAPTER FOUR.....	97
ACTIVE RACE TALK.....	110
<i>Bridging</i>	112
<i>Distancing</i>	122
TALKING BUT NOT TALKING.....	128
CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS.....	135
CHAPTER FIVE	136
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH.....	145
REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION	145
REFERENCES.....	148
APPENDICES	175

List of Tables

Table 1. <i>Description of Research Participants and Text Choices</i>	79
Table 2. <i>Concept Codes</i>	88
Table 3. <i>Active Race Talk Codes</i>	111
Table 4. <i>Maya (Translated)</i>	115
Table 5. <i>Toni</i>	117
Table 6. <i>Distancing (Maya)</i>	123
Table 7. <i>Distancing (Toni)</i>	126
Table 8. <i>Talking but Not Talking Codes</i>	128
Table 9. <i>Zora</i>	130
Table 10. <i>Octavia</i>	133

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Race Talk Typology</i>	82
Figure 2. <i>Skin Like Mine</i>	100
Figure 3. <i>A is for Awesome!</i>	102
Figure 4. <i>Someday is Now</i>	105
Figure 5. <i>Big Bully</i>	107
Figure 6. <i>Skin Like Mine</i>	114
Figure 7. <i>Someday is Now</i>	118
Figure 8. <i>Big Bully</i>	131
Figure 9. <i>A is for Awesome!</i>	133
Figure 10. <i>Active Race Talk Continuum</i>	144

Chapter One

There is an unfortunate practice of seeing the kinds of racialized events pervading our contemporary times as different and distinct from the work that we are doing in schools. (Brown, 2017, p. 83)

A simple internet search for “critical race theory” yields countless headlines exclaiming the “scandal” of teaching CRT in K-12 schools and other efforts to diversify school curricula. Much of the argument against teaching critical race theory is centered around claims that students, particularly white students, are taught that they are inherently racist (Suddath & Avi-Yonah, 2021; Rufo 2021). Others have argued that black students are explicitly taught that they are inferior (Richards & Wong, 2021; Reeve, 2021), while others argue that CRT teaches students to hate the US and to hate each other based on race (Martin, 2021; Rufo, 2021). As of April 2023, 44 states have banned or introduced legislation to ban or limit CRT from being taught in schools. One example, Texas House Bill 3979 (2021) states:

No teacher, administrator, or other employee in any state agency, school district, campus, open-enrollment charter school, or school administration shall shall (sic) require or make part of a course the following concepts: (1) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (2) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously; (3) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race or sex...(5) an individual’s moral character is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex; (6) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or

sex; (7) *any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex* (8) meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by members (sic) of a particular race to oppress members of another race. (emphasis mine, p. 3)

Despite rhetoric, CRT is not widely used in K-12 classrooms. According to legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (2021), critical race theory is a theoretical framework largely used in collegiate environments that posits the history of white supremacy in the United States as instrumental in creating differential social outcomes for people of color. Race, for the purpose of this dissertation, is defined as a social interpretation of appearance, and skin color in particular (Jones, 2000). Critical race theory approaches the analysis of social policies and practices with the recognition that racism is a fundamental part of the social and cultural order of the United States (Crenshaw, 2011; 2021).

A closer examination reveals that this legislation takes direct aim at curricula in K-12 environments that incorporate multiple perspectives in history, particularly those that explore hard truths such as slavery, the holocaust, or genocide. Another similar piece of legislation, Georgia House Bill 1084 (2022), uses the same language from Texas House Bill 3979, as quoted above, to provide explicit guidance about an expansive list of divisive concepts to be avoided in classrooms. Georgia House Bill 1084 specifically prohibits discussion about the fundamentally racist nature of the United States; that an individual, by virtue of his or her race, is inherently or consciously racist or oppressive toward individuals of other races; or that an individual bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other individuals of the same race, to name a few. The irony is that proponents of these laws often base their arguments upon the premise that such classroom discussions serve to indoctrinate children because race is no longer a social issue

in the United States (Lopéz et al., 2021). If this were true, the urgent need for legislation to prevent indoctrination of children would be a moot point; the topic of race and its consequences would be irrelevant, or at the very least would not cause “anguish” or “psychological distress,” particularly for white people. Rather, the political agenda behind this movement is part of a “larger ideological effort to delegitimize historically accurate presentations of race and racism in American history; to thwart attempts by members of marginalized groups to participate fully in civic life; and to retain political power” (Lopéz et al., 2021).

For this reason, lawmakers continue to push forward a legislative agenda that limits discussions in classrooms and bans materials like books that might contain racial or other “divisive” topics. In the first half of the 2022-23 school year alone, Meehan and Friedman (2023), found that over 874 books were banned across the U.S, with Florida, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah leading the nation. Of those 874 titles, thirty percent are books about race, racism, or feature characters of color. In elementary classrooms, picture books are often used as points of entry for discussions about social issues such as race, gender, alternative family structures, and more (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; 2020; Glenn, 2015; Kaczmarczyk, et al., 2019; Peterson, 2016). Both reading and discussion are pivotal to making meaning of the world around us (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Price-Dennis et al., 2016), therefore limiting discussions about race further removes the historical or social context of the realities of race in classrooms (Dixson & Rousseau, 2015; Gotanda, 1991). In effect, by limiting discussions about race, these bills limit opportunities to make meaning of race (Morrison, 1992; Thomas, 2015), and undermine students’ freedom to read, learn, and think for themselves (Meehan & Friedman, 2023).

In many ways, this debate shows how race and racism are deeply embedded in politics, and how politics shape the ways that educators and students engage with school curricula. Both

Texas House Bill 3979 and Georgia House Bill 1084 were enacted with the intent to “protect” students from the harms of indoctrination and to keep politics out of classrooms. Their arguments are built upon a common assumption that education is apolitical, and that curricula, teaching and learning are neutral. From this perspective, race has no place in elementary classrooms because of the belief that 1) racism is no longer an issue in the US (Apollon, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2003), and 2) race is an inappropriate topic in schools (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Winograd, 2015). Still, schools are an integral part of society, race is deeply embedded in the history of the US (Omi & Winant, 2015), and education for people of color is, in itself, a political act (Dewey, 1997; Du Bois, 1903/2003; Freire, 1993; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Givens, 2021; hooks, 1994).

One example of the embedded nature of race in academia is found in the American Psychological Association Manual (2020), which requires that racial terminology be capitalized. Capitalization connotes importance. Proper nouns such as names are capitalized because of the attached meaning to our own identities based on unique perspectives and lived experiences. For instance, author bell hooks spelled her pen name in all lower-case letters to shift the emphasis from her personhood to her work. Though her choice attracted constant curiosity, hooks’ decision, and the resulting curiosity, demonstrate that the act of capitalizing, or choosing not to capitalize, ascribes importance and meaning. The social practice of attributing value to humans based upon race does not offer the same flexibility. Gotanda (1991) contends “The socially constructed racial categories white and Black (sic) are not equal in status. They are highly contextualized, with powerful, deeply embedded social and political meanings” (p. 6). He further explains that even in the context of the law, black and white do does not have the same historical context or meaning, that is, “Black (sic) is the reification of subordination; white is the

reification of privilege and superordination (Gotanda, 1991, p. 40). The same is true in educational research. Writing “white” offers a different connotation than writing “black”; whereas whiteness is associated with normalcy or goodness, blackness is associated with malady or inferiority (Dixson & Rousseau, 2011; Gotanda, 1991). Indeed, even writing “brown” has unique implications. In educational research the term “brown” has become a monolithic description of *Latinidad* or “Latin-ness” (Busey & Silva, 2020) Yet Latinidades, are a community that includes humans of all hues with varied experiences who speak a multitude of languages and dialects. Educational research persists in perpetuating the trope of all members of the U.S. Latinidad community as brown, which serves to erase the experiences of certain populations, namely Afro Latinidades (Busey & Silva, 2020; Haney López, 1997, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2014). Although an Afro Latinidad population exists, their existence is subsumed into “brownness” to distance the entire community from blackness. Busey and Silva (2020) critique the use of the term *brown* as essentialist discourse. They continue:

Although Latin America and subsequently U.S. Latinidad racial identity are presented as fluid and dynamic vis-á-vis racialization in the United States, the perspectives of Afro-Latin American thinkers, academics, and collective social movements suggest otherwise. That is, racial politics in Latin America are antithetical to racial egalitarianism as evident in the maintenance and state sanctioning of anti-Blackness (sic). (p. 178)

Consequently, the term Latinidad, like “brown” has a complex history in terms of its social implications. Scholars’ attempts to unify the experiences of Latinidades by celebrating the racial inclusivity of Latin American countries masks the long history of anti-black racism in the Americas, where colonialism and imperialism ideals perpetuate intentional distancing from blackness. In addition, terms such as Latinx or Latiné have been used more broadly in recent

years to emphasize sexuality in the Latinidad community. Yet, some scholars argue that these terms have been imposed by academics outside of the community rather than from within (del Río-González, 2021). According to Acquie (2020), the term Latinidad has also been used to move civil rights forward, as a point of reference to reject racial essentialism, or “the belief that a genetic or biological essence defines all individuals in a racial category” (p. 15). This tactic has been implemented in response to the ways that courts have not recognized the intersectionality of discriminatory experiences that Latinidades experience because of other identity markers that are not exclusive to skin color and/or appearance (race). Part of the issue with this approach is the potential to conflate other elements of the Latinidad identity with race, thereby diminishing the heterogeneous nature of the Latinidad population. This becomes problematic in light of the courts’ reliance on understanding civil rights in terms of blackness or whiteness. The tendency of courts to view civil rights discourse in terms of a black-white binary often positions Latinidades closer to, but still distinct from white, and yet, *not black* despite the existence of Afro Latinidades. Defining the Latinidad community using traditional conceptions of racial identity such as the black-white binary furthers cultural essentialism by ignoring other unique traits like nationality, language, origin, or culture [e.g., Mendez vs. Westminster (1947); Pemberthy v. Beyer, (1994)]. Acquie (2020) explains:

...(T)he law has intervened and has unsuccessfully tried to define Latinxs as either “white” or “nonwhite” for two hundred years, trying to fit Latinxs in while using whiteness as a baseline. The idea of whiteness is “an uneven process, resulting in racial identities that change across contexts and time. (p. 19)

Yet courts have been reluctant to revise how Latinidad has been legally defined, and instead have furthered a reductionist definition that does not take culture and language into account. I contend

that it is not necessarily the use of the term “Latinidad” that contributes to the cultural and racial reductionism, but rather the courts’, and by extension, society’s, reliance on the black-white binary to define race. As a result, I stand with scholars such as Busey and Silva (2020) by using the term Latinidad with an understanding that it is impossible to try to capture the complex, rich, and diverse essence of any people in a single word. To do so, whether black, white, or Latinidad does little justice to the tapestry of human life and experience that they represent. Furthermore, capitalizing racial categories is a symbolic or visual representation of racial hierarchy that does not change the connotative meaning behind the description any more than it equalizes the lived experiences of those represented by the categories. As such, I join scholars who have reached consensus that capitalizing racial classifications reifies the hierarchical structure that classifies humans and their worth based on physical features. Much like bell hooks, I choose to use lower case letters to shift the focus from the visual representation of the terminology to the *social implications* of the categories. For the duration of this dissertation, I make a conscious choice not to capitalize racial terminology, not because I deny the importance of race, but because I continue to seek ways to disrupt its systemic privilege (Baker-Bell, 2020). In the words of Cornel West (1993/2017), “How does one dismantle the framework of racial reasoning? By dismantling each pillar slowly and systematically” (p. 25).

Within the remaining pages of this chapter, I will briefly discuss how race remains relevant in classrooms by first discussing the ways in which racism functions. Next, I will examine the impacts of one of the most consequential Supreme Court cases in the twentieth century, *Brown v. Board of Education* on race relations in schools. Following this I will discuss how racism creates a literacy teacher education debt for students of color that is further exacerbated by an unwillingness to confront race and racism (Souto-Manning, 2021). And

finally, I will discuss the need to develop racial literacy in schools to continue the work of alleviating the effects of racism in schools.

Background of the Problem

To understand how racism is embedded in education, it is important to first understand how racism functions in society. Race, as I mentioned earlier, is the social interpretation of skin color (Jones, 2000). It is a key category that influences inequality, identity, and agency in the United States (Omi & Winant, 2015). Racism is a system that structures opportunity and assigns value based on the social interpretation of appearance, or race (Jones, 2000). It is often conceptualized as an interpersonal phenomenon which one person enacts on another and is also an “artifact of geographic, political, and economic interests” (Guinier, 2004, p. 98). According to Jones (2014) racism operates on three levels: institutionalized, personally mediated, and internalized. Institutionalized racism describes differential access to goods, services, and opportunities according to race. Institutionalized racism also helps to explain associations between social class and race. Personally mediated racism is that which we often associate with racism; the differential assumptions individuals hold about others based on race, and the actions based on those assumptions (action, inaction, intentional and unintentional). And finally, internalized racism is the acceptance of negative messages and limitations, or racial storylines (Nasir, 2013).

Identifying different levels of racism helps to illustrate how race and racism play a role in education. Historical issues such as lower academic expectations for students of color (Sleeter, 2008), discriminatory and dehumanizing disciplinary practices (Noguera, 2003), and curricula that exclude diverse perspectives (Apple, 1971) are a few examples of the ways students of color are placed in the margins due to institutionalized racism. Each of these examples describe

differential access to educational resources, services, and opportunities which lead to disparate outcomes for students of color. On a smaller scale, personally mediated racism can take place through action or inaction. In classrooms, teachers make countless decisions about content, delivery, and even the environment in which their students will learn. The ways in which teachers attend to, or ignore students based on race can have significant effects on achievement. For instance, Nasir et al. (2013) examine the relationship between race, racism and learning in schools from an institutional and personal perspective. One student recounted the ways in which he, as a black male, faced challenges in schools that his white counterparts did not. From the freedom to experiment with the same clothing styles as his white counterparts (e.g., sagging) or having to lobby extensively to be placed into an Advanced Placement class, this student was able to articulate the ways in which his educational experience was markedly different than his white peers and how the “expectation of failure creates failure while high expectations create success” (Nasir et al., 2013, p. 288). In their analysis, they show how racial storylines, or the differential assumptions that are attributed to a group of people in each race, also play a role in socializing students racially and academically. They further explain that when “racial storylines are invoked, certain identities are made available, imposed, or closed down, and influence the engagement and learning in school settings” (p. 286). When a student believes ideas taught in classrooms about success or worth because of race, they have successfully internalized racism. Racial storylines, then, impact both meaning making and identity making in classrooms by creating or limiting access to ideas of worth and ability, especially for students of color.

A glimpse of past legislation illustrates how race also impacts the social structure of schools. Though not as widely known, *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947) helped to set legal precedent for other cases by establishing that segregated schools produced feelings of inferiority

among Mexican American students in Orange County, California. Soon after, the plaintiff's attorneys in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) crafted their legal strategy based upon the idea that the pathological nature of segregation inflicts serious psychological injury upon black children. As a result, the supreme court justices ruled racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. The *Brown* decision indirectly attends to internalized racism by addressing the psychological impact of sanctioned segregation, but largely ignores its ideological, economic, or social consequences (Guinier, 2004; Bell, 1992). In theory, *Brown* showed promise in the fight to obtain equitable educational outcomes for children of color; in practice, integrating the nation's schools has done little to alleviate discrepancies in academic opportunities between white children and children of color. While many use *Brown* to argue that racism and segregation are a problem of the past, court cases continue to be brought against school districts and states alike describing differential treatment that contribute to disparities in academic opportunity for students of color. *Integrate NYC, inc. vs. The State of New York* (2021) alleges that the state of New York is complicit in practices that perpetuate various forms of racism in their school systems, including:

maintaining a racialized pipeline to the City's prime educational opportunities...Allowing schools to teach a Eurocentric curriculum that centers white experience, marginalizing the experiences and contributions of people of color...Failing to recruit, retain, and support a racially diverse educator workforce to provide challenging and empathic instruction to all students; and failing to provide sufficient training, support, and resources to enable administrators, teachers, and students to identify and dismantle racism, such that students of color regularly experience racialized harms at school, and

failing to provide adequate mental health supports to redress those harms. (Colón-Bosolet, et al., 2021)

Over six decades later, the allegations from this court case are reminiscent of the complaints brought forth in both *Brown* and *Mendez*, and even relate to debates and legislation about critical race theory in K-12 schools. Despite legal mandates for school integration, other policies and practices such as redlining of neighborhoods and discriminatory practices in the housing industry proliferate causing black and Latinidad students to be more likely to attend schools where many of their classmates are living in poverty (Lee & Lee, 2021; Tatum, 2017). Guinier (2004) explains, “(p)ost-*Brown*, the ability to use race to code and cloak diverging interests sustained racial hierarchies—a phenomenon that tainted our founding arrangements and remains at our ideological core” (p. 114). As a result, schools are still largely segregated with over 75 percent of black students and 80 percent of Latinidad students attending “majority-minority” schools, which still directly impacts the quality of education for students of color. Yet, segregation inflicts psychological damage on all people, including white people (Du Bois, 1903/2003). Beside physical separation, segregation establishes and maintains white supremacy and racial hierarchy, where power is conferred upon all white people while placing black people at the lowest echelons (Guinier, 2004).

In education, racial hierarchy often translates to the adoption of pedagogical theories and practices aimed at remedying the perceived failures of black students, black teachers, and other communities of color (Guinier, 2004; Morris, 2006; Schmeichel, 2012). Multicultural and other asset-based pedagogies aim to improve the educational experience of students of color to close the achievement gap, usually by finding ways to integrate and adjust students of color into “mainstream” (read white) educational environments. Racial hierarchy diminishes the impact of

these practices because white ways of schooling are normalized, while differences in students of color are scrutinized and/or devalued. Mardi Schmeichel (2012) refers to this process as the system of difference, in which white students are used as a point of contrast to distinguish between the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students of color. In essence, racial hierarchy is so deeply embedded in education that theories designed to mitigate inequity are also implicated within the system of difference.

Asset pedagogies are equity-based approaches in which students' cultural, racial, and linguistic resources are placed at the center of learning to bridge ways of knowing inside of the classroom to ways of knowing outside of it. They have been conceptualized, theorized, and remixed across disciplines to challenge racial hierarchy and inequitable practices in education by building on or valuing "difference" in students' perspectives, experiences, languages, and ways of knowing (Davis & Schaeffer, 2019; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Gay, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Muhammad, 2018; Nasir, 2002; Paris, 2012). These pedagogies also share a common assumption about the need for meaningful explorations of race and issues of power in the context of education.

For instance, culturally relevant pedagogy is a seminal framework advanced to counter narrow conceptions of achievement that creates the false dichotomy between who can achieve and who cannot (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally relevant pedagogy counters deficit perspectives in education by placing students' cultural identities and lived experiences at the center of learning to facilitate achievement. Ladson-Billings (2014, 1995) describes three major domains of culturally relevant pedagogy which include: academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. *Academic success* is shown by intellectual growth because of classroom instruction and experiences; *cultural competence* is the ability to appreciate and

celebrate one's own culture while gaining knowledge and fluency of another; and *sociopolitical consciousness* extends learning beyond the confines of the classroom, making it applicable to real world problems, such as racial injustice. Likewise, Geneva Gay (1993, 2002) offers culturally responsive teaching to improve academic experiences for children of color. Culturally responsive teaching focuses on preparing preservice teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to create positive change in diverse classrooms using “the cultural characteristics experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106). Furthermore, culturally responsive teaching includes developing a cultural diversity knowledge base, in which teachers develop explicit knowledge about cultural diversity, designing culturally relevant curriculum designs and instructional strategies, and building a culturally caring learning community. Over time, the empirical work of Ladson-Billings has been combined with the rich research of Geneva Gay's culturally responsive teaching and is known more broadly as culturally responsive pedagogy (Warren, 2018), which has shifted the way educators think about pedagogy for students of color.

Researchers such Django Paris (2012) continue to add to asset pedagogy research and expand its applications by offering up culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) to honor past and present research practices while supporting the multiethnic, multilingual nature of society in the present and the future. The goal of CSP is to support multilingualism and multiculturalism practices for both teachers and students with the explicit focus of sustaining cultures in the wake of historical pedagogical practices that ultimately serve to eradicate minoritized cultures. Other pedagogies that integrate students' outside, lived experiences into the classroom include funds of knowledge and funds of identity. Funds of knowledge recognize family and community as invaluable resources to teaching children in meaningful, multi-faceted ways. Incorporating this

knowledge into school engages the whole child as opposed to narrow conceptualizations of students (Moll, Amanti, & Neff, 1992). Expanding on funds of knowledge research, Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) indicate that funds of knowledge evolve into funds of identity when students actively internalize community resources to make meaning, define, and present concepts of self. They define funds of identity as “historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed resources that are essential for people’s self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding” (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014, p. 37). Thus, a funds of identity pedagogy is a student-centered approach to teaching and learning that moves beyond family knowledge to place student knowledge at the center of school curricula.

Despite laudable efforts by these and other scholars to better the educational outcomes for students of color, disparities continue. Scholars such as Schmeichel (2012) and Souto-Manning (2021) work to understand why gaps in achievement persist despite expansive work in asset pedagogies. In a post-structural examination of culturally relevant pedagogy as an equity practice, Schmeichel (2012) traces the discursive production of culturally relevant pedagogy to “question taken for granted ‘good’ practices and assumptions in education to unravel the ways of thinking, talking, and doing that may be closing down more radical and effective options than the ones available to us now” (p. 212). She begins her analysis by pointing out that before the *Brown* decision, white educators did not have to consider their students' culture and the quality of valuing differences such as cultural, racial, and linguistic resources. She continues:

(T)he way culturally relevant teaching has been enacted shows that our current thinking about children of color is based upon a system of difference and still situated within an uncritical paradigm in which educators’ reflection upon social injustice is extraneous. Although culturally responsive scholars have situated students of colour (sic) positively

within their critique of schools, educators who raise the culturally relevant teaching banner can claim to be doing equity work without having to consider inequity, and their roles in perpetuating it. (p. 228)

For teachers to be culturally relevant, they not only need to have cultural understanding of students, but a conscious understanding of the social, historical, and political context of teaching and learning (Durden et al., 2016). A critical and fundamental aspect of CRP is sociopolitical consciousness, which requires political relevance in teaching. With political relevance, teachers intentionally create “opportunities for liberatory educational experiences that combat racial injustice, oppression, and inequitable schooling” (Durden et al., 2016, p. 1004). As Schmeichel’s analysis shows, racial hierarchy does not require sociopolitical consciousness in white people and politically relevant teaching is a skill not often developed in teacher development programs (Parkhouse et al., 2019; Cochran-Smith & Mitescu Reagan, 2022). Aligned to this notion is that even popular theories can be implicated in the system of difference because teachers are not required to reflect on social justice, acknowledge inequity, nor the ways in which they may perpetuate or benefit from it.

In a more recent analysis of the system of difference, Souto-Manning (2021) details the ways in which literacy teacher education programs are complicit in white supremacy. She argues that literacy teaching and teacher education owe an education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006) to students and teachers of color resulting from historic, economic, sociopolitical, and ethical decisions that have served to disenfranchise them. The literacy teacher education debt is defined as a key concept that centers the needs of students of color by emphasizing the exigency for literacy teacher education to rectify its long history of linguistic injustice and violence; a violence perpetrated against communities of color by dominant approaches to literacy teaching

and teacher education (Baker-Bell, 2020; Muhammad & Mosely, 2021). The literacy teacher education debt (Souto-Manning, 2021) is conceptualized using historical, economic, and sociopolitical components. In the paragraphs that follow, I describe these components and discuss relevant literature that shows that race *still* matters, especially in literacy education.

Historical Component

The historical component of the literacy teacher education debt examines how whiteness and Eurocentrism serve to perpetuate anti-black racism. Throughout the history of education in the US, black and other communities of color have been framed as pathological (Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2014; Morris, 2006; Muhammad, 2018). The treatment of students and teachers of color in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education* helps to illustrate how potential long-term effects of integration on the black community were overlooked as schools in black communities were effectively dismantled (Morris, 2006). In contrast, white schools remained intact and white children were unlikely to be forced to integrate into black schools, nor did they willingly attend. As many in the black community feared, children of color who integrated into white schools encountered overt and covert acts of racism, not only from other students, but from staff, curricula, and other social arrangements (Du Bois, 1903/2003; Guinier, 2004; hooks, 1994; Morris, 2006).

Even decades after *Brown*, plaintiffs in *Liddell v. St. Louis Board of Education* (1975, 1979) alleged segregation by proxy; that school enrollment remained stratified due to the use of student achievement and social class instead of race. Plaintiffs alleged that white students did not attend the “lower performing” community schools that were largely attended by black students. Meanwhile, higher-performing black students were enticed to leave community schools to enroll at white schools based on the promise of a “better” educational environment. In an examination

of the effects of *Liddell* on surrounding communities, Morris (2006) draws parallels between *Brown* and *Liddell* and the detrimental effects of desegregation on black educators and schools. In both cases, once desegregation measures were implemented, black educators were stigmatized as incompetent or unqualified professionals (Guinier, 2004), making it difficult to find employment, especially at mixed or predominantly white schools (Morris, 2006). Despite the rulings in these cases and many others, public ideology continues to attribute incompetence and inferiority to black teachers, students, and schools (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Souto-Manning; 2021). These negative assumptions have serious implications, especially for students of color in literacy classrooms (Gardner, 2017).

In content areas such as literacy, negative assumptions about the abilities of people of color also produce negative outcomes. Some modern paradigms in literacy theory conceptualize literacy as a wide range of reading and writing skills (Kaestle, 1985), with a primary focus on decoding. In contrast, sociocultural perspectives focus on the ways in which society, culture, language, and developing minds interact (Gee, 2001; 2019; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978/1986). Though these paradigms resound in literacy teaching and learning, the silence of scholars of color in this body of work is deafening. The fundamental components of these paradigms appear neutral, yet this silencing of scholars of color begs the question, with what language, texts, and culture are students, and especially students of color, interacting? Much of the previous research builds upon negative assumptions about people of color, including examinations of race in literacy teacher education. This research is often framed through the lens of an achievement gap, which positions the language and literacy practices of black and other communities of color as problematic or pathological (Baker-Bell, 2020; Haddix, 2017; Ladson-Billings; 2007; Moseley Wetzel, 2020; Souto-Manning, 2021). The very terms used in research

such as “academic language” and even understandings of the meaning of “literacy” serve to perpetuate anti-black racism by using white language and culture to define what counts as language and literacy in classrooms (Baker-Bell, 2020; Morrison, 1992; Souto-Manning, 2021; Thomas, 2019). To be clear, black literary societies that attend to the needs of students of color do exist. One example of the long history of black literacy is *The Brownie’s Book* (1920-1921), a literary periodical developed and published by W.E.B. Du Bois to educate and inspire black children. More importantly, the purpose of *The Brownies’ Book* was to be an exemplar of black literacy to counter the unconscious impression that “the Negro has little chance to be great, heroic, or beautiful” (Du Bois, 1921 as cited in McNair & Bishop, 2018). Today, literacy scholars of color draw upon the black literary tradition and continue to move beyond conceptions of literacy as reading and writing skills toward the “ethical imperative” (Luke, 2019) for freedom of dialogue and the critique of all texts, discourses, and ideologies, as a means for equity and social justice (Brown, 2017; Brooks & McNair, 2015; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Gutierrez, 2008; Luke, 2019; Milner, 2017; Muhammad, 2018; Thomas; 2019).

Economic Component

Building on the historical perspective of the literacy teacher education debt, the economic component positions the language and literacy practices of black and other people of color as deficient (Souto-Manning, 2021). In an analysis of how literacy has been encouraged or inhibited in American lives over the last century, Brandt (2001) conceptualizes literacy as a “productive resource” with close ties to economic change that account for widening gaps in income between skilled and unskilled workers. She contends “economic change has become the key factor for schools, students, parents, states, and communities to raise expectations for literacy achievement” (p. 26). Brandt touches on a key understanding of the ways in which literacy is

constantly in flux; shifting to accommodate ever-changing economic needs and widening economic gaps between the “skilled” and “unskilled.” However, this analysis does not acknowledge the ways in which literacy is positioned as white property. That is, the ways in which literacy operates to preserve white supremacy by privileging white ways of speaking, interacting, and thinking (Du Bois, 1903/2003; Haviland, 2008). Throughout her work, Brandt (2001) investigates the ways that changes in literacy expectations devalue accepted literacy standards and destabilize the ways in which literacy practices are passed on. This disruption is also manifested in the ways in which black teachers and other teachers of color have struggled to enter and remain in the profession of literacy teaching (Brown, 2018; Meacham, 2000; Morris, 2006; Souto-Manning, 2019; 2021). The advent of teacher assessments that center rigor and fidelity (more “neutral” terms that carry racial consequence), such as the educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), parallel previous experiences of disenfranchisement by preservice teachers (PSTs) of color as teacher quality and competence continue to be racialized. For example, the edTPA positions the use of *academic language* as a key characteristic of a successful literacy teacher, which, like the National Teacher Examination before it, has resulted in demotions and salary differentials for teachers of color (Souto-Manning, 2019).

Sociopolitical Component

The ways in which literacy has been used to impact the economic well-being of people of color shows that literacy is more than reading and writing skills. Literacy deepens our understandings of the world around us; it is a means to advocate for social justice, political power, sovereignty, and humanization particularly for people of color (Bean-Folkes, et al., 2020). The sociopolitical component of the literacy teacher education debt refers to participation in creating transformative educational spaces that have enduring consequences for the social

good (Souto-Manning, 2021). In addition to reading and writing skills, literacy must center identity and sociopolitical consciousness to combat persistent anti-black racism and advance equity in literacy for students of color (Muhammad 2018; 2019; 2020). From this perspective, literacy education has the potential to empower or disempower, shape identities, build agency, and transform society through emancipatory change. In short, to be literate is to also be sociopolitical.

Time and again the sociopolitical exclusion of black and other persons of color occurs in education; it is not a new phenomenon. An echo of such can be found by returning to the example of *Brown*. The decision to integrate schools had a direct impact on the lives of black teachers, however their perspective and more importantly, their educational expertise about schooling black children, were largely excluded from the conversation (Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2007; Morris, 2006; Schmeichel, 2012). This exclusion led to seismic shifts in the educational experiences of black children. Author bell hooks (1994) explains:

School changed utterly with racial integration. Gone was the messianic zeal to transform our minds and beings that had characterized teachers and their pedagogical practices in our all-black schools. Knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved. It was no longer connected to antiracist struggle. (p. 2)

By excluding the perspectives of black teachers from the conversation about integration, the learning needs of black students were also excluded. More recent examples of legislation prohibiting “divisive topics” that minimize the exploration of the histories and experiences of students of color shows how the needs of people of color are often sacrificed in the name of attaining racial neutrality. Literacy teaching and teacher education also participates in similar intellectual violence by using narrow definitions of what counts as literacy and who determines it

(Baker-Bell, 2020; Morrison, 1992, Thomas, 2019) enabling publishing practices that do little to reflect rich representations within and across other cultures (May et al., 2021), and requiring students of color to become proficient code-switchers and speak “academic language” (Baker-Bell, 2020; May, 2011). Thus, claims of racial progression obscure the ways in which race still matters in literacy education and literacy teacher education (Mosely-Wetzel, 2020; Souto-Manning, 2021; West, 1993/2017).

In this section I have briefly outlined the ways in which the literacy teacher education debt has contributed to disproportionate outcomes for students of color. In the case of *Brown*, the educational needs of black and other students of color were largely overlooked for the purpose of social advancement via desegregation. From an economic perspective, students and teachers of color are viewed as a liability, less skilled and consequently less valuable in literacy classrooms and in the teacher workforce. Such historical and economic devaluation also contributes to exclusion from sociopolitical contexts, effectively silencing the voices and experiences of people of color from discourse and action designed to shape the social good. Posited together, these examples show how literacy practices and literacy teacher education ultimately preserves white ways of being and knowing.

Statement of the Problem

The complex landscape of race in pedagogy described in the preceding paragraphs, makes it important to prepare teachers to recognize the salience of race. One way to facilitate change is to explicitly prepare preservice teachers to learn and to think critically about race and racism before they have classrooms of their own (Brown, 2017; King, 1991). Preservice teachers are in a unique role in that they are both students and teachers; this critical intersection requires teacher educators to be intentional about the ways in which PSTs are prepared to teach. Teacher

preparation programs can and should better incorporate deep historical analysis of race in classrooms to cultivate a more holistic approach to teaching and learning (Brown, 2017; Milner & Laughter, 2015) because teachers are a “living curriculum” in that what they teach, how they live, and what they model are texts that students use to make meaning (Milner, 2007). Racial stereotypes and biases, or storylines that teachers consciously and subconsciously carry, influence students’ sense of themselves as learners and their opportunities to learn (Nasir, et al., 2013). By developing an understanding of the implications of race in education, teacher preparation programs can help preservice teachers to develop foundational practices that consciously minimize negative racialized experiences for themselves and their future students (Bautista et al., 2018; Milner, 2003).

The literacy teacher education debt and current legislation help to illustrate that discussions about race and institutional racism are largely left out of educational policy and increasingly discouraged in classroom conversations (Brown, 2017; Mosley Wetzel, 2020, Souto-Manning, 2021). Teacher education programs still struggle to prepare preservice teachers to use resource pedagogical approaches in increasingly diverse classrooms, and race is often missing in extant literature about preparing PSTs for equitable teaching (Brown, 2012; 2018; Durden, et al., 2016; Mosley Wetzel, 2020). Further, preservice teachers who have participated in equity-based teacher preparation programs still express hesitancy to talk about race in classrooms, particularly with students who did not look like them (Garrett & Segall, 2013; Hendrix-Souto & Mosley Wetzel, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2003; Milner & Laughter, 2015; Mosley Wetzel, 2020; Vetter & Hungerford-Kressor, 2014). It is no wonder then, that teachers struggle to use inclusive, equitable pedagogical practices in literacy classrooms (Brooks, 2003; Brooks & Browne, 2012; Brooks & McNair, 2015; Gutierrez, 2008; Gutierrez, et al., 1999;

Haddix & Price-Dennis, 2013; Kinloch, et al., 2020; McNair, 2013, 2016; Milner, 2017; Mosley & Rogers, 2011; Muhammad, 2018, 2019; Thomas, 2019). Moreover, PSTs that identify as antiracist or social justice-oriented also struggle with race conversations with students and may still draw on discursive models that reinforce status quo notions of normativity during read-alouds (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020). This research shows that conversations about race can and do occur in classrooms, yet a gap in the literature exists about *how* those conversations take place, particularly with elementary aged students.

Research Design

This dissertation is designed as a critical case study that is driven by the research question: How do preservice teachers in an equity-oriented teacher preparation program talk about race with elementary-aged students of color during read-alouds using texts that they have characterized as culturally responsive? A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. When conducting case studies, the use of theories aids in defining the appropriate research design and data collection in addition to becoming the main vehicle for generalizing the results of the case study (Yin, 1994). A critical case study, then, is a case study that draws on critical theories as its theoretical framework.

This critical case study integrates critical race theory (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 2011; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995) and racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) as its theoretical foundation. Critical race theory helps to unpack the social-structural and cultural significance of race in education, particularly in relation to educational inequities for black and other students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The application of critical race theory (CRT) to education makes plain the ways in which the issue of race perpetuates academic inequity which is a “logical and predictable result of a racialized society in which discussions of

race and racism continue to be muted and marginalized” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 47). Meanwhile, racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) helps to describe the ubiquity of race in education and other social domains by conceptualizing race and racial meanings as “neither stable nor consistent” (p. 2); constantly shifting to meet the present need to preserve white supremacy.

In this study, I begin with the theoretical premise that the permanence and permeability of race infiltrates the very dialogue that occurs between PSTs and children of color during read aloud discussions. Reading aloud is a teaching practice that is commonly used in elementary classroom spaces. Drawing from a sociocultural perspective, a read aloud is an activity in which the teacher selects a text to read aloud to students. When a teacher reads a story aloud, meaning making is filtered through the teacher, as are the discussions about the text that follow because of the close, complex relationship between language, literacy, and culture (May, 2011). However, the constantly shifting nature of race interacts with this practice so that, even when teachers use children’s books that explicitly deal with matters of race and racism, they do not *talk* about race in meaningful ways (Ladson-Billings, 2003).

Dissertation Outline

The duration of this dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter two provides further detail about dysconscious racism and colorblindness in PSTs, critical literacy, and read aloud practices in elementary spaces. Chapter three further expands upon the research context, including the study design, participants, subjectivities, and analysis. Chapter four describes the findings of the study, and chapter five synthesizes key findings and discusses how racial discussions can inform racial literacy development in elementary classrooms.

Definition of Terms

The following are terms that are important for clarifying key concepts in my research question. As with other terminology in educational research, there are many iterations and understandings for these terms, however the definitions below align with my (epistemological?) stance as a researcher.

Equity. Kendi (2019) defines equity as ensuring that all people have access to the necessary resources and opportunities to thrive and achieve their full potential. Equity differs from equality by recognizing that individuals and communities have different needs because of historical and systemic injustices, rather than treating everyone the same. As a result, equity in education it has the possibility to create “new kinds of systems and structures that provide equal access to high quality teaching and learning” (Nasir, 2020).

Race. Race is a social interpretation of appearance, usually by skin color. Notions of racial difference have a distinct history and racial categories are subject to change (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Race is a key category that influences inequality, identity, and agency in the United States (Omi & Winant, 2015). As a result, race is a social category and a social reality with real social consequences.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Warren (2018) explains that the combination of the empirical work of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2014, 1995) and research in culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002, 1993) has become more broadly known as culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). Culturally responsive pedagogy is a seminal framework that counters deficit perspectives in education and works to improve academic experiences and outcomes for students of color by preparing preservice and in-service teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to place students’ cultural identities and lived experiences at the center of pedagogical practice.

Chapter Two

Indeed, we are socialized not to talk about race, racism, and antiracism. (Rogers & Mosley, 2006, p. 483)

Theoretical Framework

To set the stage, racial formation theory and critical race theory (CRT) are two related theoretical frameworks that use race and racism as fundamental components to analyze meaning-making and social practices. Racial formation provides a framework for understanding the fluidity of the construct of race in the United States over space and time; CRT considers the consistent role that race plays in social relations, including legislation and education. While these theories overlap in some ways, their differences add dimension to the construct of race, which ultimately helps to elucidate their impact in literacy classrooms.

Omi and Winant (2015) theorize that racial formation is the process of race-making and its influence on social order. They define racial formation as, "the sociohistorical process by which racial identities are created, lived out, transformed, and destroyed" (p. 109). From this perspective, race is not biological, but rather a socially constructed "master category" used to create hierarchies. As a master category, race has shaped and continues to shape our society by providing a template for difference and inequality. For example, Morrison (1990) explains:

Deep within the word 'American' is its association with race. To identify someone as a South African is to say very little; we need the adjective "white or black" or "colored" to make our meaning clear. In this country, it is quite the reverse. American means white and Africanist people struggle to make the term applicable to themselves with ethnicity and hyphen after hyphen after hyphen. (p. 47)

The racial template of the United States results in a social hierarchy that influences ideologies of subordination and oppression, which, in turn, directly impacts definitions of privileges, rights, and the distribution of resources. Therefore, the social practice of constructing race has social and material consequences that determine the experiences and outcomes of people in everyday life (Brown, 2018; Falkner, 2019). The social construction of race also works in other ways. Even as it is used for purposes of oppression, it is also used to resist marginalization as is evidenced by movements such as critical race theory.

Critical race theory is the result of examinations by legal scholars into the embedded nature of race in law and legal practice. It later grew into interdisciplinary efforts as scholars use critical race theory in the social sciences, mathematics, and other disciplines. In education, CRT questions mainstream discourse about neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and merit in schools (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006; Skerrett, 2011). Critical race theory provides a framework for historical and contextual analyses that value the voices of people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). When used as an analytical framework, CRT has the potential to challenge master categories of race, examine racial inequities, and proposes radical solutions to racism in education (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Milner & Laughter, 2015).

One example of CRT as a lens for historical and contextual analyses is the work of legal scholar Lani Guinier. In 2004, Guinier reexamined the impact of *Brown v. Board of Education* on racially integrated schooling and its implications on schooling for students of color. Building on Bell's (1992) concept of interest convergence, Guinier argues that white and black communities worked together to integrate schools, but in doing so, had different motivations. She contends that after *Brown*, race took on new legal meanings and these meanings became an

impetus to pathologize black people in public education. By focusing on the psychological impact of race, policy and legislation continue to hide how economic and social privilege contributes to educational outcomes.

Along the same lines, Castro (2021) indicates that communities who lack social, economic, and political power become objects of pathology through the process of victim blaming, where they are “positioned as inadequate, inferior, and ultimately, as social problems to be addressed” (p. 624). Historically, communities of color have been denied access to social, economic, and political power because of white supremacy and resulting racial hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Guinier, 2004; Omi Winant, 2015). Guinier (2004) continues, “(r)acism normalizes these racial hierarchies; it diverts attention from the unequal distribution of resources and power they perpetuate” (p. 114). In addition, the trope of black-people-as-victims counteracts the required anti-racist stance that white people must take against their own racist ideals and actions (Guinier, 2004; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b). As a result, Guinier (2004) proposes racial literacy to help decode the ways in which race operates to sustain racial hierarchies and organize social narratives. Racial literacy is characterized by 1) recognizing that problems are contextual not universal; there is no one-size-fits-all solution, 2) emphasizing the relationship between race and power, to acknowledge the importance of individual agency and institutional and environmental forces, and 3) never losing sight of race, but not focusing exclusively on race to interrogate the dynamic relationship between race, class, gender, and other variables.

Changing demographics and historical educational practices demonstrate that the concept of racial literacy is necessary, particularly in urban teacher education (Guinier, 2004; Maddamsetti, 2020; Skerrett, 2011). In response, political rhetoric has sustained a cycle of symbolic action in which teacher education programs make moves to add “culturally responsive

pedagogy” to curricula absent of hiring individuals who embody the mindset and practice (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021a). Furthermore, the deep racial divide that exists between teachers and students means that there are also drastic differences in racial understandings, cultural understandings, and ways of knowing (Meacham, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2000; Moll et al, 1992; Picower, 2009; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021a). These differences often remain unexamined because most teachers are unwilling or unable to discern how beliefs and behaviors towards students of color impact learning in classrooms (Maddamsetti, 2020; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b). Taken together, these factors are a formidable challenge to providing equitable education to students of color. Accordingly, teacher education programs need experiences that provide an intellectual understanding of schooling and inequity, counter-knowledge that challenge students’ internalized ideologies, and self-reflective transformative emotional growth experiences (King, 1991).

Racial literacy in Schools: Identity and Language

Integrating a transformative approach to teacher education programs is predicated on understanding the social nature of the school environment. In a formal school setting, both teacher and child are placed in a unique environment, or figured world, which facilitates making meaning through teaching and learning activities. Figured worlds are organized spaces developed through social encounters. Participants develop figured worlds in a specific time and space where social positioning matters (Holland et al., 1998). As a result, the positions of teacher and student take on significance in the context of the figured world of “classroom,” particularly when examining racial conversations. Engagement in teaching and learning plays a role in the shaping and reshaping of the identities of people in classrooms. To add to this point Pyle and Luce-Kepler (2014) explain, “(t)he interaction among people within a classroom can influence the development of classroom climate, which in turn influences the learning that takes place” (p.

1965). Even small changes in patterns of interaction have a major impact on classroom interactions. Gutierrez (1994) explains that the roles and identities of teacher and student are cultivated through recurring patterns of action and production. As a teacher redefines and revises her interactions, students also revise and redefine their own. This suggests that within the classroom context, the fluid nature of interactions also influences the formation of identities.

Identities

Identities are enacted; they are lived experiences of self that are created and/or recreated through social interactions in a given context. Holland et al. (1998) define identity as “the way a person understands and views himself, and is often viewed by others, at least in certain situations - a perception of self that can be fairly constantly achieved” (p.68). Other sociocultural scholars conceptualize identity as fluid and responsive to nuanced shifts in interactions, contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems (Bartlett, 2007; Olsen, 2008; Subero et al., 2018). Each definition illustrates how identity formation is constantly evolving and is, in part, a contextual social act that is based on social positioning. My position aligns with critical sociocultural scholars who use the term identit(ies) to signify the “shifting positions people occupy, and the ways people’s racial, cultural, and linguistic processes play significant roles in how they story their experiences and themselves to resist normalization” (Kinloch et al., 2020b, p. 385).

Twine (2004) explicitly connects social positioning and identities in a study about familial practices in multiracial families. First, she identifies racial literacy as a pattern of practices that white parents use to help their black children to identify, respond, and resist everyday racism. To support their children, these white parents provided conceptual tools and a “homespace,” or safe space to talk about racism to develop their own attitudes about race and the

larger social system (Ward, 1996). They also provided additional social support systems by placing them in spaces in which they could learn about their unique cultural histories from other black people. Finally, they were intentional about creating an environment that affirmed the black aesthetic by displaying black art and reading black literature. These practices enabled the children to generate their own understandings about the complexities of their racial identities in an affirming context. A safe space was created for them to practice thinking deeply about race and how they thought about themselves as black people. As a result, these children of color were able to recognize and resist negative social positioning due to racial hierarchies and experiences outside of the home (Twine, 2004).

Building on the importance of racial literacy practices in social spaces (Guinier, 2004, Twine, 2004), classroom experiences should include a diverse range of social histories and identities (Brooks, 2003; Hall, 2016; Muhammad, 2018). However, children are rarely centered in their own educational experiences (Hendrix-Soto & Mosley Wetzel, 2019; Mosley, 2010; Rogers & Mosley, 2006). Conversely, traditional education is imposed “from above and outside” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 19). I maintain that it is the imposition of learning from above and from outside that contributes to misidentification, misrecognition, and miseducation of children of color. Taylor (1994) elaborates:

(O)ur identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person, or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning, or contemptible picture of themselves. Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being. p. 25.

People view the world from the positions into which they are consistently cast (Holland et al., 1998; Twine, 2004), and in schools, students of color are often cast into deficit perspectives (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; A.F. Brown et al., 2017; K.D. Brown, 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The deficit perspectives that are ascribed to the identities of people of color are often static and steeped in hegemonic discourse, offering no room for change or growth (Kinloch et al., 2020b). This shows that race and racism exist in classrooms even as students are developing identities as learners, people, and members of society. To change the classroom environment from “sites of erasure and marginalization” (Kinloch et al., 2020b, p. 385), it is essential to develop racial literacy in educators so that they develop sensitivity to the dynamic nature of racial identity construction in classrooms (Croom, 2020). One of the ways that educators can demonstrate sensitivity and positively impact the formation of students’ identities is through language. Indeed, the ways in which teachers speak allows insight and deeper understanding of knowledge, beliefs, and actions inside of classrooms (Milner, 2017).

Language

Language is an important aspect of the human experience—it is a tool that helps to make meaning of our experience and the world around us—a tool with which our identities are enacted (Brandt, 2010; Erickson, 2004; Friere & Macedo, 1987; Holland et al., 1998). Language is the organized system of meaning which is then used as a tool for communicating those meanings (Berthoff, 1987). People use language to construct race and its meanings by classifying, categorizing, and labeling (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). Language, however, is not neutral. It is often politicized and/or weaponized to affect the balance of power within societies (Blommaert, 2010; Freire, & Macedo, 1987; Morrison, 1992; Thomas, 2019). Haberman (2000) reminds us that “language is not an innocent reflection of how we think. The

terms we use control our perceptions, shape our understanding, and lead us to particular proposals for improvement” (p. 203). Therefore, language is a form of action and can be a powerful political move (Freire, 1993), particularly for the social construction of race.

The social construction of race occurs both when race is explicitly discussed and even when it is not (A.F. Brown et al., 2017). Because of its social importance in the United States, race is ever present in conversations within and across public spaces such as classrooms (Omi & Winant, 2015; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; A.F. Brown et al., 2017; K.D. Brown, 2018). For example, the legislative efforts of Georgia HB 1084 (2022) and Texas HB 3979 (2021), take great care to sanitize the meaning of race within its contents, effectively silencing curricula that present historically accurate, albeit unsavory, truths about race and white supremacy in US society. This is just one of the ways that young children of color in the United States experience the material effects of racism on a daily basis (Falkner, 2019). “In addition to what is spoken about or read onto racialized bodies, linguistic choices also impact how the identities of students and teachers get (de)valued in classrooms” (Kinloch et al., 2020, p. 386). While schools are often described as culturally and linguistically diverse spaces that can support the development and negotiation of identities, they can also serve as sites that oppress people who resist (Kinloch et al., 2020). For instance, teachers and school materials label everyday language practices of students of color as inappropriate or as barriers to objectives of schooling (Baker-Bell, 2021; Jensen et al., 2021). Academic and colloquial languages of minoritized students are often treated as fixed and separate systems of language. That is, the focus in schools is to teach children of color "academic language" as if it were unique, different, and separate from students' home languages. Consequently, learning academic language is not anchored to students' background

knowledge which positions them as information processors rather than negotiators of meanings, stances, and identities (Jensen et al., 2021).

I build on Bartlett's (2007) idea that becoming literate is a never-ending evolutionary process. This process involves social acts with extensive interpersonal political maneuvering and impression management in which people learn to "seem" literate by positioning themselves as "a legitimate person practicing literacy in a legitimate context for a legitimate audience" (p. 54). Similarly, racial literacy is an evolving process in which we continually "become" more racially literate. Cultivating racial literacy involves active and improvised identity work that happens on an interpersonal level (seeming), and an intrapersonal level (feeling) [Bartlett, 2007], where we try to convince others and ourselves that we are the "kind of person" that knows how to practice racial literacy. Thus, racial literacy is an iterative, improvisational process of identity work in which we are constantly attending to the intersections of race, power, and other social factors that are situated within social contexts.

Race Talk Research

In education research, A.F. Brown et al (2017) observe that discussions about race often fit into one of three categories: discursive, disruptive, and/or curricular. They define curricular discussions as those that teachers explicitly plan for through instructional choices, disruptive discussions as critical moves to shift away from dominant ideologies and coded language that maintains the status quo, and discursive discussions as those that focus on the uses of language that emerge during conversations (A.F. Brown et al., 2017). Below I present examples of research in each category.

Curricular. When curricular content is carefully selected, classroom conversations can deepen academic curriculum, facilitate the development of positive social identities, and disrupt

social inequalities (Falkner, 2019; Price-Dennis et al., 2016). Yet, the ways in which teachers and students use language is critical to what is accomplished by classroom discussions on race (A.F. Brown et al., 2017). A critical challenge is to help teachers to understand how to use language as a vehicle to engage with ideas in their daily practice (Jensen et al, 2021). For instance, Price-Dennis et al., (2016) designed critical inquiry language arts units that focused on race to understand how it could impact fifth grade students' responses to texts. They layered texts from authors of different racial identities, and included different types of texts; a novel, poetry, audio recording, and digital stations, to see how students responded. Their findings suggest that curricular content can facilitate a shift in the ways that students think about race. By engaging with texts from multiple perspectives beyond the black/white racial binary, the students began to develop nuanced understandings of how racialized events in the past and present were relevant to their own lives. Cultivating this type of understanding in classrooms created connections that showed students that race is still a relevant issue. Deeper understandings about race can also contribute to disruptive discussions, or discussions that use critical moves to shift away from dominant ideologies.

Disruptive. The work of Leonardo and Porter (2010) is an exemplar of shifting dominant ideologies in racial discourse, or disruptive discourse. They reconceptualize ideas of “safety” and “violence” in racial conversations beyond common understandings. First, they contend that the demand for safe environments during racial dialogue stems from colorblind ideologies since social spaces are rarely safe for people of color. Kinloch et al., (2020b) explain:

Because of sociohistorical narratives of deficit and deviance that are ascribed to their bodies and language, as well as the marginalized positions they are often relegated to in

society, each time a young Black (sic) person speaks in public, they open themselves up to be critiqued by the white gaze. p. 385

In other words, engaging in any discourse, racial or otherwise is inherently unsafe for people of color. Even so, critical racial discourse is “inherently risky, uncomfortable, and fundamentally unsafe, particularly for whites (Leonardo & Porter, 2010, p. 139) because they benefit from white supremacy. As a result, a demand for “safety” is counterproductive to the end goal of disruption.

Next, Leonardo and Porter (2010) reconceptualize the term “violence” to liberatory violence. In a classic sense, violence is “the exertion of force in order to injure, abuse, or destroy another human being” (p. 143). However, liberatory or Fanonian violence is based on the ideas of scholar Franz Fanon, who argues that violence is liberatory when it frees the oppressed from a colonial regime. That is, Fanonian violence is humanizing and productive because it introduces change into a hegemonic social system. Indeed, “(p)ower concedes nothing without a demand.” (Muhammad, 2018, p. 351). Therefore, demanding, and enacting change in the social spaces of racial discourse is a form of violence against white supremacy.

Kinloch et al. (2020b) illustrate how black students also resist discourses that favor dominant linguistic and cultural practices. Using counternarratives, they highlight the ways that black high school students demonstrate awareness of the interconnections between language and identity. As a result, the students intentionally use black English in academic spaces, demonstrating an understanding of the ways that language can be a tool of resistance against discourses that “relegate the languages they speak and the bodies they inhabit to spaces of marginality,” (Kinloch et al., 2020b, p. 397). In contrast, other educational research focuses not

on the disruption caused by the discourse, but the uses of language that emerge during conversations; this approach is known as discursive.

Discursive. Beneke and Cheatham (2020) note that shared classroom readings can be complicated by discursive strategies used by the teachers, which can either uphold or disrupt white supremacy. Their study observes preservice teachers as they conduct read-alouds using books about race and disability to facilitate conversations with preschoolers. They found that PSTs struggled to delve deeply into the students' comments about the texts, and often evaluated student responses or relied on textual descriptions in the books to communicate meanings about race. In addition, they found that PSTs often took up discursive patterns of their mentor teachers. Specifically, mentor teachers expressed belief that young children had minimal awareness of race and rarely talked to them about it. When mentor teachers did address race with students, it was because the topic was initiated by the students. Likewise, PSTs provided limited opportunities for students to talk about the contents of the texts or initiate new topics of discussion. This shows that when race is intentionally included in the curriculum, the accompanying conversation does not necessarily employ criticality or racial literacy.

Even in critical racial discussions among adults there are distinct, complicated discursive moves that operate to ensure that white supremacy is reinforced and protected: particularly in spaces where the explicit goal is disruption. DiAngelo and Sensoy (2014) report on a four-week discussion of race with an interracial group of thirteen university students to examine the discourse of violence, or the positioning of cross racial discussions as “unsafe” for whites. They show how the discourse of violence within racial discussions positions white people as racially innocent while positioning people of color as perpetrators of violence. During the conversations, there were marked differences between the language use of white students and the language use

of students of color. When the students of color challenged the worldviews of the white students, they were often met with emotional responses, such as anger, where white PSTs expressed feeling “beaten up” or “attacked” (p. 104). In addition, white PSTs often defended their worldviews by stating that their views were based upon their own personal experience. This discursive move acted to shut down any further exploration or discussion of their views or perspectives. Often, the discourse of personal experience negates the dialogic, discursive understandings of identity construction (Holland et al., 1998) by making the actual experience of an individual indisputable. The indisputable nature of personal experience then, serves to protect white perspectives from critical analysis. Thus, personal experience supersedes knowledge and informed study of social inequality.

DiAngelo and Sensoy’s (2014) work on the discourse of violence shows that language is bound up with power. As a result, it is important to use critical race perspectives such as racial literacy to address “implicit and explicit ways in which ideologies inform, and are produced through, classroom talk about race” (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 111). Racial literacy is also used as a framework to analyze language and discourse by deciphering the dynamic interplay among race and other social factors (Guinier, 2004). Solic and Riley (2019) use racial literacy to analyze the ways in which the PSTs in an urban education fellowship developed their racial competence, or skills to navigate racially stressful social interactions in preparation for teaching in diverse settings. They emphasize the importance of repeated opportunities and multiple contexts for white PSTs to engage in the practice of reading the world as a racial text and deciphering how racial structures (Guinier, 2004) are at play in schools. They insist upon the importance of connecting PSTs to communities of educators with similar justice-oriented perspectives as a support throughout their professional life span. Similarly, supporting teacher

learning within inequitable systems requires thoughtful consideration for how teachers learn in and from their classroom language practices to improve them (Jensen et al., 2021). Racial literacy can be used to confront dominant discourse, policies, and practices in society (Rogers & Mosley, 2011; Twine, 2004). However, it must be practiced through constant conversation which can provide perspectives and experiences that can be powerful tools for building capacity for social justice in schools (Vetter & Hungerford-Kressor, 2014). This paradigmatic shift can leverage the generative nature of the classroom milieu to facilitate the respect and humanity of both teacher and child. Yet, just as racial literacy can be used as a tool to build capacity for social justice, there are many other tools that can be used to work against it. In the next section, I will discuss some of these tools and how they impact racial discussions in the classroom and other social spaces.

Technologies of Whiteness

George Floyd. Tyre Nichols. Breonna Taylor. In recent years, these names—these human beings—were a rallying cry across a nation shaken by the deaths of black people at the hands of law enforcement. Each death, a painful reminder of the blatant ways that racial injustice persists in a so-called post racial society. Heightened attention to the ongoing brutalization of black people in the media raises the question of how teachers should engage their students about race in classrooms. Rather than beginning with how teachers should engage their students about race in classrooms, Milner (2017) begins by asking whether teachers believe that race should be addressed at all with their students. In his exploratory study, Milner uses the Teachers Race Talk Survey (Milner et al., 2016) to determine teachers' belief systems about the importance of race-centered conversations. Results of the survey indicate that many English language arts (ELA) teachers believe that race plays a role in students' educational experiences (50%), that race is an

important topic to discuss (72%), and that teachers should discuss race and racism with children (96%). Notably, when asked about feelings of preparedness to engage in racial discussions, many participants either felt unprepared (23%) or unsure (39%). In addition, most participants felt that race conversations would not be supported by administrators (56%) or parents (62%). These results show that teachers believe that talking about race with students is important, yet they feel unprepared and unsupported to do so. As teachers develop in preservice and in-service teacher education programs, their talk can also be gauged to determine their developmental trajectories to enhance their practice (Milner, 2010; 2017). Despite Milner's finding that many ELA teachers believe that race is an important topic to discuss with children, research shows that preservice teachers struggle to discuss race even amongst their peers.

For instance, Bautista et al., (2018) designed a mixed-methods case study of open-mindedness and the capacity to deal with controversial issues such as race in early childhood PSTs. Open-mindedness is defined as a desirable teacher disposition that shows "the willingness to open their mind to experiences, beliefs, values, and perspectives that differ from one's own and give them serious consideration" (Bautista et al., 2018, p. 154). Using the Actively Open-Minded Thinking Scale (Stanovich & West, 2007), they identified PSTs that had lower open-minded thinking dispositions, then conducted interviews with those participants to dig deeper. Their findings suggest that PSTs who do not have an open-minded disposition struggle to discuss controversial issues such as race in classrooms because of their own belief systems. The most significant finding in the study is that participants' religious views "played the most important role in the way they developed their epistemological and ontological views" (p. 165), and those beliefs were enacted in similar ways among all students (PSTs) in the study. In addition, PSTs' self-perceived tolerance was often mitigated by avoidance of controversial issues. They explain,

"(e)mploying the words of tolerance, love, compassion, and open-mindedness can very much be a rouse (sic) for some students while they instead actively seek avoidance of ideas and people who are unlike themselves" (p. 166). In other words, PSTs may have submerged epistemologies, or ways of thinking that may or may not show in teacher preparation courses and the classrooms in which they teach. Because submerged epistemologies remain hidden, biases may continue to be unexamined or unchallenged, further contributing to racism that still exists in classrooms (Bautista et al., 2018). This finding aligns with other theories that explain the ways that PSTs engage or disengage with race by consciously or unconsciously employing technologies of whiteness (Crowley, 2019, Zaino & Bell, 2021), such as anger, resistance, avoidance, and colorblind or deficit discourses to maintain safety and social power (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; K.D. Brown, 2018; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Garrett & Segall; 2013; Gotanda, 1991; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Milner, 2017; Mosley Wetzel, 2020; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021a, 2021b; Solic & Riley, 2019; Thomas, 2015).

For example, the discomfort that many white PSTs experience when teaching students of color is often expressed through colorblindness (Sealey Ruiz, 2021b). Colorblind discourse is based upon the ability to not "see" race (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), when, in actuality, one must first recognize race to choose not to attend to it. From a colorblind perspective, race is seen as a characteristic that can be ignored, making colorblindness an approach that does not take the sociohistorical context of race relations in the United States into consideration (Gotanda, 1991). By eliminating racial considerations from racialized outcomes, white people are released from any responsibility for the status or experience of people of color. Therefore, adopting a colorblind stance is akin to politely turning a blind eye to skin color because of the ways in which it differs from whiteness (Dixson and Rousseau, 2011). Nevertheless, dominant discourse

positions colorblindness as an ideal of racial enlightenment (Crenshaw, 2011; Dixson & Rousseau, 2011; Gotanda, 1991). Bonilla-Silva (2003) advances this line of reasoning by theorizing colorblind racism as an ideology that uses powerful explanations and justifications that explain racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial social dynamics. In education, the underlying assumption of colorblindness is that not seeing color establishes objectivity in teaching practices and thus, advances equity in classrooms (Cochran-Smith & Keefe, 2022; Solic & Riley, 2019). Colorblindness is often used by teachers to “treat students equally” (Rousseau & Tate, 2003). However, colorblindness shields whites from having to recognize or resist white privilege (Rogers & Mosely, 2006), which is a luxury that is not afforded to minoritized people.

To illustrate, Dara Hill (2012) chronicles the experience of two preservice teachers, one white and one black, in a teacher education program designed to prepare PSTs to teach in an “urban” teaching context that provided “adequate exposure to effectively teach children that differed from themselves” (p. 420). In this case, the researcher is careful to mention the race of each participant but does little to critically explore representations of comfort and diversity in the participants. The participants for this study were selected because, unlike their peers, they were identified as being comfortable with teaching towards social justice and cultural issues in diverse contexts. Formal interviews indicated that cross-cultural experiences had a large influence on the level of comfort that they had with teaching students who did not look like them. Each participant shared their unique formative experiences while growing up in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan. Both PSTs shared that they received backlash for growing up in a white, suburban area, but there were significant differences in their experiences.

First, the white participant explains that her parents grew up in Detroit, so they had the perspective of “knowing what it is like to be a minority” (p. 424). This empathic identification,

or statement which places the white participant “in the shoes” of the black people can be interpreted as a form of colorblind racism. By claiming that proximity to people of color belies an understanding of their experience, the particularities of a racialized black experience are effectively erased (Zaino & Bell, 2021). Next, the participant describes moving freely through urban and suburban spaces and shares experiences of discomfort and backlash only within the context of her family for being “too white” or too “snobby” (p. 425).

In contrast, the black participant shared that she did not feel represented in her schooling experiences, which motivated her to teach so that other black students could see themselves represented in schools. She describes not seeing someone who looked like her in schools both as a student and as a teacher and expressed a desire to provide a broader perspective of black people. She recalls, ““So I want to bring diversity to a place like that (Westmore) because when I first started subbing, the kids had this thing about me where they would say ‘do you want to see my hip hop dance (laughter)’” (Dara Hill, 2012, p. 426). In each of her examples, the black PST consistently had to attend to her race and the ways in which race shaped her experiences as both a teacher and a student. She was not able to move freely in any context without attention to her difference, that is, the color of her skin. In her experiences she is racialized in ways that her white counterpart is not.

Dara Hill (2012) posits that teacher education programs are “limited in terms of transforming teacher candidates’ dispositions toward teaching students that differ from them culturally but that it is important to mentor candidates with a predisposition to diversity” (p. 421). She argues that placing PSTs with a predisposition for appreciating diversity are affirmed in their beliefs by working in “urban” settings during their practicum. What is striking about this assessment is that it does not prioritize the need to mentor candidates without a predisposition to

diversity because of the perceived limitations of teacher education programs. By focusing on students who already display a propensity towards diversity, the researcher concedes that teacher education programs can do little about transforming PST dispositions, thereby negating the need to research preservice teachers in efforts to better teacher education. This study shows how even well-meaning research can articulate and perpetuate technologies of whiteness such as dysconscious racism (King, 1991; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

King (1991) advances the concept of dysconscious racism to help unpack the ways that benefitting from a social structure based on racial hierarchy quietly socializes white people to believe that their privilege is due to inherent superiority. She explains:

Dysconscious racism is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness (that is, not unconsciousness) but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness. p. 135

In essence, dysconscious racism is a form of passivity; a lack of critical thinking about racial inequity that is fostered by an acceptance of culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and beliefs. In turn, these assumptions, myths, and beliefs justify the privileges afforded to white people through the subordination of people of color. Ultimately, dysconscious racism results from an “uncritical habit of mind...that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given” (King, 1991, p. 135), which limits the ways in which equitable teaching can happen in the minds of PSTs.

Castro (2021) connects dysconscious racism to college and career readiness by examining the failure of a college and career intervention program in Illinois. The Illinois College and Career Readiness (CCR) Pilot Program (2007) was designed to help students who

attended a small rural high school that struggled to prepare most of their students for college and career. The program was intended to provide 16 weeks of classes for a total of 40 additional hours of math instructional time. However, the course was not executed as it was originally imagined. To start, students only received less than five total hours of contact time with their instructor. Further, the course work was designed to meet the requirements for a college level course; hence, it was not augmented to meet the needs of the students who were already struggling with high school math. Even so, when asked why students were not benefitting from the program, administrators responded with explanations such as “the students’ parents do not value education” or “students simply don’t understand what is good for them” (Castro, 2021, p. 620). Rather than acknowledge the ways in which the course was neither designed nor executed in a way that would contribute to the success of students, teachers and administrators draw upon dysconscious racism by focusing on the ways in which the students of color “become the target to be helped and/or fixed, with little attention paid to the larger socio-cultural and institutional conditions that work in concert to create a need for college and career intervention programming in the first place” (Castro, 2021, p. 628). Such talk positions policies that support college and career readiness as neutral or a-contextual, rather than recognizing other factors that have racialized historical significance, including systemic or policy failures that work against student success.

In addition to the ways in which dysconscious racism operates in P-12 schools, Evans-Winters and Hoff (2011) illustrate how dysconscious racism manifests in interactions between teacher educators of color and white PSTs. They begin by using a critical race theoretical framework to analyze their own course evaluations. Based on their analysis, they build on previous research that shows how black faculty at predominantly white institutions experience

higher levels of alienation, microaggression, and marginalization (Constantine et al., 2008; Garrett & Segall, 2013). In one instance, one student stated that their instructor was “very poor” because she “only” taught about teaching black students instead of teaching about students of diverse backgrounds although several readings about other racial groups and multicultural topics were included throughout the course (p. 469). Another PST explains, “Dr. H knows a lot of information.... She understands diversity from all her experiences, but she is so biased that my learning was severely hindered” (Evans-Winters and Hoff, 2011, p. 470). These observations call the knowledge and skills of the professors into question, while minimizing the importance of their own racialized experiences in the course. Furthermore, when characterizing learning about teaching black children as a hindrance to understanding diverse contexts, the PSTs situate blackness as unworthy, both separate and distinct from other racial groups.

In taking an active stance and challenging the status quo by teaching toward social justice, these black teacher educators jeopardize racial privilege and ultimately challenge the identities of white people who have internalized racist ideological justifications (colorblind racism). Other evaluations described both professors as biased, rude, inappropriate, and incompetent; aligning with racial storylines (Nasir et al., 2013) which position black women as inferior and incapable, particularly when initiating conversations about race and social justice. These findings demonstrate a need for teacher education programs to continue to work toward broadening social knowledge by focusing on the ways in which miseducation contributes to unequal educational outcomes, thereby reinforcing societal inequity and oppression.

Race Talk in Teacher Education Programs

By developing an understanding of the implications of race in education, teacher education programs can help preservice teachers to develop foundational practices which can

serve to consciously minimize negative racialized experiences. In many ways, teacher education classrooms are structured similarly to P-12 classrooms in that there is one teacher, numerous students, and a curriculum prescribed by government agencies that is evaluated based on the acquired predetermined learning (A.F. Brown et al., 2017). The role of the teacher educator in teacher education programs is parallel to that of the teacher in P-12 settings in that their job is to encourage students to think about complex issues such as race and other intersectional issues that are pertinent in social structures. To disrupt predetermined learning and shift to a curriculum that is more student-centered, teacher preparation programs should incorporate a deep historical analysis of race in classrooms to cultivate racial literacy (King, 1991; Milner & Laughter, 2015; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021a). Consequently, there is a need for teacher educators to examine their own practices and biases as well.

Teacher Educators

Teacher educators are responsible for providing solutions for preparing PSTs to teach diverse students and improve race relations by developing racial literacy (Bean-Folkes, et al., 2020; Crowley, 2019; Mosley Wetzel, 2020; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021a). It follows that, teacher educators must develop their own racial literacy (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021a) and examine their own practices because "what they do, say, and model in the classroom (has) the potential to influence teachers and students in P-12 classrooms" (Milner, 2007, p. 584). Careful examinations of beliefs and practices to develop racial literacy could help PSTs navigate racial discussions. In a self-study, Milner's (2007) examines how narratives and self-study played a role in PSTs' opportunities to learn about race and racism in a teacher education course. Unlike Evans-Winters and Hoff (2011), he explains how narratives of his racialized experiences play a role in helping to dissolve tensions and resistance to talking about race in the classroom. By incorporating his

racialized perspective as a black man, Milner demonstrates that "pedagogical and curricular decisions can be racially and culturally mediated. They often depend on the context, and they are not necessarily neutrally constructed" (p. 591). Yet, the demographics of teacher educators mirror that of P-12 classrooms, in that it is mostly comprised of white, middle-class women (Mosley Wetzel, 2020). This dynamic presents its own challenges in preparing PSTs to teach children of color.

Daly (2022a) adds to the research of teacher educator practices by conducting a self-study of shared reflections to examine equity in field-based practicums. In this study, Daly examines the critical conversations of one white teacher educator and two white preservice teachers as they engage in collaborative coaching to improve teacher practices. Building on culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012), she defines critical conversations as "practice-based discussions that critique beliefs and structure that harm the academic, social, and emotional well-being of students of color as well as multilingual and/or culturally diverse students...to account for teaching as political" (Daly, 2022a, p. 22). Despite being well-versed in theoretical aspects of critical pedagogies, Daly experienced both successful and unsuccessful critical conversations with her participants.

During the successful conversation, the group used discursive strategies such as sharing openly and affirming complexity to develop and deepen critical understandings about equitable teaching practices. They were able to sustain the critical conversation because of the ways that the group engaged with and responded to each other. The unsuccessful critical conversation was the only conversation that explicitly named race. In fact, it was the only conversation in which the group was unable to work collaboratively to build on each other's ideas to generate consensus. When the researcher points out that a particular group of students of color were

labeled as problematic, the conversation experienced “frequent disruptions as the focus shifted in competing directions (Daly, 2022a, p. 30). This shows the power in explicitly naming race in conversations. Despite previous successful conversations about power and inequity in classroom practice, participants resisted taking up the conversation when the race was specifically named. In addition, the conversation that did occur was marked by what Bonilla-Silva (2003) describes as rhetorical incoherence, which is the discontinuity in conversations that occurs when white people become uncomfortable or emotionally charged about a racial topic. This and other research help to explain why teacher educators, and by extension, teacher education programs struggle to prepare white and preservice teachers of color to discuss race (Brown, 2012, 2018).

Making Race Visible in Teacher Education Programs

Critical sociocultural knowledge and race are often missing in extant literature about preparing PSTs for equitable teaching, which perpetuates the idea that race does not matter (Durden, et al., 2016; Lopéz et al, 2021; Mosley Wetzel, 2020). Further, preservice teachers are not “sufficiently and consistently encouraged to delve into sustained self-work and to develop their racial literacy during their coursework and outside their teacher preparation experiences” (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021a, p. 281). Nor do they have adequate support for the work that they do to disrupt whiteness in teacher education (Milner, 2017; Mosley Wetzel, 2020). Studies that do exist often focus on preparing PSTs enrolled in programs designed to prepare them to teach in “urban” or diverse populations. Such studies show that students with a commitment to social justice still grapple with race, which demonstrates that race is ever present, whether or not explicitly acknowledged (A.F. Brown et al., 2017; Daly, 2022a; Lopéz et al., 2021; Thomas, 2015).

For instance, Vetter et al. (2018), explore how PSTs use discursive strategies to engage in critical conversations about how identity markers shape classrooms. Much like Daly (2022a), they conceptualize critical conversations as a critique of how power affects the social, material, and psychological aspects of people's lives. In this study, PSTs recorded their own lessons in high school English courses and used discourse analysis to analyze their videos. The researchers found that PSTs struggled to align their teaching practices with their desired teaching outcomes, but discourse analytic tools were generative in helping PSTs to reflect on their practices to develop strategies to improve. Though the study focuses on PST identity markers in a broad sense, the conversation where race was explicitly named was not as rich as other discussions that focused on different identity markers such as SES or gender. When talking about one school's practice of placing unprepared black students in advanced courses so that they could "rise to the occasion," the participants did not engage as deeply into the discussion. The researchers noted a missed opportunity in deepening the discussion to explore the "unnerving feeling" that a white PST expressed when discussing this racialized dilemma. Similarly, deep discussions about race are just as elusive in teacher education program research.

When conversations about race are explicit, researchers and preservice teachers alike struggle to interrogate whiteness. Crowley (2019) explicitly talks about race in a study that draws from critical whiteness studies and the sociological imagination to "undermine considerations of complicity" so that white teachers can adopt "race-visible identities" (p. 1484). He works to show how three white male preservice teachers in an urban education program use personal experience with racial privilege to understand structural racism. Like other researchers, he intentionally selects white participants with inclinations toward having critical discussions about race to emphasize the formative nature of white racial identity development (Buehler et al., 2009;

Daly, 2022a; 2022b). Crowley positions this study to focus on *discourses of possibility* to respond to research that emphasizes technologies of whiteness (strategies used when discussions of race occur). He argues that discourse about technologies of whiteness “over essentialize(s) White (sic) teachers’ identities,” and that discourses of possibility enable white educators to learn about racism and make their own white racial identities visible in the learning process. He explains:

When White (sic) people discuss critical perspectives on race and racism, their own racial identity becomes visible to them. How they respond to that visibility—whether to push back or engage—relates, in part, to whether or not they are able to see themselves in a broader, historical context. (Crowley, 2019, p. 1468)

Crowley also advances the concept of *double image*, or “a sensibility or consciousness that gives White (sic) people a deeper understanding of how they are seen and raced by others” (p. 1468). Drawing from Du Bois’ (1903/2003) concept of double consciousness, Crowley also suggests that when white people internalize ‘the Other’s gaze’ and see themselves as racially and historically situated, they experience *white double consciousness*. Both concepts are integral to his analysis of his participants’ understanding of structural racism. I pause here, to address some key elements.

First, there is an irony in attempting to make the case for “over essentializing” white identities by positioning discourse about technologies of whiteness as counterproductive. Arguably, identifying technologies of whiteness names strategies in race conversations that were previously unrecognized in an effort to create space for constructive collaboration (DiAngelo, 2012; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014). Next, by using terms such as *double image*, and *white double consciousness*, Crowley co-opts a black scholar’s terminology to position white people as

racialized when their whiteness becomes “visible to themselves” (p. 1468). Although white people are racially and historically situated, it is important to note that they are not inherently racialized in a white supremacist system, they are, in fact, the norm by which all others are racialized (Omi & Winant, 2015; Crenshaw, 1995, 2011; Guinier, 2004). Daly (2022a) also engages in similar reasoning by positioning her study of white in-service teachers' race talk moves for racial literacy as “asset based.” By taking this stance, she suggests, like Crowley, that critiques of discursive strategies are deficit based. She explains, “A common assumption is that *challenging* moves must be combative or aggressive to be effective” (Daly, 2022a, p. 498). I contend that these claims advance discursively violent perspectives of racial conversations in research and in teacher education classrooms (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Leonardo & Porter, 2010). She attempts to dismantle the assumption that *challenging* has formerly been conceptualized as necessarily combative or aggressive. In doing so, she presumably ascribes these attributes to scholars of color that demand anti-racist change and do not cater to the “polite” sensibilities of whiteness (Aronson et al., 2022; Mosley Wetzel, 2020; Nasir et al., 2017). These studies align with others in the field in that they focus on the emotional burden of reconciling whiteness for participants (A.F. Brown et al., 2017). While discussions of antiracism, race, and racism in these studies were not overcome by the emotional burden, the deconstruction of race and racism were impacted by the need to cater to the reconciliation of whiteness. In conceptualizing “asset based” research to dismantle white hegemony, these researchers inhibit their own possibilities (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

In summation, these examples show the complex nature of making race visible in research and in teacher education programs. Despite these complexities, it is important to continue the work to diminish the gap between theory and practice. An important step in this

work is to provide PSTs with extensive experience in school climates that prepare new teachers for the challenges they will face (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b).

Critical Literac(ies) and Race Talk in Elementary Classrooms

Elementary classrooms have significant potential for developing racial literacy, though race is not often explicitly discussed in the elementary school context. Moreover, preservice teachers who are enrolled in teacher education programs that are equity centered express hesitancy to talk about race in classrooms, particularly with elementary-aged students who do not look like them (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Hendrix-Souto & Mosley Wetzel, 2019; Mosley Wetzel, 2020). Arguments against discussions of race in elementary contexts include perceived lack of support from parents and administration (Milner, 2017), age appropriateness (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020; Kaczmarczyk et al., 2019), and legislation or policy (López et al., 2021). To shift this paradigm, scholars suggest using the field of literacy research to support the development of racial literacy (Croom, 2020, Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b). One influential body of research that supports this shift is that of critical literacies.

Critical Literac(ies)

The collaborative nature of literac(ies) makes literacy classrooms an ideal space for exploring race. Literacies are more than the ability to read and write, they also deepen understandings of the world around us and so transform into a means to advocate for social justice, political power, and humanization. This study uses the term critical “literacies” to acknowledge that there is not one definition of critical literacies, but a collection of intersecting tenets (Hendrix-Souto & Mosley Wetzel, 2019; Muhammad, 2018; Luke, 2019; Peterson & Chamberlain, 2015). The following is a brief discussion of each tenet and how they converge to inform this study.

Literacies are not neutral. Literacies have material and political consequences (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Rogers & Mosley, 2011). To illustrate, literacy education has been conceptualized as a property of whiteness that has been granted and withheld, ultimately creating a legacy of inequity in literacy education for people of color (Baker-Bell, 2020; Du Bois, 1903/2003; Haddix, 2017; Muhammad, 2018; Rogers & Mosley, 2011). That legacy continues today as black people and other people of color have been pathologically positioned as verbally deprived (Baker-Bell, 2020; Kinloch et al., 2020b; Souto-Manning, 2021). For example, curricular oppression is often carried out under the guise of neutrality (Cornbleth, 1984). Yet, texts, curricula, and the skills determined to be valuable are all chosen with purpose and intent (Apple, 1971; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Souto-Manning, 2020). By whom and for what purpose? Berthoff (1987) argues:

(T)o be ‘nonjudgmental’ is a rhetorical value, not a logical option. We must respect the plurality of voices, the variety of discourses, and of course different languages; we must be tactful, but a neutral stance is impossible. Freire notes that all human activity is by definition purposeful and has, therefore, a direction. (p. xvii)

Like language, literacies are not neutral, and people’s language experiences are not different from their racial experiences (Baker-Bell, 2020). Therefore, critical literacies focus on the “ethical imperative” for freedom of dialogue and the critique of all texts, discourses, and ideologies as a means for equity and social justice (Luke, 2019).

Literacies are a tool for deconstructing and reconstructing the world. Critical literacies position technical mastery of written languages as the *means* for the expansion of individual and collective transformation, not the end (Jensen, 2021; Luke, 2019). It moves beyond the technical aspects of literacy acquisition to consider the nature of language use and its

implications. Thus, the premise of critical literacies is to teach learners to engage with language through texts: to critically analyze social institutions and cultural sites where texts are used and exchanged. Freire and Macedo (1987) conceptualize literacy as reading the word and the world. Reading the word and the world integrates our understanding of the world around us with language and texts, which shapes the meaning we make with them. From this perspective, literacy has the potential to shape identities, build agency, and transform society. Reading the word and the world is a means for students to link the social world to texts for purposes of emancipation.

Struggle against the status quo. Building on the concepts of agitation (Muhammad, 2018) and emancipation (Freire & Macedo, 1987), literacies are useful only to the degree that they function to empower or disempower people, and literacies are critical to the extent to which they either reproduce existing social norms or serve as a set of practices to promote democracy and emancipatory change. Critical literacies provide a framework for understanding how literacy and language are tied to power (Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). They “attend to the ideological and hegemonic functions of texts, as in critical pedagogy models” and provide the “technical resources for analysing how texts and discourses work – where, how, and in whose interests” (Luke, 2019, p. 358). By teaching students how to analyze and critique, students can actively engage in the application of literacy and the development of agency. To combat the pervasive problem of racial oppression in the United States, it is important for students of all ages to critique and make meaning with texts, as texts are inextricable from the societies in which they are disseminated. Racial literacy can be conceptualized as a form of critical literacies in that “racial literacy in English classrooms is the ability to read, discuss, and write about situations that involve race or racism” (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b, p. 2). Furthermore, the discursive

practices inherent in racial literacy can help to disrupt binaries in discussions of race (Rogers & Mosley, 2011). In activating this set of critical literacy skills, learners can actively take up (or refute) pedagogies as they progress through our education system (Freire & Macedo, 1987). From this approach, critical literacies are not a set of technical skills, but a foundation for cultural action, a fundamental component of being an agent of change for self and society.

Moves beyond traditional concepts of print. Critical literacies build on what the New London Group (1996) describes as multiple literacies, or multiliteracies. The concept of multiple literacies calls into question the dominance of print as a communicative and/or expressive form by shifting the narrative about what counts as literacy and redefining what counts as “text” (Moje, 2009). Multiple literacies, or multiliteracies, encompass an expanding array of communication channels and media and the increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity (New London Group, 1996). Recognizing multiple literacies addresses textual multiplicity by focusing on modes of representation including but not limited to, language. It moves beyond the page to include multiple modes of visual, spatial, and other forms of representation. For example, there are many ways of engaging digital technologies for text production such as vlogging or creating content for Instagram that are overlooked or devalued. From this perspective, literate forms of communication can include other semiotic systems, such as fashion, social media, and graffiti (Moje, 2000, 2009). These modes of representation differ depending on culture and context and have “specific cognitive, cultural, and social effects” (New London Group, 1996, p.64). They continue, “Multiliteracies also creates a different kind of pedagogy, one in which language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their uses as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes” (New London Group, 1996, p.64). While this study focuses on the critical meaning-

making that occurs using picture books, which constitutes “traditional” literacy, it is important to acknowledge the many ways in which meaning can be made using “non-traditional” literacies in the classroom and other contexts.

Situated and vary across contexts. Decades of literacy research offer empirical evidence that social and cultural factors are significant to literacy learning (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, 2020; Du Bois, 1903/2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999, 2014; Mosley Wetzel & Rogers, 2015; Souto-Manning, 2021). Even so, white hegemony has minimized whose social and cultural capital are prioritized. Students’ identities, ethnicities, race, and histories shape meaning-making experiences with texts (Brooks, 2003; Hall, 2016; Hendrix-Souto and Mosley Wetzel, 2019). Meaning making is a complex process of connecting self and world, which takes place as texts are filtered through the intersections of language, context, and identities. For example, storytelling and story listening is contextual; environment plays a role in how participants engage with stories due to hierarchies that are present or not present, such as the classroom or the lunchroom (Enciso, 2011). As a result, there is no roadmap or prescription to enacting critical literacies; teachers need to be able to provide instruction and experiences that respond to a diverse range of social histories and identities. Racial literacies can assist in adaptation because they enable critical recognition and reframing of race practices. They are also necessary in the field of literacy research because racial meanings are created using many situated processes that are often “unstated, unexamined, or unaccounted for” (Croom, 2020, p. 533). Therefore, evading racial meanings as they relate to students’ educational experiences leaves space to perpetuate racial bias and inequities (Mosley Wetzel, et al., 2021). The next section will explore how critical literacy is used in elementary classrooms to facilitate race talk with elementary-aged

students. Despite taking up critical literacies, we will see that race is often unstated, unexamined, or unaccounted for.

Elementary Talk

A small body of research examines PSTs from a critical orientation (Hendrix-Souto & Mosley Wetzel 2019) and even fewer focus on racial literacy (A.F. Brown et al., 2017; Mosley Wetzel, 2020). Race matters for students as much as it does for teachers (Thomas, 2015), and ideologies of whiteness are actively constructed in the everyday ways that children and teachers talk, silence, and interact with issues of race while reading and discussing texts in elementary classrooms (Daly, 2022b; Thomas, 2015). Although teacher education classrooms have been identified as an important space to develop racial literacies to address this problem, a gap remains in the literature about how preservice teachers talk to elementary aged students about race. Research that does exist is more likely to examine the ways in which PSTs talk about race with teacher educators (Daly, 2022a), and amongst their peers (Dara Hill, 2012; Evans-Winters & Hoff, 2011; Garrett & Segall, 2013; May et al., 2014; Milner, 2017; Solic & Riley, 2019; Vetter, 2018). When elementary aged students are involved in racial discussions, literature is usually the entry point into the conversation (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; 2020; Glenn, 2015; Kaczmarczyk, et al., 2019; Peterson, 2016), and critical literacy is often the method of instruction (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, 2020; Brooks, 2006; Price-Dennis, et al., 2016; Tomé-Fernandez, et al, 2019). For this reason, research of critical literacy development in elementary spaces is transitioning toward exploring how the development of critical literacies segues into racial discussions, or race talk.

Elementary literacy research about race talk often discusses the challenges that educators face in facilitating literature discussions or read-alouds in ways that create opportunities for

students to share about race and racism (Daly, 2022b). Beneke and Cheatham (2019) show that literacy practices, such as classroom participation structures, influence the ways that students respond (Levine et al., 2021). Their investigation of preschool read-alouds reveals that discursive structures work to produce asymmetrical power relationships where teachers have access to different rights and discursive resources than the students. Teachers often use the Initiation, Response, Evaluation (I-R-E) conversational structure (Heath, 1983; Cazden & Beck, 2003) in which the teacher initiates a question, the children compete to respond, then the teacher evaluates the responses. Once the “correct answer” to the question is presented, the discourse is complete. When the teachers read books about skin color, the I-R-E conversation structure controls the ways that the students can talk about race. Rather than emulate real life conversations, the student’s contributions are positioned as responses to teacher questioning, with correct or incorrect answers (evaluation). As a result, any racial knowledge or perspectives that students might have is silenced.

It is important to note that texts also have a significant role in critical racial conversations. In this study, teachers purposely selected texts about race, yet they uncritically relied upon the ways that race was represented in the text. For example,

In both picture books, the authors described skin colors with vocabulary like “cocoa” and “cherry,” without introducing the word “race.” Thus, the texts allowed the teachers to talk about “race” as skin color without actually discussing “race” as a social construction in sociopolitical contexts. (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 124)

In other words, the texts portray race as skin color in “child friendly” terms, which decontextualized the significance of race as a social construction with historical, political, social, and contextual significance (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Brooks & McNair, 2015; A. L. Brown

& K.D. Brown, 2010; Thomas, 2016). Without referencing the adult vocabulary for skin color, the texts, and by extension, the teachers, distance themselves from the power and politics embedded in racial discourse in the United States. As a result, when teachers read texts that conflate race and skin color, they engage in uncritical discourse about skin color thereby perpetuating the racial ideology that race does not have social consequences. This shows that even when teachers read picture books about skin color, they can silence topics of race and racial injustice by shifting topics and relying on texts as the authority. Therefore, using literature without deep reflective thinking about personal biases and other forces that operate outside of the classroom can cause teachers to do more harm than good (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020; Croom, 2020; Milner et al., 2015; Schmeichel, 2012; Solic & Riley; 2019).

Even with using texts to facilitate discussions, race talk is complex and does not unfold in linear ways (Daly, 2020b; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Yoon, 2020). For young children, conversations about race are often unplanned; indeed, race comes up in unexpected ways in response to their understanding of social issues. For this reason, critical conversations are opportunities for children “to speak honestly about the conditions filling up their everyday lives. They are mobilized by literature, media materials, and the kinds of interactions teachers set up in classrooms” (Yoon, 2020, p. 295). Critical literacy development is a delicate balance between teaching and learning; a cycle of shifting from observing children as a curious listener to taking a more active role in guiding conversations to act against inequality that is produced through discourse (Campano et al., 2013; Yoon, 2020).

Building on this premise, Campano et al. (2013) examine third and fourth-grade student discourse about the book *Holes* (Sachar, 1998) where they found that the young students "mobilized their social identities" in reading and writing practices (p. 99). As a result, Campano

et al. (2013) contend that students of color do not need to be taught critical literacy, but arguably possess critical dispositions that are rooted in their social contexts. That is, children practice *organic* critical literacies by drawing upon their daily social experiences to theorize about race and inequity. Yoon (2020) concurs that elementary aged students employ organic critical literacies and builds upon this reasoning by encouraging educators to redefine what counts as criticality. By insisting that the everyday is already critical, Yoon shifts the narrative about children's readiness to deal with social issues. She asserts that children negotiate critical social issues through what adults usually characterize as play. Further, she characterizes play as children's work, in that it is tied to negotiations of identity, and is crucial to development and learning. Through play, children "explore social issues, apply language and literacy as communicative acts, and try out and test cultural ideologies" (Yoon, 2020, p. 297). Moreover, Yoon demonstrates that second graders negotiate political and social ideas in social classroom spaces despite rhetoric that certain textual encounters are deemed by adults as too sad, serious, controversial, or complicated for young students to grasp. Her work and others demonstrate that young children are capable of interacting with "unsanitized versions" of historical pasts that unearth colonization, racism, and enslavement because they are already engaging in the world as cultural beings (Keenan, 2019; Templeton and Cheruvu; 2020, Yoon, 2020).

Elementary-aged students are often placed in the margins because of their age (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019). Falkner (2019) notes that "the current educational system positions them as powerless, and their ideas as unimportant" (p. 43). Yet researchers like Osorio (2018) and Falkner (2019) show that young children can claim forms of agency that are usually denied in classrooms. Osorio (2018) investigates how humanizing pedagogy occurs in culture circles that uses Latinidad literature to honor students' life experiences, background knowledge, and culture.

By centering her second-grade students' experiences, she creates learning contexts of mutual humanization and critical consciousness to challenge traditional roles of teacher and student. She defines mutual humanization as "problem-posing education in which students (are) engaged in dialogue and co-investigate issues" (Osorio, 2018, p. 8). Her approach is unique in that it positions her students as producers of knowledge in the classroom, intentionally minimizing her authority to make space for collaborative learning. Falkner (2019) illustrates mutual humanization with first graders in a whole class read aloud from the picture book, "Don't Touch My Hair!" (Miller, 2018). The story describes a young black girl's experiences with white people touching her hair without permission. Racialized hair touching is another example of symbolic violence, that is, anti-black behavior that is not physically violent but still serves to inflict harm and reject the experiences of black youth (Johnson et al., 2019). The teacher of the first-grade classroom is a black woman who shares a similar personal experience with the class about someone touching her hair without permission. In doing so, she creates a space where the class can share their own feelings, thoughts, and experiences about the racialized interaction of hair touching. Throughout the lesson, students were able to apply the scenario, and its symbolic violence, to their own lives. They empathize with the main character and strategize about the ways in which they would handle the situation. Some students suggested establishing boundaries such as requesting that the people ask permission, others recommended readjusting the balance of power by monetizing the experience, "(i)f you touch my hair you have to give me five hundred bucks!" (p. 42). Another student advocated for justice as she declares, "They *need* to say sorry" (p. 43). These responses demonstrate both their recognition of the power imbalance of racialized hair touching and their ability to imagine ways in which the imbalance might be addressed.

In this study, Falkner (2019) shows how racial literacy can strengthen other practices such as asset pedagogies and critical literacies. Though they appear similar, research shows that layering these practices can help with difficulties in addressing race. For example, Yoon (2020) and others actively work towards critical literacies yet acknowledge the struggle to deepen racial conversations with students. She reflects, “(O)ur reactions and comments during this conversation were insufficient, if not superficial...we missed an opportunity to go deeper into the social construction of race and concealed the structural limitations that were obvious to us all” (Yoon, 2020. P. 307). This reflection aligns with other research that shows that no matter the racial identity, teachers often talk superficially about race. Instead, they draw upon technologies of whiteness such as colorblindness and race evasion to minimize the history and impacts of racial oppression (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Daly, 2022a; King, 1991; Yoon, 2020).

Admittedly, race is a complex and elusive construct that can be difficult to understand, yet like other literate processes in the classroom, racial literacy development must be guided. Rogers and Mosley’s (2006) seminal work on racial literacy in a second grade English Language Arts classroom shows how racial literacy development can help disrupt racial ideologies in the classroom. During read-alouds and subsequent discussions, children noticed whiteness in their visual and linguistic analysis of the texts. This noticing and naming facilitated both enactments and disruptions of white privilege throughout their discussions during the read aloud. The existence of both enactment and disruption in the same conversations indicate a hybrid discourse; one characterized by unstable ideologies. Therefore, racial literacy development is not linear; the more unstable the discourse, the more open to change the social practices (Rogers & Mosley, 2006).

These findings are important for two reasons, first, race talk when “unstable” could be an important step to changing social practices, making elementary spaces crucial to advancing racial equity in education. Second, students as young as second grade engaged in racial discussions and contributed substantive noticing, naming, and other racially literate practices. In other words, they identify race talk as a generative space for meaning making, identity formation, and social critique. This discounts common perceptions that are often used by teachers and PSTs alike that students are too young to engage in racial conversations (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019). Not only are elementary aged students able to engage in the conversations, but by participating in racial conversations they are making meaning. Since white people learn to suppress their problematic and disruptive views of race over time (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), younger children are in the early phases of racial conditioning which makes engaging in racial conversations all the more important (Daly, 2022b; Rogers & Mosley, 2006).

Daly (2022b) highlights the need to equip teachers with discursive moves to counter pressures to *not* talk about race from white teachers who represent the majority of educators. She contends that read-alouds are a common instructional method for elementary classrooms, yet few studies demonstrate what critical racial conversations look like or what teachers can do to support students’ racial literacies. Other research has shown the existence of race talk dilemmas in classrooms, or moments in conversations about race that have the potential to create conflict (Thomas, 2015). As a result, she offers five discursive moves that teachers can use to sustain conversations about race which include: listening, participating, synthesizing, challenging, and anchoring. In this study, the teacher uses race talk moves to identify discursive patterns during racial conversations to adjust her instruction to sustain and deepen the conversations. Daly asserts that white teachers can navigate the tensions of their racialized identities and the

structures of white supremacy successfully to talk and teach critically about race. However, to do so requires “deep critical racial knowledge and robust critical racial literacies” (Daly, 2022b, p. 504). Teachers need to take a recognizable antiracist stance in education; in doing so, they can no longer ignore the implicit power of race. Teacher educators must develop a teacher workforce that has the knowledge and skills to negotiate the complexities of teaching effectively *and* combating racism and other forms of oppression (Brown, 2017; Haddix, 2017). This shift is imperative to facilitate meaningful change for all students, and especially students of color.

Existing literature about race talk in teacher education and elementary classrooms show how racial literacy can contribute to positive learning outcomes for students of color. However, there are disconnects between the ways they are conceptualized and the ways they are enacted. Teachers should be well versed in their ability to critique and examine the ways in which racial ideologies are carried out in literacy classrooms and in education at large. This shift is imperative to facilitate meaningful change for all students, and especially students of color. Literacy classrooms are no exception. There is a growing body of work that focuses on racial literacy in literacy teacher education programs, however, there are far fewer that explore how preservice teachers attend to race in their developing practice. It seems that after much research, the question still remains, how can teacher preparation programs help preservice teachers to talk about race in their own classrooms?

Research Question

The purpose of this study is to investigate ways in which PSTs who are enrolled in a culturally responsive teacher preparation program navigate discussions about race with students of color. Consequently, the research question that guides this study is How do preservice teachers in an equity-oriented teacher preparation program talk about race with elementary-aged

students of color during read-alouds using texts that they have characterized as culturally responsive? In the following chapter, I will describe the design and methods for this dissertation study. First, I describe the salience of social constructionism to critical qualitative inquiry. Next, I provide a brief explanation for the appropriateness of critical case study as a methodology. Finally, I describe the methods, which include my subjectivities, research protocol, data collection, analysis, and other considerations.

Chapter Three

Not only are justice and injustice abstract concepts, but they are, moreover, enacted processes, made real through actions performed again and again. (Charmaz, 2005, p. 508)

To begin, this study embraces a social constructionist epistemological stance, an approach that sees the ways in which we understand the world as historically, culturally, and socially defined (Crotty, 2005; Weinberg, 2014). From this perspective, knowledge and reality are constructed through interactions with people, ideologies, and social structures (Freire, 1993; Holland et al., 1998). That is, people do not exist in a socially untouched vacuum, but are instead influenced by systems (Saukko, 2005). In the same way, the extensive and pervasive use of race throughout history has firmly embedded it in the social fabric and systems of the United States, leaving no one “untouched.” The embedded nature of race is complex and difficult to distinguish in social interactions (Omi & Winant, 2015). Consequently, race continues to play a fundamental role in structuring and representing the social world (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Omi & Winant, 2015).

One of the ways that race structures the social world is to provide those in possession of whiteness (e.g., skin, ways of being, knowledge, etc.) social and material privileges and benefits. Those same benefits are used in classrooms to create social hierarchies that confer privilege to certain ways of being, knowledge construction, power, and opportunity (Baker-Bell, 2020; Brown, 2018; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Jones, 2014; Omi & Winant, 2015). As a result, the historic and everyday practices of race and racism are implicated in ways of being and knowing, making it necessary to “interrogate them closely across distinct temporal and spatial contexts” (Brown, 2018, p. 110). A qualitative research approach helps to interrogate these ways of being and knowing by deciphering the nuance of human experience to enable consideration of complex social contexts of a particular phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2010;

Holland, et al., 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Case studies offer a multilayered view of social realities that, when used, do not privilege the interests of those who occupy positions of authority and power (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Omi & Winant, 2015). Since qualitative research is further characterized as critical when it critiques systemic inequalities in an ethically responsible and just manner, case study methodology needs a critical theoretical perspective such as critical race theory to disrupt whiteness in research (Batista-Morales, 2021; Esposito & Evans-Winters, 2022; Matias, 2021). This dissertation is designed as a critical case study following the principles of racial literacy (Omi & Winant, 2015), critical race theory (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006), and racial literacy (Twine, 2004) to answer the research question: How do preservice teachers in an equity-oriented teacher preparation program talk about race with elementary-aged students of color during read-alouds using texts that they have characterized as culturally responsive?

Methodology

Case study methodology is defined by Yin (1994) as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are unclear. Case studies are advantageous when “how” or “why” questions are asked about contemporary events over which the researcher has little control. For case studies, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that cases can include individuals, small groups, organizations, and communities or settlements, all of which emphasize the nature and size of a social unit. They also point out that cases can be located spatially or defined temporally. That is, a case can be defined as an episode or encounter, an event (such as a read aloud), a period of time, or even a sustained process. They further explain that qualitative sampling involves setting boundaries and creating a frame. To set a boundary is to define aspects of the case that can be studied within the time and means available to the researcher that connect

directly to the research questions and include examples of what is to be studied. Creating a frame helps the researcher to “uncover, confirm, or qualify the basic processes or constructs that undergird [the] study” (p. 27). This study is as an embedded, single-case design (Yin, 1994). That is, the single case (read alouds with elementary-aged students of color), is studied using more than one unit of analysis (five read-alouds that include discussions about race).

When using case study as a methodology, theory selection helps to define the appropriate research design, data collection, and generalization methods (Yin, 1994). Accordingly, I selected critical theories to examine racial discussions within the context of classroom spaces in an ethically responsible and just manner. To assist in parsing and elevating issues of race in elementary read alouds, this dissertation was developed using the principles of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015), critical race theory (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006) and racial literacy (Twine, 2004) to guide my data collection, and analysis.

Racial formation positions race as a master category that is socially constructed for the purpose of maintaining a racial hierarchy. It provides a framework for how the construct of race shifts and changes over time through the process of race-making, illustrating the many ways that race has been operationalized to maintain a racial hierarchy, particularly in the United States (Omi & Winant, 2015). As a result, I use racial formation to organize my data and to create a snapshot of race in a given time, and context. Racial formation is also closely related to CRT in that both use race and racism to analyze social practices. Critical race theory differs from racial formation in that it focuses on the ubiquity of race and its impact on people of color and should “employ any means necessary to address the problem of inequity in education” (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006, p. 49).

Three themes that proliferate in educational CRT research include voice, restrictive and expansive views of equality, and problems of colorblindness (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). Voice describes how students and scholars of color perceive and experience racism. Validating these experiences helps move toward the qualitative and material improvement of the educational experiences of people of color (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006), which prompted me to examine whose voice(s) were privileged during discussions about race in my analysis.

The second theme shows how restrictive and expansive views of equality produce different outcomes. Restrictive views of equality focus on the process of equality while downplaying the significance of outcomes. In classrooms, the restrictive view of equality often plays out in “treating everyone equally” such as using standardized test scores to determine college readiness (Castro, 2021). However, the process of treating everyone equally can prevent teachers from reflecting deeply on instructional practices and the differential effects that those practices have on students of color (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). In contrast, expansive views of equality challenge equal treatment ideologies by attending to actual outcomes. This perspective served as a catalyst for me to interrogate PSTs’ views of equality as they selected their texts for cultural responsiveness and in the ways that they attended to racial discussions with their students as evidenced by their reflections.

The last theme problematizes the ways in which colorblindness operates in classrooms. Colorblindness is often positioned as a form of racial enlightenment but is a form of avoidance instead (Gotanda, 1991; King, 1991). Practicing colorblindness contributes to feigned invisibility of race in educational settings that effectively disconnects race from social realities (King, 1991). My understanding colorblindness as a form of avoidance informed my examination of

the ways that PSTs acknowledged the impact of race as a social construct with real world implications.

The final theory that informed my analysis was racial literacy (Guinier, 2004; Twine, 2004). Racial literacy is a pattern of practices used to identify, respond, and resist everyday racism (Twine, 2004). These practices include providing a safe place to talk about race and racism, placing children in a position where they might learn about their own unique histories from people who look like them, and creating an environment that affirms the cultural aesthetic of the child (Twine, 2004). Because racial discussions often pose linguistic and psychological threats to people of color, (Leonardo & Porter, 2010), I also examined how PSTs created a safe space for their students to discuss race and even develop their own attitudes. Racial literacy also attends to the relationship between race and power, acknowledging tensions between individual agency and institutional and environmental forces. This final emphasis played an important part in the ways that I positioned myself as an educator and researcher in this study.

As Charmaz (2005) puts it, qualitative researchers themselves are tools in their studies, so it is imperative that I am transparent about the ways in which my identities shape my perspectives because they are integral to my research approach. King and Pringle (2019) share their personal stories as black women scientists to help clarify their positions in research about black girl scientists to highlight where their identifications intersect with issues of power, privilege, and social justice. Their candor helps to illustrate the ways in which their situated identities influence the scope of their research. Mensah (2016) describes positional identity or positionality as multiple social markers that are socially located in relation to others, that is, people are identified by their location within shifting networks of relationships. From this perspective, identity is not fixed, but rather fluid and contextual. Thus, in the spirit of conducting ethically responsible and

just qualitative research, it is important that I share the ways that my identities operate within the context of this research because my presence in the research also shapes its context (Bhattacharya, 2017). Therefore, in the following segment, I detail how my identity markers influence my positionality within this work.

Subjectivities

As a qualitative researcher examining conversations about race with students of color, I emphasize my experiences as a student, an educator, and a researcher of color. Reflecting on my experiences helps me to recognize that I have been socialized in a racially oppressive society, therefore, I am not exempt from unconsciously perpetuating oppression (Brown & Brown, 2010). I also recognize that, because of my socialization, my experiences as a woman of color do not naturally predispose me to a fluent understanding or inherent ability to explain the complexities of structural and institutional racism (Apallon, 2011; Brown, 2018). This understanding contributes to my vigilance in the practice of critical reflexivity; to consciously take the time to pause, reflect, analyze, and take appropriate action as I partake in social justice work. Therefore, I intentionally seek opportunities to learn and unlearn the ways that racism manifests itself, especially as a researcher in education.

My research design is informed by my positional identity as a biracial, cisgender woman who was raised in a middle-class, predominantly white community. Despite the privileges and opportunities afforded by my family's socioeconomic status, I often found my formative years to be disorienting because of my racialized body, with my melanated skin as one of the most obvious indicators of my blackness. To be clear, I have no desire to be anything else, as I was raised to have a strong sense of pride in self and in my black and Mexican ancestry. Yet, my skin, the texture of my hair, and other physical features often cause confusion for others, most

especially white people. Difficulties arise when people cannot place me or my family into standard typologies of blackness based on their personal histories, and I no longer succumb to the tension to explain or justify my existence.

I have a vested interest in examining discussions about race in classrooms because my racialized body has led to countless encounters with isolation, racism, white supremacy, misrecognition, and microaggressions in social and educational settings. Many of these events were ignored by my teachers even though some of the most consequential events with race and racism happened at school. A poignant example is when black swastikas were spray painted on the walls of our brand-new high school, which happened to be named for a prominent civil rights figure. To my surprise, the adults at the school did not initiate any substantive discussion about that incident or what it might have meant for us as students of color. Instead, we were offered vague platitudes and left to make meaning about that act of psychological violence for ourselves (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Leonardo & Porter, 2010).

Still, the most important conversation about race that I can remember in my P-12 experience is one with my associated student body (ASB) advisor. I was class president and had been working to start a black student union at our school. I had garnered a solid membership and secured an advisor – the last thing to do was to get the club approved by ASB officers. The day before the vote, my advisor, a middle-aged white woman, pulled me into her office and closed the door. She explained that it was not a good idea to start a black student union because it would cause other students to want to start a white student union; she suggested that I join the multicultural council instead. My advisor went on to disclose that she had black friends who had shared their ordeals with racism and that she understood what it must be like to have those encounters. As I quietly listened, I experienced an array of emotions—surprise, confusion, anger,

hurt, and betrayal. Yet, the pressure I felt to comply superseded everything else. My position as class president meant that I would still have to work very closely with this woman for the duration of the school year, yet I also felt the tension of knowing that black students and other students of color like me needed a space where we could be affirmed. In the end, I did not bring the club before the ASB to be established, and the disappointment and disempowerment from that decision still resonates.

At that time, I wondered: How many other black students living and learning in white contexts experienced situations like mine? How did they respond, and how did they make meaning about the importance of their psychological and emotional needs as they moved through those spaces? Thanks to critical race scholarship in education, there is a substantial body of work that elevates discrepant treatment between students of color and white students in U.S. classrooms across disciplines (e.g., college readiness, [Castro, 2021], STEM [King & Pringle, 2010], and diverse representations in picture books [Price-Gardner, 2017]). This body of research points to the importance of investigating the ways in which race plays a role in classroom conversations (Thomas, 2015). My experiences have helped to solidify my desire for social justice, which now shapes my approach to teaching, learning, and more importantly, the research process. As an educator and researcher, I take the stance that pedagogical and curricular practices in the United States perpetuate white supremacy by normalizing white, middle-class values which serve to systematically disadvantage students of color (A.F. Brown et al., 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Milner, 2003, 2015). As a result, I believe that it is important to create dialogical spaces in classrooms to challenge systemic inequity. I believe that doing so creates spaces for people of color to see their perspectives and experiences as valuable both inside and outside of schools.

Research Context

This study takes place within the larger context of a professional development project that focuses on teacher preparation and local community involvement. Working from Yosso's (2005) model of community cultural wealth, the professional development project uses school and community-based training to assist future and current teachers in collaborating with families and communities to improve academic achievement. The project's teacher development component takes place within a university master's teacher education program that prepares preservice teachers (PSTs) to work in urban elementary schools in a large city in the Southeast. University faculty and staff worked closely together to organize curricula across six semesters to ensure that culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014) and assets-based approaches for teaching in diverse schools (Gay, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2000) were essential components of instruction across content areas.

This qualitative study is situated in the first course of the literacy strand of the teacher development program, which takes place during the first year of the program. The literacy strand of the program is divided into four different courses; the first two focus on the fundamentals of literacy instruction for elementary-aged, culturally, and linguistically diverse children, and the second two focus on praxis, in which PSTs put theory into practice in classrooms. Prior to taking content area courses, PSTs were enrolled in an intensive, six-hour, culturally responsive pedagogy course designed to disrupt the centrality of whiteness in education. In this course, they learned about issues of equity inside and outside of the classroom and engaged in activities designed to uncover their own implicit biases. After the culturally responsive pedagogy course, PSTs worked toward earning their teaching certification and master's degree while engaging with curricula that emphasizes assets-based approaches to teaching, such as culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies.

Literacy Methods Course Context

The literacy course convened once a week over six weeks of the summer semester. It was designed to integrate theory and practice by incorporating fieldwork with children as a part of the class experience. During the six-hour class meeting, preservice teachers explored foundations of literacy instruction by participating in lectures, readings, and discussions about the linguistic features of language (e.g., phonics), language acquisition, and culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices. Other topics included assets-based approaches to teaching literacy (e.g., Franquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998; Herrera et al., 2017), critical race issues in literacy education (e.g., López-Robertson & Haney, 2017; Muhammad, 2018), and identifying culturally responsive texts for literacy lessons (e.g., Dworin, 2006; Kaczmarczyk et al., 2018; McNair, 2016). As part of the coursework, preservice teachers were required to prepare and teach literacy lessons using culturally responsive texts for the literacy tutoring rotation of each class meeting. The lesson assignment consisted of three components: Lesson planning, teaching the lesson, and the lesson reflection. The lesson plans were due the Friday before they were taught so that the instructors could review and provide feedback, and so that the PSTs could adjust the lesson, if necessary. After the finalized lessons were taught, the PSTs were required to reflect on the lesson using guiding questions and submitted their written reflections with the following week's lesson plan.

The class and field experience took place at a partner non-profit organization that provides learning services to students in the surrounding community (Pendergast et al., 2015). The organization serves Title I schools, those with populations of forty percent or more who qualify for free or reduced lunch, by providing elementary tutoring during the summer and the school year, drop-off and pick-up services, and access to other community resources such as a mobile library. The families in the surrounding community served by this organization identified

as Latinidad (73%), black (18%), asian, (6%), and white (2%; <https://www.zipdatamaps.com/>). At the site, the children were organized according to grade level, kindergarten through grade 5. Preservice teachers were assigned to work with one grade level and continued to work with the same grade level and the same students for the duration of the course. Throughout the day, the students and PSTs rotated to different activities including literacy tutoring, math tutoring, social-emotional learning, and recess/play.

Participants. Participants for this study were selected from the preservice teachers enrolled in the first course of the literacy strand of a site-based culturally responsive teacher education program. Participants were further refined using purposive sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2005) based on the selection criteria used to define the embedded units of analysis, that is, specific discussions about race situated in the read aloud portion of literacy lessons. As a result, five lessons from four PSTs were selected for further analysis.

The first participant, Toni, (all names are pseudonyms) is a white, middle-class female with less than two years of classroom experience as a teacher's aide in a small, local private school. The conversations about race took place with fourth and fifth graders throughout a read-aloud of the text *Someday is Now: The Clara Luper and the 1958 Sit-Ins* (2018). Her read-aloud happened over the span of two lessons, which resulted in two of her lessons being included in the analysis. The text talks about the life of Clara Luper and her work within the civil rights movement, including the organization of student sit-ins in Oklahoma City in 1958. The second participant, Octavia, is a middle-class, white female with no formal classroom experience. She talked about race with her students during a read aloud of the book *A is for Awesome: 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World* (2019), which is an alphabet book that showcases the achievements of famous women throughout history. The third participant, Zora, is a middle-

class, black woman with no formal classroom experience. She read aloud from the short story *Big Bully* (2021), which tells the story of an English Language Learner who experienced bullying at the hands of one of his classmates. As a result, she and her fourth and fifth grade students talked about race and bullying. The final participant, Maya, is also a middle-class, black woman with less than two years of previous experience in a formal school setting working with preschoolers. The story that she read during her read aloud was called *Skin Like Mine* (2016) and celebrated the various skin tones that existed in the main character's community. The resulting conversation with her third and fourth grade students also yielded a conversation about race. Each of the previous participants are characterized as a preservice teacher because at the time of the study, they were candidates pursuing a teaching license in a teacher preparation program. Although they are characterized as "preservice," their classroom experience outside of the program ranged from zero years to two years in which they may have served as teaching assistants or paraprofessionals, but not as teachers of record. Table 1 identifies the texts, grade levels, and discussion topics for each participant's lesson.

Table 1.
Description of Research Participants and Text Choices

Name	Race	Gender	Text	Grade level	Topic
Maya	black	F	<i>Skin Like Mine</i> (2016) Author: Latashia M. Perry Illustrator: Bea Jackson	3/4	Skin Color
Octavia	white	F	<i>A is for Awesome: 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World</i> (2019) Author: Eva Chen Illustrator: Derek Desierto	K/1	Gender
Toni	white	F	<i>Someday is Now</i> (2018) Author: Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich Illustrator: Jade Johnson	4/5	Civil Rights
Zora	black	F	<i>Big Bully</i> (2021) Author: Caroline Hu https://www.readinga-z.com/literacy-curriculum-map/#!/grade4	4/5	Bullying

Methods

Data Collection

I used video recordings to capture the context of the phenomenon, particularly when and how racial conversations occurred. The data consisted of recordings, transcripts, and field notes of individual lessons. With the help of two graduate students and a cooperating teacher educator, I set up iPads to record all of the PSTs' literacy lessons and took observational notes for each PST in the course. I used the video recordings in an attempt to minimize my influence as their instructor and to offer some "breathing room" as the PSTs taught their lessons. As their instructor, I recognized my position of power, therefore I watched the video recordings after the course was completed to adhere to strict ethical considerations. At any rate, using video recordings as a data source was beneficial because I was able to capture multiple lessons at the

same time. I also had the ability to revisit or rewind the recordings which helped to decipher nuance as I took retroactive field notes.

In most cases, the PSTs seemed to adapt quickly to the presence of an iPad in the vicinity of their lessons. Toni did ask that we record from far away to help reduce her anxiety about being recorded. Thus, the observation team got into the practice of establishing some distance to record the lessons. On one hand, the distance reduced the sound quality of the video recordings because of background noise, but on the other, it was responsive to the needs of the PSTs as they engaged in the challenging work of implementing their first literacy lessons. In addition to the challenge of their course work, PSTs expressed tension and anxiety during class discussions about the many unprecedented events happening both in the United States and globally. They grappled with the appropriateness of certain topics, such as race, gender, and even face masks in the classroom. Yet the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, the attack on the nation's capital, and the rise in racial tensions leading to global protests were impossible to ignore. These events caused the PSTs to question their role in the classroom, and more importantly, in their students' lives.

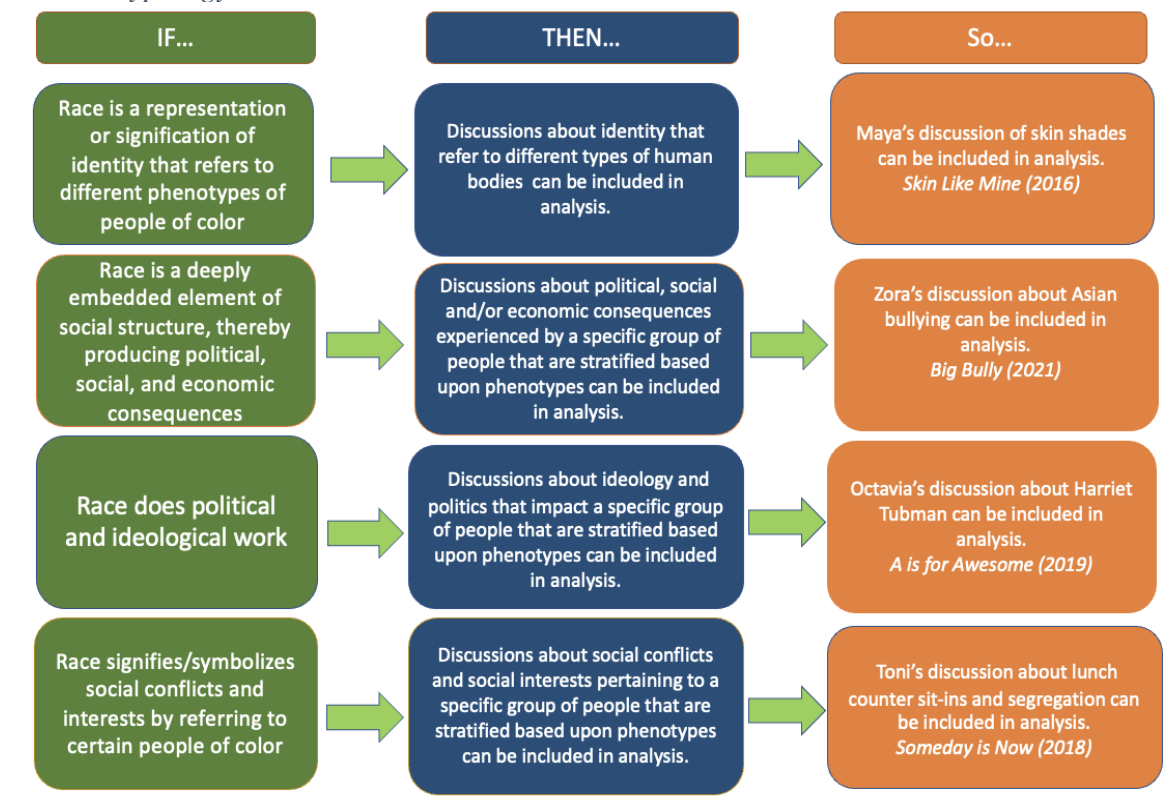
In 2021, nearly every aspect of our lives had been disrupted and changed in meaningful, tangible ways. The silver lining was that this disruption had the potential to make room for a social reckoning; a space in which discourse aimed at unearthing inequities deeply rooted in our governing systems were revitalized. The current social and political divisiveness caused by the culmination of unprecedented events beginning in 2020 emphasized the urgent imperative to embrace critical literacy and resource pedagogies in classrooms. And so, my research continued.

Data Sources

To explore when and how PSTs discussed race in their lessons, I recorded every lesson that took place during the courses. To identify which discussions were bounded by the case, that

is, discussions about race, I reviewed all the videos from each course (n = 62) two times. Each video captured a 25–30-minute lesson, beginning with a poem and a read aloud of what the PST identified as a culturally responsive text. For my analysis, I defined discussions about race built on the understanding of race as a fluid and adaptable concept that shifts according to the ebb and flow of social change. While this fluidity can present challenges for researchers, I defined discussions about race using four criteria based upon understandings of race as a social structure (Omi & Winant, 2015) and as an ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). I designed a typology to help guide my thinking about the discussions (see Figure 1) which included any conversations that: 1) signified identity that referred to or was based upon characteristics of people of color, 2) alluded to political, social, and/or economic consequences to people of color, 3) included ideology or political statements about a certain group of people based upon phenotypes, especially skin color, and 4) signified or symbolized social conflicts and interests based upon physical features. The “If” column was designed based on the conceptualizations of race and characteristics of race talk offered by Omi and Winant (2015), and Bonilla-Silva (2003). The “Then” column identifies which topics or pieces of discussions caused them to be included within the boundaries of the case. The “So” column identifies which participant’s discussion and read aloud text was included in my analysis.

Figure 1.
Race Talk Typology



The following is a discussion of the data sources that helped me to identify which lessons would be included based upon the selection criteria, in addition to serving as the subjects of my analyses.

1. **Field notes:** PSTs were observed while they taught their lessons by the researcher, co-teacher, and teaching assistants. Observational notes were guided by an observation protocol that included five components: *Behavior, Conversation, General Mood, Context, and Reflexive Comments*, while also allotting space for any unforeseen phenomena. These notes were used initially to identify which lessons would likely contain discussions that were race related. Retroactive field notes of the videos were taken as I watched the video recordings of the lessons. I watched the lessons in

alphabetical order according to PSTs' first names to minimize biases. Each of the 16 PSTs in the class had a series of four lessons, except for one who was absent for one lesson. I watched each PST's lessons in chronological order so that I could have a sense of continuity for the lessons if the read aloud texts were repeated over more than one lesson. Watching the lessons in chronological order also helped to show how the PSTs engaged with their students over time. I paid close attention to the texts that were chosen for the read aloud and the ways that PSTs and students talked about the text and other topics that may have come up during the discussion. I noted the titles and authors of the texts, as well as specific time stamps of instances in which race may have been the topic. In addition, I observed the flow of the lesson, the content knowledge that PSTs brought to the lesson, what pedagogical tools and strategies that they employed for cultural relevance, and how they interacted with students on a personal level. For each PST, I watched two lessons while taking field notes, then I stopped to write a reflective memo (Saldaña, 2016) about the two lessons that I watched before I began watching the next two. In the memos, I recorded my wonderings and thoughts about the occurrences and patterns that I observed. The second time that I watched the videos, I noted each conversation that mentioned race in any capacity. Later, I developed a working definition for race using the characteristics of race talk as identified by Omi & Winant (2015), and Bonilla-Silva (2003) to identify units of analysis [refer to Figure 1].

2. **Lesson plans with reflections:** Each lesson plan included the following components: poetry, read aloud, word work, and a joke. At the beginning of the course, students were given explicit instruction about how to design a lesson that incorporates each of these components to help literacy instruction. In the plan, PSTs identified what

texts they selected for a read aloud, their rationale for selecting the text, and their plan for discussing the text. I provided feedback to the preservice teachers about each of their lesson plans before they implemented the lesson the following week. The feedback that they received was largely geared toward technical pedagogical aspects, such as literacy teaching, in addition to deepening their understandings of cultural relevance. There were occasions in which PSTs were asked to improve and resubmit their lessons over the weekend if necessary. While the body of the lesson provided valuable information, the reflections that the PSTs wrote after each lesson also provided insight into their thinking about their experiences. Guiding questions for the lesson plan reflections included: What book did you select for your read-aloud and why? How is your book selection culturally responsive? What perspectives does the book reflect? What connections did your students make? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about your students? What adjustments are you going to make for next week's plan? Reflections were submitted with the following week's lesson plans, which were due no more than two days after the lesson was complete in order to help students to plan for the next lesson. Reflections were used for this study as a source of crystallization (Tracy, 2010) to provide context from the PSTs perspective in thinking about the lesson, the needs of their students, and how they applied that knowledge to the planning of their subsequent lessons. Crystallization encourages researchers to gather multiple types of data and numerous theoretical frameworks to "open up a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue" (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). One limitation of using PST's reflections as a method of crystallization is the opportunity for social desirability bias. It is possible that PSTs would write about what they would think are desirable thoughts or

behaviors, such as focusing on perceived positive aspects of the lesson, as opposed to engaging in critical reflection, which could help produce critical change (Luke, 1995). The guiding questions were designed to help mitigate this possibility by helping PSTs to think deeply about the occurrences of the lesson. In addition, they were able to access the video recordings of their own lessons to help them reflect, however there were many instances across both courses in which deep, critical reflection did not occur.

3. **Transcribed Lesson Recordings:** As previously described, the field notes, memos, and discussion typology assisted with identifying which lessons would be selected as units of analysis. If the conversations did not include talk about race in ways that were included in my typology, they were excluded from my analysis. This data reduction resulted in the selection of five lessons from four different PSTs to be analyzed. These lessons were transcribed and reviewed for accuracy before data analysis began. One lesson was taught in both English and Spanish. As a result, I transcribed the lesson, and consulted with a colleague whose first language is Spanish to ensure the accuracy of my translation. Once all the translations and transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy, they were uploaded into Nvivo to begin the first round of the coding.

Data Analysis

Social justice studies may provoke controversy and contested conclusions; therefore, it is important to identify clear boundaries and limits of the data, particularly because the “lingering hegemony of positivism still makes controversial research suspect” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 511). Critical theories are inherently comparative methods, each asking: What is happening and what are people doing? Charmaz (2005) explains that “(c)oding is the first step in taking an analytic stance toward the data” (p. 508). After using the typology of racial topics to identify discussions

that included race, each of the five read-alouds were transcribed to include verbal aspects of the conversation. I then reviewed the written transcripts along with the video recordings two times while adding analytic notes to the transcript. Next, I wrote separate memo summaries based on my research question and theoretical frameworks to document how I made sense of the read-aloud. My analysis revealed several key moments in the discussions, which I describe analytically as interactions.

Phase 1: Process coding. For the first phase of coding, I used process codes to capture action in the data. Building on my theoretical framework, I paid attention to actions or processes related to whose voice(s) were privileged in the discussion (voice), how PSTs engaged in the discussion (expansive views of equality), how PSTs acknowledged race as a social construct (colorblindness), and how the PSTs created safe spaces for discussions and meaning making (racial literacy). According to Saldaña (2016), process codes are useful to capture simple observable activity and more general conceptual action. Processes imply actions intertwined with the dynamics of time “such as those things that emerge, change, occur, in particular sequences, or become strategically implemented through time” (Saldaña, 2016). Therefore, process coding is appropriate for uncovering the rituals and routines of human life, particularly examining the “repetitive forms of action-interaction plus the pauses and interruptions...when people act or interact to reach a goal or solve a problem.” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 111). More importantly, processes are embedded within psychological concepts such as identity, which is fluid and enacted (Holland et al., 1998; Charmaz, 2005).

Initial process codes began with inductive, line-by-line hand-written codes placed in the margins of the transcriptions. The purpose of this first round of coding was to begin “defining action, explicating implicit assumptions, and seeing processes” (Charmaz, 2005). By engaging

line-by-line during my initial round of coding, I closely studied the data to lay a foundation for synthesizing it (Charmaz, 2005). This phase of coding was a recursive process in which I reviewed the codes multiple times to ensure that they captured distinct actions within the conversations. Redundant codes were integrated for clarity. For example, *relating* and *connecting* often appeared together in multiple interactions and did not add any additional meaning to interactions as separate codes, therefore they were combined under one code *connecting* (see Appendix A).

Phase 2: Concept coding. Using the process codes identified in Phase 1 helped to replace static descriptions for a more dynamic account of events (Charmaz, 2005). To construct a racially literate analysis, I identified the ways in which the PSTs and their students interacted with the text and ideas of race presented in their conversations to decipher the dynamic interplay among race and other social factors (Guinier, 2004). The process codes were then used to identify how the group interacted with racial discourse. Next, I developed concept codes that described action with consequences (Charmaz, 2005). Concept codes are inferential or explanatory codes that identify the “bigger picture.” They pull together material from the first cycle of coding into more meaningful units of analysis (Miles et al., 2020). More specifically, my concept codes pulled together the ways that the group's actions influenced understandings of race. The conceptual codes that were generated during this phase of coding include: *reifying the status quo*, *race making*, *minimizing social significance*, *identity making*, *making sense of difference*, *recognizing social implications*, and *developing a stance* (see Table 2).

Table 2.
Concept Codes

Code	Description
Reifying the Status Quo	Making use of narratives that are commonly used to explain race relations, post-racial or otherwise. (e.g., skin color doesn't matter, Bonilla-Silva, 2003).
Race Making	Constructing race based on a core assumption or visual information (e.g., racial projects, Omi & Winant, 2015).
Minimizing Social Significance	Actively redirecting (explicit) or inactive redirection (implicit, e.g., silence); reading between the lines.
Identity Making	The process of "self-making" Aligning oneself as the "type of person who is or does something." Can approach bridging or distancing. "Identity or self-making occurs through a continuous process of identification.... literacy practices and social identities develop through mutual interaction" (Bartlett, 2007, p. 53; Holland et al., 1998).
Making Sense of Difference	"[G]rappling with lines of 'difference' and the dominant referent points against which difference is constructed" (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020, p. 246).
Recognizing Social Implications	Attending to the material consequences of race, racism, and racial hierarchies for people of color (Guinier, 2004; Daly, 2022; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b).
Developing a Stance	Stating or implying an attitude or standpoint in relation to race.

Using constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2005), I moved back and forth between the read-aloud discussions, noting similarities and dissimilarities between the interactions comparing "data with data, data with categories, and category with category" (Charmaz, 2005, p. 517). These comparisons helped me to realize that while each participant discussed race to some degree in the first round of coding, two of the participants did not consciously act when students

tried to initiate race conversations. In addition, the two participants who engaged more substantively, as indicated by the saturation of codes in each interaction, did so in dissimilar ways. Upon completion of Phase 2, the interactions from each read-aloud largely fell into one or more of three thematic categories.

Ethical Considerations. Participation in this research was strictly voluntary, and preservice teachers were in no way pressured to participate as they had given consent to participate two semesters prior to the start of the course. Data gathered during the academic semester (i.e., lesson recordings and reflections) were not reviewed until after the semester coursework was graded and final grades were submitted to the registrar. In addition, participants' identifying information was protected using pseudonyms for file names and transcripts and any physical data collected were stored in a secure, locked location. The data gathered were assignments already included in the coursework to help mitigate any additional stressors that participants may have felt due to returning to in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The term in which these courses took place was the first in which PSTs were able to work with children in person, which marked a dramatic shift from the remote teaching and learning that PSTs experienced during their first courses of the program.

Reliability. The ways in which whiteness and its resulting privilege manifests in education extends to academia, and particularly the ways in which research is conducted (Esposito & Winters-Hoff, 2021). Positivism is often reified as ideal, which can serve to marginalize other types of research, particularly socially just educational research (Charmaz, 2005; Matias, 2021; Motulsky, 2021). Establishing what constitutes quality in qualitative research is an issue that has and continues to be debated among qualitative researchers. Some qualitative scholars are hesitant to propose fixed criteria for qualitative work because a claim to

universal criteria could serve to stifle the multitude of diverse perspectives and approaches that exist within qualitative inquiry, such as justice oriented educational research (Gordon & Patterson, 2013; Tracy, 2010). In response, Tracy (2010) proposes eight criteria for evaluating qualitative research studies and specifies ways to meet those criteria in an effort to unify the qualitative research community. Her list spans a variety of technical considerations and guidelines to promote clarity while trying to include the many genres of qualitative research. The proposed criteria include: (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. Tracy (2010) carefully considers the delicate balance between universal, conceptual guidelines and prescriptive markers of qualitative quality. Designed with her own proclivities toward critical, interpretive, and post structural research, she explains:

This conceptualization differentiates between common end goals of strong research (universal hallmarks of quality) and the variant mean methods (practices, skills, and crafts by which these goals are reached. This conceptual discrimination of qualitative *ends* from *means* provides an expansive or “big tent” (Denzin, 2008) structure for qualitative quality while still celebrating the complex differences amongst various paradigms. (p. 839)

Following her intent for the criteria to be applicable across genres of qualitative research, these criteria can lend themselves to interpretation through a critical race lens. Below, I highlight some categories that demonstrate the strengths and limitations of this study using critical race theory as a frame for Tracy’s criteria.

Worthy Topic. A worthy topic from a CRT perspective would, at the very least, involve the selection of a topic that addresses the endemic nature of racism in the United States. An

examination of when and how preservice teachers discuss race with elementary-aged students not only acknowledges the endemic nature of race in education, but also challenges pervasive claims of objectivity, neutrality, or colorblindness that persist in literacy education (A.F. Brown, 2017; Mosley Wetzel, 2020). Tracy (2010) contends that worthy topics can grow from timely societal events, current political climates, or contemporary controversies. Escalating social and political tensions make this topic timely and pertinent, particularly for teacher education programs that seek to develop teachers working from resource or assets-based pedagogies. The topic of race in classrooms continues to be relevant to broader political discourse as is evidenced by the steady progression of legislation that continues to reshape dialogue and curricula in classrooms. Some examples include recent legislation such as Georgia House Bill 1084 (2022), Texas House Bill 3979 (2021), and Florida House Bill 7 (2022) laws that prohibit “advocacy for divisive topics” and other “divisive language.” CRT insists that whiteness and oppression are pervasive in the U.S., and this legislation demonstrates the need for such insistence. Discussions about race in classrooms become particularly perplexing when one considers that even before classroom dialogue became the subject of confusing legislation (Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice Memorandum, 2022), teachers were uncomfortable with talking about race (Parkhouse et al., 2019). Such laws could curtail critical social dialogue completely, which can create further intellectual, social, or emotional consequences for all students, and especially students of color. Such an impactful, worthy topic requires rigorous research to help substantiate its importance and move toward solutions.

Rich Rigor. From a “big-tent” perspective, high quality research is characterized by a rich complexity of abundance in descriptions, explanations, theoretical constructs, data sources, contexts, and samples (Tracy, 2010). Meanwhile, the task of CRT in educational research is to

expose how racism manifests and mutates in classroom discourse and institutional practices (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Evans-Winters & Hoff 2011; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), which can and should include teacher preparation programs that prepare PSTs for teaching students of color (Cochran-Smith & Mitescu Reagan, 2022; Haddix, 2017; Milner, 2010; Solic & Riley, 2019). A critical race perspective insists upon a historical and contextual analysis to help to challenge systems of white privilege, and especially colorblindness. The two perspectives complement each other because historical and contextual analyses require attention to complexity and nuance.

The context of this study is unique, compelling, and complex because it is situated in a teacher education program that is distinct from most others in that it is equity-centered and built upon the tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy. Indeed, many teachers complete teacher preparation programs that do not prepare them to work with students of color (Parkhouse et al., 2019; Cochran-Smith & Mitescu Reagan, 2022). The explicit nature of the social justice lens of this program precludes that students enrolled in the program have some inclination toward social justice and equity, however this inclination is filtered through the endemic nature of racism in the United States. That is, social justice and/or culturally responsive dispositions may not translate to practice in the classroom, particularly when other elements such as high-stakes testing are involved (Parkhouse et al., 2019). In addition, PSTs bring problematic beliefs about race into their preparation programs that can later influence interpersonal interactions in classrooms (Bautista, 2018; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; King, 1991; Milner, 2010).

Credibility. Tracy (2010) indicates that the “big-tent” criterion of credibility is established when research includes thick description, concrete detail, explanation of tacit

knowledge, and/or crystallization. Thick description gives concrete details to help explain culturally situated meanings, specificity, complexity, and circumstantiality of data. Concrete details also help the researcher to understand tacit knowledge. In other words, the researcher delves beneath the surface of explicit interaction to strengthen understanding of the ‘negative spaces’ (to borrow from an artistic term) of cultural interactions.

One form of credibility that is often used in critical research is member checking. Because of its pervasive use in qualitative research, I would be remiss if I did not address the lack of member checking in this study. Member checking is a powerful tool to collaborate with participants in the research process and is defined as demonstrating a correspondence between the researcher’s findings and the understandings of the participants being studied (Tracy 2010). While I subscribe to the benefits of member checking, particularly for social justice, I also believe that checks should be implemented with careful consideration and care. The uncritical adoption of member checking as a technical fix for the sake of validity is rooted in positivist ideals (Matias; 2021), which is counter to my epistemological stance. Indeed, Morse (2015) states that there is little evidence of how member checking substantially affects research design, outcomes, or the quality of inquiry.

This does not negate the value of member checking, particularly when approaching research from a critical perspective, however, its uses should be accompanied by “serious thought about the purpose, clear expectations from participants, considerations of harm avoidance, and explicit consent from initial contact” (Motulsky, 2021, p. 392). In my study, member checking presented the following opportunities for harm: Data collection for this study occurred in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the wake of resurging racial unrest. I felt the weight of managing my own tensions due to my positionality as an instructor of color

who felt the urgency of working toward social justice in schools and balancing the mental, intellectual, and emotional needs of my students, the PSTs while I negotiated the execution of this study.

To address ethical considerations as an instructor of the course, I intentionally reviewed the data after the course was complete and grades were submitted. Consequently, there was a significant passage of time between the occurrence of the lessons and when I would be able to schedule member checks, which could have compromised the ways in which the PSTs remembered the conversations. In addition, participant responses to member checking are difficult to predict (Motulsky, 2021), and my identities as a biracial woman with black phenotypes also could conceivably present a challenge for deeper discussions about race, particularly with white PSTs. Such factors could lead to “indifference, embarrassment, shame, or feelings of exploitation” (Motulsky, 2021; Barbour, 2001), which could in turn, exacerbate white fragility (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014) and (white) resistance (Zaino & Bell, 2021). Ultimately, the nature of this study focuses on *when* and *how* racial discussions occurred, which leaves the *why* to be studied in future research. Recognizing that the lack of member checking is a limitation of this study, I worked to mitigate biases in my analysis by using “critical friends,” which is further explained in the next section, *sincerity*.

Sincerity. Sincerity in qualitative research requires vulnerability; the researcher engages in self reflexivity, honesty, transparency, and data auditing (Tracy, 2010). She goes on to say that “[s]incerity means that the research is marked by honesty and transparency about the researchers’ biases, goals, and foibles as well as about how these played a role in the methods, joys, and mistakes of the research (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). Like qualitative research, equitable research does not conform neatly to a set of predetermined boundaries, but rather has been

described as “an overarching frame of mind or focus that guides one’s research” with the highest likelihood of being implemented when equity is “an intentionally articulated component of the research” (Walls, 2017, p. 496). Taken together, this means that sincerity in CRT speaks to an introspective awareness of how the researcher approaches the research, and the impacts of that approach. Walls (2017) continues:

The factors that shape us through our experiences are also carried with us into not just our research, but in every decision we make daily. The problem is that many of us are often unaware of exactly what those factors are and subsequently rarely acknowledge them as influences on our data collection and analysis. (p. 496)

As a critical researcher who was educated in predominantly white contexts, there are many aspects of the research process that I continue to grapple with. Transparency, honesty, and reflexivity require that I acknowledge the ways in which I operate in and through white supremacy in the academy. For example, many researchers do not feel the urgency of employing a critical lens in their research, yet I experience substantial tension around the need to employ a critical lens and still meet the criteria for rigorous research. Ladson-Billings (1998) contends that people of color continue to be silenced in the field of education. Therefore, to gain a deep understanding of the educational system, it is necessary to include the dialogue of people of color. Yet, even as a scholar of color, I naturally gravitate towards authors considered seminal to the field which largely excludes the work of scholars of color (Matias, 2021). To address this tendency, I took the time to uncover the scholarly lineage of the scholars that I included in my work. That is, when I read, I examined who the author cited, and who cited the author particularly when looking at specific topics, such as race, resource pedagogies, and equity research. Yet even with this precaution, I recognized the need for someone else to challenge my

perspectives. To address the well-documented analytical dangers of being the sole interpreter of knowledge, which serves to perpetuate deficit perspectives in qualitative research, I employed “critical friends” to help with the process of reflexivity throughout my research and especially for purposes of analysis.

Critical friendship is defined as critical, collaborative reflection; a collaborative engagement in analysis that has both breadth and depth, especially as it relates to the consideration of “alternatives to personal beliefs and the ethical consideration of historically rooted structures and systems within schooling” (Behizadeh et al., 2019, p. 282). I was careful to select critical friends with diverse perspectives who were familiar with my work and whose epistemic perspectives aligned with social justice and equity in education. My critical friends included two white women, one Latinidad man, and one black woman. Each of them had over five years of experience in education, elementary education, and social justice work.

Over the course of a year, I met with my critical friends via phone calls and in person meetings on a weekly basis to discuss key issues that I faced as I completed my research. They listened, asked questions, challenged my thoughts, and provided insight into other concepts, researchers, and literature that could help to guide my work. During the analysis phase, I shared codes and the definitions that I developed with critical friends before I used them on the data with the intention of making sure that the codes, and my definition of the codes, aligned with my research purpose. We then discussed the codes, and I adjusted according to feedback. This was an iterative process as I engaged in four rounds of action coding in Phase 1 of my analysis and two rounds of concept coding in Phase Two.

Chapter Four

Contrary to the popular assumption that folks find it difficult to talk about race, the truth of the matter is that most folks talk about race all the time... (hooks, 2012, p. 9)

At midmorning the children make their way to the second floor of the modest building, chatting, laughing, and teasing as their footsteps echo on the hollow carpeted stairs; up, up, up the dark, narrow staircase to the second floor where their (preservice) teachers were preparing their next lessons. The dank stairway is a sharp contrast to the second floor where their math and reading lessons take place. The room is spacious, bright, and cheery, with several long tables carefully placed throughout to accommodate small group learning. Natural light from the sun pours into the large windows, illuminating the children's work and the colorful words on the walls. Most of the children know who their reading teacher is, they had been introduced the week before. As the children stream into the room, they make their way toward the tables, where their teachers wait patiently, if not a little anxiously, to begin their reading lessons. The reading block of the day is always quite busy, and at times, a little loud, because of the nine reading lessons taking place at the same time. Yet the children are mostly absorbed, listening intently to their teachers and seemingly unbothered by the busy climate.

It seems unlikely that in such an idyllic atmosphere a topic as fraught as race would be a subject of discussion. And yet, in the read alouds that took place during this summer program, race was indeed a part of several conversations. Despite the narrative that race talk is difficult, bell hooks (2012) notes that people engage in race talk all the time. For this reason, the purpose of this study was to understand how preservice teachers discussed race with students of color. I used a critical case study design to interrogate the characterization of race as a taboo topic in schools. My research helps to contribute to this objective by asking: How do preservice teachers

in an equity-oriented teacher preparation program talk about race with elementary-aged students of color during read-alouds using texts that they have characterized as culturally responsive?

This chapter presents an overview of the themes that emerged from my analysis as they relate to my research question. Before I discuss the themes, I will revisit the critical framing of this study. Recall my previous description of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 2015) which helped to operationalize race as a social construct that is contextual and changes over time. Dixson and Rousseau's (2006) three themes of critical race theory provided a framework for analyzing whose voice(s) were privileged during discussions about race (CRT theme 1); the expansive ways that teachers engaged with their students about the texts that were chosen for cultural responsiveness (CRT theme 2); and uncovering colorblindness (CRT theme 3). And finally, racial literacy (Twine, 2004) provided a framework for the analysis of the space that was created for the elementary students to discuss race and develop their own attitudes.

When taken as a whole, this analytic framework contributed to the development of the following three themes. They include:

Theme 1 (Bridging)¹: PSTs worked to build bridges of understanding with their students to overcome the idea of race as a taboo topic. They made connections between the text, their students, themselves, and race while holding space for other perspectives and connections.

Theme 2 (Distancing)¹: PSTS moved away from developing social understandings of race by positioning race as neutral, ahistorical, and/or separate from their own or their students' lived experiences.

¹ For conciseness, I use the term following terms as an abbreviation for each of the themes: Theme 1 (Bridging), Theme 2, (Distancing), Theme 3 (Talking but Not Talking).

² The title of the theme "Talking but Not Talking" is borrowed from Ladson-Billings' (2003) assertion that teachers often read children books about race without talking about race in meaningful ways.

Theme 3 (Talking but Not Talking)¹²: PSTs talk about race without delving into the meaning or social significance of race, or while enacting colorblindness in their discussions.

In subsequent sections, I elaborate on the findings of this study and implications for developing racial literacy in teacher education courses. The first part of this chapter provides the context of each read aloud, and the second part of this chapter presents the overarching themes of the data and connections to my research question.

Read Alouds

Reading a book in a shared setting tends to draw out personal connections or experiences, which is an important part of comprehension (Hynds, 1994). Text selection, then, is an important decision because responses originate from shared reading of books (May et al., 2021). Below, I provide descriptions of the texts that were selected for the read alouds based upon the PSTs' developing understandings of identifying culturally responsive texts. I also share insights into why the PST chose the text, and a description of the personal connections that the PSTs and their students made through the shared reading experience.

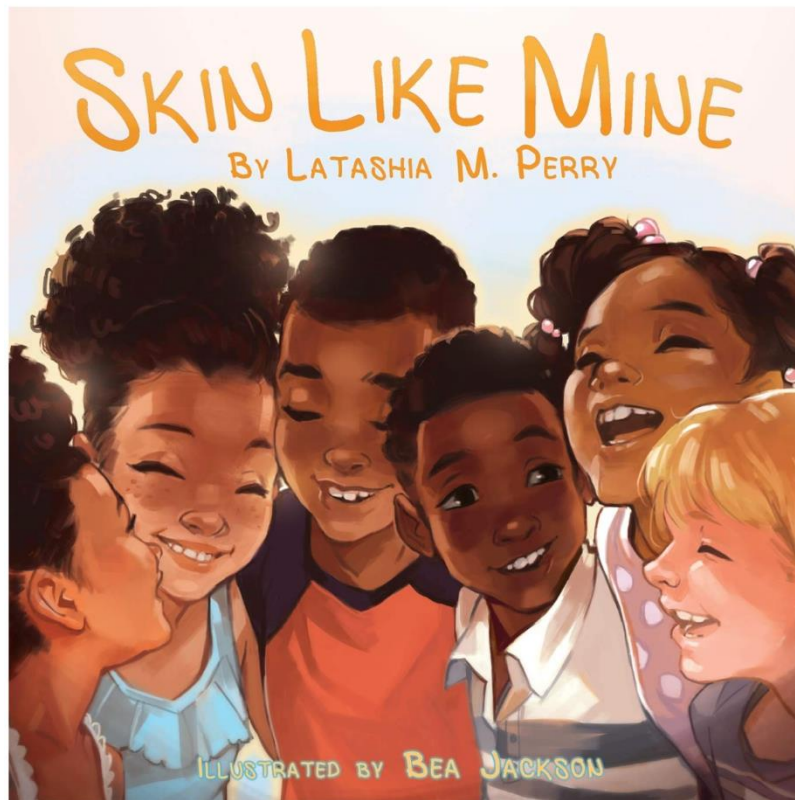
Skin Like Mine (Maya)

Skin Like Mine (Perry, 2016) is a story for children aged three to seven that celebrates diverse skin tones using rhyming and descriptive words. The main character of the book shares her love for the color of her skin and describes the skin tones of important people in her life throughout the story. She describes each shade of skin by comparing them to different foods that she enjoys eating, which are often desserts.

For conciseness, I use the term following terms as an abbreviation for each of the themes: Theme 1 (Bridging), Theme 2, (Distancing), Theme 3 (Talking but Not Talking).

² The title of the theme "Talking but Not Talking" is borrowed from Ladson-Billings' (2003) assertion that teachers often read children books about race without talking about race in meaningful ways.

Figure 2.
Skin Like Mine



Maya selected *Skin Like Mine* (Perry, 2016) because she wanted her students to feel confident about themselves. (Lesson plan, July 13, 2021). In her lesson plan, she explained that she decided to select a text that offered opportunities for the children to reflect on the narrator's point of view as well as their own. Before reading, Maya introduced important vocabulary by asking her students "What is shades?" to prompt discussion about the meaning of shades in relation to skin color. After they agree on the meaning of "shades" as different colors, she reads the text, pausing periodically to listen to her students identify rhyming words throughout the story. At the end of the book, she asks a series of pre-planned questions, which include, "How would you describe your skin color? What food would you compare it to? Do you have family members who have different skin colors? Do you have friends who have different skin color than you? What is the beauty of different skin colors?" (Lesson plan, July 13, 2021). As the lesson

continued, Maya and her students shared thoughts about their own skin tones and compared them to foods, just like the main character in the text. Following the read aloud, the group discussed the diversity within their own families and even among themselves as a group before transitioning to a phonics activity about ending sounds.

In her lesson reflection, Maya described her lesson as the best that she had done to date because the book that she selected created space for many different questions to be asked and answered. She continues:

The students and I had a lot of discourse about different shades of skin, cultures, racial identity, and racial representation. Students were able to reflect on the different skin colors within their families and amongst their families. After reflecting, they were able to understand that all people are different, and can be friends regardless of race or ethnicity.

(Maya, Lesson Plan Reflection, July 13, 2021)

Maya felt that her students enjoyed her lesson, especially when they compared their skin to foods. She expressed that her students were able to see themselves throughout the whole lesson and that “representing each child is a very effective way of connecting and teaching...when they see themselves and the role they play in other’s lives, they value the lesson more” (Maya, Lesson Plan Reflection, July 13, 2021).

A is for Awesome: 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World (Octavia)

For her read aloud, Octavia selected *A is for Awesome: 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World* (Chen, 2019). This book is an alphabet book for young readers that describes famous women throughout history who are “awesome.” On each page is an illustration of the woman, and a short message about their accomplishments. Some of the women included in the book are Beyonce, a world-famous singer; Florence Griffith Joyner, an Olympian, and the fastest woman

in the world; Harriet Tubman, an abolitionist and activist; and Malala Yousafzai, an education activist.

Figure 3.

A is for Awesome!



Octavia selected the book because she wanted her Kindergarten and first grade students to continue with the theme of alphabet books and to encourage her students to make predictions about the patterns in the text, such as the next letter in the alphabet. In her lesson plan, she explained that she thought the book was wonderful and wanted to make the connection that she thought her students were wonderful too (Lesson Plan, July 8, 2021). At the beginning of the read aloud, she reviewed the characteristics of an alphabet book with her students and encouraged them to think about what pattern they recognized by asking them what letter they thought would come next.

Race became a part of the discussion when Octavia read the page that described Harriet Tubman. As she began to read the next page, one of her students interrupted her reading to share that she knew who Harriet Tubman was. Octavia asked, “you do?” and then tried to keep reading the next page, but the student interrupted again to explain what she knew about Harriet Tubman and her impact in society. The student recognized Harriet Tubman’s name and shared that Harriet Tubman had a train because she needed to save people. Octavia responded briefly by affirming that student, in fact, did know Harriet Tubman and kept reading.

In her lesson plan reflection, Octavia notes that her students did understand the form and function of picture books and certain words that begin with the same letter on each page. She expressed concern about her text selection, however because one of her students, the only male in the group, was disruptive and did not engage with the story or the discussion. She recalled that the student said that the book was for girls. She mentioned that this was the second time in a row that she selected a book with a female lead character and expressed regret for not being able to find a book with a male lead. She described how the child complained about her lesson and quotes when he said, “You did a bad job, no one loves you because you did bad” (Octavia, Lesson Plan Reflection, July 8, 2021). She attributed his comment to something more than his moods and not liking the lesson. She added:

I think he may be insecure or lacking some confidence and I would love to highlight some (sic) very special about him. I also hope the people in his life will make him feel loved even when he makes mistakes or doesn’t do something well” (Octavia, Lesson Plan Reflection, July 8, 2021).

Octavia continued to reflect about how she could have responded differently in the moment to his complaints about the perceived gender of the book and ways that she could have redirected

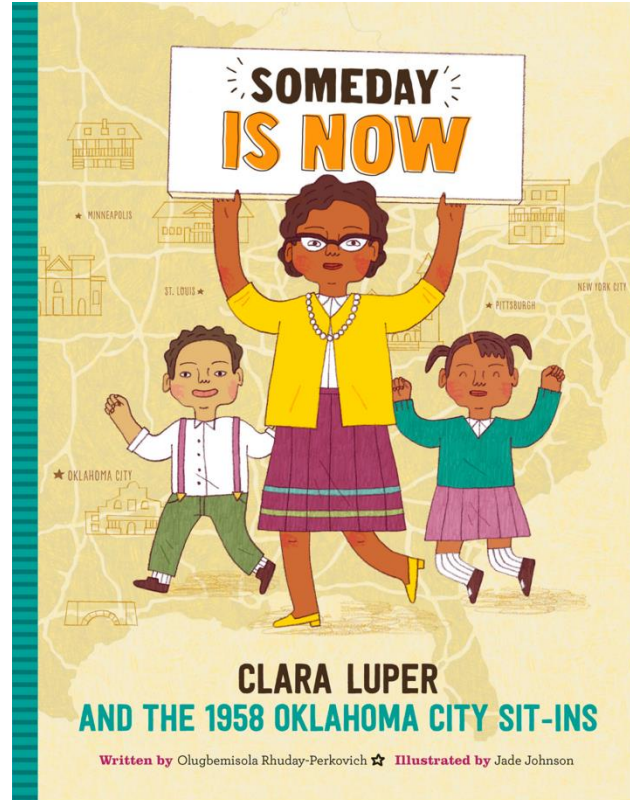
the student during the lesson. She made no mention of the other student's interruptions to her lesson or read aloud in her reflection.

Someday is Now (Toni)

Someday is Now (Rhuday-Perkovich, 2018) is a story that is intended for upper elementary students (grades 3-5). It tells the story of educator and civil rights activist Clara Luper, a determined woman who helped to organize one of the first lunch counter sit-ins in the United States. The story begins by sharing Clara's early experiences with racial inequity. As a child, her father promised her that he would "someday" be able to take her to parks and restaurants that were segregated. These early experiences with racial inequality inspired her to make a difference as an adult activist and educator. The book continues by sharing her work as an educator, where she taught young black children about black history and the process of civil disobedience: investigation, negotiation, education, and demonstration.

When the class takes a trip to New York City to perform a play, Clara and her students experience what life could be like without segregation; where they could play in parks and eat in restaurants like everyone else. This taste of freedom helped to galvanize the class to act against segregation. Clara organized her students and held several sit-ins at the lunch counter at Katz Store in Oklahoma City. After several demonstrations, Clara and her students finally convinced Mr. Katz to desegregate his store.

Figure 4.
Someday is Now



Toni selected *Someday is Now* (Rhuday-Perkovich, 2018) for her fourth and fifth grade students because it “portrays a story about a little-known Civil Rights Movement activist and teacher, Clara Luper” (Toni Lesson Plan, July 1, 2021). Another reason for her selection was because the story told about young students encountering segregation, which she thought was more relatable for her students than more stories of adults. She describes the text as culturally responsive because “it told the story of the Civil Rights Movement from an African American person’s perspective” (Lesson Plan, July 8, 2021).

Toni’s read aloud took place over two days because she did not want to skip parts of the book and wanted to be able to “teach them explicitly about a new figure in a movement that they had background history about” (Lesson Plan, July 1, 2021). According to her lesson plan, Toni intentionally paused to ask questions during the read aloud so that she could understand what the

students noticed about the story and the illustrations. At the end of the first day, she asked her students to make predictions about what will happen next in the story. To begin the second half of the read aloud on day two, Toni introduced the vocabulary words “segregation” and “sit-in” to make sure that the students understood what the words meant and how they might be relevant to the story. Front-loading vocabulary helped her students connect to the book because Toni was able to clear up a misconception by distinguishing “sit-in” from “citizen”. After some discussion, the students understood the difference between the two words and were able to make connections to their prior knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement throughout the rest of the story.

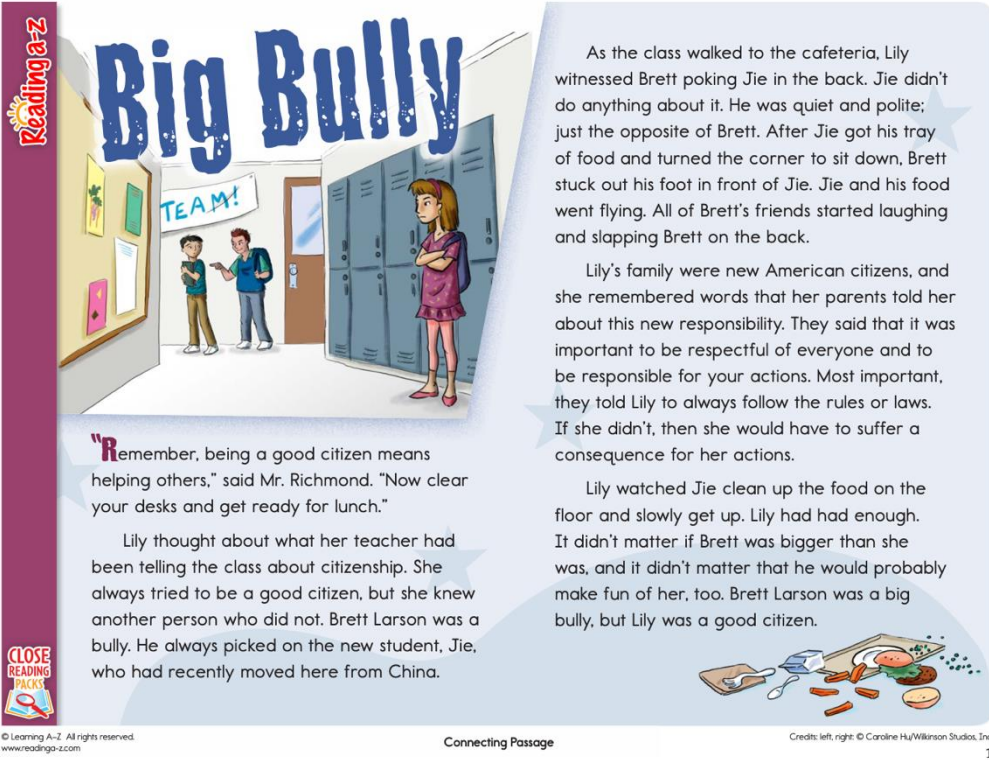
In her first lesson plan reflection, Toni noted that she needed to do more research prior to her lessons. She explained that she did do some research ahead of time, but that she did not feel prepared for the questions that her students asked her about that time in history. In her second lesson plan reflection, she found that the questions that she paused to ask throughout the story helped to engage her students during the read aloud. She recognized that the questions “got them thinking about how the characters were feeling, and what they were going through, so they could empathize with the characters” (Lesson Plan Reflection, July 8, 2021).

Big Bully (Zora)

Big Bully (Hu, 2021) is a story that Zora pulled from reading resource site Reading A-Z. This site provides curricula and resources to teachers and is a resource that school districts can purchase to inform reading instruction. The story was a short text or “connecting passage” for fourth grade students that Zora identified as culturally responsive because it talked about the importance of the rights and responsibilities of being a good citizen. In her lesson plan, she also suggested that the story was culturally responsive because it encouraged children to be nice to

one another and emphasized the importance of teamwork and working together despite physical differences (Lesson Plan, June 29, 2021).

Figure 5.
Big Bully



Reading a-z

Big Bully

TEAM!

Remember, being a good citizen means helping others," said Mr. Richmond. "Now clear your desks and get ready for lunch."

Lily thought about what her teacher had been telling the class about citizenship. She always tried to be a good citizen, but she knew another person who did not. Brett Larson was a bully. He always picked on the new student, Jie, who had recently moved here from China.

As the class walked to the cafeteria, Lily witnessed Brett poking Jie in the back. Jie didn't do anything about it. He was quiet and polite; just the opposite of Brett. After Jie got his tray of food and turned the corner to sit down, Brett stuck out his foot in front of Jie. Jie and his food went flying. All of Brett's friends started laughing and slapping Brett on the back.

Lily's family were new American citizens, and she remembered words that her parents told her about this new responsibility. They said that it was important to be respectful of everyone and to be responsible for your actions. Most important, they told Lily to always follow the rules or laws. If she didn't, then she would have to suffer a consequence for her actions.

Lily watched Jie clean up the food on the floor and slowly get up. Lily had had enough. It didn't matter if Brett was bigger than she was, and it didn't matter that he would probably make fun of her, too. Brett Larson was a big bully, but Lily was a good citizen.

CLOSE READING PACKS

© Learning A-Z. All rights reserved.
www.readinga-z.com

Connecting Passage

Credits: left, right: © Caroline Hu/Wilkinson Studios, Inc.

1

Prior to reading the story, Zora asked her students if anyone at the table was a bully or if anyone at the table had been bullied before. One student shared that they were bullied a long time ago but did not give any further details. In response, Zora shared her own story about when she was bullied at school because of the tone of her voice. She explained how she would cry because people would make fun of her and how her mother encouraged her to love herself and embrace her differences. Eventually, she learned to sing, which was a hobby that she still enjoyed, and came to appreciate the tone of her voice. After sharing how she become confident in the wake of her bullying experience, Zora began to read the story aloud to her students.

The story took place at an elementary school in which a new student Jie, had recently emigrated from China to the United States. In the story, Jie was described as “quiet and polite” despite being harassed by the “big bully” Brett Larson. The story is told from Lily’s perspective, who was identified as a new American citizen. Lily watched the ways that Brett bullied Jie with increasing concern and soon decided to be a good citizen, which was also a recent discussion at school. In response to Brett’s bullying, Lily pointed out his mean behaviors to her friends. Once his classmates noticed how mean Brett’s jokes were, they did not laugh at the jokes that were made at Jie’s expense. One student even told Brett to “knock it off” (Hu, 2021, p. 2). Their teacher, Mr. Richmond also noticed the bullying after the students begin to react to Brett’s behavior. As a result, Mr. Richmond had a discussion with Brett after school. The next day, Mr. Richmond made Brett and Jie partners on a project, which prompted them to bond over baseball and become friends at the end of the story.

When Zora finished reading the story, she questioned her students about the storyline. She began by asking the students what subject caused Brett and Jie to bond. She then asked the students what they took away from the story. Before she received a response from her students, she immediately shared that she learned that a good citizen was “someone who was nice” (Zora, 2021, para. 18). Race became a part of the discussion when she asked, “...why was (Jie, the main character) getting bullied? Because he was what?” (Zora, 2021, para. 19). One student responded, “He was asian?” (Zora, 2021, para. 19). The discussion continues to build on the concept of Jie’s “otherness” by adding that he was also different because he was learning to speak English. She concludes by asking additional question about how Jie was bullied and then asking the students what they should do if they see someone that is being bullied. The students answer that they should be good citizens.

In her lesson reflection, Zora mentioned that she felt that everyone in her group could relate to that story, even herself. She recognized that the students started to use the phrase “good citizen” in the correct context during their discussion responses. Her consideration for improving the lesson next time was to be prepared prior to the lesson starting so that she would not have to pause mid-lesson to look for materials.

Summary

The texts above are examples of what the PSTs deemed culturally responsive to their students. It is important that I pause here to acknowledge that PSTs are novice practitioners, who are learning to navigate pedagogical practices, which have many moving pieces. Culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002) adds even more complexity to that process because it requires challenging deficit perspectives and developing a cultural diversity knowledge base (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002). Even so, the PSTs in this study made brave decisions when selecting texts to try to connect with their students.

Some stories, like *A is for Awesome* (Chen, 2019) and *Big Bully* (Hu, 2021) were selected because of their “responsiveness” to their students in general ways, such as “all of my students are awesome” (Octavia Lesson Plan, July 8, 2021), or “it encourages children to be nice to one another and the importance of teamwork and working together despite our physical differences” (Zora Lesson Plan, June 29, 2021). Here, Zora tries to attend expand her view by acknowledging physical differences between herself and her students but does not specifically state what physical differences she means. As a result, there is no explicit connection to why those differences would be important to her students, the discussion, or the text. Both of these text selections more closely aligned with restrictive views of equality (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006) in that they attempted equality by being responsive to “all” students rather than attending to the

unique cultures, histories, languages, and identities of *their own* students to achieve their learning outcomes.

Other stories, *Skin Like Mine* (Perry, 2016) and *Someday is Now* (Rhuday-Perkovich, 2018) aligned with an expansive view of equality by providing mirrors and windows (McNair, 2016) for students to see their own and other perspectives in the text. Maya selected her text because, “the students had the opportunity to reflect on the narrator’s point of view and their own” (Maya Lesson Plan, July 13, 2021). Toni made her selection because “it was told from an African American person’s perspective and because it was about students encountering segregation and discrimination” (Toni Lesson Plan, July 1, 2021). In their reflections, both Maya and Toni stated that they believed that their students could see themselves in the texts that they chose based on their discussions (Maya, Lesson Plan, July 13, 2021; Toni Lesson Plan, July 8, 2021). The following section delves into the themes that were derived from this data. It is organized by providing specific examples from multiple discussions. For each of them, I provide a description of the theme characteristics, then an overview of the context of the examples that are included, and finally a summation of the examples.

Active Race Talk

Active race talk encompasses both theme one *bridging*, and theme two *distancing* (see Table 3). Active race talk describes the ways that PSTs create opportunities for their students to engage in discussions that move beyond understanding race as physical characteristics. In these instances, PSTs have the opportunity to problematize taken-for-granted notions of race and language, and to share narratives of their own experiences (A.F. Brown et al., 2017). These opportunities have the potential to create richer conversations that deepen understandings of race as a social construct (Omi & Winant, 2015; Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Conversely, active race talk

opportunities can also perpetuate negative, harmful, or inaccurate racial understandings (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Leonardo & Porter, 2010), where the social impact of race is misrepresented (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). The following sections provide more insight into the first two themes, Bridging and Distancing, that emerged as PSTs navigated their read-alouds and subsequent race talk.

Table 3.
Active Race Talk Codes

Theme 1 (Bridging): PSTs worked to build bridges of understanding with their students to overcome the idea of race as a taboo topic.	
Making connections between the text, the student, self, and race. Bridging also includes holding space for other perspectives and connections for example, relinquishing discursive power	
Code	Definition
Identity Making ¹	The process of “self-making” Aligning oneself as the “type of person who is or does something.” Can approach bridging or distancing. “Identity or self-making occurs through a continuous process of identification... literacy practices and social identities develop through mutual interaction” (Bartlett, 2007, p. 53; Holland et al., 1998).
Making Sense of Difference	“[G]rappling with lines of ‘difference’ and the dominant referent points against which difference is constructed” (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020, p. 246).
Recognizing Social Implications	Attending to the manifested consequences of race, racism, and racial hierarchies (Guinier, 2004; Daly, 2022; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b).
Developing a Stance	Stating or implying an attitude or standpoint in relation to race.
Theme 2 (Distancing): PSTs move away from social understandings of race by positioning race as neutral, ahistorical, and/or separate from their own or the children’s lived experiences.	
Moving away from social understandings of race; positioning race as neutral, ahistorical, and/or separate from lived experiences.	
Code	Definition
Reifying the Status Quo	Making use of narratives that are commonly used to explain race relations, post-racial or otherwise. (e.g., skin color doesn’t matter, Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Race Making	Constructing race based on a core assumption or visual information (e.g., racial projects, Omi & Winant, 2015).
Minimizing Social Significance	Actively redirecting (explicit) or inactive redirection (implicit, e.g., silence); reading between the lines.

-
1. Although identity making is located under bridging, it can also be a form of distancing depending on how the participant aligns with racial literacy.

Bridging

Theme 1 (Bridging): PSTs worked to build bridges of understanding with their students to overcome the idea of race as a taboo topic.

This segment focuses on the ways that PSTs approached *bridging*, or drawing connections between race, themselves, their students, and the text. The theme of bridging builds on the idea of connecting two points over an obstacle, making the difference between two groups smaller or less significant as a result. In read-alouds, PSTs and the children are trying to connect over the obstacle of race and racism as taboo topics. The metaphorical bridge is supported by ideas that are introduced in the text and by attempts to make meaning of the social, systemic, and structural implications of race. This section shows how PSTs worked to create those connections.

Overview. When Maya meets her students for the very first time, one of them tells her that she feels more comfortable speaking Spanish. As a result, Maya adapts her lessons to the needs of her students as language learners by teaching her lessons using a blend of English and Spanish. As an intermediate Spanish speaker, Maya often asks her students for help with words that she did not know throughout her lessons and her students help her willingly. The read aloud of *Skin Like Mine* (Perry, 2016) is like the others before it as Maya and her students work together to communicate using each other's languages.

Maya's read-aloud begins with asking students to identify rhyming words from the text. She asks the students to repeat the name of the title of the text *Skin Like Mine* in call and

response style. Next, she introduces the author and the illustrator before reminding the students to point out any rhyming words that they hear as she reads the story to them.

As she reads the first pages of the text, her students begin to verbally identify the rhyming words that they see in the story. Maya engages in a consistent rhythm of reading, then pausing to ask questions about skin color. After the first rhyming interlude, Maya pauses and asks, “What is ‘shades?’” Student 2 replies simply, “Brown.” Maya nods and looks around the table, nodding,

Mmhmm, mmhm. Do they—for example, I look like you. Um, a little different, but not much. But this is skin of color. This is different (points to the book), this is not, (points at herself) Yeah? So here, they are sisters, but (they have) different skin. Color. (Maya, July 13, 2021, p.2)

At this point, she draws attention to the skin tones of the characters in the text, herself, and her students, making skin color an explicit focus of the conversation. She compares skin tones with that of her students but points out that their skin tones are actually very similar to each other with very small differences.

The read aloud continues and the main character compares her loved ones’ shades of skin with her favorite tasty treats. Maya’s students continue to identify rhyming words, until they reach a page in which the main character describes her relationship with her best bud Sean like cookies and cream (See Figure 6). Here Maya stops to explain, “on this page, um, this is her friend, but they have different skin. Yeah, yes. But it’s good, yes?... Do you have any friends with different skin?” (Maya, July 13, 2021, p. 3). The students nod their heads in response. They continue to read the book, identifying rhyming words all throughout. When they reach the end of the story, she asks her students if they liked the book, and then asked, “what do you understand

about it? Student 4 answers, "...Ummm that the kid has um, different skin." Maya nods, then asks, "and you, you know people in your life with different skin, yes?" Student for answers again, "Yeah, they like their skin."

Figure 6.
Skin Like Mine



The discussion continues as Maya learns new words from her students in Spanish to describe the desserts that were in the text. Using some of the words that she recently learned, Maya begins to describe her own skin as “caramel, chocolate caramel.” Afterward, she shares more personal details about her family. “In my life, there are many people who think I uh am Latina. From the Dominican Republic, or Mexico, or Puerto Rico too but a lot of people think, ‘Ah no, black, not black, black. African American.’ But yes, I like this book.” (Maya, July 13, 2021).

After sharing her own experiences, she asks her students what they like about their skin, again drawing connections between herself, the text, and the students. To supplement discussion about the book, she shows a slide that she prepared entitled “Skin Color” that has photographs of

smiling girls with a variety of different skin tones. She asks the students what they like about their skin, and the students begin pointing to the pictures that they admire on the slide. One student remarks that the skin on the pictures is beautiful, and another begins to make comparisons between themselves and the pictures (see Table 4).

Table 4.
Maya (Translated)

Speaker	Comment
Maya	About your skin, what do you like?
Student 2	(Points to a picture). I like that.
Maya	Which one? Mm-hmm, okay...Yes. You think that it is beautiful? Okay, What else? What else?
Student 1	I like that her skin is beautiful.
Maya	Mm-hmmm. You think that it is beautiful? Okay, What else? What else?
Student 2	Does her skin look like, look like a shadow?
Maya	A shadow?
Student 2	Yeah, 'cause they are hiding
Student 3	I look like that (points at a picture)
Maya	Me?
Student 3	No, me.
Maya	You? Yes. And your hair is like this. Me? My hair, my hair is like this. With braids.

At the end of the discussion, Maya asks her students if they have family members with different skin color. Student 4 nods and share that she has family that looks like Maya. Maya answers:

Yeah? Me too, my family has a lot of different colors. Also, I have, a...um, an uncle who is Puerto Rican. Mmhmm, so I have um, uh, cousins, what is it? (that are) Puerto Rican

that look like you. Okay, so what is beautiful about different skin colors? Maya, July 13, 2021).

Student 1 answers, “That you, can be together with folks and it doesn’t matter the...the color of your skin.”

Summary. In this interaction, Maya and her students are attending to the ways in which they are similar and the ways in which they are different. They make observations about their own physical characteristics to help understand themselves and one another. This discussion helps to lay a foundation for creating a space in which each person is recognized and appreciated for their contributions and for the ways in which they are different from one another. In this way, Maya and her students work together to see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

Overview. Toni’s read-alouds of *Someday is Now: Clara Luper and the 1958 Sit-Ins* (2018) are filled with discussion about the context of the book and its meanings. Toni uses sticky notes to mark when she is going to stop and ask a question, and she stops frequently to point out words that are important to building understanding about what is happening in the story. Both days, she introduces the book with a brief overview of the text, providing background information so that the students understand its context. She intentionally defines key terms such as “segregated,” “integration,” “demonstrate,” and “sit-in,” while taking the time to clarify student misconceptions as they occurred. The consistent routine of reading, then pausing for planned questions and discussion yields a pattern of action that help the group make sense of race.

Toni and her students begin to make sense of difference when she reads the first page of the book then stops to ask what the students notice about the picture (See Table 5). The students study the page and notice that there is a sign that says, “whites only.” Toni and her students

discuss what that sign meant for the characters on that page and how those characters may have felt as a result of their perceived differences.

Table 5.

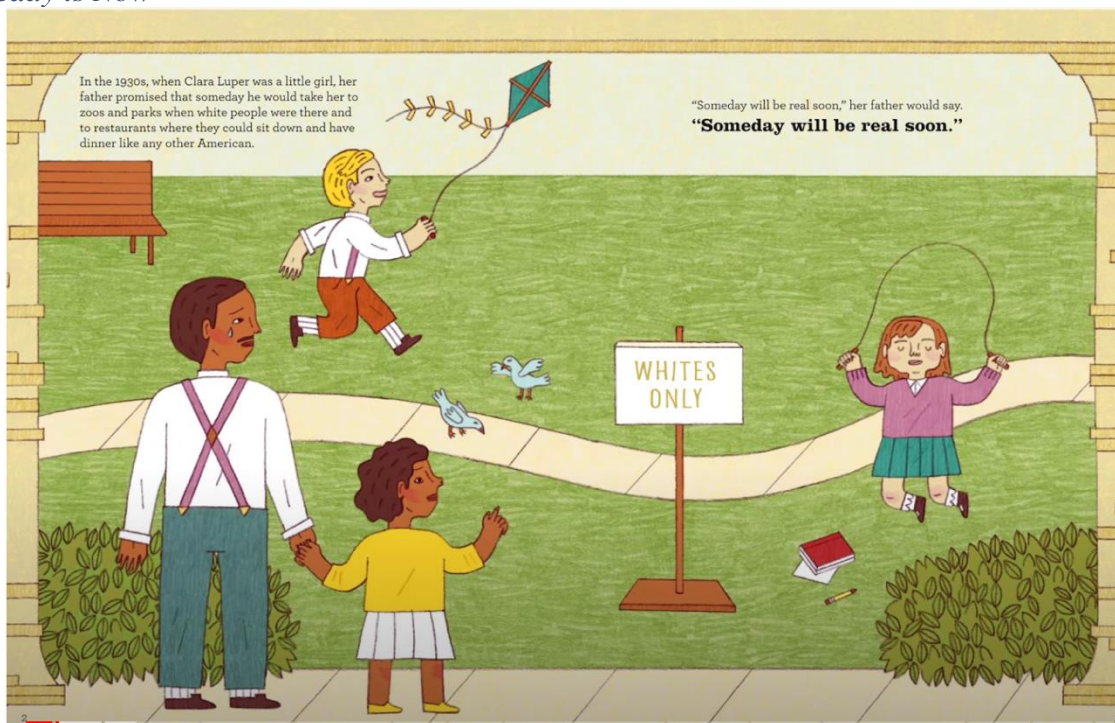
Toni

Speaker	Comment
Toni	So what do you notice just from this first picture?
Student 1	Uh, there's a sign that says 'whites only.'
Toni	Good job, yes. So he's like what do you think the tear means?
Student 1	He's sad.
Toni	That he's sad that he can't take his daughter in there. And you notice the White's Only sign? How does that—What does that like show on one side versus the other?
Student 2	That there's white people going to playground on the one side and the other side that there's they all can't play
Toni	Mm, yes.
Student 2	I would be asking why you're crying. I would be asking if you work here. So I would be asking
Toni	Yeah. You
Student 2	So why would— they would be mean to that person because he's black or If I was a white person, would help to—I would grow up and help umm like help make them free
Toni	Mm-hmm. No, I love that. That's another great reflection to the story, for sure.

Though they are still at the beginning of the story, Toni and her students are already recognizing how race can have social implications when they discuss the “whites only” sign. They grapple with the realization that the white people on the first page of the story can enjoy the privileges of the park while the black people are not. Toni builds on the students’ observations and asks, “And you notice the white’s only sign? How does that—What does that like, show on one side versus the other?” The students recognize that the differential treatment in the story

impacts the emotions of the characters by noticing that the father in the story has a tear on his cheek and is sad.

Figure 7.
Someday is Now



The students also begin to make personal connections with this part of the story, which is shown when Student 2 begins to explain what she would do if she were in a similar position as the characters in the story (see Table 5). As Student 2 imagines what she would do in a similar situation, she also positions herself as the kind of person who would do something to make a difference. Student 2 states that if she were in the same situation, she would “help to—I would grow up and help umm, like help make them free” (Toni, 2021, para.8).

As Toni continues to read, the text details the ways that the laws in Oklahoma and other states said that white people and black people had to be segregated which “meant that the law separated black and white people in many public places.” In response, Student 2 asks, “That was the laws?” Toni pauses reading and replies, “Exactly, and we’re gonna get into that. Yeah.” They

continue to read about Clara Luper and her students staging a sit-in at a shop in Oklahoma City until Toni pauses again to ask:

So what do you think that means when it says they did not believe in someday? So remember the title of the book is called *Someday is Now*? (Student 3), what do you think that means when they say they did not believe in someday?

In response, Student 3 says that the shopkeepers did not believe that integration was going to happen. Toni agrees with Student 3 and explains,

Yeah, absolutely. They didn't see— They couldn't see the future of that, right? And they didn't like it (the sit-in) because of this. They felt it was, like, intruding on their own rights, right? Which it's not—Which we know, now, that it's not, but that's what they were thinking. Love those thoughts.

Here, Toni, who is a white woman, develops her own stance about integration by stating that it does not intrude on the rights of white people. At the end of the story, Toni shares that she wanted to read that story to her students because she “thought it was really cool that this real-life example showed how kids in Oklahoma made a huge difference in the civil rights movement.”

In response, Student 3 begins to recognize the social implications of race in the story and exclaims, “This really happened?” Toni confirms that the events of the story did, in fact, happen in 1958. Student 3 proclaims, “That's, like, 1958—It's like a thousand years and a half ago.” To which Toni replies, “It is actually closer than you think. Which is part of the problem, right?”

Summary. Throughout her read aloud, Toni engages in actions that bridge students' understanding of race. Here, the PST's careful selection of text serves as a key component in making many of her bridging actions successful. The text that Toni selected to read with her students is unique in comparison to other stories that PSTs selected to read with their students

during this study. This story explicitly mentions race in addition to giving examples of the manifested consequences of racism, such as sanctioned segregation and peaceful protests (Sittins). The text also uses “adult terms” to talk about race, which is useful in facilitating deeper discussion as the group develops understandings about its meanings. In this read aloud, Toni treats the text as valid in the way that it represents race (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019), but still stops several times throughout the read aloud to provide additional information about the historical context of the book. She also intentionally defines other terms that were not explained in the book to help her students build vocabulary, and consequently deeper understandings of race and themselves.

When people use language, they are always communicating about who they are in relation to each other, and part of that is their personhood (A. Brown et al., 2017, p. 456). Student 2 demonstrates her understandings of race when she reflects aloud, “So why would they— would be mean to that person because he's black or—If I was a white person, would help to—I would grow up and help, umm like, help make them free.” By imagining what she would do to facilitate justice, she positions herself as the type of person who understands justice and would work to make a difference (Falkner, 2019). When Student 2 states, “If I was a white person, would help to—I would grow up and help, umm like, help make them free,” she develops a stance against racism, but still distances herself from the social realities of race by making her activism contingent upon being a white grownup. This shows that while she is recognizing injustice and developing a stance, it is a theoretical stance that does not connect the realities of race to her own lived experiences, which stops just sort of bridging.

Still, Toni tries to build on the students’ sense of identity by explaining that she selected the text because “kids in Oklahoma made a huge difference in the civil rights movement” (Toni,

2021, para. 3). This observation reminded the students that the story was non-fiction and served as an implicit form of encouragement for the students to think about the ways in which they too could make a difference. Instead, Student 3 distances himself from the events in the story by positioning 1958 as “a thousand and a half years ago.” Though he connects the story to other people’s lived reality, he does not connect the events to his own. By conceptualizing 1958 as a millennia ago, racism is seen as a problem of the past that has no relevance to today. Toni pushes back when she says that “(i)t is actually closer than you think. Which is part of the problem, right?” Despite these efforts, the students unconsciously maintain that race, racism, and segregation were problems of the past, or fictional, which demonstrates the durability of white hegemony in classroom spaces.

Both Maya and Toni engage in actions that begin to connect their understandings of race to their students and the text. However, the corresponding actions of their students alternately leaned into this connection or maintained the status quo of racial narratives. The ways in which the PSTs conceptualized race also determined the ways in which the students made the connections between race, text, and self. Toni tries to develop socially significant understandings of race by focusing on the social and material impacts on other people’s lived experiences; however, both she and her students minimize the same impacts on their own personal lives. On the other hand, Maya takes more steps to connect race to her personal life and the lives of her students but minimizes the social and material impacts of race by conceptualizing it as skin tone. By focusing on skin tones, Maya and her students talk around the ways that race is socially constructed and minimize the ways that it impacts their lives.

Distancing

Theme 2 (Distancing): PSTs move away from social understandings of race by positioning race as neutral, ahistorical, and/or separate from their own or the children’s lived experiences.

The second theme, *distancing*, refers to actions that position participants as less involved or disconnected from developing understandings of race. Though participants move past superficial descriptions of race, they do not draw on racial literacy practices to challenge or disrupt the ways that race and power operate in the text or in their own experiences (A.F. Brown et al., 2019; Guinier, 2004). Examples of *distancing* begin with Maya’s read aloud.

Overview. We return to Maya’s read aloud where she has just finished reading the story *Skin Like Mine* (2016). They begin comparing their skin tones to food like the author’s style of comparison in the text, constructing race based on visual information. Rather than talking about the significance (or insignificance) of differences in skin tones, Maya instead asks them to compare their skin tones to the seemingly neutral topic of food. She asks, “What food, uh, do you compare your skin, uh, color to? The students respond with various foods including chocolate, white rice, and caramel. Their food comparisons yield additional discussion about why their skin looks the way it does (see Table 6), which has social significance. Each student in this group is Latinidad (Mexican, Salvadorian, and Honduran), and Maya is black, but as Maya pointed out early in the read aloud, there is very little difference in the depth of their skin tones. Towards the beginning of the food comparison discussion, Maya describes herself as “chocolate caramel.” In response, Student 3 also describes herself as caramel, and Student 2 describes herself as chocolate. Maya pauses, laughs (not unkindly), and asks “like dark chocolate?” Student 2 replies “No, like, like uh the light one.” Maya smiles and says “Ah, okay, good.” When the Student 1 responds that her skin looks like white rice. Without prompting, Student 1

explains that her skin looks like white rice but that the sun tanned her skin, which changed her skin's appearance so that it did not, in fact, look like white rice. Maya listens to the explanation, nodding her head. She does not inquire into this explanation any further. Instead, after each student shares their ideas, she asks the students about the differences in their family's skin tones. After each response, they move on to the next topic of discussion.

Table 6.
Distancing (Maya)

Speaker	Comment
Maya	What food, uh, compares to your skin, uh, color? Me? I'm caramel. You too?
Student 1	(Translates in Spanish to Student 3). What food compares to your skin color?
Student 2	My skin looks like a chocolate.
Maya	Chocolate? (laughs) Chocolate like, dark chocolate?
Student 2	No like, like uh the light one
Maya	Ah, okay. Bueno. Mm-hmm, yeah. And what else?
Student 1	Mine is like the white rice
Maya	White rice?
Student 1	(Student 1 nods) Because—This happened (looks down and rubs her arm) because of the sun but it made it white.
Maya	Ah. Okay (looks at student 3 nodding), you too? That's so cool. And you? (Looks at Student 4). She says rice, she says chocolate, and I say, uh, caramel (points to Student 3), also caramel.
Student 4	The same.
Maya	The same?
Student 4	Yes.

Summary. Though the topic of her read aloud was a celebration of different skin tones, Maya engaged in activities that distanced herself and her students away from deeper

understandings of race. Throughout the conversation, the group draws upon the narrative that the color of skin does not matter, yet engaged in activities which were designed to celebrate different skin tones. Explicit statements such as "it doesn't matter the, the color of your skin" and "so on this page, um, this is the friend, her friend, but with different skin. Yeah, yes. But it's good, yes?" send the message that skin, and by extension race, does not matter; however, the need to draw so much attention to differences in skin *not* mattering implies that skin color is indeed important. As a result, the participants in this read aloud engage in race making when they conceptualize race as differences in skin tone, using food to simplify and neutralize the implications of those differences.

Throughout the conversation, Maya builds upon the author's implicit definition of race as skin tone without pausing to explore how her student's lived experiences may differ from the depictions of skin tones as sweet treats and candies. In this way, the text mediates these race talk interactions by portraying race solely as skin color (Beneke & Cheatham, 2018). Maya relies on the text as a legitimate, accurate resource rather than critically engaging with its representations of race. Furthermore, comparing skin tones to food brings up an interesting turn of events. In the beginning of the read aloud, Maya tells the students that her skin tone looks similar to theirs. "For example, I look like you, a little bit different, but not much." She then goes on to compare her skin tone to chocolate caramel. However, when one Latinidad student compares her skin tone to chocolate, Maya, a black woman, pauses to clarify. "Chocolate (laughs) Chocolate like, dark chocolate?" The student explains that she meant "like, like uh the light one." Contradicting this pattern, when another student describes her skin tone as white rice, Maya does not pause, even though all the participants in the read aloud are similar skin tones, despite their racial differences.

The student explains, unprompted, that her skin is tanned “Because—This happened because of the sun but it made it white.”

Maya’s immediate correction of the student that identified as chocolate is different from the way that she responds to the student who compared her tanned skin to white rice. While this could be because Maya was trying to ensure that students accurately reflected their skin tone, the lack of redirection for the second student may point to something deeper. When the student positioned themselves closer to darkness, or blackness, the PST immediately redirected them. However, a student positioning herself closer to whiteness, as in white rice, was not questioned. This interaction shows that even in conversations where race is positioned in neutral ways, such as skin color, or food, there are still socially significant meanings behind racialized identity markers and experiences. It is therefore important to attend to those meanings because of the material consequences that they often produce.

Though the text *Skin Like Mine* (2016) is a celebration of difference, it also vaguely implies that there is an important reason for doing so. Maya assumes the narrative of celebrating difference without explicitly expressing why it is important, which effectively minimizes the social significance of race. Still, its social significance seeps through in spoken and unspoken ways. For example, when Maya compares her skin to chocolate caramel, she explains to her students that “in my life, a lot of people think, I, uh, I am Latina. From the Dominican Republic, or Mexico, or Puerto Rico, too. But a lot of people think, ‘Ah not black, only black, black, African American.’ But yes. I like this book.” In this moment she is describing the ways in which she is racialized because of her skin tone. In the example that she presents, she is racialized in ways that distance her from her own body and her own experience as a black woman, yet the narrative of her read aloud maintains that race does not matter.

Overview. Toni’s read-aloud of *Someday is Now: Clara Luper and the 1958 Sit-Ins* (2018) takes place over the span of two days. The text is about Clara Luper, a civil rights activist and teacher that helped to organize student sit-ins in Oklahoma City. Toni describes Clara Luper as “just as important in the Civil Rights Movement as Martin Luther King, or other people that we have heard of.” Like Maya, Toni also engages in a consistent pattern of reading, then pausing to ask questions, explain or discuss. As Toni reads about the ways in which Clara Luper’s students are treated “separate and unequal,” she comes to a point in the text where they are refused service at a local shop. Toni stops to reflect about this turn of events with her students (see Table 7). During her reflection, she explains that the reason that the students were refused service was “the choice of the shopkeeper.” She advances this thought by explaining that the shopkeeper couldn’t ask Clara Luper and her students to leave because they were participating in a peaceful protest (sit-in).

Table 7.
Distancing (Toni)

Speaker	Comment
Toni	So they were not actually served the sodas that they asked for, right? So that was the, um, the choice of the shopkeeper to not do that, but they couldn't ask them to leave, they were sitting-in and protesting.
	So how do you think it—What does it show that—that the students and Clara wanted to come back the next day even though they were treated so poorly? Like, what do you think that shows—How do you think they're feeling ... treated poorly, but they still want to come back the next day?
Student 1	Because they're not giving up.
Toni	Absolutely. They're not. They are gonna actually come back and keep fighting.... Does anybody else have anything else they wanna share?

Summary. Until this point in the lesson, Toni and her students engaged deeply with the ways that race and racism impact society by making sense of differences, attending to the social

implications of race, and developing critical stances. In this interaction, though, they begin drawing on superficial understandings of race. For example, by explaining that the students were not served because of “the choice of the shopkeeper,” Toni minimizes the social significance of race as structural and systemic. Positioning racism as an interpersonal act places the responsibility of white supremacy on a select few bad actors, who are characterized as deviations from the norm (Jones, 2000).

This interaction marks an important shift in the read-aloud, as subsequent interactions begin to draw on post-racial narratives. At the end of the discussion, Toni explains that she chose the text because “anybody can do anything to make a difference.” When she tries to deepen the conversation with her students she asks, “So, do y'all have—How do you think—How did the children in her class make change in the world? What happened then?” A student responds that “Everybody got what they wanted...they got their sodas and all that, and... There was no more segregation in the store.” At this point, Student 1 demonstrates a localized understanding of racism. Toni attempts to deepen that understanding by posing another question:

Right. there was no more segregation in that store, right? So what does that mean for, like, how you feel as a person and you're allowed to be at the same place as everybody else? [Long Pause] Because if, like, you're not allowed in a place and then now you're just like everyone else, how does that make you feel?

Student 1 responds, “Happy,” while another student explains that the story gives her hope. The conclusion of the read aloud does not reflect the depth of conversation and meaning-making that happened throughout the lesson. The shift to localized understandings of race demonstrates the durability of racial narratives/projects (Omi & Winant; 2015), even as students and teachers work to dismantle them.

Talking But Not Talking

Theme 3 (Talking but Not Talking): PSTs talk about race without delving into the meaning or social significance of race, or while enacting colorblindness in their discussions.

Talking but Not Talking is a phrase borrowed from Ladson-Billings (2003) who observes that teachers often read books about race without talking about race in socially significant or meaningful ways. This section focuses on how PSTs discussed race in general ways without attending to any meaning of race, whether physiological, social, or enacted.

Table 8.

Talking but Not Talking Codes

Theme 3 (Talking but Not Talking): PSTs talk about race without delving into the meaning or social significance of race, or while enacting colorblindness in their discussions.	
Code	Definition
Evaluating	Giving a “grade” to a response. Determining the “correctness” of a response. “The verbal evaluation occurs when the teacher affirms or clarifies the child’s response based on the answer they expected (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).
Imposing	Projecting an idea, thought, or feeling onto someone else, forcing something to be accepted or put into place
Initiating	A bid for a “known answer,” discussion or line of thinking (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).
Redirecting	Shifting or moving attention away from an undesirable topic to a new, less challenging topic. (<i>Pay close attention to when this code is used to shift the conversation away from race</i>) (Roach & Beck, 2012, p. 250-251). -OR- pivoting conversation to consider multiple points of view (Falkner, 2022, p. 41).
Responding	A reply to a bid for a “known answer” (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).

Overview. Zora’s read aloud of *Big Bully* (2021) begins with a very vulnerable discussion in which Zora shares a story about how she was bullied in school. Before reading to her students, Zora asks if anyone at the table is a bully or if anyone at the table has been bullied

before. One student responds that they were bullied a long time ago. In response, Zora shares her own story:

Um, when I was younger, like, my voice was, like, deeper than, like all the other girls, so the g-guys would tease me like, 'ha, ha, ha, you sound like a man.' And my feelings would be hurt. I would go home to my mom, and I would cry, and she just always encouraged me to always be myself, and, you know, embrace everything there is about myself because I can't change me, right? I have to learn to embrace my differences.

(Zora, 2021, p.4).

Her students relate to her and begin sharing their own experiences with bullying. One student talks about a time when he saw someone bully a person who was “different”. Zora helps him to identify terminology by saying, “So those are called handicapped, but we don't need to say handicapped today we just say differently abled for someone who just, you know, is different from us” (Zora, 2021, p. 5). Zora explains that using the term handicapped is a form of bullying and that as a group they want to be good citizens.

After she reads *Big Bully* (Hu, 2021) in its entirety, she begins asking her students questions about the story. One student chimes in to say that they learned not to bully. Zora restates the student's response and then begins another line of questioning that leads to a student suggesting that the main character was bullied because he was asian (see Table 8). Zora praises his answer and states that she liked that the student referred to the main character as “asian” because it means that he (the main character) is from the continent of Asia. She also points out that the main character Jie was different because he was learning to speak English, implying that this was likely another reason for his bullying.

Table 9.*Zora*

Speaker	Comment	Code
Zora	Not to bully. What were some of the ways in which he was bullied? You all remember some of the ways Jie was bullied in the story? What was one of the ways?	Initiating Questioning
	Teasing, they were teasing, they were taunting him. And is that something to do? No, and why was getting he teased, because he was what?	Evaluating Redirecting
Student	He was asian?	Responding
Zora	He was asian. I like the way you said asian. He was asian, that means he was from the continent of Asia. So he was different because he was also learning to speak what?	Explaining Prompting
Student	English?	Responding
Zora	English, so the kids made fun of him. Do you want to add something? Right, he tripped and then what happened when he tripped him? His food went flying and everyone thought it was so funny. Now let me ask you this, if you see somebody that's bullying somebody else, do you join in with them or do you stand up and be the bigger person like a good citizen would do?	Restating Explaining

When Zora affirms that Jie was bullied because he was asian and defines the “meaning” of asian as a person from the continent of Asia, race emerges as a conversation topic. Zora affirms that the reasons that Jie was being bullied in the story was because he was from another country and because he spoke another language (See Figure 8). At that point, the discussion goes no further, and the group does not unpack any of the social consequences of a person being from another country, speaking another language, or other ways that Jie could have been seen as different. The read aloud is concluded when Zora asks the students if they should join in when somebody is being bullied or if they should “stand up and be the bigger person, like a good citizen would do?” (Zora, 2021, p.6).

Figure 8.
Big Bully

She started to quietly point out Brett's behavior to her friends. After a while, she noticed that the majority of people weren't laughing with Brett anymore.

The next day, Lily sat with Jie at recess and tried to get to know him. He told her about what his life was like back in China. Jie was just learning English, so they laughed together over some of his word choices.

As Lily and Jie were walking back into the classroom, Brett started teasing them.

"Jie likes Lily. Jie likes Lily," Brett said in a singsong voice.

"Knock it off, Larson," said a fifth grader in the hallway. "I wonder how you would feel if your family moved to China? Leave Jie alone!"


Brett's face turned red. He became even more embarrassed when the rest of our class started laughing at him! Unfortunately for Brett, Mr. Richmond happened to be walking by, too.

"Let's talk after school today, Brett," said Mr. Richmond. "I think we need to review some points about being a good citizen."

Brett must have gotten the message because the next day he was very quiet. In fact, Mr. Richmond paired Brett and Jie up to write a report about their favorite sports. Brett was surprised to learn that he and Jie both loved baseball. Lily couldn't believe it when she saw the boys laughing together.

"I guess it *is* possible for a big bully to turn into a good citizen!" smiled Lily.

DID YOU KNOW?
There are only two ways to become a U.S. citizen; either by law or by birth.



© Learning A-Z. All rights reserved.
www.readinga-z.com

Connecting Passage

Credits: right: © Caroline Hu/Wilkinson Studios, Inc.

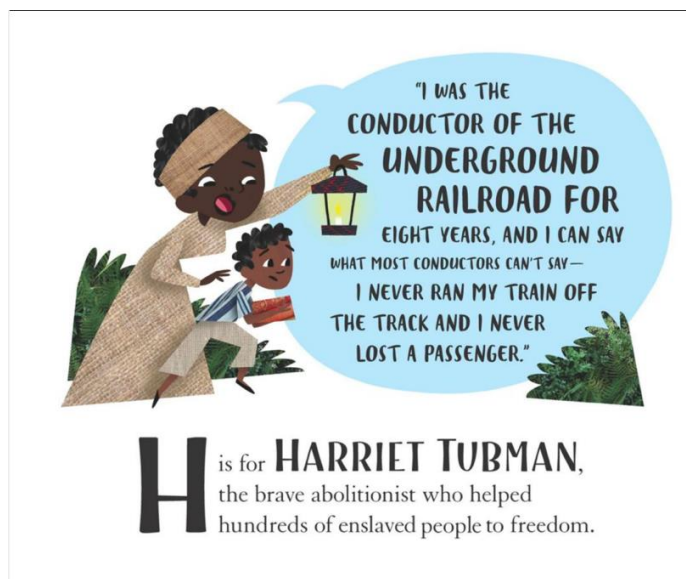
2

Summary. Both Zora and the students identify the ethnicity of the main character as a reason for being bullied (asian), but no other ideas or attitudes are expressed other than those general statements. In actuality, the book specifically states that Jie the main character emigrated from China. In this conversation race was mentioned explicitly and could not be ignored because it was a central part of the storyline for the read aloud text. While Zora acknowledged that the main character was being bullied because he was asian, she did not facilitate further discussion about the social significance of emigrating from another country, or the tangible effects of being bullied because of race. She does acknowledge that Jie is indeed a racialized individual but explains the racialization in a way that refers to country and language, or what Omi and Winant (2015) refer to as the ethnicity approach to race; an approach that cannot account for the visual aspect of racism.

Overview. The read aloud of *A is for Awesome: 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World (2019)* is a busy one. Octavia works hard to manage the behavior of a student who is upset

from an earlier event. She engages in constant redirection before and throughout the read aloud, both behaviorally and topically. During the read aloud, she shifts the topic of discussion nine times. Of the nine times, two were academic redirections (one dealing with race), and the other seven were behavioral corrections. She constantly redirects both the upset student and the rest of her students so that she can attend to her read-aloud. As she tries to quickly make her way through the alphabet book, she reads about Harriet Tubman on the page with the letter *H* (See Figure 9). When the student attempts to make connections with her knowledge of Harriet Tubman by saying, “I know her!” Octavia responds, “You do?” and immediately redirects the conversation by asking “What comes after the letter H?” The student replies “I” and Octavia evaluates her response, “I, very good.” But the student is not deterred and redirects the conversation back to Harriet Tubman, by stating, “She had a—a train be—because she need to save the people so they can never be...” Once again, Octavia interrupts the student by evaluating the response and saying, “You *do* know her, good job,” then employs a page turn to manage the student’s talk, effectively closing the discussion about Harriet Tubman (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020).

Figure 9.
A is for Awesome!



It is important to note here that despite her evaluations, Octavia did not correct the misconceptions that the student had about Harriet Tubman and her contributions to society (see Table 9). In evaluating the response as “correct,” Octavia neglects the resources and knowledge that the student brought into the lesson (Moll, et al., 1992). Instead, she positions the student’s observations as “correct,” limiting any further discussion.

Table 10.
Octavia

Speaker	Comment	Code(s)
Octavia	(Reading from the text) H is for Harriet Tubman. She was a brave abolitionist that helped hundreds of slaves to freedom.	
Student	I know her.	Redirecting Relating
Octavia	You know her? What comes after the letter H?	Restating Redirecting
Student	I.	Responding
Octavia	I. Good job.	Evaluating
Student	She had a—a train be—because she need to save the people so they can never be...	Redirecting Explaining

Summary. Octavia was having a difficult time with classroom management during her read aloud, which is a common struggle for PSTs as they begin working with children. In addition to dealing with behavioral issues, she was also trying to attend to the students who were fully engaged in the read aloud discussion. Because there were so many competing priorities in this lesson, it is likely that Octavia struggled to find her own voice, and consequently struggled to create a space where her students could assert theirs. Octavia’s constant redirection and evaluation of student responses culminated in a missed opportunity to discuss the background knowledge that the student brought about Harriet Tubman, the potential to clear up a misconception about Harriet Tubman’s train, *and* possible exploration of why “...she need to save the people...”

In both read alouds, the PSTs read texts that were not specifically about racial issues: one was about bullying in schools; the other about influential women in society. However, race still emerged organically in the conversations. For many reasons, these conversations did not go any further than vague acknowledgements of the existence of race. This demonstrates the ubiquity of race (Omi & Winant, 2015, Dixson & Rousseau, 2003) and that race is socially constructed through language when it is an explicit topic of conversation and when it is not (A.F. Brown et al., 2017). While race was indeed evident in these discussions, the participants did not talk *about* race, but rather talked around its existence, leaving its relevance unattended in the context of their broader discussions. Ultimately, the ways in which Octavia and Zora shifted the topics of the conversations and positioned themselves as experts left little space for children to share their perspectives or expertise (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, 2020).

Conclusion of Findings

The experiences of PSTs in this study suggest that reading culturally responsive texts does not necessarily lead to active discussions about race. Nor do these texts inherently do the work of disrupting white supremacy or systemic racism. When texts do not reflect the social realities that “reinforce the systems of inequality feeding stereotypes” (Copenhagen-Johnson, et al., 2007, p. 241), it is more difficult for PSTs to navigate the unspoken consequences of race with their students. Maya’s text, *Skin Like Mine* (2016), prompts a discussion that recognizes and celebrates skin tones, and does little to deepen understandings about why differences in skin tone matters. Toni’s text, *Someday is Now* (2018), reflects the social realities of systems of inequality. While this does lead to more active discussions initially, her group still ultimately struggles to make personal connections to systemic racism, let alone disrupt it.

Findings suggest that preservice teachers negotiate racial discussions by engaging in three types of behaviors: 1) engaging in superficial conversations that do not move beyond general descriptions (talking but not talking), 2) by separating race from social implications (distancing), and 3) by creating generative connections between themselves, their students, the texts, and race (bridging). Findings also point to constant shifts between bridging and distancing as preservice teachers work to “seem and feel” racially literate. The study suggests that preservice teachers would benefit from teacher education programs that develop racial literacy, particularly in programs designed to prepare teachers to work in under-resourced schools. In the next chapter, I discuss the implications of these findings for the field of teacher preparation.

Chapter Five

By focusing on the ways that schooling, including their own miseducation, contributes to unequal educational outcomes that reinforce societal inequity and oppression, students broaden their knowledge of how society works. (King, 1991, p. 134)

Discussion

At its best, education is a space for creativity, criticality, and growth: a means to honor, celebrate, and build upon all the ways in which we, as humans, are similar and different. As defined here, education does not take place in U.S. education today. Instead, race and racism persist in shaping educational systems, consequentially manifesting in strikingly different educational experiences for students of color. A case in point are the ways that discussions about race and institutional racism are being systematically targeted in public spaces, resulting in classrooms being increasingly vulnerable. Even so, attempts at silencing and sanitizing the racial history of the U.S. do not negate that race is a fundamental part of our social discourse, whether it is verbally addressed or not. Teachers are an important component of social discourse in classroom environments because their language has the potential to influence students' identities as learners and as human beings. Many researchers have identified English Language Arts as a promising content area to address race because of its discursive nature. Yet despite the potential in this content area, few opportunities exist for students to contribute and engage in multiple perspectives, and teachers sometimes reinforce stereotypes or avoid difficult topics altogether (Vetter et al., 2018). As I discussed in chapter two, a small body of literacy research shows that conversations about race do happen in schools with elementary aged students, while reading and discussing texts (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; 2020; Glenn, 2015; Kaczmarczyk et al., 2019; Peterson, 2016). However, even when in-service teachers use texts as a scaffold, racial discussions do not unfold in neat or linear ways (Daly, 2020b; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Yoon,

2020). Text choice also makes an impact on the quality of racial discussion because texts often portray race in child-friendly terms, removing the historical, political, and social contextual significance of race as a social construct (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Brooks & McNair, 2015; A.L. Brown, & K.D. Brown, 2010; Thomas, 2016). Each of these challenges compound for preservice teachers, who are in the process of developing pedagogical knowledge and skills. It is no wonder then, that PSTs express a hesitancy to talk about race in classrooms with elementary aged students who do not look like them (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Hendrix-Souto & Mosley Wetzel, 2019; Mosley Wetzel, 2020). Furthermore, there is a need to equip teachers with discursive moves to counter pressures to silence discussions of race (Daly, 2022b). To curtail the effects of white supremacy, particularly for students of color, it is important to prepare teachers to recognize the salience of race in literacy education, especially before they have classrooms of their own. In literacy classrooms, being ill-prepared translates to practices such as linguistic violence, reinforcing white-middle class norms, or worse still, reifying racial stereotypes.

In this dissertation, I investigated racial conversations that occurred during read-alouds with elementary students of color in a culturally responsive teacher education course. My focus on conversations about race stems from extant literacy research that shows that race or critical sociocultural knowledge are often missing when preparing teachers to be responsive to diversity in schools (Mosley-Wetzel, 2020).

Talking But Not Talking

Talking but not talking refers to the ways that PSTs talk about race without enacting racial literacy. Zora's read aloud of the story *Big Bully* was designed to focus on being a good citizen, but the story implies that Jie, the main character of the story, was being bullied because of his race. When one of her students verbalized that race was the cause of Jie's bullying, Zora

did not explore the social significance of racial bullying. Instead, she distanced the discussion from the racial implications of the story by explaining that Jie was different because he spoke another language. This is problematic because it has the potential to normalize asian hate for students, particularly because asian hate crimes have been on the rise since the COVID-19 pandemic. In the lesson, the students explicitly learned to be good citizens by not bullying. The implicit lesson from this read aloud could be that people get bullied because they are of a different racial background and/or speak a different language. These ideas were reinforced by Zora's superficial line of questioning which neglected to account for the bully's actions or the effects of those actions on Jai.

Octavia's read aloud of *A is for Awesome* was designed to focus on the letters of the alphabet using famous women. Her questions throughout the read aloud focused on the sequence of the alphabet and although her students answered her questions, they also interrupted her reading several times to offer insights. One student interrupted more than once in an attempt to engage Octavia in a discussion about Harriet Tubman. Rather than engage and deepen the conversation, Octavia used page turns to manage the talk (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020), redirecting the topic back towards the letters of the alphabet.

In both of these lessons, what was explicitly taught is not necessarily what was learned (Bautista et al., 2018). In Zora's read-aloud, students learned that race was a reason for someone to be bullied, but that they should not bully. What they did not learn was the social significance of racial bullying or make connections to how racial bullying could manifest in their own lives as Latinidad students. When Octavia's student shared her limited knowledge about Harriet Tubman, she learned that her knowledge was "correct" despite having several misconceptions. As a result, her decontextualized understanding of the importance of Harriet Tubman was reinforced. In both

of these examples, PSTs talked about race without enacting racial literacy which obscured the ways that race is socially constructed. This silence positioned their elementary aged students as powerless and unprepared to have racial discussions. However, Octavia's student demonstrates that even the youngest elementary students have background knowledge and ideas about race (Daly, 2022; Falkner, 2019)

Distancing

The other participants in this study talked about race while actively employing racial literacy to delve into deeper discussions about race. Yet deeper discussions did not equate to participants moving towards socially situated understandings of race. *Distancing* occurred when participants positioned race as neutral, ahistorical, and/or separate from lived experiences. For instance, Maya's read-aloud of a text that celebrated different skin tones led to a conflation between skin color and race. She attempted to personally connect with her students by asking about their families' skin tones and even shared her personal experiences with racialization. However, she was not quite able to make explicit connections to the racialized social meanings that are ascribed to the differences in the skin tones that she emphasized. More importantly, there are instances in which she participates in racializing her students using the food categories that are introduced in the text.

At the beginning of her read aloud she compared her skin tone to her students' and observed that they are similar with only slight differences. A short time later, Maya described herself as "chocolate caramel" and asked her students to join her in comparing their skin tone to foods. When one of her Latinidad students compared her skin to chocolate as well, Maya challenged the description by asking what kind of chocolate the student meant. In doing so, she reinscribed the racialized meaning of chocolate as a euphemism for blackness. As a result, Maya

simultaneously attempted to neutralize race by comparing skin tones, while reinforcing racialized narratives by encouraging students to describe themselves as a “certain kind” of chocolate.

Participants in this study also struggled to align their teaching practices with their desired teaching identities when they talked about race (Vetter et al., 2018). An example of this struggle was when Toni attributes legally sanctioned segregation in restaurants and other public spaces to a personal choice made by the local shopkeeper in her read aloud. When she described institutional racism as an individual choice, she moved students away from developing an understanding about the impact of institutional racism on people of color. This explanation perpetuated the assumption that racism is specific to interpersonal interactions which absolves those who are not “blatantly evil” from the responsibility of assuming an anti-racist stance. However, “(w)hite supremacist thinking informs the consciousness of everyone irrespective of skin color” (hooks, 2012, p.11), therefore educators must engage in active racial literacy in classrooms to cultivate definitive change. Both Maya and Toni did not lose sight of race in their read-alouds, which demonstrates some racial literacy. Still, they missed important opportunities to contextualize racial issues or emphasize the relationship between race and power. Developing the ability to make these connections is an ongoing challenge for many educators.

Bridging

Many times, PSTs (and in-service teachers) employ activities that make them “seem” racially literate (Twine, 2004), while struggling to “become” racially literate (Bartlett, 2007). A challenge for many educators is knowing how to facilitate read-alouds in ways that create opportunities for students to share and learn about how race and racism impact their lives and communities. (Daly, 2022b). This is most evident when PSTs attempt *bridging*, or making connections between themselves, the text, their students, and race. Maya began *bridging* with her

students when she created an opportunity for them to share perspectives about their skin tone. With this attempt, Maya makes connections between the text, her students, and herself which are all key elements of bridging. This exchange forges great strides but falls short of bridging when her group is unable to extend these connections to understandings of the social implications of race.

Contrastingly, Toni experiences added success with bridging, in part because of her curricular decisions. The text that she selects for her read aloud is distinct from those chosen by her peers because it talks about the civil rights movement. In addition, she guides her discussions in advance by using sticky notes with pre-planned questions to mark important ideas in the story. While racial literacy is not a prerequisite for these pedagogical moves, they indicate a guided curricular conversation about race in which she selects texts and determines goals for student learning in advance (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; Daly, 2022b). Carefully selecting curricular content such as read aloud texts can help facilitate positive social identity development for students and disrupt inequalities; however, the ways in which teachers and students use language are critical to what is accomplished in conversations about race (A. Brown et al., 2017).

Toni begins by asking questions about what students notice in an illustration after reading the first page of text. Together, she and her students discuss the image of two black people looking at a park with a “White’s Only” sign outside of it. During this interaction, Toni uses questioning to help the students empathize with the black characters. Student 2 recognizes the injustice in the moment and shares what she would do to help fix the injustice that the black characters were experiencing. Student 2 is able to share her perspective because Toni holds space for her students to make connections and share ideas that were likely not a part of her planning.

In this way, Toni relinquishes discursive power and disrupts the power imbalance between teachers and students that often characterize read-alouds (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; 2020).

Toni's bridging experience with Student 2 also mirrors Daly's (2022b) finding that young students can recognize power imbalances and make full use of their capabilities to imagine ways in which such imbalances might be corrected. Furthermore, Toni encourages activism in her students when she shares her admiration for the children in the story who were instrumental in making change to segregation laws in Oklahoma City. Her open admiration is a personal connection that quietly encourages her students to participate in activism in their own lives. Her encouragement would have been even more effective if she would have explicitly made the connection that her students can also make change in their own communities.

These bridging moments are marked by tensions between past and present, fiction and lived experience. The tension between past and present becomes apparent when Student 3 remarks that 1958 was "like a thousand years and a half ago." His comment shows that he is mentally separating his own experiences from those in the text by thinking of racism as ancient history. Toni tries to minimize this disconnection by reminding him that "It's actually closer than you think. Which is part of the problem, right?" Student 3 attempts to distance the story from his own life which shows that racial conversations are filled with actions and reactions as participants negotiate the relevance of race to their own lives. The tension between fiction and lived experience is shown when Student 2 states that if she were a white person, she would grow up and help to free black people. Although she is making a personal connection to the text and to the injustices of racism, she is also creating a barrier between herself and the social significance of race. Because she is a Latinidad student, she will never be white, therefore her thinking automatically excludes her from making any real change to the racial injustice that they discuss.

In addition, by stating that she must first grow up to challenge injustice, she gives away her power as a child activist. This exchange illustrates the ways in which children internalize discourse from the adults in their lives about their lack of readiness to address race and their inability to enact change (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, 2020; Daly, 2022; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Falkner, 2019).

Discussion of Research Question

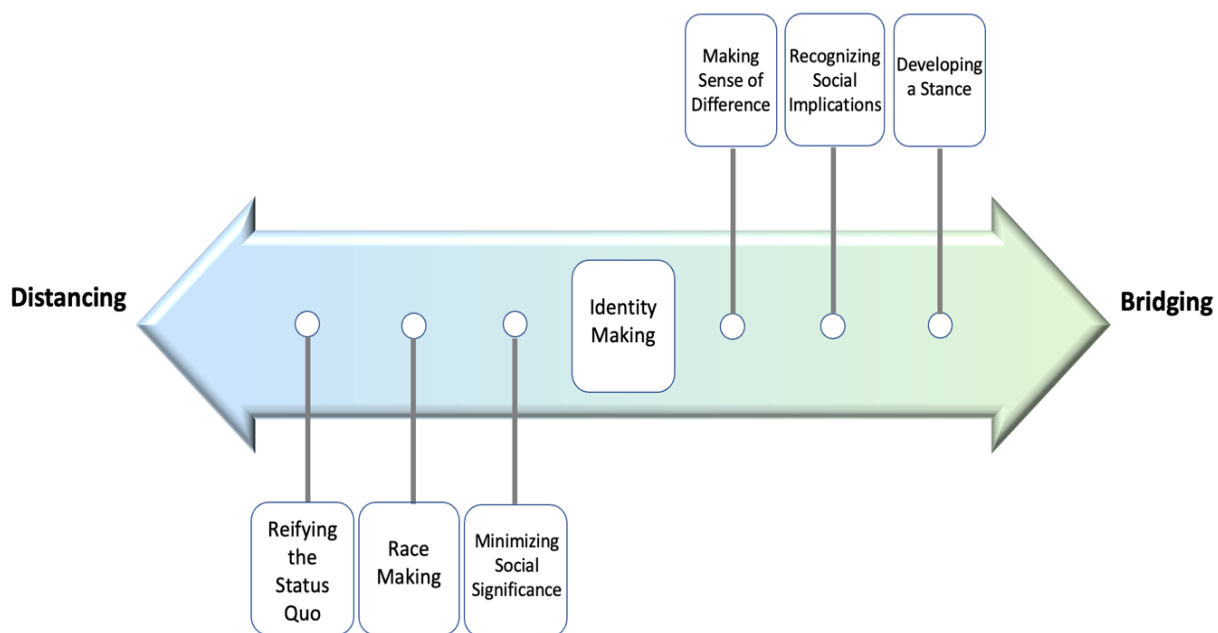
This critical case study used racial literacy as a framework to examine how preservice teachers engage with topics related to race during read-alouds with elementary-aged students of color. During my analysis I discovered that structure can be derived from the ways in which PSTs talk about race. First, race talk that does not enact racial literacy is more static and tends to rely on racial formation projects such as phenotype or ethnicity to describe race (Omi & Winant, 2015). The first theme, talking but not talking, is a form of inactive race talk. This theme shows that PSTs can talk about race without enacting racial literacy, in essence, they talk around the social significance of race. On the other hand, active race talk employs racial literacy to facilitate understandings about race. However, active race talk does not suggest that discursive actions are automatically disruptive to white supremacy and racial hierarchies. The second theme, *distancing*, illustrates how PSTs can disconnect the social implications of race from their discussions with students even as they work to develop racial literacy. The last theme, *bridging*, shows that preservice teachers can make meaningful connections between themselves, the text, their students, and race. It is not uncommon for participants to vacillate between any of the actions on the continuum as they come to terms with the ways that race is socially situated. In some cases, both bridging and distancing happen simultaneously (i.e., Maya's discussion about skin tone). In others, the discursive actions remain relatively stable (i.e., Octavia, Zora, and

Toni). The instability of discursive action during the read-alouds builds on other research that shows that racial literacy development is also an unstable process (Rogers & Mosley, 2006).

Figure 10 shows how active race talk fluctuates between bridging and distancing in read-alouds with racial dialogue.

Figure 10.

Active Race Talk Continuum



Implications for Practice and Research

My findings align with other research that suggests that preservice teachers would benefit from teacher education programs that develop racial literacy (King, 1991), particularly in programs designed to prepare teachers to work in under-resourced schools. Supporting teacher learning within inequitable systems requires close consideration for how PSTs learn in and through their classroom language practices to improve them (Jensen et al., 2021). In addition, racial literacy development, like other literate processes in the classroom, must be guided (Rogers & Mosley, 2006) as preservice teachers engage in active and inactive discursive moves to talk about race. The use of inactive moves demonstrates that there is a need to equip teachers with tools to counter pressures to *not talk* about race (Daly, 2022b). Active race talk must also be guided so that it is disruptive to racism and white hegemony. Furthermore, it would be useful to examine how race talk moves are related to PSTs submerged epistemologies (Bautista et al., 2018) to assist PSTs in aligning their teaching practices with their desired teaching identities (Vetter et al., 2018). A continuum such as the one developed in this study helps to illustrate certain actions that PSTs use to talk about race and can also be used to identify developmental trajectories to enhance racial literacy practices (Milner, 2017). More research is needed across other teacher development programs to identify additional race talk actions, refine understandings of racial literacy development, and determine its effectiveness as a guideline or tool.

Reflections and Conclusion

At the beginning of this dissertation, I outlined several examples of how race is embedded in the U.S. education system. I described recent book bans and legislation that work to silence conversations that bear witness to inconvenient truths of our social reality. These events

point to how deeply race and racism are embedded in politics and education. Despite political efforts, race remains relevant in education. Literacy classrooms have incurred an education debt for students of color that is worsened by an unwillingness to confront race and racism (Souto-Manning, 2021), and elementary teachers insist upon the unreadiness of elementary students to face social issues (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019; 2020). To help reconcile the deep racial divide that exists between a predominantly white teacher force and an increasingly diverse student population, teacher education programs need to provide experiences that challenge preservice teachers' internalized ideologies. As a result, I argue that racial literacy is necessary in all teacher education programs, beginning with those that are geared towards teaching in urban contexts.

It is grossly apparent that current legislative efforts are a bellwether for the dysfunction that is occurring in our schools. Attempts to stifle racial conversations in classrooms, and indeed, free thought, only serve to disprove the assumption that schools are race neutral spaces. On the contrary, race is a fundamental part of our social structure and is therefore embedded in all our social interactions. Race talk happens organically in classrooms, building on the social construction of race through language and silence. Furthermore, teachers mediate meaning making during read-alouds, influencing the ways that students derive meaning from the close interrelationship between language, literacy, and culture (May, 2011). For these reasons, it is important to attend to the ways that language is used to construct race in elementary classrooms. Consequently, I designed this critical case study to examine how preservice teachers talk about race when using culturally responsive texts during read-alouds. By examining preservice teachers' discursive patterns, teacher educators can better understand what PSTs believe, what they know, and ultimately, what they do (Milner, 2017). My findings suggest that even PSTs who were enrolled in a culturally responsive literacy course struggled to talk about race with

students of color. Rather than silencing racial discourse through banning books or curricula, increased opportunities for dialogue about issues of race will help preservice teachers develop racial literacy (Daly, 2022b). Another critical factor in accomplishing racial literacy in elementary classrooms is to take black and Latinidad children's thinking about race seriously (Falkner, 2019). Since talk is a form of action (Freire, 1987; Freire & Macedo, 1987), racial literacy development is crucial to disrupting hierarchies of power and privilege for students of color (Vetter & Hungerford, 2014). As a result, racial literacy development in teacher preparation programs can be a key component to providing an equitable education and classroom environment for students of color.

References

- Apallon, D. (2011). Don't call them "post-racial": Millennial attitudes on race, racism, and key systems in our society. Applied Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.raceforward.org/research/reports/millennials-activism-and-race-dont-call-them-post-racial>.
- Aronson, B., Meyers, L., & Winn, V. (2020). "Lies my teacher (educator) still tells": Using critical race counternarratives to disrupt whiteness in teacher education. *Teacher Education* 5593), 300-322. 10.3102/0034654315582066
- Apple, M. (1971). The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict. *Interchange*, 2(4), 27-40.
- Baker-Bell, A. (2020). *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*. NCTE-Routledge Research Series.
- Barbour, R. S. (2001). Checklists for improving rigour in qualitative research: A case of the tail wagging the dog? *British Medical Journal*, 322, 1115–1117.
<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.322.7294.1115>
- Bartlett, L. (2007). To seem and to feel: Situated identities and literacy practices. *Teachers College Record* 109, 51-69.
- Batista-Morales, N. (2021). *Creating border crossing spaces for decolonizing critical literacy encounters in teacher preparation* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin]. <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/86787>.
- Bautista, N. Misco, T., & Quaye, S.T. (2018). Early childhood open-mindedness: An investigation into preservice teachers' capacity to address controversial issues, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 69(2), 154-168. DOI: 10.1177/0022487117702575
- Bean-Folkes, J., Browne, S., & McGinn Luet, K. (2020). Reflections on equipping candidates to teach literacy in culturally diverse schools. *The Educational Forum*, 84(3), 258-271.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2020.1744782>

- Bell, D. A. (1992). Brown v. board of education and the interest-convergence dilemma. In Crenshaw, K.W., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., Thomas, K. (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, (p. 302-312). The New Press.
- Beneke, M., & Cheatham, G. (2019). Race talk in preschool classrooms Academic readiness and participation during shared reading. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 19(1), 107-133.
- Beneke, M., & Cheatham, G. (2020). Teacher candidates talking (but not talking) about dis/ability and race in preschool. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 52(3), 245-268.
- Berthoff, A. E. (1987). Foreword. In Freire, P. & Macedo, D., *Literacy: Reading the word and the world* (pp. xi-xxiii). Bergin and Garvey.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. Routledge.
- Blake, B. (1998). "Critical" reader response in an urban classroom: Creating cultural texts to engage diverse readers. *Theory into Practice*, 37(3), 238-243.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.) Allyn and Bacon.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bottiani, J. H., Larson, K. E., Debnam, K. J., Bischoff, C. M., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2018). Promoting educators' use of culturally responsive practices: A systemic review of inservice interventions. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 69(4), 367-385.
- Brandt, D. (2001). *Literacy in American lives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Borrero, N., Ziauddin, A., & Ahn, A. (2018). Teaching for Change: New Teachers' Experiences

- with and Visions for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *Critical Questions in Education*, 9(1), 22-39.
- Brooks, W. (2003). Accentuating, preserving, and unpacking: Exploring interpretations of family relationships with African American adolescents. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 29(2), 78-84.
- Brooks, W. (2006). Reading representations of themselves: Urban youth use culture and African American textual features to develop literary understandings. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41(3), 372–392.
- Brooks, W., & Browne, S. (2012). Towards a culturally situated reader response theory. *Children's Literature in Education*, 43(1), 74-85.
- Brooks, W. M., & McNair, J.C. (2015). “Combing” through representations of Black girls’ hair in African American children’s literature. *Children's Literature in Education*, 46, 296-307. 10.1007/s10583-014-9235-x
- Brown, A. F., Bloome, D., Morris, J. E., Power-Carter, S., & Willis, A. I. (2017). Classroom conversations in the study of race and the disruption of social and educational inequalities: A review of research. *Review of Research in Education*, 41(1), 453–476. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X1668752>
- Brown, A. L. & Brown, K.D. (2010). Strange fruit indeed: Interrogating contemporary textbook representations of racial violence toward African Americans. *Teachers College Record*, 112 (1), 31-67.
- Brown, K. D. (2012). Trouble on my mind: Toward a framework of humanizing critical sociocultural knowledge for teaching and teacher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 3, 1–23.

- Brown, K.D. (2017). Why we can't wait: Advancing racial literacy and a critical sociocultural knowledge of race for teaching and curriculum. *Race Gender and Class*, 24(2), 81-96.
- Brown, K. D. (2018). Race as a durable and shifting idea: How millennial preservice teachers understand race, racism, and teaching. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 93(1), 106-120. doi:10.1080/0161956X.2017.1403183
- Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).
<https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/usrep/usrep347/usrep347483/usrep347483.pdf>
- Buehler, J., Gere, A. R., Dallavis, C., & Haviland, V. S. (2009). Normalizing the fraughtness: How emotion, race, and school context complicate cultural competence. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60, 408-418.
- Campano, G., Ghiso, M. P., & Sánchez, L. (2013). " Nobody knows the ... amount of a person": Elementary students critiquing dehumanization through organic critical literacies. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 48(1), 98–125.
- Carter, P., & Nasir, N.S. (2017). Reimagining educational research: A conversation. *Berkeley Review of Education*, 7(1), 141-147.
- Castro, E. L. (2021). "They sellin' us a dream they not preparin' us for": College readiness, dysconscious racism, and policy failure in one rural black high school, *The Urban Review*, 53(4), 617-640. 10.1007/s11256-020-00585-9
- Cazden, C. B. & Beck, S.W. (2003). Classroom discourse. In: Graesser, A. C., Gernsbacher, M.A., and Goldman, S. R. (eds). *Handbook of Discourse Processes*. Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 165–197.
- Chen, E. (2019). *A is for Awesome: 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World* (D. Desierto, Illus.). McMillan Publishing Group.

- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 249-305.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Mitescu Reagan, E. (2022). Beyond “best practices”: Centering equity in teacher preparation evaluation. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 30*(66).
<https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.30.7040>
- Cochran-Smith M., & Keefe, E. (2022). Strong equity: Repositioning teacher education for social change. *Teachers College Record, 124*(3), 9-41.
- Coladarci, T., & Cobb, C. (2014). *Fundamentals of Statistical Reasoning in Education*. Wiley.
- Collins, K., Onwuegbuzie, A., & Jiao, Q. (2007). A mixed-methods investigation of mixed methods sampling designs in social and health science research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(3), 267-294. 10.1177/1558689807299526
- Colón-Bosolet, M., Rosenbaum, M., Mangaser Savage, A., Phillips, C. G., Joyce, E. P., Blau, A.M., Strongin, Z. J., Farra, K. O., Hasbrouck, A.M., Powell, J.A., Crump, B.
- Caminker, E.H. Torres, G., & Minow, M. (2021). *Integrate NYC, inc. vs. The State of New York*, NYCEF 1 (2021).
<https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/nyscef/ViewDocument?docIndex=jHAVRjM/0VBF2bxhnEz7aA==>
- Constantine, M., Smith, L., Redington, R. & Owens, D. (2008). Racial microaggressions against black counseling and counseling psychology faculty: A central challenge in the multicultural counseling movement. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*, 348–55.
- Cornbleth, C. (1984). Beyond hidden curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 16*(1), 29 –36.
- Crenshaw, K.W. (1995). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity, politics, and violence against women of color. In Crenshaw, K.W., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., Thomas, K. (Eds.),

Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement

(p. 357-383). The New Press.

Crenshaw, K.W. (2011). Twenty years of critical race theory: Looking back to move forward.

Connecticut Law Review, 43(5), 1253- 1354.

Croom, M. (2020). If “Black Lives Matter in Literacy Research” then take this racial turn:

Developing racial literacies. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 52(4), 530-552.

Crowley, R. (2019). White teachers, racial privilege, and the sociological imagination. *Urban*

Education, 54(10), 1462-1488. 10.1177/0042085916656901

Daly, A. (2022a). Critical conversations in practice-based teacher education: Fostering equitable

teaching in a yearlong practicum. *Action in Teacher Education*, 44(1), 21–36. [https://doi.](https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2021.1959465)

[org/10.1080/01626620.2021.1959465](https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2021.1959465)

Daly, A. (2022b). Race talk moves for racial literacy in the elementary classroom. *Journal of*

Literacy Research, 54(4), 480-508.10.1177/1086296X221141391

Dara Hill, K., (2012). We’re actually comfortable with diversity: Affirming teacher candidates

for culturally relevant reading pedagogy in urban practicum. *Action in Teacher*

Education, 34, 420-432

Davis, N., & Schaeffer, J. (2019). Troubling troubled waters in elementary science education:

Politics, ethics, and black children's conceptualization of water (justice) in the era of

Flint. *Cognition and Instruction*, 37(3), 367-389.

del Río-Gonzalez, A. M. (2021). To Latinx or not to Latinx: A question of gender inclusivity

versus gender neutrality. *American Journal of Public Health*, 111(6), 1018-1021.

<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306238>

- Delgado, R. (1995). The imperial scholar. In Crenshaw, K.W., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., Thomas, K. (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement* (p. 46-57). The New Press.
- Dewey, J. (1997) *Experience and Education*. Kappa Delta Pi (Original work published 1938).
- Diemer, M.A., Rapa, L.J., Park, C.J., & Perry, J.C. (2017). Development and validation of the critical consciousness scale. *Youth and Society*, 49(4), 461-483.
- Dixson, A.D., & Rousseau, C. K. (2006). Introduction. In D. Dixson, & C.K. Rousseau (Eds.) *Critical race theory in education: All God's children got a song* (pp. 1-8). Routledge.
- Dixson, A.D., & Rousseau, C. K. (2006). And we are still not saved: Critical race theory in education ten years later. In D. Dixson, & C.K. Rousseau (Eds.) *Critical race theory in education: All God's children got a song* (pp. 31-54). Routledge.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (2003). *The Souls of Black Folk*. Barnes and Noble Books. (Original work published 1903).
- Durden, T., Dooley, C., & Truscott, D. (2016). Race still matters: Preparing culturally relevant teachers. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 19(5), 1003-1024.
- Dworin, J. (2008). The family stories project: Using funds of knowledge for writing. *International Reading Association*, 510-520. doi:10.1598/RT.59.6.1
- Eisner, E. (1998). *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*. Teachers College Press.
- Enciso, P. (2011). Storytelling in critical literacy pedagogy: Removing the walls between immigrant and non-immigrant youth. *English Teaching*, 10(1), 21–40.
- Erickson, F. (2004). *Talk and Social Theory*. Polity Press.
- Esposito, J. & Evans-Winters, V. (2022). *Introduction to Intersectional Qualitative Research*.

Sage.

Esteban-Guitart, M., & Moll, L.C. (2014). Funds of identity: A new concept based on the funds of knowledge approach. *Culture and Psychology, 20*(1), 31-48.

Evans-Winters, V., & Hoff, P. (2011) The aesthetics of white racism in pre-service teacher education: A critical race theory perspective. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 14*(4), 461-479.

Ewing, E. L. (2020, July 2). I'm a Black scholar who studies race. Here's why I capitalize 'White.' Medium. <https://zora.medium.com/im-a-black-scholar-who-studies-race-here-s-why-i-capitalize-white-f94883aa2dd3>

Falkner, A. (2019). "They need to say sorry:" Anti-racism in first graders' racial learning. *Journal of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning, and Leadership in Education, 4*(2), 35-45. 10.3102/1583382.

Foster, M. (1995). Constancy, change, and constraints in the lives of black women teachers: Some things change, most stay the same. *NWSA Journal, 3*(2), 233-261.

Franquiz, M.E. & de la Luz Reyes, M. (1998). Creating inclusive learning communities through English language arts: From "chancas" to "canicas". *Language Arts 75*(3), 211-220.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. Bergin and Garvey.

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum.

Gardner, R. (2017). Unforgivable blackness: Visual rhetoric, reader response, and critical racial literacy. *Children's Literature in Education, 48*(2), 119-133.

Garrett, H., & Segall, A. (2013). (Re)Considerations of ignorance and resistance in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 64*(4), 294-304. 10.1177/0022487113487752

Gay, G. (1993). Building cultural bridges: A bold proposal for teacher education. *Multicultural*

- Education: Strategies for Implementation in Colleges and Universities*, 4, 95-106
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53, 106-116. doi:10.1177/0022487102053002003
- Gee, J. P. (2001). Reading as situated language: A sociocognitive perspective. In Alvermann, D. E., Unrau, N. J., Sailors, M., & Ruddell, R. B. (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of literacy* (7th ed., pp. 105-135). Routledge.
- Gee, J. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice. (2022). Recommended guidance to be issued by the Georgia Department of Education pursuant to the Protect Students First Act, O.C.G.A. 20-10-11 (passed as HB 1084, 2022).
- Givens, J. R. (2021). *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching*. Harvard University Press.
- Glenn, W. (2015). Understanding unfamiliar literary aesthetics: White preservice teachers examine race through story. *Action in Teacher Education*, 37(1), 23-44.
- Gotanda, N. (1991). A critique of "Our constitution is color-blind." *Stanford Law Review*, 44(1), 1-68.
- Gordon, J. & Patterson, J. (2013). Response to Tracy's under the "big tent": Establishing universal criteria for evaluating qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 19(9), 689-695.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. International.
- Gregory, A., Skiba, R., & Noguera, P. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 59-68.
- Grove, R. (1988). An analysis of the constant comparative method. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1(3), 273-279.

- Guinier, L. (2004). From racial liberalism to racial literacy: Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-divergence dilemma. *Journal of American History*, 91(1), 92-118.
- Gutierrez, K. D. (1994). How talk, context, and script shape contexts for learning: A cross-case comparison of journal sharing. *Linguistics and Education*, 335-365.
- Gutiérrez, K. D. (2008). Developing a sociocritical literacy in the third space. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(2), 148-164.
- Gutiérrez, K.D., Baquedano-López, P., & Tejeda, C. (1999). Rethinking diversity: Hybridity and hybrid language practices in the third space. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 6(4), 286-303.
- Haberman, M. (2000, November). Urban schools: Day camps or custodial centers? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82, 203–208.
- Hall, L.A. (2016). The role of identity in reading comprehension development. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 32(1), 56-80.
- Haddix, M. M. (2017). Diversifying teaching and teacher education: Beyond rhetoric and toward real change. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 49(1), 141– 149.
- Haddix, M.M., & Price-Dennis, D. (2013). Urban fiction and multicultural literature as transformative tools for preparing English teachers for diverse classrooms. *English Education*, 45(3), 247-284.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hendrix-Soto, A., & Mosley Wetzel, M. (2019). A review of critical literacies in preservice teacher education: Pedagogies, shifts, and barriers. *Teaching Education*, 30(2), 200-216.
10.1080/10476210.2018.1465034
- Herrera, S., Kavimandan, S. K., Perez, D. R. & Wessels, S. (2017). *Accelerating Literacy for*

Diverse Learners: Classroom Strategies that Integrate Social/Emotional Engagement and Academic Achievement, K-8. Teachers College Press.

Hesse-Biber, S. (2010). Qualitative Approaches to Mixed Methods Practice. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 455–468.

Holland, D., Skinner, D., Lachicotte, W., & Cain, C. (1998) *Identity and agency in cultural worlds.* Harvard University Press.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress.* Routledge.

House Bill 3979, TX. (2021). <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/billtext/html/HB03979I.htm>

House Bill 7, FL. (2022). <https://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/BillSummaries/2022/html/2809>

House Bill 1084, GA. (2022). <https://www.legis.ga.gov/api/legislation/document/20212022/204303>

Hu, C. (2021). *Big Bully* (Wilkinson Studios, Inc., Illus.). Learning A-Z.

<https://www.readinga-z.com/literacy-curriculum-map/#!/grade4>

Hulan, N. (2015). Molding a culturally responsive literacy practice: Professional development within diverse schools. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 28(1), 60-74.

Hynds, S. (1994). *Making connections: Language and learning in the classroom.* Christopher-Gordon.

Jensen, B., Valdés, G., & Gallimore, R. (2021). Teachers learning to implement equitable classroom talk. *Educational Researcher*, 50(8), 546-556.

Johnson, L. L., Bryan, N., & Boutte, G. (2019). Show us the love: Revolutionary teaching in (un)critical times. *The Urban Review*, 51(1), 46–64.

Jones, C. (2014). *Allegories on race and racism* [Video]. TEDxEmory Conferences.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNhcY6fTyBM>

Kaczmarczyk, A., Allee-Herndon, K., & Roberts, S. (2019). *Using literacy approaches to begin*

- conversations on racial illiteracy. Reading Teacher, 72(4), 523-528.*
- Kaestle, C. (1985). The history of literacy and the history of readers. *Review of Research in Education, 12*, 11-53. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1167145>
- Keenan, H. B. (2019). Selective memory: California mission history and the problem of historical violence in elementary school textbooks. *Teachers College Record, 121(8)*, 1-28.
- Kelly, L., Wakefield, J., Caires-Hurley, J., Watanabe Kganetso, L., Moses, L., & Baca, E. (2021). What is culturally responsive literacy instruction? A review of research in P – 5 contexts. *Journal of Literacy Research, 53(1)*, 75-99.
- Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How To Be an Antiracist*. Random House Publishing.
- Kinloch, V., Burkhard, T., & Penn, C. (Eds.). (2020a). *Race, Justice, and Activism in Literacy Instruction*. Teachers College Press.
- Kinloch, V., Penn, C., & Burkhard, T. (2020b). Black lives matter: Storying, identities, and counternarratives. *Journal of Literacy Research, 52(4)*, 382-405.
- King, J. E. (1991). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. *Journal of Negro Education, 60(2)*, 133-146.
- King, N., & Pringle, R. (2019). Black girls speak STEM: Counterstories of informal and formal learning experiences. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 56(5)*, 539-569.
- LaBoskey, V. K. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Vol. 2, pp. 817-869). Kluwer Academic.
- LaBoskey, V., & Richert, A. (2015). Self-study as a means for urban teachers to transform

- academics. *Studying Teacher Education*, 11(2), 164-179.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 32, 465-491. doi:10.3102/00028312032003465
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1999). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Fighting for our lives: Preparing teachers to teach African American students. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(3), 206-214.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2003a). Foreword. In S. Green & D. Abt-Perkins (Eds.), *Making race visible: Literacy research for cultural understanding* (pp. vii-xi). Teacher College Press.
- Ladson Billings, G. (2003b). Racialized discourses and ethnic epistemologies. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2nd ed., pp. 398-432). Sage Publications.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2007). Can we at least have Plessy- The struggle for quality education. *North Carolina Law Review*, 85(5), 1279-1292.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0: A.K.A. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74-84.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97, (1), 47-68.
- Lee, A. J. & Lee, A. Y. (2021). Using critical race spatial method to understand disparities in controlled choice plans. In Matias, C. E. (Ed.), *The Handbook of Critical Theoretical Research Methods in Education* (pp. 226-242). Routledge.
- Leonardo, Z. & Porter, R. (2010). Pedagogy of fear: Toward a Fanonian theory of 'safety' in race

dialogue. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 13(2), 139-157.

10.1080/13613324.2010.482898

Levine, S., Trepper, K., Hiuyan Chung, R., & Coelho, R. (2021). How feeling supports students' interpretive discussions about literature. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 53(4), 491-515.

Liddell v. Board of Education of the City of St. Louis, 469 F. Supp. 1304 (E.D. Mo. 1979) *Liddell v. St. Louis Board of education*, 72C100 (1). Consent Judgement and Decree. U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri (1975).

Lopéz, F., Molnar, A., Johnson, R., Patterson, A., Ward, L., & Kumashiro, K. (2021).

Understanding the attacks on critical race theory. National Education Policy Center, pp. 1-18. Retrieved [1/30/2023] from

https://nepc.colorado.edu/sites/default/files/publications/PM%20Lopez%20CRT_0.pdf

Lopez-Robertson, J. & Haney, M.J. (2017). Their eyes sparkled: Building classroom community through multicultural literature. *Journal of Children's Literature* 43(1), 48-54.

Loughran, J. (2007). Researching teacher education practices: Responding to the challenges, demands, and expectations of self-study. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(1), 12-20.

Luke, A. (1995). Text and discourse in education: An introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, 3-48.

Luke, A. (2019). Regrounding critical literacy: Representation, facts, and reality. In Alvermann, D. E., Unrau, N. J., Sailors, M., & Ruddell, R. B. (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of literacy* (7th ed., pp. 349-361). Routledge.

Maddamsetti, J. (2020). Elementary pre-service teachers' practice of racial literacy: Analysis of small stories in online critical inquiry communities. *Teaching Education*, 33(1), 81-101.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2020.1813703>

- Martin, J. B. (2021, May 25). Critical race theory can be stopped. Here's how. *The Washington Times*. https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/may/25/critical-race-theory-can-be-stoppedhereshow/?utm_source=GOOGLE&utm_medium=cpc&utm_id=chacka&utm_campaign=TWT++DSA&gclid=EAIAIQobChMInMD64IbT8wIVFkqGCh3Dvw5CEAMYAiAAEgJyHPD_BwE
- Matias, C.E. (2021). Introduction. In Matias, C. E. (Ed.), *The Handbook of Critical Theoretical Research Methods in Education* (pp. 1-15). Routledge.
- Matsuda, M. (1995). Looking to the bottom: Critical legal studies and reparations. In Crenshaw, K.W., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., Thomas, K. (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement* (pp. 63-79). The New Press.
- May, L. (2011). Animating talk and texts: Culturally relevant teacher read-alouds of informational texts. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 43(1), 3-38.
- May, L., Windom, C., Santini-Diaz, Y., Harvey-Torres, R. (2021). Connecting curricula to families: Guiding principles for using funds of identity to select children's literature. In X. Bauer & Y. Wang (Eds.), *A Transdisciplinary Lens for Bilingual Education* (pp. 191-210). Routledge.
- May, L., Stenhouse, V., & Holbrook, T. (2014). Critical moment but not critical literacy: Perspectives on teaching about President Obama. *Social Studies Research & Practice*, 9(1), 165-188. [10.1108/SSRP-01-2014-B0010](https://doi.org/10.1108/SSRP-01-2014-B0010)
- McGrady, C. (2021, December 15). Why bell hooks didn't capitalize her name. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2021/12/15/bell-hooks-real-name/>
- McNair, J. (2013). "I never knew there were so many books about us": Parents and children reading and responding to African American children's literature together. *Children's*

Literature in Education, 44(3), 191-207.

McNair, J. (2016). #WeNeedMirrorsAndWindows: Diverse classroom libraries for K-6 students.

Reading Teacher, 70(3), 375-381.

McNair, J. & Bishop, R. S., (2018). "To be great, heroic, and beautiful": The enduring legacy of the Brownies Book. *The Horn Book Magazine*, 28-34.

Meacham, S.J. (2000). Black Self-love, language, and the teacher education dilemma: The cultural denial and cultural limbo of African American preservice teachers. *Urban Education*, 34(5), 571-596.

Mendez v. Westminster, 37 U.S. 368 (1947).

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/judgement-and-injunction>

Mensah, F. M. (2016). Positional identity as a framework to studying science teacher identity: Looking at the experiences of teachers of color. In L. Avraamidou (Ed.), *Studying Science Teacher Identity: Theoretical, Methodological and Empirical Explorations* (pp. 49-70). Sense Publishers.

Mertens, D. M. (2003). Transformative mixed methods research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 468-474. DOI:10.1177/1077800410364612

Miles, M. M., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Miles, M., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook* (4th ed.). Sage. Chapter 4: Fundamentals of qualitative data analysis.

Miller, S. (2018). *Don't Touch My Hair*. Little, Brown, and Company.

Milner, H.R. (2003). Reflection, racial competence, and critical pedagogy: How do we prepare

- pre-service teachers to pose tough questions? *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 6(2), 193-208. DOI: 10.1080/13613320308200
- Milner, H. R. (2007). Race, narrative inquiry, and self-study in curriculum and teacher education. *Education and Urban Society*, 39(4), 584-609.
- Milner, H. R. (2010). What does teacher education have to do with teaching? Implications for diversity studies. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60, 118–131.
- Milner, H. R., & Laughter, J. (2015). But good intentions are not enough: Preparing teachers to center race and poverty. *Urban Review*, 47(2), 341-363.
- Milner, H.R. (2017). Race, talk, opportunity, gaps, and curriculum shifts in (teacher) education. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 66(1), 73-94.
10.1177/2381336917718804
- Milner, H. R., Delale-O'Connor, L., Murray, I. E., & Alvarez, A. (2016). Teachers Race Talk Survey (TRTS) [Survey instrument]. Retrieved from https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/SE?SID¼SV_cIsNBHIZIAfqx6t&Q_CHL¼preview&Preview¼Survey
- Moje, E. (2000). To be part of the story: The literacy practices of gangsta adolescents. *Teachers College Record*, 102, 652–690.
- Moje, E.B. (2009). Standpoints: A call for new research on new and multi-literacies. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 43(4), 348-362.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., & Neff, D. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31, 132-141.

- Morris, J.E. (2006). Critical race perspectives on desegregation: The forgotten voices of black educators. In D. Dixson, & C.K. Rousseau (Eds.), *Critical race theory in education: All God's children got a song* (pp. 129-151). Routledge.
- Morrison, T. (1992). *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination*. Harvard University Press.
- Morse, J.M. (2015). Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25 (9), 1212-1222.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315588501>
- Mosley, M. (2010). "That really hit me hard": Moving beyond passive anti-racism to engage with critical race literacy pedagogy. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education* 13(4), 449-471.
10.1080/13613324.2010.488902
- Mosley Wetzel, M. (2020). Disrupting race-evasive practices in literacy teacher education: Reflections on research and implications for policy and racial identities in literacy. *Language Arts*, 97(5), 306-316.
- Mosley Wetzel, M., Daly, A., LeeKeenan, K., & Svrcek, N.S. (2021). Coaching using racial literacy in preservice teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(4), 539-562.
- Mosley, M. & Rogers, R. (2011). Inhabiting the tragic gap: Pre-service teachers practicing racial literacy. *Teaching Education*, 22(3), 303-324.
- Mosley Wetzel, M. & Rogers, R. (2015) Constructing racial literacy through critical language awareness: A case study of a beginning literacy teacher. *Linguistics and Education*, 32, 27-40. 10.1016/j.linged.2015.03.014
- Muhammad, G. (2018). A plea for identity and criticality: Reframing literacy learning standards

- through a four-layered equity model. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 62(2), 137-142.
- Muhammad, G. (2019). Protest, power, and possibilities: The need for agitation literacies. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 63(3), 351-355.
- Muhammad, G.E., & Mosley, L. T. (2021). Why we need identity and equity learning in literacy practices: Moving research, practice, and policy forward. *Language Arts*, 98(4), 189-196.
- Nasir, N.S. (2002). Identity, goals, and learning: Mathematics in cultural practice. *Mathematical Thinking and Learning*, 4(2-3), 213-247.
- Nasir, N. S. (2004). “Halal’ing” the child: Reframing identities of resistance in an urban Muslim school. *Harvard Education Review*, 74(2), 153-174.
- Nasir, N. S. (2020). Teaching for equity: Where developmental needs meet racialized structures. *Applied Developmental Science*, 24(2), 146-150. DOI: 10.1080/10888691.2019.1609737
- Nasir, N., McKinney de Royston, M., O’Connor, K., & Wischnia, S. (2017). Knowing about racial stereotypes versus believing them. *Urban Education*, 52(4), 491-524.
10.1177/0042085916672290
- Nasir, N.S., Snyder, C. R., Shah, N., & Miraya Ross, K. (2013). Racial storylines and implications for learning. *Human Development*, 55(5-6), 285-301.
- New London Group, (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60-92.
- Noguera, P.A. (2003). Schools, prisons, and social implications of punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices. *Theory into Practice*, 42, 341-350.
- Olsen, B. S., (2008). *Teaching What They Learn, Learning What They Live: How Teachers’ Personal Histories Shape Their Professional Development*. Paradigm.

- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (2015). *Racial Formation in the United States*. Routledge.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. & Collins, K.M.T. (2007). A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in social science research. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2), 281-316.
- Osorio, S. L. (2018). Toward a humanizing pedagogy: Using Latinx children’s literature with early childhood students. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 41(1), 5–22.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2018.1425165>
- Parkhouse, H., Lu, C. Y., & Massaro, V.R. (2019). Multicultural education professional development: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 89(3), 416-458. DOI: 10.3102/0034654319840359
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97.
- Pendergast, M., May, L., Bingham, G., & Simon Kuramada, K. (2015). Acquiring responsive practices: Preservice teachers learn to conduct interactive read-alouds. *Action in Teacher Education*, 37(1), 65-81.
- Pemberthy v. Breyer, 19 F.3d, 857, 871 (1994).
<https://www.casemine.com/judgement/us/5914be16add7b049347a630e>
- Perry, L. M. (2016). *Skin Like Mine* (B. Jackson, Illus.). G Publishing.
- Peterson, K. (2016). Making Meaning with Friends: Exploring the Function, Direction and Tone of Small Group Discussions of Literature in Elementary School Classrooms. *Reading Horizons*, 55(3), 29–61.
- Peterson, K. E., & Chamberlain, K. (2015). “Everybody treated him like he was from another world”: Bilingual fourth-graders develop social awareness through interactive read-alouds focused on critical literacies. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 54(3), 231–255.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2015.1027020>

- Picower, B. (2009). The unexamined whiteness of teaching: How white teachers maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 12(2), 197-215.
10.1080/13613320902995475
- Pinnegar, S., & Russell, T. (1995). Introduction: Self-study and living educational theory. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 22(3), 5-9.
- Price-Dennis, D., Holmes, K., & Smith, E. E. (2016). "I thought we were over this problem": Explorations of race in/through literature inquiry. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 49(3), 314–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2016.1194102>
- Pyle, A., & Luce-Kapler, R. (2014). Looking beyond the academic and developmental logics in kindergarten education: The role of Schwab's commonplaces in classroom-based research, *Early Child Development and Care*, 184 (12), 1960-1977,
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2014.897945>
- Rausch, M.K. & Skiba, R. J. (2004). Unplanned outcomes: Suspensions and expulsions in Indiana. Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Educational Policy. Retrieved October 11, 2021, from <http://ceep.indiana.edu/ChildrenLeftBehind>
- Reeve, Elle (2021, July 7) CNN interviews parents worried about critical race theory. *CNN*.
<https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2021/07/07/critical-race-theory-cnn-reeve-pkg-ebof-vpx.cnn>
- Rhuday-Perkovich, O. (2018). *Someday is now: Clara Luper and the 1958 Sit-Ins* (J. Johnson, illus.). Seagrass Press.

- Richards, E., & Wong, A. (2021, September 10). Parents want kids to learn about ongoing effects of slavery – but not critical race theory. They’re the same. *USA Today*.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2021/09/10/crt-schools-education-racism-slavery-poll/5772418001/>
- Rogers, R., & Schaenen, I. (2014). Critical discourse analysis in literacy education: A review of the literature. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 49(1), 121-143.
- Rogers, R., & Mosley, M. (2006). Racial literacy in a second-grade classroom: Critical race theory, whiteness studies, and literacy research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41(4), 462-495.
- Rogers, R., & Mosley, M. (2008). A critical discourse analysis of racial literacy in teacher education. *Linguistics and Education: An International Research Journal*, 19(2), 107–131.
- Rosenblatt, L. M., (1994/2019). The transactional theory of reading and writing. In Alvermann, D. E., Unrau, N. J., Sailors, M., & Ruddell, R. B. (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of literacy* (7th ed., pp. 451- 477). Routledge.
- Rousseau, C. K., & Dixson, A.D. (2011). The first day of school: A CRT story. In D. Dixson, & C.K. Rousseau (Eds.) *Critical race theory in education: All God’s children got a song* (pp. 57-65). Routledge.
- Rufo, C. (2021). *Writer discusses why he opposes critical race theory* [Video]. MSNBC.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CwGy392gFE
- Rufo, C. (2021, June 27). Battle over critical race theory. *Wall Street Journal*.
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/battle-over-critical-race-theory-11624810791>
- Sachar, L. (1998). *Holes*. Random House.

- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Saukko, P. (2005). Methodologies for cultural studies: An integrative approach. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd Ed., pp.343-356). Sage Publications.
- Schmeichel, M. (2012). Good teaching? An examination of culturally relevant pedagogy as an equity practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 44(2), 211-231.
- Scribner, S. & Cole, M. (1981). Unpacking Literacy. In Whiteman, M.F. (Ed.), *Writing: The nature, development, and teaching of written communication* (pp. 57-70). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2021a). The critical literacy of race: Toward racial literacy in urban teacher education. In H. R. Milner IV & K. Lomotey (Eds.), *Handbook of Urban Education* (2nd ed., pp. 281–295). Routledge. 10.4324/9780429331435-21
- Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2021b). Racial literacy: A policy research brief. National Council of Teachers of English.
https://ncte.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SquireOfficePolicyBrief_RacialLiteracy_April2021.pdf
- Skerrett, A. (2011). English teachers' racial literacy knowledge and practice. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 14(3), 313-330.
- Skerrett, A. (2020). Social and cultural differences in reading development: Instructional processes, learning gains, and challenges. In E. Moje, P. Afflerbach, P. Enciso, & N. Lesaux (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 5, pp. 328–344). Routledge.

- Sleeter, C. (2008). Preparing white teachers for diverse students. In Smith, M.C., Nemieser, F., McIntyre, J.D., & Demers, K.E. (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Context*. (3rd ed., pp. 559–582). Routledge.
- Solórzano, D. & Yosso, T. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for educational research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.
10.1177/107780040200800103
- Solic, K. & Riley, K. (2019). Teacher candidates' experiences taking issues of race and racism in an urban education fellowship program. *Action in Teacher Education*, 41(2), 99-116.
10.1080/01626620.2018.1561549
- Souto-Manning M. (2019). “Good teaching” and “good teachers” for whom?: Critically troubling standardized and corporatized notions of quality in teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, 121(10), 1–44.
- Souto-Manning, M. (2021). Righting the literacy teacher education debt: A matter of Justice. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 53(4), 588-600.
- Stanovich, K. E., & West, R. F. (2007). Natural myside bias is independent of cognitive ability. *Think Reason*, 13, 225-247.
- Stake, R.E. (2005) Qualitative case studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 443-466). Sage Publications.
- Subero, D., Llopart, M., Siqués, C., Esteban-Guitart, M. (2018). The mediation of teaching and learning processes through identity artefacts. A Vygotskian perspective. *Oxford Review of Education*, 44(2), 156-170. 10.1080/03054985.2017.1352501

- Suddath, C., & Avi-Yonah, S. (2021, October 2). How critical race theory became a political target. *Bloomberg*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-02/how-critical-race-theory-became-a-political-target-quicktake>
- Tatum, B. (2017). “Why are all the black kids still sitting together in the cafeteria?” and other conversations about race in the twenty-first century. *Liberal Education*, 103, 46-55.
- Taylor, C. (1994). The politics of recognition. In C. Taylor, K.A. Appiah, S.C. Rockefeller, M. Waltzer, & S. Wolf, (eds), *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition* (pp. 25-73). Princeton University Press.
- Teddle, C. & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Sage Publications.
- Templeton, T., & Cheruvu, R. (2020). Childhood innocence for settler children: Disrupting colonialism and innocence in early childhood curriculum. *The New Educator*, 16, 131–148.
- Thomas, E.E. (2015). “We always talk about race”: Navigating race talk dilemmas in the teaching of literature. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 50(2), 154-175.
- Thomas, E. E. (2019). *The Dark Fantastic: Race and Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*. New York University Press.
- Tomé-Fernández, M., Senís-Fernández, J., & Ruiz-Martín, D. (2019). Values and intercultural experiences through picture books. *Reading Teacher*, 73(2), 205–213.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1813>
- Thomas, E. E. (2019). *The Dark Fantastic: Race and Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*. New York University Press.

- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851. DOI: 10.1177/1077800410383121
- Unrau, N. J., Alvermann, D. E., & Sailors, M., (2019). Literacy and their investigation through theories and models. In Alvermann, D. E., Unrau, N. J., Sailors, M., & Ruddell, R. B. (Eds.), *Theoretical Models and Processes of literacy* (7th ed., pp. 3-34). Routledge.
- Vanassche, E., & Kelchtermans, G. (2015). The state of the art in Self-Study of teacher Education practices: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 47(4), 508-528.
- Vetter, A., & Hungerford-Kressor, H. (2014). “We gotta change first”: Racial literacy in a high school English classroom. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 10(1), 82-99.
- Vetter, A., Schieble, M., & Meacham, M. (2018). Critical conversations in English education: Discursive strategies for examining how teacher and student identities shape classroom discourse. *English Education*, 50(3), 255-282.
- Ward, J. V. (1996). Raising resisters: The role of truth telling in the psychological development of African American girls. In B. Ross and N. Way (eds), *Urban Girls: Resisting Stereotypes, Creating Identities*, (pp. 85-99). New York University Press.
- Warren, C. A. (2018). Empathy, teacher dispositions, and preparation for culturally responsive pedagogy. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 69(2), 169-183.
- West, C. (1993/2017). *Race Matters*. Beacon Press.
- Weinberg, D. (2014). *Contemporary Social Constructionism*. Temple University Press.
- Winograd, K. (2015). Critical literacy, common core standards, and young learners: Imagining a synthesis of educational approaches. In: Winograd, K. (ed.) *Critical Literacies and Young Learners: Connecting Classroom Practice to the Common Core* (pp. 3-13). Routledge.

Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.) Sage Publications.

Yoon, H. (2022). Critically literate citizenship: Moments and movements in second grade.

Journal of Literacy Research, 52(3), 293-315. 10.1177/1086296X20939557

Zaino, K. & Bell, J. (2021). Beyond brutality: Addressing anti-blackness in everyday scenes of teaching and learning. *Northwest Journal of Teacher Education*, 16(2), 1-17.

10.15760/nwjte.2021.16.2.3

Zeichner, K. (2007). Accumulating knowledge across self-studies in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(1), 36-46.

Appendices

Phase One Codes		
Code	Description	Example
Comparing	To note similarities or differences between the child, the PST, and/or the text	But this is skin of, um—Color. This is different, this is not. Yeah?
Contextualizing	Providing the details about the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed.	<p>So this is Clara Luper. She was an African American woman. And it's about the 1958 Oklahoma City sit-ins.</p> <p>It—So what it is is, um, if you— And you learn about it too, in the book, but it's like, um, during the Civil Rights movement, a lot of people would do sit ins, which is when you come in with your own sit and sit inside a place where they were told they weren't allowed to go to go.</p> <p>It should be like a—Yeah. To be like kind of a peaceful protest, you know saying, "Why aren't we allowed to be here?" What is the, you know, reason for this?</p>
Engaging	Taking up or initiating a conversation. Moves beyond responding by “understanding how power, oppression, and privilege are present. Looking outside of themselves, including the cultural identities and values that they have come to know...to understand the ideologies and perspectives of marginalized communities...to read between the lines and to seek to understand what is not in print...to investigate positions from marginalized standpoints.	
Evaluating	Giving a “grade” to a response. Determining the “correctness” of a response. “The verbal evaluation occurs	<p>Good job, yes</p> <p>I love that. That's another great reflection to the story, for sure.</p>

Phase One Codes		
Code	Description	Example
	when the teacher affirms or clarifies the child's response based on the answer they expected (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).	That doesn't belong there, right? Yes, you do know her. Good job. Feet? Very good. Good job.
Explaining	Giving more details about a topic, concept, or question; defining.	This one is, um—So that one was fiction. So the story was made up. This is a non-fiction story. So it's about real people. Um, but it's really cool. So, this is an alphabet book. We have words that start with the letter A on the A page, we got words that start with the letter B on the B page. He was asian, that means he was from the continent of Asia
Imagining	Applying the content of the topic of discussion or read aloud to their own lives; Thinking about what they would do if they were in the same or similar scenario.	I would be at asking why you're crying. I would be asking if you work here. Probably that all the Black people, all African Americans in that school—will probably do protesting that, showing that black people that black people protesting. Wait, that girl is—that girl looks so fun
Imposing	Projecting an idea, thought, or feeling onto someone else, forcing something to be accepted or put into place	I think sometimes you think you don't like school but like, really, you get to see your friends, we get to color, we get to play. We get to do a lot of fun stuff in school.
Initiating	A bid for a "known answer," discussion or line of thinking (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).	So they were not actually served the sodas that they asked for, right? So what is good about the fact that they got to drink soda that day? What kind of words do you think are gonna be on half ago half ago this page?
Subcode Prompting	Guiding a response. (Sayers Adomat, 2010, p. 207). A	Because if, like, you're not allowed in a place and then now you're just like everyone else, how does

Phase One Codes		
Code	Description	Example
	form of initiation where the teacher either provides an example of the type of the response, or a question that is closed in a way that makes them attend to a specific phenomenon.	that make you feel? What do you think she won a prize for? And why was getting he teased, because he was what?
Inquiring	Asking for more information in a way that requires thought or process beyond simple answers...explorations (i.e., one word, yes or no).	What do you think the tear means? So what are some changes here that you're noticing both in the words and in the pictures? This really happened? Do you have any bullies sitting at the table right now? Have you all ever been bullied before? What do you like about your skin color?
Noticing	Paying attention to what might be missed; to bring attention to a specific idea, thought, or topic	And you notice the White's Only sign? They have emotions? They look sad. That's, like, 1958—It's like a thousand years and a half ago.
Questioning	Teacher: "A method of evaluating what the children have been taught" (López-Robertson, 2011, p. 67). Children: A tool for clarification and an expression of opinions (López-Robertson, 2011, p. 67). Initiating a response by asking a question (see discursive pattern IRE). This is usually a close-ended question that does not require	Do y'all know what a sit-in is? Have ya'll heard that term? What kind of words do you think are gonna be on this page? And is that something to do? No, and why was getting he teased, because he was what? Do you have, um, friends with different skin?

Phase One Codes		
Code	Description	Example
	critical or deeper thinking.	
Redirecting	Shifting or moving attention away from an undesirable topic to a new, less challenging topic. (<i>Pay close attention to when this code is used to shift the conversation away from race</i>) (Roach & Beck, 2012, p. 250-251).	So, let's take one second. Let's take one second to hear my words, okay?...it's time to stop. Chocolate? (Laughs)...like dark chocolate?
	-OR- pivoting conversation to consider multiple points of view (Falkner, 2022, p. 41).	
Relating	Drawing on parallels between the text or discussion and their own experience or prior knowledge (i.e., "connecting their lives with schooling" (Freire & Macedo, 1987) as a foundation for literacy (López-Robertson & Haney, 2017, p. 53). "Seeing beyond the classroom and connecting to events from the past as well as the present (Sims Bishop, 1990; Price Dennis et al., 2016).	But I just thought it was cool that students—You know, anybody can do anything that makes a difference. That's like 1958—It's like a thousand years and a half ago. For example, I look like you. Um, a little different, but not much.
Rephrasing	To repeat what was said by someone else in new or different words	You think it's beautiful? Someone who flies an airplane. African Americans had to sit in the back.
Responding	A reply to a bid for a "known answer" (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).	They did not believe that it's gonna happen? There was no more segregation in that store. My brother is so fast.

Phase One Codes

Code	Description	Example
Restating	To repeat what was previously said, can also be for clarity. “Voicing the words of others” (May, 2011, p. 12).	<p>It’s like a map of part of America.</p> <p>So everyone’s happy, everyone is calm.</p> <p>Maybe she could change something?</p>
Separating	Creating space between the PST, the child, the text, or race. Moving away from racial conversations.	<p>Which we know, now, that it's not, but that's what they were thinking.</p> <p>So that was the, um, the choice of the shopkeeper to not do that,</p> <p>That's, like, 1958—It's like a thousand years and a half ago.</p>

Appendix B. Phase Two Codebook

Phase 2 Concept Codes	
Code	Description
Reifying the Status Quo	Making use of narratives that are commonly used to explain race relations, post-racial or otherwise. (e.g., skin color doesn't matter, Bonilla-Silva, 2003).
Race Making	Constructing race based on a core assumption or visual information (e.g., racial projects, Omi & Winant, 2015).
Minimizing Social Significance	Actively redirecting (explicit) or inactive redirection (implicit, e.g., silence); reading between the lines.
Identity Making	The process of "self-making" Aligning oneself as the "type of person who is or does something." Can approach bridging or distancing. "Identity or self-making occurs through a continuous process of identification... literacy practices and social identities develop through mutual interaction" (Bartlett, 2007, p. 53; Holland et al., 1998).
Making Sense of Difference	"[G]rappling with lines of 'difference' and the dominant referent points against which difference is constructed" (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020, p. 246).
Recognizing Social Implications	Attending to the material consequences of race, racism, and racial hierarchies for people of color (Guinier, 2004; Daly, 2022; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b).
Developing a Stance	Stating or implying an attitude or standpoint in relation to race.

Appendix C. Abbreviated Themes and Codes

Theme 1: Bridging	
Making connections between the text, the student, self, and race. Bridging also includes holding space for other perspectives and connections for example, relinquishing discursive power	
Code	Definition
Identity Making ¹	The process of “self-making” Aligning oneself as the “type of person who is or does something.” Can approach bridging or distancing. “Identity or self-making occurs through a continuous process of identification... literacy practices and social identities develop through mutual interaction” (Bartlett, 2007, p. 53; Holland et al., 1998).
Making Sense of Difference	“[G]rappling with lines of ‘difference’ and the dominant referent points against which difference is constructed” (Beneke & Cheatham, 2020, p. 246).
Recognizing Social Implications	Attending to the manifested consequences of race, racism, and racial hierarchies (Guinier, 2004; Daly, 2022; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021b).
Developing a Stance	Stating or implying an attitude or standpoint in relation to race.
Theme 2: Distancing	
Moving away from social understandings of race; positioning race as neutral, ahistorical, and/or separate from lived experiences.	
Code	Definition
Reifying the Status Quo	Making use of narratives that are commonly used to explain race relations, post-racial or otherwise. (e.g., skin color doesn’t matter, Bonilla-Silva, 2003).
Race Making	Constructing race based on a core assumption or visual information (e.g., racial projects, Omi & Winant, 2015).
Minimizing Social Significance	Actively redirecting (explicit) or inactive redirection (implicit, e.g., silence); reading between the lines.
Theme 3: Talking but Not Talking	
PSTs talk about race without delving into the meaning or social significance of race, or while enacting colorblindness in their discussions.	
Code	Definition
Evaluating	Giving a “grade” to a response. Determining the “correctness” of a response. “The verbal evaluation occurs when the teacher affirms or clarifies the child’s

response based on the answer they expected (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).

Imposing	Projecting an idea, thought, or feeling onto someone else, forcing something to be accepted or put into place
Initiating	A bid for a “known answer,” discussion or line of thinking (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).
Redirecting	Shifting or moving attention away from an undesirable topic to a new, less challenging topic. (<i>Pay close attention to when this code is used to shift the conversation away from race</i>) (Roach & Beck, 2012, p. 250-251). -OR- pivoting conversation to consider multiple points of view (Falkner, 2022, p. 41).
Responding	A reply to a bid for a “known answer” (Beneke & Cheatham, 2019, p. 110).
