“SIXTH GRADE IS TOO LATE”: A CASE STUDY OF DIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR ELEMENTARY GRADES

by

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Curriculum and Instruction

Charlotte

2020

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ABSTRACT

JESSICA J. NORWOOD. “Sixth grade is too late”: A case study of diversity education for elementary grades. (Under the direction of DR. TINA HEAFNER)

Recent high-profile events and rhetoric surrounding White supremacist ideology in conjunction with recent data about White Americans’ understanding of structural racism has illustrated the problematic nature of White Americans’ conceptions of race and racism. In a society where Whiteness is normalized and seldom challenged, White Americans tend struggle with applying structural and institutional lenses to racial inequality. Further, American education often lacks conversations about race and racism that invoke structural and institutional perspectives, particularly at the elementary level, contributing to the misunderstandings of race and racism among White people. Seeking to address this problem from an education perspective, this study aims to contribute to the scholarship of anti-racist and multicultural education by exploring ways in which racial literacy may be facilitated within White students.

A case study method was conducted to explore one elementary school’s use of a diversity curriculum as multicultural education with its predominantly White student body, including the associated perceptions and attitudes about the curriculum among a sample of White administrators, teachers, and fifth grade students. Through lesson observations, interviews with adults and students, and a review of lesson plans, qualitative data were gathered and analyzed through a framework of multicultural education and Critical Whiteness theory. Results suggested six primary characteristics of the diversity curriculum, including: (1) a grounding in the school mission statement, (2) an investment in the racial literacy of teachers and staff, (3) an organic and evolving

nature, (4) a multi-faceted approach to diversity topics, (5) the use of sound instructional strategies, and (6) an emphasis on parent involvement and communication. Results of teacher perceptions and attitudes indicated teachers believed in: (1) the necessity of racial literacy to teach the curriculum, (2) the need to provide space for students, parents, and faculty/staff of Color, (3) the benefit of the program for White students, (4) a personal investment in the curriculum, and (5) room for growth for the program. Finally, data from student interviews suggested that students: (1) had mixed feelings about the enjoyment of the lessons, (2) remembered specific memorable topics, and (3) understood diversity as difference.

Results from the study suggested implications for moving toward effective anti-racist education for elementary school students, including the power of conversations as vehicles toward greater racial literacy for White children and adults, a spiraling nature of racial literacy among administrators and teachers, meaningful stakeholder inclusion, social studies as anti-racist work, and possibilities for public schools enacting similar curriculum efforts.

Keywords: diversity education, multicultural education, anti-racist education, elementary education, Critical Whiteness

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Lori Bridges and Scott Norwood, who have led and supported my education journey for, quite literally, my entire life. I humbly owe this work, and all my other achievements and opportunities, to your sacrifices, unconditional love, and continued grace. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My doctoral journey was only possible due to the unwavering support I've received since I started my program. I am truly grateful for my dissertation chair, Dr. Tina Heafner, and her investment in my academic growth over the past four years, including making conferences possible for me, inviting me to write and research, and mentoring my interest in social studies education. Tina, I could not be more thankful for your guidance and care along this journey. I also want to offer a special thanks to Dr. Amy Good, who has also provided both personal and professional support since I was an undergraduate. Amy, there were times you were truly the glue between me and this program, and I owe much of this accomplishment to your genuine investment in my wellbeing. The rest of my dissertation committee have also made this work possible: Dr. Tracy Rock, Dr. Tehia Starker-Glass, and Dr. Erin Miller. I thank you all for your time and energy in helping me grow in the areas of qualitative research, anti-racism, and Critical Whiteness studies. I am lucky to have been able to work with and learn from you all.

Although not part of my dissertation committee, I also want to acknowledge the guidance and support from Dr. Erik Byker and Dr. Adam Myers, who allowed me opportunities to grow as an academic and educator through my graduate assistantship for three years. I am also grateful for Dr. Paul Fitchett and his mentorship and advocacy for me through this program experience.

In truly uncertain times, I also owe tremendous gratitude to the 10 administrator, teacher, and student participants of my study. I am incredibly appreciative of their time, expertise, and willingness to share their experiences with me. This study would not have

been possible with their generosity.

Additionally, I want to recognize my friends and family who have made this journey possible for me. First, to my parents, who have been my most enduring and loudest cheerleaders, I am so grateful to have had you as a source of love and support throughout this process. Even when I didn't believe in myself, you did, and that made such a difference. I am also grateful to my brother, Matthew, whose humor I can always count on to lift my spirits, even when writing a dissertation. To my lifelong friends, Hannah, Hannah, Casey, and Jessica, thank you for always being only a text away, celebrating my milestones, and supporting me along the entire journey. And to Mandy, how could I have ever done this without you? I am so grateful to have met you four (long) years ago and I cherish our lifelong friendship ahead. Thank you for everything.

Finally, I'm not sure how to put into the words the sacrifice and unconditional love of my husband, Patrick, who met me during my first year of this journey and still chose to walk it with me. Thank you so much for never giving up on this for me – you have been the most amazing support I could have happened to meet along the way. I love you, am so grateful for you, and look forward to continuing to talk about "pedagogy" with you for the rest of our lives. To my daughter, Magnolia, and yet-to-arrive baby two, I want you to know that this work is for you. You're the biggest inspiration for me, and I hope this work will make you proud. Lastly, to my pup, Olive, who I adopted a month before starting my doctoral program, thank you for your unconditional love and many, many cuddles. Mom has lots more free time for tug-of-war now.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

During August 2017, White supremacists descended upon Charlottesville, Virginia, in the "Unite the Right" rally that brought racist and anti-Semitic ideology to the surface of American discourse and left an anti-racist protester, Heather Heyer, dead (Ruiz & McCallister, 2017). Additionally, since 2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center has documented a 50% increase in the number of White supremacist groups in the United States (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2020). At the same time, as of 2019, 52% of White Americans believe people "see racial discrimination where it really does not exist," and only 54% agree that racial discrimination may hurt social mobility for Black people (Horowitz et al., 2019, para. 16). In fact, Krysan & Moberg (2016), using longitudinal data across decades of national surveys, found that White Americans' beliefs in structural racism have actually declined since the 1970s. For example, according to their data, in 1975, 72% of Whites surveyed agreed that "generations of slavery and discrimination" affected social mobility for Black people (para. 29). In 2012, only 46% of White Americans agreed with the same statement. White respondents across decades have favored personal motivation as the reason for why Black people are less likely to experience social mobility (Krysan & Moberg, 2016), exhibiting a troubling misunderstanding of structurally unjust social institutions that serve to perpetuate racism.

White Americans' justifications of racial inequality may partly be attributed to the United States' approach to social studies and multicultural education in public schools, which often fails to highlight the ways structural and institutional racism has characterized past and current American society (King & Chandler, 2016). Civil rights education is often told through stories of individuals and in isolation from current social

problems related to historical inequality (King, 2016). Lacking understanding of how intersections of historical institutional racism influences the modern lives of many Americans (Kelly & Varghese, 2018), those with race or class privilege may misinterpret not only the realities faced by minoritized groups, but also their own lot in life. Ultimately, stereotyping, scapegoating, and prejudice may come to fill the void of more sophisticated understandings of racial group differences (Dovidio et al., 2010), distracting from the more accurate institutional perspective.

White Americans in particular tend to struggle with conceptions of structural and institutional racism (Jayakumar et al., 2017). With perspectives viewed as the default American norm, further reinforced by Eurocentric forms of public education, White Americans exist in a society built by and for other White people. Revealing Whites' privileged position in society is often met with backlash and frustration situated in a disconnection from the reality of racism in the 21st century (DiAngelo, 2018; Jayakumar et al., 2017). As such, White students seldom contend with the history of Whiteness in America through traditional public education (Picower, 2009; Yeung et al., 2013).

Young White children especially may have fewer opportunities to grapple with issues of race. Despite beliefs among White adults that children are too innocent or immature to tackle challenging topics (Leistyna, 2009), White children's conceptions of race are continuously developing throughout their elementary (grades K-5) years (Bronson & Merryman, 2011; Harvey, 2018; Kinzler & Dautel, 2011; Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). Failing to discuss with White children the significance of racial identity, racial inequality, and White racial superiority during a formative window of social understanding may hinder social justice orientations. Intervening during

elementary years, however, may help to disrupt early and foundational historical and cultural understandings that limit White students' grasps of institutionalized discrimination in the United States (Husband, 2010; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2004). Given the implications of young White students lacking opportunities to contend with critical perspectives of race, the purpose of this study is to explore an intentional curriculum in place at a predominantly White elementary school that aims to educate students about race and diversity from a social justice lens.

Statement of Problem

Students' exposure to education about the social construction of race, structural nature of racism, and significance of diversity through public school is often lacking, particularly in the elementary grades. While racism is taught *about* in schools, it is typically disjointed from an institutional lens (King, 2016), focused on specific individuals (Levinson, 2010), and communicated from positions of privilege by White teachers and White authors of curricula (Boutte & Jackson, 2013). Known as *non-racist* education, this type of race education is a piece-meal approach defined by passive language and actions that reinforce dominant notions of race without attention to social science data that suggest otherwise (King & Chandler, 2016; Mosley, 2010). Colorblindness also permeates discussions of race in public education, especially in the elementary grades, where the significance of race is pushed aside in discussions of societal harmony (Boutte et al., 2011; Leistyna, 2010; King & Chandler, 2016).

In contrast, *anti-racist* education seeks to expose the structural and institutional nature of racism in America and bring the socially constructed nature of race to the center of education, particularly within the social studies (King & Chandler, 2016). This type of

structurally-focused race education seeks to increase students' racial literacy, or the understanding of racism as a perennial issue in the United States rooted in "socio-historical, socio-economic, and socio-political structures" (King, 2016, p. 1303). Racially literate students and individuals are aware and considerate of the institutional structures at work in creating and maintaining racial inequality. Anti-racist education, however, is not the norm in public school classrooms, and this creates a problem for wider efforts toward social justice for students of Color, including educational equity.

Further, shying away from discussions about the social construction of race in the elementary grades misses a critical period in which children are being socialized into a racialized cultures and societies (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Miller, 2017). Since children first starting elementary school have often already internalized the dominant racial ideology of White supremacy (Baron & Banaji, 2006), strategic anti-racist instruction may help mitigate negative racial attitudes children bring to school (Stephan & Stephan, 2004).

Given White Americans' typically limited understanding of how race operates from a structural lens, anti-racist education in early childhood may help bridge gaps between White perspectives of race and the reality of historical and institutional inequality in the United States. Multicultural education may be one way through which students can experience meaningful anti-racist education. According to Banks (2016), meaningful multicultural education embodies not only exposure to multiple, diverse groups of people, but does so in a way that highlights the structural and institutional realities of social problems. Multicultural education invites students to examine themselves, marginalized groups, the context of community, and the tenets of social

justice and democracy (Banks, 2016). In fact, in Banks's (1993) framework for multicultural education, the highest level of multicultural education, the Social Action Approach, prioritizes discussions of social structures that help students challenge the status quo of inequality. As students engage in this type of multicultural education, they not only learn anti-racist education content, but also live anti-racist education that involves a systemic change to their educational materials, processes, and classroom and school cultures (Banks, 2016). In elementary education, however, multicultural education is typically approached from a non-racist, Contributions Approach that highlights some diverse representation of marginalized groups, such as holidays, but does not embody the social justice aspects of multicultural work (Banks, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Non-racist approaches to multicultural education in the elementary grades fail to challenge White supremacy, particularly for White children, and presents an area for further research among schools seeking to change this norm. Through documenting one elementary school's efforts to educate its predominantly White student body about race and diversity, this study hopes to address this issue by offering potential solutions for schools looking to implement anti-racist work among both staff and students.

Conceptual Framework

Critical theory is a broad framework composed of various theories that critique hegemonic structures of society that propagate social inequalities (Lemert, 2010). Rooted in Marxist class theory, critical theory has branched into more specific analyses of race (Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies), gender (feminist and womanist theory), and sexuality (queer theory). Within education, critical theory is woven through a series of critical pedagogies that acknowledge the politics inherent in education and

seek to empower students toward liberation through critical analyses and applications of educational content and processes (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Rather than participating in a "banking model" of education in which information is poured into students and expected to be regurgitated, critical pedagogies aim to spark consciousness among students to recognize systems of oppression through problem-posing education (Freire, 2000). Education for emancipation is the central goal of critical theory.

More specifically, this study is grounded in Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies. Critical Race Theory (CRT) centers the connection between racism and power, noting the incentives that institutional racism provides for the dominant group at the expense of minoritized groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Situated within education, CRT calls for helping students to: 1) identify and analyze the nature of racism in the United States; 2) recognize problems inherent in colorblind rhetoric and policy; 3) prioritize the voices of minorities; 4) understand the limitations of civil rights laws and racial liberalism; and 5) challenge Whiteness as the norm (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lynn & Dixon, 2013).

Building on the work of scholars of Color, Whiteness studies have emerged as an examination of the racial identities of the dominant group (Jupp & Slattery, 2013), with the goal of disrupting Whiteness as the norm (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003). More specifically, the goals of challenging Whiteness within this perspective include examinations of history and institutional aspects of White identities and privileges, exposing and mitigating White fragility, and asserting change among Whites to resist and rectify racist American social structures (Levine-Rasky, 2002). Recent scholarship in Critical Whiteness has also encouraged an acknowledgement of the complexity of

Whiteness as opposed to “monolithic” and “essentializing” ways of describing White people, which does not assist in fundamental changes to racist structures of society (Miller & Tanner, 2019, p. 75). Critical Whiteness guides this work as a tool for evaluating the diversity curriculum being studied as well as the reported perceptions and attitudes of the initiative as shared by White administrators, teachers, and students.

Additionally, because the diversity curriculum studied in this work is a form of multicultural education, Banks’s (1993) model of multicultural education is also used as a conceptual framework for this study. Banks’s (1993) framework describes different hierarchical approaches to multicultural education, including the Contributions Approach, Additive Approach, Transformative Approach, and Social Action Approach. These approaches present different types of multicultural education that start with a marginalized approach to multiculturalism (the Contributions Approach) and grow through a social-justice oriented transformation of both content and pedagogy (the Social Action Approach). For this study, Banks’s (1993) framework is used both to describe the curriculum being studied and to offer suggestions for pushing the curriculum toward more strategic anti-racist education.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study is to document a diversity curriculum implemented at a predominately White (71%) elementary school in the Southeastern United States aimed at cultivating positive student attitudes and perspectives about diversity, as well as the associated attitudes and beliefs about the curriculum among White administrators, teachers, and fifth grade students. Few studies have explored White students’ racial literacies and engagement with race education, particularly for

elementary students (Rogers & Mosley, 2006), and fewer studies have documented elementary student voices regarding diversity education. Through exploring the school's diversity curriculum along with adult and student attitudes and beliefs, this work may inform additional multicultural education efforts for White students.

Through triangulating data from lesson observations, interviews with administrators, teachers, and students, as well as a review of lesson plans from the curriculum, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a diversity curriculum at an elementary school serving predominantly White students?
2. What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among school administrators and teachers?
3. What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among fifth grade students?

It is important to note the use of the term "diversity curriculum" to describe the work being done at the school in this study. While the school titled the program, "Embracing Diversity," the tenets of the curriculum mirrored education literature's use of the term "multicultural education." According to Banks (2016), multicultural education seeks to facilitate perspectives in students that allow them to thoughtfully consider both local and wider communities as well as teach the knowledge and skills to empower them to address social inequalities. The first two research questions guiding this study seek to assess the extent to which the curriculum under study approaches these qualities, while the third question aims to inform the elementary multicultural literature of student voices regarding diversity education.

Significance of Study

This study has significance for the fields of anti-racist and multicultural education. By documenting efforts at an elementary school to expose White children to themes of diversity, this work may further inform the field of anti-racist education regarding strategies for cultivating racial literacy among White elementary school students. Further, documenting the attitudes and beliefs about the curriculum among White school staff and students may lend insight into White perspectives of diversity education that indicate areas for improvement or opportunity within diversity initiatives. By examining the curriculum itself within an anti-racist philosophy, this work may also help inform practical efforts for moving multicultural approaches in the elementary grades toward more meaningful anti-racist education.

Additionally, themes documented in the school's diversity curriculum through this study align with social studies goals and content as outlined by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (NCSS, 2013). As social studies education has traditionally excluded hard history and a structural focus of race and diversity, this study may provide insight into opportunities for social studies education outside of traditional social studies scheduled times, which have largely been marginalized in the elementary grades (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012). Documenting opportunities to integrate social studies content into school and classroom cultures provides insight into strategies for maximizing student access to social studies knowledge and skills.

Finally, this study is significant for its inclusion of elementary student voices as a data source. The National Council for the Social Studies has called for more research capturing student voices (NCSS, 2020), as social studies research among elementary

students often uses teacher or observational data rather than student data. This study incorporates student perspectives of the curriculum, which provides more considerations for multicultural initiatives among White students.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Study assumptions involve contextual attributes that the researcher has little control over (Simon, 2011). This study assumes that the administrators, teachers, and student participants will provide honest responses to questions about the diversity due to confidentiality measures taken to ensure participants' identities as well as their ability to withdraw from the study at any time. The study also assumes that the curriculum is situated in anti-racist philosophy as described by previous informal meetings with the principal (not included in data collection or analysis) and based on the school's website, which explicates a commitment to social justice through its curriculum and school philosophy. While findings indicate there is room for improvement in the curriculum from such a lens, the assumption guiding this curricular exploration is that the curriculum at least *intends* to engage students in institutional and structural understandings of diversity. Finally, from a logistical standpoint, this study assumes that all participants have had enough interactions with the curriculum to form thoughtful perceptions and attitudes of the program.

Limitations of a study refer to its "potential weaknesses," which are out of the control of the researcher (Simon, 2011, p.2). A significant limitation of this study is related to its case study nature. There is only one school involved in this research, which is not representative of diversity education among all elementary schools. The limited number of participants, only 10, also do not fully represent the school itself, particularly

regarding the attitudes and perceptions of the curriculum among students and faculty of Color. As such, results from this study are not intended to be generalizable, but informative for similar initiatives among White elementary students. The nature of subjectivity in qualitative research also provides a limitation for this work, although efforts are made to prevent as much bias as possible through sound research methods and a researcher positionality statement. Finally, the school under study is also a religiously-affiliated private school, which limits its conclusions into the public and secular school spheres due to the many differences between the sectors, such as a selective parent and student population, religious focus, higher school autonomy, and, in this case, higher student socioeconomic status.

The intentional focus on White school staff and students is both a limitation and delimitation. Delimitations purposefully limit the boundaries of a study (Simon, 2011). While participants reported that faculty of Color were involved in the curriculum planning and design, and that there was an intentional focus on providing space for students of Color, the chosen focus on a White population was selected as the purpose for this study in order to capture White perspectives about multicultural work. This narrow focus limits the generalizability of this study and does not capture voices from faculty and students of Color. However, because White students and teachers rarely engage in formal diversity education, this setting provided the opportunity to document strategies and limitations for facilitating racial literacy among both White children and adults.

Another delimitation is the elementary setting, which was specifically selected to add to the field of elementary anti-racist work and multicultural education. While results from this study are not intended to be generalizable to middle and high school grades, the

focus on elementary school intends to add to the literature of strategies for anti-racist and multicultural work with young children.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are present throughout this work and have been defined to clarify their use:

Anti-racist education: "active rejection of the institutional and structural aspects of race and racism [that] explain how racism is manifested in various spaces, making the social construct of race visible" (King & Chandler, 2016, p. 4)

Diversity curriculum: this term captures the curriculum explored through this study and includes the information, knowledge and skills transmitted to students by teacher instruction (Beyer & Liston, 1996), particularly focused on developing students' personal identities, understandings of diverse identities, the relationship among identities and inequality, and the need for social justice

Institutional racism: "the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are White and the exclusion of people of Color" (Racial Equity Tools, 2020, para. 1)

Multicultural education: affective, curricular, and organizational school efforts to teach students knowledge and skills that result in thoughtful considerations of their diverse local and wider communities in an effort to promote democracy and justice (Banks, 2016); used as a synonym and conceptual framework for the "diversity curriculum" studied in this work

Racial literacy: "an interpretive framework that exposes the interwoven structural components of race and racism in both US and global contexts" (King, 2016, p. 1303)

Social justice education: "the pedagogical practice of guiding students toward critically discussing, examining, and actively exploring the reasons behind social inequalities and how unjust institutional practices maintain and reproduce power and privilege that have a direct impact on students' lives" (King & Kasun, 2016, p. 1)

Structural racism: "the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of Color" (Lawrence & Keleher, 2004, para. 1)

Whiteness: the "implicit normalization of the inferiority of persons of Color as manifested globally, nationally, and locally" (Miller & Starker-Glass, 2018, p. 131)

Summary

White Americans' understanding of race does not tend to coincide with the reality of American history or current society and subsequent impacts on minoritized groups. Further, discussions of race often become defensive among White people, hurting efforts for remedying misunderstandings. To address this concern, one possibility may be to approach anti-racist education from a young age among White students, as the elementary grades present a critical time to address the social construction of race and inequality (Miller, 2015b). This qualitative study intends to document one school's efforts to bring multicultural education to its predominantly White staff and student population through a diversity curriculum. The results of this study hope to inform fields of anti-racist and multicultural education as an effort to promote anti-racist education among more elementary schools.

This chapter covered the study's background, problem statement, purpose and

research questions, conceptual framework, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, as well as common terms used in this work. Chapter two will provide a literature review for the study, including approaches to diversity education in the elementary grades, justification for the need for White students to grapple with diversity themes, and the theoretical base for the study. Chapter three will then describe the methodology of the study, followed by the results of the study in chapter four. Finally, chapter five will provide theoretical and practical implications and conclusions based on the study's findings.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to document the characteristics of a diversity curriculum in place a predominantly White elementary school, as well as to gauge the associated attitudes and perceptions of the curriculum among White administrators, teachers, and fifth grade students. The following literature review will present research and conceptual frameworks for diversity education rooted in multicultural, social justice, and anti-racist education. Given the study's focus on White participants, White racial identity development and anti-racist education for White children is also explored. Finally, the study's conceptual framework, rooted in Critical Whiteness theory and Banks's (1993) framework for multicultural education, is also discussed in this chapter.

Diversity Curriculum as Multicultural Education

The terms "diversity education" and "diversity curriculum" both present potentially multiple interpretations and connotations. As such, it is important for this study to define and explain how both are being used as concepts and descriptors. According to Merriam-Webster (2020), diversity is described as "the condition of having or being composed of differing elements, especially the inclusion of different types of people (such as different races or cultures) in a group of organization." The organizational focus is prominent in literature searched by "diversity education" and "diversity curriculum," as many articles are oriented toward workplace-based diversity training for the purpose of fostering cultural understanding and harmony among colleagues (Bierema, 2010). The terms used in this study, however, are not meant to refer to such trainings. While the school selected for this research entitled their curriculum "Embracing Diversity" and referred to it as a "diversity curriculum," the tenets of the

program align with the concept of multicultural education, which is how the concept of "diversity education" is operationalized in this work.

Frameworks for Multicultural Education

As the world continues to become more diverse through immigration and globalization, multicultural education aims to provide an avenue for students to become more knowledgeable about their communities, both local and global, in order to promote democracy and equity (Banks, 2016). Further, educational equality is at the core of multicultural education. According to Banks and Banks (2013), successful models of multicultural education involve institutional curricular changes, meaningful cultural consideration for teaching materials, pedagogy, and learning styles, positive perceptions of multicultural initiatives among teachers and administrators, as well as culturally conscious norms, goals, and culture of schools. Similarly, Davidman and Davidman's (1994) six goals of multicultural education include educational equity, learner empowerment, societal cultural pluralism, intercultural/interethnic/intergroup understanding and harmony, knowledge of different cultural and ethnic groups, and the development of informed, inquisitive multicultural perspectives among both students and stakeholders. Rather than an examination of identities and a focus on tolerance, the concept of multicultural education requires a structural approach from schools that recognizes both micro and macro factors at work in interpersonal relationships and societal patterns of inequality.

Approaches. With a common overarching goal, the depth and scope of multicultural education has been conceptualized into different frameworks by various multicultural education scholars, including Growe et al.'s (2000) four dimensions, Sleeter

and Grant's (1988) five-tier taxonomy, and Banks's (1993) four approaches.

Growe et al.'s (2000) framework for multicultural education includes four dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, and generating a common or shared culture. Content integration refers to the use of varied examples and content from multiple cultures, while knowledge construction emphasizes the pedagogical techniques used to help students define their own positionality through examining cultural assumptions and biases. The third dimension, equity pedagogy, encourages the use of cooperative learning, while the final dimension, generating a common shared culture, prioritizes an equitable learning environment for all students. Banks (2016) expanded on this model by incorporating a dimension of prejudice reduction, which includes the use of teaching methods and materials to modify students' racial attitudes, and redefining the final dimension into an "empowering school culture and social structure" (p. 4). According to Banks (2016), this type of school culture considers organizational structures such as grouping decisions, sports participation trends, achievement disproportionality, and interpersonal interactions among gender and racial/ethnic groups in order to examine and prioritize equitable practices. As demonstrated by Growe et al.'s (2000) original model and Banks's (2016) revisions, multicultural education goes beyond curricular decisions and classroom-level variables into philosophical and systemic considerations about teaching methods, organizational culture, and student opportunity.

Sleeter and Grant's (1988) Taxonomy of Multicultural Education Model provides five approaches for teachers to consider when implementing multicultural education. The first, Teaching the Exceptionally and Culturally Different, involves differentiating

instruction for diverse students with the goal of helping them to assimilate into the dominant classroom and broader societal cultures. The second approach, Human Relations, centers student attitudes of diversity by teaching tolerance of others with the goal of improving student-student relationships. Neither of the first two of Sleeter and Grant's (1988) approaches to multicultural education represent structural change (Bierema, 2010). Instead, they encourage assimilation or individual-level behaviors. The third approach, however, called Single-Group Studies, involves a structural perspective by examining a single minoritized group through various methods, such as history, culture, and current events, in order to promote understanding of both the group itself and patterns of historical oppression. The fourth approach, Multicultural Education, folds together the first three approaches into a type of classroom reform that encourages appreciation of diversity and difference, academic achievement for all students, and social justice awareness. Finally, the fifth approach, Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist Education, expands on the fourth approach by encouraging students to be reflective of their own positionality, including their oppressions and privileges, as well as the associated connections to themes of citizenship and democracy.

Finally, James Banks's (1993) model of multicultural education, similar in hierarchical nature to Sleeter and Grant's (1998) taxonomy, provides four levels: The Contributions Approach, the Additive Approach, the Transformative Approach, and the Social Action Approach. The first level, the Contributions Approach, involves diversity by including acknowledgements to individuals, holidays, or themes such as Black History Month or Women's History month, without fundamentally changing the goals, structure, or other characteristics of the mainstream curriculum. The second level is the Additive

Approach, in which the Contributions Approach is expanded through more routine inclusion of diverse and minoritized groups in the regular curriculum. Multicultural content in this phase, however, is still taught from a mainstream curricular lens (Bierema, 2010). Challenges to the mainstream curriculum begins during the third level, the Transformative Approach, in which students begin to consider content and issues from several critical racial and ethnic perspectives. This level also involves multiple cultural aspects of social influence from groups, such as history, language, and clothing, in order to highlight diversity as an integral characteristic of society. Finally, the fourth level, the Social Action Approach, includes elements of the Transformative Approach as well as an intentional focus on social systems and structures that help students challenge the status quo and promote social justice. Such changes may involve restructuring or abandoning the mainstream curriculum in favor of more opportunities for structural-oriented content that discuss privilege and oppression.

All three frameworks for multicultural education highlight two important themes: the necessity of *embracing* diversity and the focus on a *structural lens* in addition to micro classroom trends. As illustrated by the hierarchies of Sleeter and Grant's (1998) and Banks's (1993) frameworks, multicultural education can be started at micro levels, but not fully realized until more institutional changes and structural perspectives are taken. This endeavor involves more than content integration as well, reaching into the culture and organizational aspects of schools (Banks, 2016). Ultimately, transforming schools to better reflect the needs and rights of students of Color reflects a social justice purpose of multicultural education.

Multicultural Education as Social Justice

Social justice education provides a philosophical framework for multicultural education, as educational philosophy rooted in social justice seeks to extend students' understandings of social inequalities from individualized faults into institutional analyses. According to King and Kasun (2013), social justice education can be defined as "the pedagogical practice of guiding students toward critically discussing, examining, and actively exploring the reasons behind social inequalities and how unjust institutional practices maintain and reproduce power and privilege that have a direct impact on students' lives" (p. 1). It maintains that we live in an unjust society which requires remedy for justice, and has roots as far back as John Dewey's vision of education to produce active and engaged citizens committed to fighting injustice (Boyles et al., 2009). Various critical theories underlie this conception of social justice education, including critical race theory, critical Whiteness, ecojustice, feminist theory, multiculturalism, and globalization (Hytten & Bettez, 2011).

Operationalized, critical social justice education may take various forms. According to Hackman (2006), education for social justice includes five pillars: providing students with tools for content mastery, providing students with tools for critical thinking about institutional oppression, providing students with tools for taking action and effecting change, providing students with tools for reflective thinking, and providing students with tools for broadening their awareness and understanding of group dynamics. From a schoolwide perspective, Carlisle et al. (2006) also developed five tenets of social justice based on their qualitative research within the Social Justice Education in Schools Project. These principles include: 1) promoting inclusion and equity among students; 2) setting high expectations for all students; 3) acknowledging the role

of the school within a community; 4) using a system-wide approach to mediate and help maturate intergroup relationships; and 5) a belief in emancipatory education (Carlisle et al., 2006). In the classroom, such engagement may include student analyses of media and the role it plays in social movements, international perspectives of inequality, and education on the history of youth as agents of social change (Leistyna, 2009). Social justice education may also be enacted through service-learning, where students are able to gain hands-on experiences with tactile representations of inequality and potential avenues toward addressing it (Mitchell, 2007). Maxine Greene (1998) eloquently described that teaching for social justice encourages:

> …enhanced perception and imaginative explorations, for the recognition of social wrongs, of sufferings, of pestilences wherever and whenever they arise…it is to teach so that the young may be awakened to the joy of working for transformation in the smallest places, so that they may become healers and change their worlds" (as cited in Ayers et al., 1998, p. xiv).

Ultimately, social justice education is considered a process (Bell, 1997) with a goal to "mentor students into critical inquiry and theory" (Leistyna, 2009, p. 53). The components of social justice education, which emphasize the individual learner within the context of greater social patterns of power and privilege, reflect the aims of multicultural education. By situating multicultural and diversity education within a philosophy of social justice, the structural focus of the curricula becomes more acute and broader than the micro classroom decisions and interactions that only provide surface-level multicultural education.

Social justice education, often used as a buzzword within the field of education, is

often critiqued due to the lack of a critical perspective taken by many who claim the philosophy. Quite conversely, some advocates of social justice education have defined it in ways to maintain the status quo. In a seminal commentary of social justice education, Young (1990) explicated the ways in which social justice education had been diluted by focusing on distributive justice, which focuses on resources, at the expense of analyses of power relations. By excluding such analyses into how power hierarchies mask what she described as "faces of oppression" (pp. 48) – exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence – the critical nature of social justice education is lost (Young, 1990). This is exemplified in spaces dedicated to supposed racial social justice in which colorblind language avoids direct discussions about race and racism, and reverence for meritocracy and individualism drive conversations about inequality (Applebaum, 2006). From a macro lens, these conversations divert attention from critical considerations of institutional structures to shallow understandings of oppression. Additionally, some liberal perspectives of social justice education, while progressive, distinguish themselves from critical analyses in the pursuit of other aims. For example, in McKenzie and colleagues' work, which is from an educational leadership perspective, raising test scores remains the ultimate goal of social justice education (McKenzie et al., 2008). As Stromquist and Monkman (2014) explain, however, high-stakes testing is a factor of neoliberalism. By working within the inequalities of the capitalist system instead of seeking to critique it, the use of social justice education is incongruent to more emancipatory aims. Finally, public critiques of teaching for social justice have also surfaced (Marshall & Ward, 2004), especially among those who are ideologically conservative (Applebaum, 2009), straining its status and presence in

schools to enact the change desired by social justice activists.

Watered down approaches to social justice education are similarly found in multicultural education initiatives as well. In fact, both Sleeter and Grant's (1998) and Banks's (1993) models both account for this type of treatment of multicultural education in their lower framework levels. While such endeavors provide steps toward structurally-focused multicultural education, they are not true multicultural education models. Instead, the leveled approaches provide potential pathways for realizing the social justice goals of multicultural education aims (Gorski, 2011). More specifically, higher levels of multicultural education embody anti-racism at their core.

Anti-Racist Multicultural Education

In contrast to *non-racist* education, which takes an individualistic approach to race analysis that ignores the significance of historical and institutional oppression, *anti-racist* education takes a critical stance of institutional structures that drive systemic racism (King & Chandler, 2016). According to King and Chandler (2016), anti-racist education is the "active rejection of the institutional and structural aspects of race and racism" that "explains how racism is manifested in various spaces, making the social construct of race visible" (p. 3), which ultimately requires praxis and the opportunity to negotiate and effect social change. In contrast to racial liberalism as anti-racist education, however, which has positioned the effects of racism as individual and psychological problems, critical examinations of race in the United States require investigations of racial literacy (Guinier, 2004).

Racial literacy, or the understanding of the connections between race and power (Guinier, 2004), encapsulates the goal of anti-racist education. The racially literate person

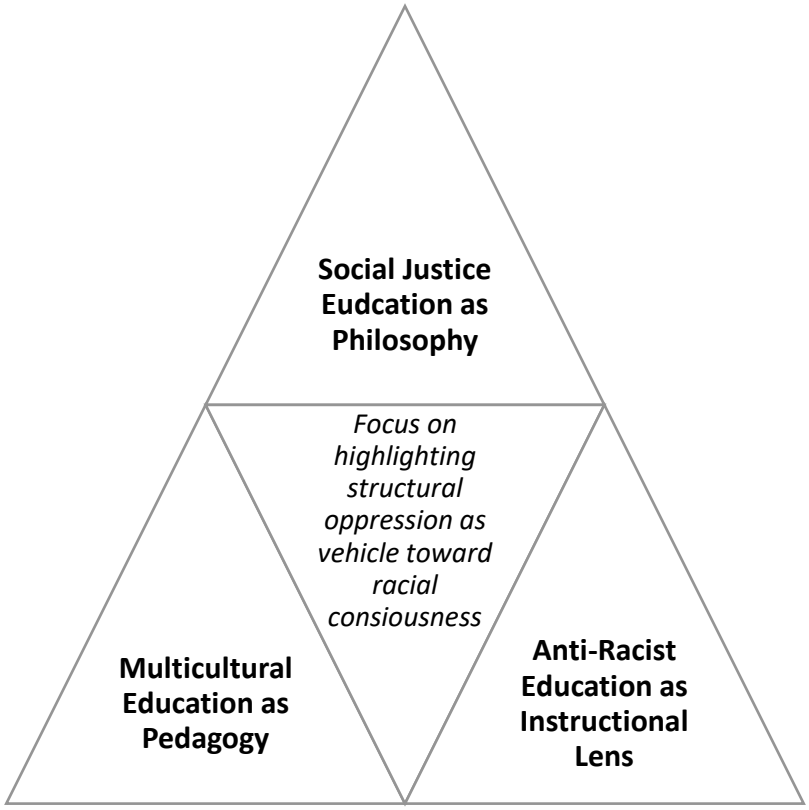
is able to identify institutional structures in society, both modern and historical, that perpetuate racial inequality (King, 2016). It also involves understanding the significance of context on race, that oppression may be experienced in different ways, and that class, gender, geography, and others aspects of institutional power are interwoven into these experiences (Collins, 1990; Guinier, 2004). According to Duffy (2008), teaching for the development of racial literacy involves teachers' sophisticated understandings of race relations in America, utilizing a counter-narrative to mainstream understandings of American history, and committing to a vision of racial justice.

Several studies have marked the impact of anti-racist pedagogy in classrooms seeking to raise students' racial literacies. For example, Epstein and Gist (2013) documented the use of anti-racist education in high schools as a form of culturally responsive pedagogy for students of Color. Broadening students' awareness of detrimental social structures, the authors suggested, helped attend to the praxis as called for by anti-racist pedagogy (Epstein & Gist, 2013). Similarly, Sealy-Ruiz (2015) called for anti-racist education within urban contexts to offset the "educational genocide" of Black male students, and Love (2019) described abolitionist teaching as an approach to resisting the White supremacist nature of American education. Using critical anti-racist texts in social studies and English classrooms have also provided evidence of the potential of anti-racist education for high school (King, 2016; Vetter & Hunugerford-Kressor, 2014; Wetzel & Rogers, 2015). In higher education, particularly within teacher education, anti-racist book clubs (Rogers & Mosley, 2008), seminars (Yeung et al., 2013), autobiographical examinations (Tianlong, 2012), and documenting the experiences of preservice teachers of Color (Jackson, 2015) have helped develop

strategies for facilitating racial literacy growth. Such awareness gained through anti-racist teaching may create social justice consciousness in learners, promoting the macro multicultural goals of democracy and equality. Connections between multicultural education, social justice education, and anti-racist education are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Relationship between multicultural, social justice, and anti-racist education



While the social justice goal of multicultural education aims to provide equity for underserved and minoritized student populations through reforming school processes that prioritize Eurocentric and middle class hegemony, multicultural education also facilitates a mindset of critical thinking and empathy for those "victimized by the expansion and growth of the United States" (Banks, 2016, p. 11). White students, whose perspective of

history, culture and society tends to be unchallenged and reified by traditional curriculum, also benefit from the transformational possibility of multicultural and diversity education by placing power and privilege into context.

White Students and Multicultural Education

White adult Americans' micro-based views and perceptions of race (Horowitz et al., 2019) often do not reflect structural and institutional understandings of history and modern forms inequality. Since traditional approaches to multicultural education rarely extend beyond Banks's (1993) Contributions Approach (Irvine, 2010), and social studies education in the United States typically does not include a structural or institutional lens (King, 2016), it is unsurprising that White people may use traditional mainstream American values such as hard work, individualism and opportunity (Henslin, 2018) to explain racial inequality as an individual rather than structural issue. Fortunately, multicultural education offers a challenge to this perspective through explicit instruction in concepts of institutional privilege and discrimination, the legacy of structural racism, as well as an examination of different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups.

It is important to clarify that the purpose of this study is not to center Whiteness in the greater conversation of multicultural education. Instead, this work seeks to add to the body of Critical Whiteness studies that aim to mitigate the effects of unchallenged Whiteness and its role in the preservation of White supremacy that harms people of Color. By focusing on White participants, I hope to aid in the process of "destabilizing" Whiteness by "expos[ing], examin[ing], and challeng[ing] White identities (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 25).This work also does not intend to essentialize or use a deficit lens for the White participants in this study, including both student and adult participants.

Instead, I acknowledge the multifaceted nature of White identities (Miller & Fellows, 2007) as well as the institutionalized nature of Whiteness in education (Ladson-Billings, 2005). For the purposes of this study, Whiteness is defined as the "implicit normalization of the inferiority of persons of Color as manifested globally, nationally, and locally" (Miller & Starker-Glass, 2018, p. 131). The present discussion is intended to contextualize the development and significance of Whiteness and White identities, particularly at the elementary level, as well as the implications for multicultural education.

White Racial Identity

Developing a racial identity, or becoming raced, involves the active social construction of how to "do" race through experience and participation in racially stratified social and cultural worlds (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Miller, 2017). With Whiteness historically considered a norm in society (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003), Critical Whiteness scholars have offered different models of White identity development. Hardiman (1982) posited a five stage model of racial identity development for White people: Lack of Social Consciousness, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition, and Internalization. During the first stage, which occurs between the ages of four and five, White children begin to develop awareness of racial differences, including learning the appropriate attitudes and behaviors for White people. This stage is followed by the Acceptance stage, in which White children are further socialized into the dominant ideology of race. In contrast to the first stage, this stage may last much longer, including into adulthood or possibly a lifetime (Ponterotto et al., 2006). When (or if) White people transition into the third stage, Resistance, they develop an awareness of racial inequality

that often produces negative emotions such as guilt, embarrassment and anger about the nature of racism in the United States. It may also leave White people confused about their role in anti-racist efforts as well as feeling ostracized from other Whites' conceptions of race and racism. Following Resistance, Whites may then enter into the fourth Redefinition stage, in which their White identities are redefined from guilt and shame into recognition of White contributions to culture that are not necessarily rooted in White supremacy, such as art and music (Ponterotto et al., 2006). At this stage, White people understand that it is in Whites' self-interest to assist in anti-racism, and often desire to help other White people proceed through earlier stages. Finally, the last stage in Hardiman's model is Internalization, during which Whites accept a positive racial identity and begin to inquire about other sources of oppression, such as gender, class, and age.

Although similar to Hardiman's (1982) model, Helms's (1992) Model of White Identity Development has been most widely used to explain White racial identity (Ponterotto et al., 2016). Helms's model includes six stages. During the first stage, Contact, Whites are oblivious to, avoid or refuse to discuss issues of race. Once (or if) Whites eventually recognize racism beyond the first stage, they then enter the second stage of Disintegration, which may be characterized by negative feelings as Whites rectify their position in society alongside an awareness of racial inequality. From here, Whites may enter a defensive mode in which they cling to dominant racial ideology and project previous negative feelings onto minoritized individuals and groups, leading to anger, fear and racism. Helms called this third stage Reintegration. Next, during the fourth stage, Pseudoindependence, White people recognize the responsibility of Whites in

maintaining racism, although they often approach it from an othered stance rather than a reflection of their own personal maintenance of and responsibility for racism and White supremacy. Rather than a fear and anger toward minoritized groups, Whites at this stage believe people of Color can assimilate into the dominant culture (Miller & Starker-Glass, 2018). The fifth stage is Immersion-Emersion, during which Whites begin to understand their own racial socialization more deeply (Immersion) and then seek out community devoted continued anti-racist awareness (Emersion). Finally, the "most advanced status of racial identity development for White Americans" (Poterotto et al., 2016, p. 96) is the Autonomy stage, in which Whites develop an active anti-racist orientation to self and society. Hardiman's and Helms's models are compared in Table 1.

Table 1
Hardiman's (1982) vs. Helms's (1992) Models of White Identity Development

Stage	Hardiman	Helms	Similarities/Differences
1	Lack of Social Consciousness	Contact	Both characterized by a general ignorance of racism and racial implications.
2	Acceptance	Disintegration	In Hardiman's model, Stage 2 emphasizes further socialization into race beyond the lack of recognition from Stage 1. In Helms's model, acknowledgement of race is present in the Contact phase, while the Disintegration phase involves the discomfort of recognizing the substance of racism.
3	Resistance	Reintegration	Stage 3 of Hardiman's model is similar to Stage 2 of Helms's model, in which Whites begin to understand the reality of racism. However, Helms's Stage 3 involves racist prejudice against minoritized groups as a defense mechanism for negative emotion. Hardiman's model does

			not account for this type of racial identity development.
4	Redefinition	Pseudoindependence	Stage 4 of both models involves a White recognition of the responsibility of Whites for maintenance of White supremacy. Both models highlight Whites' desire for a more positive White identity.
5	Internalization	Immersion-emersion	Helms's Stage 5 involves more education and fact-searching among Whites. Stage 5 of Hardiman's model is more similar to Stage 6 of Helms's model.
6	(none)	Autonomy	Stage 6 of Helms's model is akin to Stage 5 of Hardiman's models. Both describe the most advanced levels of White racial identity, and are characterized by positive racial identities and commitment to anti-racism.

Although widely used as research frameworks, White identity models have been challenged for several reasons. Miller and Fellows (2007) argued that such models are too linear, enforce a Black/White binary that does not consider other minoritized groups, suggest "failure" of Whites who do not reach higher levels of identity, do not provide guidance for moving through stages, and do not account for intersectional aspects of White identities related to gender, culture, class, and religion. The seminal work of Peggy McIntosh (1988), which connotes similar expectations of recognizing privilege as a hallmark of becoming a "good White person," has also been challenged and expanded upon by second wave Critical Whiteness Studies, which are further explored later in the chapter.

Ultimately, White identity development models can illustrate the grappling and defense mechanisms that deploy when Whites are confronted with uncomfortable realizations about racism and their own roles in a White supremacist society. DiAngelo (2018) termed these negative feelings "White fragility," which involves the unbearable discomfort Whites experience when discussing race, such as anger and guilt, that lead to hostile or avoidant behaviors that serve to reinstate comfort and ultimately uphold White supremacy. As Whites proceed through different stages of racial awareness, characterized by important intersectional identities, it is worth considering the interventions of racial consciousness and awareness that can occur during childhood to help mitigate White fragility in broader efforts toward social justice.

Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education for White Elementary Students

Bringing White privilege and the benefits of White supremacy to the attention of White people is often met with emotion, offense and misunderstanding of the term (DiAngelo, 2018). Because developing racial literacy requires forming an awareness of the institutional advantages of Whiteness as an antithesis to the experiences of people of Color and, to some extent, assuming a position of vulnerability, resistance among White students to anti-racist education has been well documented in the literature (Harvey, 2018; Lawrence & Tatum, 1999; Ringrose, 2007; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Schick, 2010; Tianlong, 2012). The movement along a continuum of racial awareness is also complicated (Ringrose, 2007), involving multiple stages through which White students must transition and disrupt their previous notions of history as well as social and political life (Helms, 1992). Engagement with anti-racist education, however, is an avenue through which White students can contend with structural and institutional perspectives

of racism (Lawrence & Tatum, 1999). Pushing White students toward racially literate understandings of society is an important effort toward reducing prejudicial beliefs and prioritizing justice for minoritized racial groups. As Ringrose (2007) explains, understanding White students' connections and growth through anti-racist education is multifaceted and complicated, requiring more research into the mechanisms through which Whiteness may be confronted as a means toward social justice education and increased racial literacy.

Elementary education often harbors approaches to race from a colorblind, harmonic lens in which all races are the same and difficult discussions about racism are avoided (King & Kasun, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Leistyna, 2009; Miller, 2015b). Young students, however, are racialized Americans and capable of considering the implications of racism and other forms of oppression (Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; Harvey, 2018; Leistyna, 2009). In fact, perennial data suggest that children as young as six have already internalized beliefs about White supremacy (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Clark & Clark, 1940), and as children grow older, the effects of social context on prejudiced beliefs increases (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011). However, while socialized negative attitudes toward race may follow children into school, curricular interventions have the potential to cultivate more positive attitudes about diversity among children (Stephan & Stephan, 2004). As Miller's (2015a) ethnography of White children suggests, White identities are developed and refined through different contexts in which children interact with messages about race. As schools transmit such messages to students, both overt and covert, multicultural education may offer a strategic way of intervening on dominant notions of race.

Contrary to privileged perceptions of controversy inherent in discussing social justice with children, many elementary-age students are naturally interested in the concepts of fairness, providing opportunities for inviting discussions of unfairness in society (Brophy et al., 2016). Making explicit considerations of race is also important for White children, who may never consider themselves as racialized (Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003) in their understanding of how race and power manifest (Harvey, 2018). Disrupting the notions of Whiteness as "normal" is a task adults often struggle with (DiAngelo, 2018), but if such disruptions of hegemonic beliefs started in earlier stages of development in which children's identity formation is rooting, cultivating racial literacy may be met with less resistance.

Although research regarding anti-racist education with White elementary schoolers is scant, several studies have documented the potential for bringing such pedagogy to the elementary classroom. Through action research, Husband (2010) implemented anti-racist education about African American history through drama in first grade. His work uncovered challenges with anti-racist education in the primary grades, such as tension over content, students' prior knowledge of racist behavior, and White parents, but also suggested the promise of critical dialogue with young students to explore institutional racism. In another study, Rogers and Mosley (2006) used critical discourse analysis within literacy education to study the use of anti-racist education in a second grade classroom in the Midwestern United States. While studying the Civil Rights Movement, second graders, using race as a tool of analysis, showed progression through racial literacy by recognizing Whiteness, White privilege, and the potential for White allyship (Rogers & Mosley, 2006). Miller and Tanner (2019) explored anti-racist

pedagogy in a fourth grade classroom by teaching about the history and significance of Uncle Tom stereotypes and inviting students to consider inverted pictures in the style of Robert Colescott. Although students were engaged in the lesson, Miller and Tanner (2019) reflected on the failure of the anti-racist initiative to reach a student who was pulled from the program by his mother, offering important insight regarding the "complexity of Whiteness" (p. 91). These studies illustrate the ability for White elementary students to move along a continuum of racial literacy, prompting a need for additional research to further explore the inherent possibilities of anti-racist education in the elementary setting for White children.

Significance of Teachers. In investigating the possibility for multicultural and anti-racist education for White elementary students, it is important to offer context of the elementary teaching force, which tends to be young, White and female (Miller, 2017). Research suggests challenges not only for White teachers' instruction of multicultural and anti-racist curricula, but confrontations with Whiteness itself. White teachers often do not fully realize the impact of Whiteness (Boutte & Jackson, 2013) nor the scope of racism and their role in racist social structures (Jackson, 2011; Lensmire, 2010; Picower, 2009). As White adult teachers are not exempt from White fragility, they may also express resistance toward (Sleeter, 2004) and discomfort with (Zembylas, 2018) confronting issues of Whiteness and racism. Such avoidance of racial understanding and a preference for colorblindness results in the typical elementary school *non-racist* treatment of race and racism (Boutte et al., 2011).

However, as emphasis on social justice and anti-racist education grows, teacher education programs are contending with how to prepare teachers for taking more anti-

racist perspectives into classrooms (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). In fact, some programs measure their teacher candidates' dispositions regarding social justice education as assessments, which Villegas (2007) argues is of importance due to the nature of stratified schooling in the United States and the role teachers play in the mechanisms of school sorting functions (Whitaker, 2019). Assessing such dispositions is also useful because it requires teacher educators to have their preservice teachers contend with potential social misconceptions that would remain unchallenged throughout teacher education otherwise (Villegas, 2007). Fostering racial identity work among White teachers has the potential to help them develop racial consciousness that better prepares them to serve minoritized students (Jupp & Slattery, 2010). Jupp, Berry, & Lensmire (2016) situate this work as "pedagogical deployment," which works to cultivate anti-racist teaching practices among both preservice and in-service teachers.

Due to the influence of White teachers on their students' access to and quality of anti-racist and multicultural education, this study includes their perspectives alongside student perspectives to gauge orientations to the diversity work being implemented at their school. These approaches are subsequently examined through Critical Whiteness theory and Banks's (1993) approaches to multicultural education.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study involves a theoretical base from Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies as well as an examination of the diversity curriculum from Banks's (1993) framework for multicultural education. These analytical aspects are explored below.

Critical Race Theory offers perspective for anti-racist work in schools and

classrooms (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Stovall, 2006), and has origins in Derrick Bell's analyses of racial interest convergence in school desegregation litigation (Bell, 1976; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In practice, Critical Race Theory (CRT) includes teaching to help students: 1) identify and analyze the nature of racism in the United States that systematically oppresses people of Color; 2) recognize problems inherent in colorblind rhetoric and policy that ultimately marginalize minority racial communities; 3) prioritize the voices of minorities in examinations of discriminatory experiences and a White supremacist society; 4) understand the limitations of civil rights laws and racial liberalism to dismantle systems of oppression; and 5) challenge Whiteness as the norm in education (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Lynn & Dixon, 2013). Additionally, while race is the primary construct through which analysis occurs, CRT also expands analyses of oppression into other areas of hegemony, including class and gender (Collins, 1990; Stovall, 2006). Because institutional oppression is experienced in multiple layers, CRT also lays the foundation for an analysis through race that also considers the impacts of patriarchy and capitalism as dominant social systems alongside White supremacy (Crenshaw, 1989).

Inspired and grounded by the work of scholars of Color in Critical Race Theory, Critical Whiteness Studies provide theoretical insight into the development and significance of White identities. Spanning the last century, Whiteness studies have offered research into developmental stages of Whiteness (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1992; Miller & Fellows, 2007) as well as racially-driven psychological aspects of Whiteness (Vendantam, 2010) and emotional consequences of developing and maintaining Whiteness, particularly for children (Thandeka, 2007). Additionally, Whiteness scholars

have also offered intersectional interpretations, including working-class racial ideology (Roediger, 2007), analyses of White women's status and compliance to White men and dominant institutions (Delivosky, 2010), and the connection between White supremacy, nationalism, and Manifest Destiny (Horsman, 1997).

Perhaps most notably for education, Whiteness Studies have offered investigations of the micro privileges rooted in the macro racial patterns of society. Often used in teacher education (Miller, 2015b), McIntosh's (1988) "knapsack" of White privilege has offered perspective of taken-for-granted advantages experiences by Whites. Challenged, however, by more recent second wave Critical Whiteness scholars, Lensmire et al. (2013) worry that examinations of White privilege have become "synecdoche" for broader discussions of race and anti-racist work. Rather than further examining structures of racism, McIntosh's work is individual-centered, and "seems to equate individual White people coming to understand their White privilege with overcoming systems of racial oppression" (Lensmire et al., 2013). White privilege without context may also lead to dead end conversations about race, stunting anti-racist work (Lensmire et al., 2013). Similarly, Leonardo (2004) has suggested that, while White privilege conservations have been helpful for forwarding racial perspective among Whites, discussions of White privilege must coincide with "rigorous examination of White supremacy" that "make White privilege possible" (p. 137). As such, second wave Critical Whiteness Studies have sought to move beyond the "simpli[fied] and flatten[ed]" themes of White privilege work into structural themes and the complexity of White identities among different people (Lensmire, 2010). With an emphasis on a structural lens for appropriate multicultural education rooted in anti-racist education, this study is grounded in the contributions from

these second wave Critical Whiteness scholars.

Finally, Banks's (1993) model of multicultural education, which includes a hierarchical model of four approaches described previously in this chapter, provides a framework of analysis for the diversity curricular characteristics. Comparing the stages in which the curriculum tends to fall in conjunction with a Critical Whiteness lens of teacher and student perceptions and attitudes will offer perspective of anti-racist efforts at the school and potential future steps for improving the curriculum.

Gaps in the Literature

The present study hopes to inform areas of research in elementary education, Critical Whiteness studies, and multicultural education. First, literature in anti-racist education often focuses on upper grades or higher education. With the assertion that elementary ages are important for examining the social construction of race, racism and other forms of inequality, this work intends to shed light on anti-racist and social justice education for elementary schoolers. Additionally, there is a call for student voices within research of social studies education (NCSS, 2020). By including student interview data about experiences with, perceptions of, and attitudes about multicultural education, this study intends to address the elementary gap in the literature.

This study also seeks to inform the area of Critical Whiteness Studies by focusing the interactions of White administrators, teachers, and students at a predominantly White school with multicultural education through a diversity curriculum. As Whiteness research grows regarding White identity development, pedagogical deployment for teachers, and the intersectional nature of White identities, this work hopes to add to the body of knowledge of Whiteness that facilitates anti-racist goals.

Finally, this study intends to contribute to the literature of multicultural and diversity education, particularly for White racial literacy development among elementary-age children. By documenting the characteristics as well as adult and children perceptions and attitudes about a diversity curriculum, this study will provide an additional example of multicultural education at work, including implications for implementation. Data presented here will be helpful for refining pragmatic multicultural education strategies and demonstrate possibilities for elementary school children to engage with diversity topics.

Summary

Following up chapter one's introduction to the social context of the study, chapter two described the literature base for the present study, including an exploration of multicultural education as a conceptual framework for the diversity curriculum explored in this work, as well as the connections between multicultural education, social justice and anti-racist education. Additionally, because this study specifically involves White participants' experiences and attitudes about diversity work, this chapter provided justification for engaging young White children in anti-racist work, in addition to an explanation of the tenets of Critical Whiteness theory and Banks's (1993) multicultural framework that ground the study's purpose, method, and conclusions.

The following chapter will describe the qualitative methodology of the study, followed by presentation of results in chapter four and a discussion of results in Chapter five.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to document the characteristics of a diversity curriculum in place at a predominantly White elementary school as well as the perceptions of and attitudes about the curriculum among teachers, administrators, and a sample of fifth grade students. Specifically, this work took the form of an exploratory case study in which the curriculum itself and associated attitudes and perceptions were considered from an extensive and in-depth approach with no presumed outcomes (Yin, 2014). Within case study tradition, this study took place within the real-life context (Yin, 2014) of the school and included multiple detailed data sources (Creswell, 2003). Chapter three will detail the study's: (1) research design, (2) research context, (3) data collection, (4) data analysis, (5) trustworthiness, (6) researcher positionality, and (7) ethical concerns in relation to the study's research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a diversity curriculum at an elementary school serving predominantly White students?
2. What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among school administrators and teachers?
3. What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among fifth grade students?

Research Design

This study employed an exploratory qualitative case study design. Through a lens of interpretivism that emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality, qualitative research seeks to discern multiple realities of a phenomena through seeking inductive patterns within descriptive data (Glesne, 2016). This involves sharing and *interpreting*

the perspectives of participants that reflect personalized understandings and experiences within social contexts (Glesne, 2016). Qualitative studies seek to collect and analyze rich and in-depth data in order to drive inductive theory (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). With an implied emphasis on the importance of uncovering socially-constructed understandings, particularly in relation to diversity and multiculturalism, this study used interviews, observations, and school-created lesson plans that documented participants' own words, actions, and behaviors in relation to their experiences with the diversity curriculum studied in this work.

More specifically, this study took a case study approach, which was selected for several reasons. First, a case study provides the opportunity to describe, in detail, a phenomenon in which few studies have focused while simultaneously seeking to inform theory (Merriam, 2001). The school explored in this study was selected because of its emphasis on educating White elementary students about diversity, which is an area not often explored in research. Further, this study also intended to inform the areas of Critical Whiteness studies and multicultural education as a theoretical purpose. Case studies seek to embrace the natural environmental variables that create the unique case, emphasizing the real-life context of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2014). Within this study, there were no efforts to control variables in order to promote generalizability, yet there was a purposeful commitment to describing the potential within one example of a diversity curriculum targeted at White elementary students. Including contextual variables added to the study's richness of detail, particularly when making inductive conclusions. Finally, in order to form a holistic understanding of the school's curriculum and teachers and students' interactions with it, this case study was organized around four

main sources of data collection: classroom observations of lessons, interviews with a sample of White administrators and teachers, interviews with White fifth grade students, and a review of lesson plan documents. This process is known as triangulation, and is used to validate and corroborate data for making conclusions (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

Research Context

Setting

This study took place at a private Episcopalian school in a major Southeastern city, which is referred to in this work by the pseudonym Central Episcopal. The school was chosen due to its intentional focus on diversity and investment in multicultural curriculum, particularly for its predominantly White student population. Central Episcopal, which included grades K-8, was divided into an upper and lower school. This study took place at the lower school, which included grades K-5. At the lower school, there were two teachers per grade level, and each classroom also had an instructional assistant (including the upper grades 3-5). There were also numerous support personnel at both the upper and lower levels, including chaplains, a digital learning specialist, a performing arts director, academic deans, community life deans, counselors, and instructional coaches.

According to Central Episcopal's website at the time of the study, it enrolled approximately 444 students in grades K-8, and was majority (71%) White followed by 11% Black, 10% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and approximately 7% mixed race. The school followed a seven-stage admissions process, including site visits, teacher recommendations, testing, and interviews. Following admission, there was a tuition cost.

Fees for the 2019-2020 school year ranged from approximately $18,000 for grades K-5 to $19,000 for grades 6-8. The school also offered financial aid for students in need, which was used to lower students' tuition bills to less than $1,000 annually according to the school's website. Additionally, Central Episcopal provided an extended day program that was prorated based on family income, which ranged from $80-325 per month. Approximately 27% of students received tuition assistance for the 2019-2020 school year according to the school's website.

Religious identity was a foundational aspect of the school. Specifically embedded in Episcopalian tradition, the school situated itself within three characteristics of Episcopalian education: (1) Jesus Christ and his teachings as center to education within and beyond the classroom, (2) education as an opportunity for exploration and critical thinking expansion rather than indoctrination, and (3) spirituality as essential for community and civic development. In fact, it is within the Episcopalian setting that the focus on diversity education took root for the school. According to both administrators Allison and Carlie, as well as advertised on the school's website, a commitment to progressive education grounded curricular decisions at the school. "Embracing Diversity," the name of the curriculum, was also the name of a pillar of the school's mission and vision, and was considered essential to helping students develop Christian values of "curiosity, justice and empathy."

Service-learning was also considered critical to the fulfillment of Episcopalian tradition, according to the school's website and administrator interview data. To promote this value, each grade level was partnered with a community organization to work through curricular-related projects as service-learning. For example, the community

organization partnered with fifth grade during this study was a refugee support center. During their project, students were able to learn about other cultures, assist with teaching about history in preparation for the citizenship test, read to refugee children, and help adult refugees practice English communication skills. According to the school website, this work helped students better understand social studies themes of "journeys, conflict and advocacy." Further, rather than approaching service-learning from a "White savior" mentality (Aronson, 2017) in which the partner organizations and individuals are viewed from a deficit perspective, the school's engagement with service-learning positions partnerships as sources of knowledge and community, approaching hands-on multicultural education. Connections between service-learning, social studies, and multicultural education were apparent through interview data and are further explored in chapter four.

Diversity Curriculum

The logistics of the diversity curriculum itself provide context for its associated characteristics explored in the next chapter. First, the curriculum was rooted in four guiding questions, which included, "Who am I?" "Who are you?" "Who are we together?" and "What are we called to do?" These questions were translated into quarterly thematic units for the curriculum, which included identity (Who am I?), diversity (Who are you?), community (Who are we together?), and social justice (What are we called to do?). For the first quarter of the school year, the curriculum focused on identity, then diversity for the second quarter, community for the third quarter, and social justice for the final quarter. Each theme was scheduled to span approximately two months.

The curriculum was also divided into grade bands. As such, grades K-1 received the same lessons, grades 2-3 received the same lessons, and grades 4-5 received the same lessons. The lessons also rotated each year so that students did not receive the same lessons in first grade as they would in Kindergarten, and so on. All grade bands followed the quarterly focuses.

The school designated one day per month in which the diversity lessons were formally delivered. This was underscored by the expectation that teachers would continue to have conversations about the monthly theme throughout the month and within other academic subjects. The lessons were typically anchored by trade books related to diversity, which adults and children alike discussed in their interviews. Based on the trade book topic, students would then engage in discussion and application activities related to the objectives of the lesson. Videos sometimes took the place of books as lesson anchors, but children's literature dominated the curricular tools.

While the monthly lesson was taught whole class, students of Color at the school had the opportunity to join a grade-band affinity group that provided space for non-White children to discuss the diversity topic for the month, share any concerns, and/or simply fellowship with other students of Color. According to Principal Allison, these groups sometimes took place right after the lesson, later in the day, during lunchtime, or another preferred time among students. The school's website stated that the purpose of the groups was to, "provide students of Color a place to celebrate their uniqueness, gifts and important role in our school community, and to affirm, protect and nurture the racial and cultural identities of the group." Students were not obligated to participate, and they were required to have parent permission to do so. Before the diversity curriculum became a

formal lessons, Central Episcopal approached multicultural education solely through affinity group opportunities for students of Color.

Participants

Administrators. Two administrators, Principal Allison and Administrator Carlie, from Central Episcopal participated in the study. Allison and Carlie were selected for interviews due to their close work with the curriculum and unique insight into its development and implementation.

Principal Allison was part of the founding of the school. In 2000, she and other members from her church were interested in starting an Episcopalian school because there weren't any in the city, and started the process of building and staffing Central Episcopal after surveying community interest. She was one of seven founding faculty members and began at the school teaching fifth grade. When asked about her decision to work at the school during her interview, she shared, "To be able to start a school and kind of teach and learn in the way that I felt like children should be taught would be a really exciting opportunity…and kind of a once in a lifetime opportunity." After moving into different roles along the way, she became the principal of the lower school in 2007, where she was still at the time of the study. The 2019-2020 school year was her 26th year in education. Allison had also been a part-time doctoral student since 2018, working on a doctorate in urban education.

Administrator Carlie's title was "Dean of Community Life." In this role, she taught faith studies, led chapel for grades K-5, and coordinated closely with school parents. She was also head of the diversity curriculum, including service-learning partnerships. Carlie had an elementary education degree and previous experience

teaching pre-K, but after completing her master's degree in Divinity and Christian Education, sought out a school that would allow her to "combine education as well as faith and spirituality." She considered Central Episcopal "sort of call a ministry as well as a call to education and teaching," which led to her decision to work there. The 2019-2020 school year was her 14th year in education.

Teachers. The two teachers interviewed for the study were selected because I had observed their classes during the February 2020 monthly diversity lesson. I had requested an interview with the second grade teacher I had also observed, but did not receive a response.

The first teacher I interviewed was fifth grade teacher, Deborah. She held a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. In addition to teaching, she had experience as an education consultant and had also worked for a literacy-based Think Tank. The 2019-2020 school year was her 25th year in education, and she had spent the last ten years in her position as a fifth grade teacher at Central Episcopal. After choosing to settle down after years of traveling as a consultant, Deborah described her decision to work at Central Episcopal was due to "the mission of the school, which included not just academic rigor and, um, you know, a community based style to teaching, but it did include diversity."

The second teacher interviewed for the study was Kindergarten teacher Samantha. Samantha held a bachelor's degree in elementary education and had 19 years of teaching experience all in Kindergarten, including five years at Central Episcopal. She had grown up in a very rural part of the state and initially went "home" to teach there after graduating with her undergraduate degree. After teaching in her hometown, Samantha

moved to the city in which Central Episcopal is located and worked at a Title I school for 12 years before Central Episcopal. She shared that she chose to work at Central Episcopal after enrolling her son there, who was accepted by the school and student culture despite being (as she described him) “eccentric.” She noted the presence of a gay chaplain at the school made her feel comfortable sending her son there, and she applied to work at the school a year later after her son enrolled. Samantha was the only participant without a graduate degree.

Students. Six fifth grade students were interviewed for the study. Background data was not collected on students beyond grade, race and gender. All students were White, and four were girls and two were boys. Most students were from Deborah’s class, but two were from the other fifth grade class. Fifth grade students were chosen because of their accumulated experience with the curriculum from previous grades and an assumption that they would be best able to reflect on and articulate their experiences and thoughts about the program due to maturity. White students were also chosen specifically due to the interest of this study in multicultural education for White children. The six students were given the following pseudonyms: Student 1 Lizzie, Student 2 Sarah, Student 3 Michael, Student 4 Kaylee, Student 5 James, and Student 6 Beth.

Data Collection

Data collection included four sources: observations of three diversity lessons, interviews with administrators and teachers, interviews with fifth grade students, and a review of lesson plans from the curriculum provided by the school. The observations were completed first.

Observations. In total, one round of three classroom observations was completed

to see the curriculum in action in conjunction with the interview data about the curriculum from teachers and students. Two more rounds of observations had been planned as part of the research design to gather more data of lessons in action, but the school closures related to the coronavirus pandemic halted further observational data collection and it was not possible to view the lessons through remote learning. Due to the pandemic, I was only able to observe lessons for one month (February 2020) in three classroom settings (Kindergarten, second grade, and fifth grade).

All observations took place during the "Who are we together?" theme of the curriculum, which focused on developing community among students. Rather than discussing more controversial topics related to identity and different forms of diversity, "Who are we together?" emphasized commonalities and perspective. This thematic unit was observed due to the timeline of this study.

The observations were completed in Kindergarten, second grade, and fifth grade to document an example lesson from each grade band. Lesson observations lasted approximately 45 minutes each and occurred on the same day, which was the February 2020 diversity lesson day. During each observation, I sat at the back of the classroom and took field notes in a journal, which were subsequently digitally transcribed. I did not participate in the lessons or talk to students, although I did ask the teacher questions during the Kindergarten lesson while students were working independently. Each lesson was observed for content, instructional strategies, student engagement, and teacher behaviors (see Table 2).

Table 2
Lesson Observation Details

Grade	Content	Instructional Strategies	Student Engagement	Teacher Behaviors

Kindergarten	Read *Little Humans of New York* and discussed similarities and differences of children from book. Students then partnered up to write a sentence and draw a picture of how they played together.	- Read-aloud - Discussion - Writing and drawing	Students very engaged in talking during discussion and working together during independent work.	- Interactive read-aloud - Facilitated discussion - Monitored student work - Emphasized cooperative learning (e.g. "What do you two friends have in common?"
2nd Grade	Created Flip Grid video of themselves talking about their unique traits and how they contributed to the community of their class and the school. All students were able to observe each other's videos after they were submitted.	- Technology - Modeling	Students had to warm up to filming themselves on video. Some students were more engaged than others in recording message (by using hand gestures, facial expressions, etc.). Due to the "like" feature of Flip Grid, it seemed some students focused more on getting "likes" than the message of community. Classroom management became problematic toward the end of the lesson.	- Guided students through using technology - Sat with individual students to help record videos - Seemed frustrated by end of lesson with student behavior - Emphasized students' place in the classroom and school community (e.g. "What do you bring to [school name] as a unique individual?"
5th Grade	Interactive read-aloud of the book, *The*	- Emphasis on decoding and	Students were engaged in conversations with	- Explained book visuals

	World as 100 People. Connected to global perspective of literacy and poverty rates as well as demographics related to religion and language.	understanding infographics - Math integration - Discussion (whole group and small group) - Journaling	each other and the larger class conversation.	- Facilitated classroom discussion - Attempted to guide students into meaning-making (e.g. "What does it *mean* that 1% of the world's population owns half of the world's wealth?")

Interviews. I interviewed two White administrators, two White teachers, and six White fifth grade students about their perceptions of and attitudes about the diversity curriculum at their school. One interview (with administrator Carlie) took place before the observations and the other interviews took place up to three months after the observations. These semi-structured interviews, during which flexible interview protocols were used to guide the discussion for deeper probing and additional discussion opportunities (Glesne, 2016), were conducted in order to better understand both the curriculum itself as well as adult and student experiences with it. All interview participants submitted consent forms for interviews (Appendix A).

The administrators, Allison (principal) and Carlie (dean), were selected for their leadership role with the curriculum, and the two teachers selected were the fifth grade teacher (Deborah) and Kindergarten teacher (Samantha) of the classrooms I observed in February. The second grade teacher was also approached for an interview, but did not participate.

The interview protocols for the administrators and teachers were similar, but

asked different questions based on their positions in the school (Appendix B). Both were asked about their professional and educational backgrounds first, including training related to diversity education and why they chose to work at the school. Based on their school role, however, the administrators were then asked questions about decision-making related to the curriculum while teachers were asked about their instructional strategies and classroom experiences with the curriculum. Finally, evaluative questions, such as the challenges and rewards and the future of the curriculum, were presented to both administrators and teachers, but approached from a more organizational lens for administrators and classroom-level lens for teachers.

The interview protocol used with students, also semi-structured like the protocols for adults, included questions regarding students' experiences, content understanding, and attitudes and beliefs about the curriculum (Appendix B). The specific student participants for the study were identified based on parent response to a recruitment email sent after the school had shifted to remote learning during the coronavirus pandemic. A list of parent emails was provided to me by Principal Allison of children who had parental consent before the pandemic, and I reached out via email to the list of parents provided. Six parents responded with permission for their children to participate in a phone interview and we scheduled interview times across the span of two weeks. Parents were invited to listen in to the interviews, and at least four parents did so.

Both adult and children interviews took place individually over the phone for a total of ten separate interviews. Adult interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours, while student interviews averaged 15 minutes long. All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed for subsequent analysis.

Lesson plans. According to Creswell (2003), document reviews may offer additional qualitative insight beyond interviews. To meet this end and assist with data triangulation, I requested example lesson plans from the administrators as a more formal glimpse into the stated objectives and instructional strategies of the curriculum. The review of lesson plans occurred after observations and interviews to compare more subjective data (observation notes and interview data from participants) to printed, objective depictions of the curriculum in lesson plan form. Due to the input of fifth grade students in the study, I requested lesson plans from fifth grade and was provided three example lesson plans from the curriculum that were used in the 2019-2020 school year. Each plan aligned with the first three quarterly themes of the curriculum: "Who am I?" "Who are you?" and "Who are we together?" More specifically, the themes were related to identity (Who am I?), diversity (Who are you?), and community (Who are we together?). The lesson plan from the "Who are we together?" theme was actually the fifth grade lesson I observed.

As indicated in interviews with administrators and teachers, these lesson plans were created in-house and designed by a committee with two representatives from each grade band – K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 – and purposefully included multiple faculty of Color for perspective. Administrator Carlie was also part of the planning committee and Principal Allison, while not formerly present for every meeting, also reviewed the lessons. During meetings to write lessons, Administrator Carlie shared that debrief sessions from the previous month were included to help move the curriculum forward appropriately. Full lesson plans with necessary materials were provided every month to teachers prior to the

day of the lesson, and all teachers were invited to a training meeting for the monthly lessons as well (but not required to attend).

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a grounded theory approach to find patterns and themes within interview responses, observation field notes, and lesson plan content through a process of coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Charmaz (2006, p. 43), coding involves, "...categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data. Your codes show how you select, separate, and sort data to begin an analytic accounting of them." This study utilized a three phase approach to coding qualitative data: initial, focused, and axial.

After reading through data for a general sense of interview responses, observation field notes, and lesson plan content, individual transcripts were then reread through the initial coding process. The initial coding process involved a close read of data to identify words or phrases on a line-by-line and incident-by-incident basis with the goal of identifying further themes to explore in the second round of coding (Charmaz, 2006). Rather than defining a priori codes, in vivo codes were *created* by defining the data (Charmaz, 2006). This process also helped more closely read the data and develop new ideas to further explore, such as potential categories and themes (Charmaz, 2006).

During initial coding, I coded adult transcripts together, student transcripts together, and then observation field notes and lesson plans together. Field notes and lesson plans were analyzed together with an assumption that similar codes would emerge from both, as the observations were lessons in action, particularly for fifth grade, which taught the same lesson I had a plan for. Across the adult transcripts, there were a total of

46 codes identified within the data. 34 codes were identified among the student interviews, and 32 codes were identified within the field notes and lesson plans.

Following the first phase of initial coding, I then completed the focused coding process. Rather than identifying codes on a line-by-line or incident-by-incident basis, focused coding involved more conceptual thinking to help categorize data (Charmaz, 2006). Through a constant-comparative process in which data were compared to data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), focused codes helped refine initial codes by identifying the most frequently discussed codes in relation to the research questions. From the original codes I developed during initial coding, during focused coding, I narrowed down the most frequent codes across data sources into 14 codes for adults, 7 codes for students, and 5 codes among the observation and lesson plan data.

The final stage of data analysis was the axial phase of coding. According to Creswell (1998), axial coding allows for a restructuring of data into an analytic whole. Axial coding also involves linking subcategories to major categories of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) as well as the application of an analytic frame to understand the data (Charmaz, 2006). While axial coding has the potential to limit data analysis by prescribing boundaries (Charmaz, 2006), the approach was used for this study as a way to connect data codes into thematic categories in order to address the research questions. Following open and focused coding, I employed axial coding in relation to my research questions as a way to sort the data into a synthesized picture of the diversity curriculum and associated perceptions and attitudes (see Table 3). Overall, six themes emerged as relevant to the first research question concerning curriculum characteristics, five themes emerged in relation to question two about administrator and teacher perceptions and

attitudes about the curriculum, and three themes emerged for question three regarding student perceptions and attitudes about the curriculum. These themes are discussed as results in chapter four.

Table 3
Examples of Initial, Focused, and Axial Coding for RQ 1

Data Segment	Initial Code	Focused Code	Axial Code/Theme
"…identity work with young children, it's pretty easy. I mean, you can ask a kindergartner, you know, to do some identity work and, and it's not a huge stretch." – Principal Allison	Identity	Core curricular theme	Multi-faceted curriculum
"…we learn about like, our identity." – Student 6 Beth			
"I think it provides a more open community. We talk openly and comfortably talk about real life scenarios." – Teacher Samantha	Community	Core curricular theme	Multi-faceted curriculum
"…who we are in a community." – Student 1 Lizzie			
"So along with race or ethnicity or nationality in depth, some [topics] around like, um, immigrants, migrants, refugees, um, country of origin. Biracial families." – Administrator Carlie	Race	Core curricular theme (diversity)	Multi-faceted curriculum
"I know about back then people were excluded like Black/White and it wasn't a good time for African Americans." – Student 1 Lizzie			

"We're hopefully providing things all students to, um, have a safe space to have conversation, and kind of talking about some really important topics that help make our kids better humans." – Administrator Carlie	Safe space	Class environment	Instructional strategies
"I've developed my understanding of all of this curriculum and sort of its, um, puzzle piece way of being connected in and out [to the diversity curriculum]." – Teacher Deborah	Integration	Strategy	Instructional strategies
"…it's just having those open conversations about the material and the book…" – Teacher Samantha	Discussions	Strategy	Instructional strategies

Trustworthiness

The nature of qualitative work may come under scrutiny by positivist researchers due to issues of validity and reliability that are approached differently from quantitative work (Shenton, 2004). Through establishing trustworthiness, however, qualitative researchers may explicate the ways in which their study maintained rigorous standards of research (Guba, 1981). The trustworthiness of this qualitative work is addressed below through Guba's (1981) criteria for trustworthiness.

Credibility. Credibility refers to the match between what results suggest and the reality of the phenomenon (Shenton, 2004). To address this concern, researchers should include: reputable research methods, familiarity with research context, random sampling,

triangulation, participant openness and honesty, iterative questioning, negative case analysis, debriefing opportunities, researcher reflection, positionality, member checks, thick description, and literature review (Shenton, 2004). This study addressed these suggestions in a variety of ways. First, the selected research methods are prevalent in research methods literature and among published case studies. Triangulation was also utilized in the study through multiple means of data collection and thick descriptions as well as member checks to check for accuracy and validity of conclusions. Additionally, networking with adult participants individually provided opportunities to develop rapport for openness and honesty, and the use of semi-structured and open-ended interviews facilitated iterative questioning to absorb the most accurate and consistent data from participations. Debriefing and reflection opportunities were built into the research design, and member checks were completed with both adult and children interviewees to confirm accurate reporting of perceptions and attitudes. Both a positionality statement and literature review are included within this dissertation as well.

One missing aspect of credibility as described by Shenton is the absence of random sampling. Teacher and student participants were purposefully sampled instead.

Transferability. Transferability within research involving qualitative methods is debated. Some researchers assert that due to the nature of small sample sizes within qualitative work, generalizability is unwarranted (Shenton, 2004). Others, however, suggest that because small cases are attached to a larger group, the feasibility of transferability is not impossible (Stake, 1994). Regardless, to mitigate the limitations of transferability within qualitative methods, providing robust details of context is important to designate the boundaries of the study (Shenton, 2004). The following information

should be provided to the research consumer upfront: number of cases/participants in the study and where they are based, the types of people who contributed data, data collection methods, number and length of data collection sessions, and the time period of data collection (Shenton, 2004). Within this study, all of these details are addressed through the "Data Collection" section of this chapter. While broad generalizability is an assumed limitation to qualitative work, acknowledging the boundaries and details of this case provided context that may assist in such transferability.

Dependability. Dependability in qualitative research is similar to the concept of reliability in quantitative work (Shenton, 2004). Similar to quantitative methods, dependability can be fostered through documenting and reporting specific method procedures (Shenton, 2004). Doing so includes providing robust details regarding the research design and its implementation, data collection, and reflection of the study (Shenton, 2004). To address dependability, these areas were documented in both the method and results chapters. Attending to measures of credibility, such as a strong research design, triangulation, thick description, and reflection opportunities, also helped ensure dependability.

Researcher Positionality

Positionality refers to one's own self, background, and subjectivity within the research process, which ultimately exists as a fixture of the researcher's approach throughout the phases of the study (Peshkin, 1998). Acknowledging one's own positionality and subjectivity can help not only to contextualize the research for consumers, but also bracket bias and interpretations within the scope of one's own life experiences.

My research interest addresses the nature and process of social studies education in the United States, particularly from a critical lens that encourages the investigation of structural and institutional power. Given the politicized nature of social studies standards and the overall pattern of elementary social studies marginalization, it is my concern that social studies education, including multicultural education, is not being approached through critical lenses to facilitate students' development of critical consciousness that will help them address social inequalities. Situated in my educational background in sociology and my own teaching experience, I consider myself an advocate for ensuring students have access to social studies education at the same quality and quantity as tested subjects such as reading and math. From a sociological lens, I embody a critical structural perspective of the education system, particularly within test-based accountability, and view the marginalization of social studies as a means of political oppression by those in power. This lens creates a social justice aspect to my research, couching my efforts to bring critical social studies education to the elementary school classroom as an equity issue.

Within efforts to bring critical perspectives of social studies to the classroom, I believe it is especially important to consider White students, whose embodiment of centralized Whiteness is likely to go unchecked in traditional school contexts, particularly in predominantly White areas. As a White woman who grew up in a predominantly White area and who has been around a predominantly White population for my entire life, learning the ways in which race operates in my own life has been a revelatory experience, and I find I am still constantly learning more about what it means to be White as well as the implications of White supremacy. My socialization into race was never

challenged or considered until my graduate studies, which created a significant experience for my interest in anti-racist education for White students. Due to my own contentions with Whiteness in formal and informal atmospheres along with the necessity for me to keep learning about anti-racist allyship, I hope to continue growing through this research, and at the same time, am concerned about those who lack critical perspectives about Whiteness. Because significant misconceptions about race and society may occur without challenges to Whiteness, White populations in particular need intervention in order to take informed action within a democracy. The diversity curriculum at Central Episcopal aims to help White children develop such perspective, which made me interested in further studying the program. Due to the nature of segregation within schools, school diversity and social studies curricula have the power to expose to students to diverse groups in meaningful and critical ways that question and critique the dominant social structure.

By analyzing not only the access to, but also the content of social studies education being delivered to students, I hope to find more curricular content and accessible ways of raising student critical consciousness to promote social justice, starting in the elementary grades. I ultimately approach my research topic from a framework in which the lack and diluted content of social studies education creates an equity and social justice problem that must be countered in educational research. Although the diversity curriculum presented here has its own scheduled place and is not specifically tied into designated social studies time at the school, its four themes (identity, diversity, community, and social justice) are reflected in the National Council for the Social Studies' *College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State*

Standards (2013).

Within the present study, I am aware of the need to mitigate my critical nature toward the subject, and aim to not impose my own beliefs upon my teacher participants or allow my presuppositions to cloud data analysis. I ultimately recognize how my education and past experience have impacted the meaning I assign to education and the ways in which each individual teacher and student in this study have undergone the same process. While my orientation toward this research area is critical, I understand and accept the responsibility of representing the teacher participants in this study as most true to their perceptions as possible.

Ethical Concerns

Before data collection began, this study was submitted to the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for ethical consideration and approved for implementation. Two primary ethical concerns guiding work in social science are informed consent and inflicting no harm upon participants (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Participants in this study, including administrators, teachers, and students, received detailed informed consent letters that described the purpose of the study without concealment, the details of data collection and analysis, why they have been chosen to be part of the study, the time commitment, potential risks and benefits, and emphasis on the nature of voluntary participation (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Students' parents were also given consent letters for their children. These consent letters also called attention to the protection of privacy among participants, which are all referred to by pseudonyms in this work. This is also why the school website is not cited as a source in this chapter. Special concern was also taken when discussing sensitive topics of race to limit the risk

of psychological or social harm on participants. All participants were also offered the opportunity to skip any uncomfortable questions during interviews.

Summary

The preceding chapter described the methodology of the current study, which intends to document the characteristics of a diversity curriculum at a predominantly White elementary school and gauge the perceptions and attitudes of the curriculum among White administrators, White teachers, and a sample of White fifth grade students. Through an exploratory case study design (Glesne, 2016), multiple data sources were collected to provide an in-depth, detailed lens through which to approach the research questions. Data were collected through interviews with White administrators, teachers, and fifth grade students, as well as classroom observations and lesson plan documents. These data were then analyzed through a three-stage process (Charmaz, 2006) to define conceptual categories in relation to the study's three research questions.

To promote quality qualitative research, data were carefully triangulated to promote detail and trustworthiness, and the study's context was used as an asset in the description process. My positionality as a researcher was carefully considered in my approach to multicultural education throughout data collection and analysis, and attention to ethical practice guided all parts of the research, particularly in relation to participants.

The following chapter will report the results of the data analysis followed by a discussion and interpretation of these results in the concluding chapter five.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to document the characteristics of an intentional diversity curriculum used in a predominantly White elementary school, along with administrator, teacher, and student perceptions of and attitudes about the curriculum. Through a case study approach, interview, observational, and document data were collected and analyzed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a diversity curriculum at an elementary school serving predominantly White students?
2. What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among school administrators and teachers?
3. What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among fifth grade students?

This chapter will present the findings of the study through discussions of each research question.

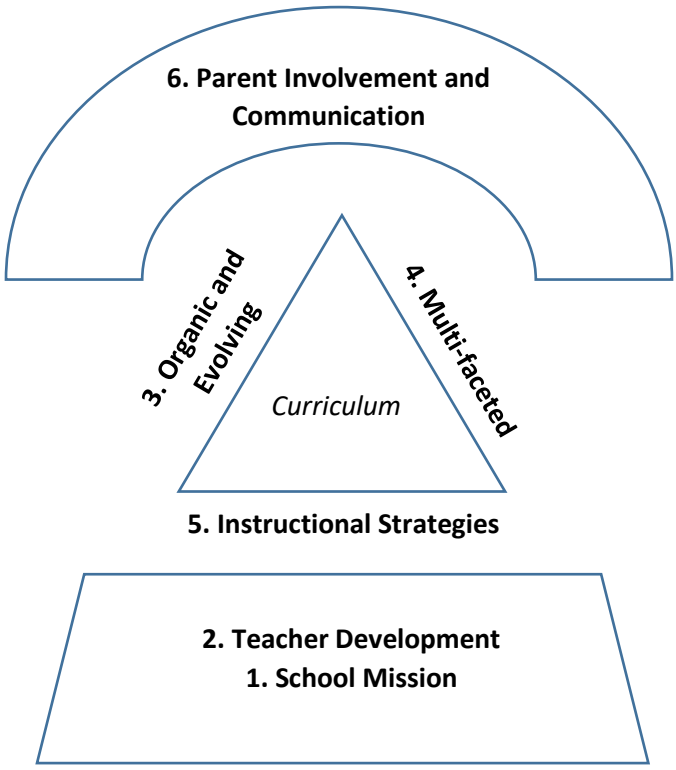
Characteristics of Diversity Curriculum

Data about the curriculum itself were primarily gathered from interviews with administrators and teachers, and then triangulated with data from student interviews, classroom lesson observations, and lesson plan documents. Participants described the curriculum from multiple angles, resulting in six specific characteristics. Data from the study suggest that the diversity curriculum from this school: (1) was rooted in the school mission; (2) emphasized content knowledge of structural racism and personal identity among teachers and staff at the school; (3) was organic and evolving; (4) was multi-faceted; (5) utilized a variety of instructional strategies; and (6) prioritized parent

involvement and communication. The relationship of these themes is diagrammed in the figure below.

Figure 2

Relationship between curriculum characteristics.



Characteristic One: Rooted in School Mission

All four adult participants in the study remarked on the strong connection between the school's mission, which had a specific statement about diversity, and the rationale, planning and delivery of the diversity curriculum. Principal Allison described the root of centering diversity as one of the founding philosophies of the school:

> So if you look at schools that started at that opened in the sixties, that's why they opened for many of them…because of White flight, that [White] families would

> have a place and pretty affluent families would have a place to go if they no longer wanted to attend a public school where there were Black students. That's just a sad fact of reality. But yeah, we were never that school, you know, we were never anywhere near that kind of school. We actually started under a very, very, different kind of mission.

This sentiment was also echoed by Administrator Carlie:

> I guess whenever the school was founded and the mission kind of established who we were, it included embracing diversity as one of our three pillars. So we have trained scholars through an academic fellowship and spiritual formation and embracing diversity. It's a big part of who we've been since, since the school started.

When asked to describe the goals of the school's diversity curriculum during the interview, Principal Allison again based her response in the school's mission, explaining:

> Part of our mission goals are to ensure that children have a strong sense of who they are as well as others in the world…so they recognize injustices, understand why they happen and then understand the power that they have to do something about them.

All four of the adult interview participants also gave the school's mission as the reason they chose to work at the school. When asked specifically why she chose to apply to Central Episcopal, Administrator Carlie explained, "My school, um, is really called toward justice and, um, being active in your community, and not a type of, just sort of, introspective or reflective to your own self, but actually thinking about others." Fifth grade teacher Deborah also responded similarly, sharing, "That was a major part of the

decision to work at my school – that the school itself was founded on the principle of diversity and actually seeing it out through a curriculum." Kindergarten teacher Samantha explained her decision to work at the school as the result of the school faculty embracing her son, whom she described as "eccentric," while he was a Kindergartener, noting the presence of a gay chaplain at the school that made her feel the school was committed to celebrating diverse students. She then applied to work at the school a year later. Principal Allison was part of the school's founding, and helped design the school mission and culture to align with Episcopalian values that promoted embracing diversity and serving social justice. Allison also explained that knowledge of the school's mission statement was often evaluated in teacher interviews for open positions:

> In terms of teacher interviews, when we are interviewing candidates, we always talk to them about the mission of the school. And there is an expectation of if you're interviewing at [school name] that you studied enough about that, to make sure that, you know, what our goals are as a school. And so there's three pillars that I think I talked about – creating scholars, embracing diversity, and nurturing spirituality. We talk about…we ask questions about all of those things in our interviews. We have very specific questions that we ask all candidates. It's a fair process. And some of those questions are, you know, what is your definition of diversity? What is your identity? How does your identity impact your role as a teacher?

Throughout the interviews, the adult participants also communicated a sense of the curriculum being a core part of the school. When asked how the curriculum fit into the school culture, Carlie explained, "I think it is definitely a, um, core part of who we

are and what we do as a school." Similarly, Samantha noted the effect of the curriculum on her classroom culture:

> Oh, it's a huge part of the culture. Like I said, we can always refer back to these books and different situations and scenarios in the classroom. It's just sort of hard to separate it. It's not a standalone thing. It's just woven into the whole culture of the school.

The attachment between the diversity curriculum initiative and the school's mission seemed to serve as a grounding mechanism for the philosophy and logistics of delivering it to students. From an organizational lens, mission statements have the power to guide tangible goals as well as to provide opportunities for assessment of desired objectives (Lee, 2010). Mission statements also promote shared visions and purpose for a school (Stemler et al., 2011). When considering Banks's (1993) framework of multicultural education, the school's mission around diversity hints at an important structural approach to the program attuned to the higher levels of multicultural education. The use of the embracing diversity philosophy at Central Episcopal seemed to provide a similar path for teachers and administrators when designing the diversity curriculum, including curriculum revisions. With a commitment to embracing diversity driving the purpose for the school, the selection and professional development of teachers at the school emerged as another curricular theme.

Characteristic Two: Rooted in Teacher Professional Development

The second characteristic of the curriculum, closely tied to fulfilling the embracing diversity aspect of the school's mission, was the careful attention to educating teachers regarding issues of diversity, particularly regarding race. As stated by Principal

Allison, Central Episcopal searched for teachers of a "mindset" ready to tackle the diversity work driven by the school's mission:

> You know, we don't expect them to be like a PhD in this kind of work, but what we are always looking for are people who are interested and curious and willing to grow, even if they've not had any prior experiences or trainings, because we know that we can provide all of that. So we're really just looking for a mindset, um, that, you know, that nicely lends itself to being willing to challenge some assumptions that you might bring just based on your upbringing or your own experiences.

The school's investment in growing their teachers' mindset for teaching the curriculum and subsequently helping to fulfill the school's mission was apparent in the work they did with providing teacher (and staff) professional development regarding diversity. Fifth grade teacher Deborah described a sense of "readiness" necessary for children and adults alike to tackle the diversity work, particularly from White perspectives, and all adult participants were able to describe at length the professional development experiences with diversity they had since arriving at Central Episcopal.

Principal Allison noted that all teachers and staff engaged in a school-funded 2-day workshop about racial equity upon hire, which was facilitated by a larger equity institute in the state. During the workshop, she described, "You learn the, really the history of racism, um, in the South in particular, but more than that. It goes all the way back…it's pretty eye opening." Following that major workshop for all faculty and staff, the school also facilitated many other opportunities for growth, including book clubs, faculty meetings, professional development workshops, speakers, and consulting. These

opportunities were facilitated by both outside groups/individuals as well as in-house faculty leaders.

Professional development: Outside facilitators. Administrator Carlie succinctly described some of the professional development opportunities for teacher and staff facilitated by outside entities:

> Our school does ongoing professional development within our school diversity work. We worked with, uh, a consulting group called [name redacted]. Um, we had guest speakers like Eddie Moore come in and we've done Facing History with our school, um, and conferences around racism and diversity work.

Referencing the consulting work, Principal Allison described it as a year-long partnership with the purpose as working individually with teachers to "help teachers understand what it means to really create inclusive and welcoming spaces," including "the stuff that's on our walls, in the hallways and in our classrooms to the libraries that are in our classroom and the books, materials, and how to interact with children." She also commented, "That group of consultants were really asking some hard questions and looking at things like our dress code" as well as "things related to gender identity and gender inclusivity." Allison also explained the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their work with the consulting group, explaining:

> We were just reaching the pinnacle of that big work and were super excited about the direction that was heading. And literally the week, the last week that we were on campus, I had set up all of these readings for the small groups and had to cancel all of them. So I imagine we'll come back to that next year. I hope I can come back to it. That is some training that I could be sure that everybody was

> getting really equally. Um, and that's what you get when you bring someone into a school, especially for a year, rather than like a one time workshop…everybody's a part of it.

In addition to the consulting work, most participants, like Carlie above, described the use of literature and author speakers as avenues for professional development around multicultural work. Kindergarten teacher Samantha referenced reading and hearing Ruby Payne speak as well as a school book club on *The Guide for White Women Who Teach Black Boys* by editors Eddie Moore, Ali Michael, and Marguerite W. Penick-Parks. Principal Allison also noted the influence of Tim Wise, who was a speaker at Central Episcopal about ten years ago, and a powerful conversation she had with him about their diversity efforts:

> So we invited him to come and he came and heard about all the things that we were doing. And we were talking to him and I had some time with him. And a couple of other people we were talking about, um, all the things that we were doing with our kids of Color at this point. We were really excited about it. And he said, "That's great. That's awesome that you're doing that, but *what are you doing with all the White kids?"*

It was this conversation through a professional development opportunity, described by Allison as a "wake up call," that sent her "back to the drawing board" to develop the curriculum in its current model that includes both White students and students of Color as its focus. This change is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section, "Organic and Evolving."

The two administrators interviewed spoke about several diversity-based

conferences they had attended over the years – Carlie named five specific conferences and Allison named four. Every conference mentioned was specifically related to race, and one in particular was run by the National Association of Independent Schools, of which Central Episcopal is a member. Allison cited this conference in particular with helping to establish the curriculum in their elementary grades:

> That was really the conference where I decided, because I heard another school present, that we should be doing this work in our lower school. We'd only been doing it in our middle school. And so, yeah, and not many schools were doing it with younger children and it made a lot of sense to do it in middle and high schools…So that was that conference that was, you know, one of many conferences or workshops I attended, but that one was pretty, uh, I don't know, I guess it was a turning point for us as a school.

Fifth grade teacher Deborah, acknowledging the importance of mindset and growth for teaching the curriculum, also noted the significance of the required conference that new teachers attend when they start work at Central Episcopal:

> We send people to the [name redacted] conference every year. Um, you know, like I said, we, we try to get everybody's thinking founded in some sort of background knowledge of how all of this became a problem in the United States, by going to [name redacted], which, if you've not experienced that, it's a wonderful background piece of information that takes three days and is rather intense. So I think that something like that is important, they're [the administration] actually not coming at it as, "Go teach your kids this," because what if you yourself are not ready to embrace those concepts? And so I think

that's one of the biggest parts – you can't start teaching the kids until the faculty is in a place where they can actually embrace it and talk about it.

The use of outside resources for professional development seemed to be a cornerstone of the push for teacher understanding in order to best teach the diversity content from the curriculum. Research suggests that such professional development opportunities can be beneficial for developing school personnel's racial literacies, skills for teaching for social justice, and awareness of structural racism in schools (Nyachae, 2018). As evidenced in later parts of the interviews, all participants had an awareness that a successful initiative needed more than the predominantly White faculty's input, and the purposeful and intentional use of additional stakeholders was critical to the curriculum's development. Participants were easily able to share the experiences they had had with professional development organizations, and beyond these opportunities were in-house professional development sessions as well.

Professional development: In-house. In-house professional development opportunities seemed to complement the more formal workshops and speakers brought to campus. Both administrators and teachers described these opportunities as book clubs, faculty meetings, groups, and specific workshop days. Compared to the bigger opportunities, Principal Allison described these as, "a lot of smaller things along the way, like we had a White allies group, you know, of teachers and staff that met on Fridays twice a month" where "[we were] reading a lot of articles and we were listening to podcasts and we were sharing videos with each other." She also mentioned yearly book studies as professional development: "Every summer read that we do as a school, there's a book that has a diversity theme to it. So we've been doing that for like 10 summers."

Participants indicated that this type of professional development also occurred in spaces like faculty meetings and during designated professional workshop days. Fifth grade teacher Deborah shared a memory from a tense faculty meeting in which the definition of "racist" was debated:

> We had a rather long conversation about a video called "I'm Not a Racist, Am I?" We actually had a screening of it and in it, a concept was the definition of racist is anybody who benefits from racism. And so that conversation is the best example of, "You're not ready for this, it'll actually turn them away more than it'll help them lean into it." So, you know, we had a lot of, "I don't like it." We had people who were downright outwardly, vocally, and emotionally offended. And so you can imagine then asking anybody in the room, regardless of their place on the spectrum of readiness, "Now I want you to all go all teach well about this topic."

Kindergarten teacher Samantha also shared a memory from one of the professional development days and had similar sentiments about high emotions during some conversations:

> We've done a lot of neat visual work. Like they'll put a big line on the ground, um, it's almost like a number line and you got to place where you…how comfortable you feel talking about race. And, um, you know, there's been a lot of very emotional, angry, happy, sad meetings…just within our own beliefs about being inclusive and about race and, um, with topics. So yeah, [school name] does give a lot of direct training.

Administrator Carlie also led monthly professional development and training sessions for teachers to teach the monthly lessons. Teacher Deborah noted, "The people

who are teaching them [the lessons] are actually going to a meeting and there they are part of a conversation prepares them for that." Both teachers Samantha and Deborah affirmed they felt prepared to teach the lessons based on the work they had completed through all professional development opportunities, both in-house and through outside entities. Rationalizing the necessity for these common opportunities, Deborah mentioned:

> And so we spent a lot of time actually seeking that [professional development] out and making sure that, you know, if we are not the minority, how is it possible that we can understand what diversity really means? And so we have to constantly be learning and checking ourselves, you know, as a primarily White-educator school. So we're also sharing articles regularly and just really trying to make sure that we're balancing what we understand to be the truth and what the truth really is.

The discussion of active professional development in racial literacy alongside the anecdotes shared by teachers Samantha and Deborah about other faculty reactions to discussions of race seemed indicate a continuum of development for this work among teachers at Central Episcopal. Since successful multicultural education models are predicated on buy-in from teachers and staff (Banks, 2016), it seemed Central Episcopal's work with their teacher training may have been strained by White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018) and perhaps the concern of Lensmire et al. (2013) that pointed discussions of White privilege may dampen discussions of race. While the teachers interviewed for this study were supportive of the diversity curriculum and professional development, a bigger sample of teachers may have yielded additional insight into struggles some White teachers may face with learning about structural racism.

Although it seemed some teachers resisted some of the anti-racist work being

promoted at the school, it is also important to note the longevity of the school's efforts around the curriculum. Although the program had undergone changes since its inception, the persistence beyond struggles with staff and the curriculum lend more evidence toward an organizational effort among school leaders to implement effective multicultural work. The continued work in this area by Central Episcopal, even with the acknowledgement of necessary growth, is critical for the anti-racist goals of the curriculum.

With the school mission, administrator vision for the diversity curriculum, and mindset of teachers being refined through consistent professional development, the diversity curriculum at Central Episcopal had firm grounding for its additional, logistical characteristics. The following three subsections of characteristics – organic and evolving, multi-faceted, and instructional strategies – describe the nature of the curriculum itself.

Characteristic Three: Organic and Evolving

All adult participants were proud to share that the curriculum in place at Central Episcopal was built in-house and consistently evolved to reflect updated knowledge and practice in order to maintain the school's mission. Principal Allison described the curriculum's origin at length, explaining how the use of "affinity groups" to provide space for children of Color to fellowship eventually evolved into an entire curriculum for both White children and children of Color to learn about diversity. As previously described, it was her attendance at a diversity-focused conference with the National Association of Independent Schools that drove her to bring the curriculum to the elementary level, and the discussion with Tim Wise that affirmed the necessity to reach White students in addition to the intentional work done for students of Color. She

provided a reflection of the purpose of affinity groups and the spark for introducing them to the elementary grades:

> As I sat in that workshop and listened to what they were doing, they were basically starting affinity groups for children of Color within that school. And, um, they shared how that felt for children. They shared, you know, how important it was for the families of those children because they were the non-majority in the school. So they can go into a place where they could eat with a group of other students and adults to allow them some time to spend together and to have unity together. It was really powerful, at least in the way that they described it, and meaningful and helped those kids lives, you know. That helped them understand who they were better and who they were in the larger group. It provided a layer of support for them. And I had, you know, never really been presented with that kind of scenario or research around how that could be really critical within a school to do this. And then we were always doing a lot of things related to diversity, but we, we just weren't doing it with younger children.

She continued, describing the action she took to begin the affinity groups with elementary students of Color:

> There was a sense that younger children don't know. Then of course, when you look at the research, like, of course they know that. They recognize skin color and other differences, very early, you know, as infants. And so as that research began, you know, um, it was presented and we began to think about it. I thought, “We really can do this in our lower school.” I also had at the time, a woman of Color who was our Dean of Community Life and our chaplain, and I knew she would do

> it. She wanted to do it. We talked about it and we imagined what it might look like. So I came back from that workshop and thought, yeah, you know, it's time. I like it. We need to do this. Our kids need it. And it's the right time to do it. And we have the right people here and we're going to make this happen. *Sixth grade is too late.*

According to Allison, the school began providing affinity groups for students of Color in the lower school, partnering students as mentors and facilitating spaces for students to talk with each other and faculty of Color. This continued for several years until her conversation with Tim Wise during the professional development opportunity discussed previously, during which he asked Allison what the school was doing to educate the White students about diversity. Describing Wise as "exactly right," Allison described the subsequent change to the program she made, which became the modern curriculum:

> We went back to the drawing board, actually. I formed group of teachers to work on this over the summer. And we applied for a professional development grant to our school. I paid them to work on the writing of curriculum that we could use with all students, that we could use with the whole class. We could use it with students of Color and then we could use with White allies within the school. And so that group got together and wrote curriculum for several weeks over the summer. And then we rolled it out the next year. And that was where we came up with it the four core questions. We were, you know, brainstorming, like six or seven of us brainstorming about what kind of framework do we want to provide for this?

From there, the school launched the formal diversity curriculum for all elementary grades, and continued making changes as it rolled out, allowing it to evolve with the needs of the school, students, and shifts in perspective over time.

One of the major changes mentioned by all participants was a pivotal change in student grouping for the lessons. Initially, when the curriculum was first introduced, all students would be together for a short time at the beginning of the lesson for an introduction, and then all students of Color (who had parent permission), would leave the room to have the same lesson in another location in their own space. Students would then return for debriefing. Administrator Carlie described the process as, “In previous years we would have the affinity group time and the classroom lesson time at the same time. We would come back together and have like, a debrief, for like ten, fifteen minutes.”

According to the teachers and administrators, this process was used to ensure a safe space for students of Color. Referencing a White parent complaint about her child not being invited to attend the affinity groups, fifth grade teacher Deborah implied a justification for the decision to split students:

> I had a parent complain that her child wasn't allowed to go in there and sit with a friend. And we were trying to point this out with, you know, we're not going to tell your child no, but the whole point of having children of Color have a place where they can go together is that safe space. And I think in that conversation, it dawned on me that the reality of it never occurred to her. And doesn't occur to a lot of people that, that maybe they are not the safest person for other people to talk in front of.

All participants, however, commented at some point in their interviews that this process was eventually changed based on teacher, parent, and student feedback. Rather than send the students of Color out of the room for their lesson and affinity group time, all students at the time of this study stayed in the same room for the duration of the diversity lesson, and the student of Color affinity groups met sometime later in the week or month. Administrator Carlie described this change from a student perspective:

> The rest of the class would be having a similar lesson, but they [students] just always kind of wondered, what are they talking about? They wanted to do the lesson together and then have it be more of a social community building kind of time. That was a change that we made based on feedback.

Principal Allison also discussed student feedback, along with parent feedback, in the decision to keep all students together:

> So when we stepped back a little bit, which you could do after doing it for a couple of years, I stepped back and said, how's this going? And we surveyed our kids. And I was really, really adamant that we, you know, put real surveys in the hands of third, fourth, and fifth graders and get them four or five questions to answer. After doing some surveys of students and surveys of families and teachers, and then meeting and talking to students, we decided the last couple of years, we would have the whole class come together around a lesson at the same time. We would still do affinity groups, but the affinity groups would be more social and more student led.

Additionally, both teachers Deborah and Samantha described the change from a teacher perspective:

Deborah: A couple of years ago we were still...we would have our diversity conversations and it had been since the very beginning and it took us a while to reverse it, but it was that we would begin our conversations for diversity all together in the classroom. And then about 10 minutes in, the children of Color, they'd have their conversations someplace else. And it would, they would be identical parallel conversations. So you can imagine them in that safe space that we were, we were told when we designed it, but you can also imagine, *"Who did we just send out of the room?"* And we got some really excellent, critical feedback from many of those minority groups that, um, them being sent out, or taught apart from everybody else, while it did give them an opportunity to speak safely, it was also dividing them further.

Samantha: I wasn't so sure about pulling out the children of Color during the lessons, because I felt like it was a very inclusive lesson. So I'm happier with them keeping all of us together during the lesson. For me, this is the better model and then the children of Color going out at a different time.

The ability and necessity for the curriculum to continue changing and evolving was highlighted in all interviews, but the shift to keeping students of Color in their classrooms during the formal diversity lessons was discussed as the biggest and most fundamental shift the curriculum has experienced since its inception. There were also other examples of changes to the curriculum over the years. Administrator Carlie mentioned the importance of keeping books that were used in lessons updated with new available titles. When asked to describe why she believed the curriculum needed to be continually updated, she mentioned:

> I guess because new books come out. So there will be a better way to describe, say, an experience with being biracial or there might be something better about what it's like for interacting when you're a refugee. We're just getting more and more diverse children books and resources. We want to use the new stuff because there's so many great stories that are being shared.

Fifth grade teacher Deborah also mentioned changes to the literature, sharing that she was a leader in adjusting books for each grade level. Previously, all grade levels had used the same book during the monthly lessons, but Deborah brought up issue with the same books being used for Kindergarteners and fifth graders due to engagement and maturity. She shared, “I was a major part of saying we can't be reading the same book in first grade and fifth grade and expect our fifth graders to lean into this conversation.” From there, the curriculum shifted to grade bands. K-1, 2-3, and 4-5, that would receive the same lesson and accompanying book. Principal Allison also mentioned the need for refining topics each year to stay in tune with the needs of students and society:

> I think we're wanting to make sure that we’re talking about more than just race-based differences. So that's been some of the changes in this past year with all of it, and then other changes that have to do with kind of what's going on in this country about immigration. We wanted to make sure that we were adjusting and, um, highlighting those kinds of those events, national events, political events that were, you know, in the moment to try and to stay current with what's happening right now, outside your door, and has been, you know? We've always tried to adjust the curriculum.

Both teachers also shared similar beliefs about the value of an evolving curriculum. Kindergarten teacher Samantha shared, “I just think it's important that we stay on top of any research or that we don't get stagnant. It should always be an evolving curriculum. And I think it is.” Fifth grade teacher Deborah, while optimistic about the organic nature of the curriculum, was the only participant to caution against too much change:

> I do think we need to be a little bit more direct and shore up what are the outcomes that we're looking for at each grade point are and, um, and stabilizing our curriculum a little bit. Not getting rid of the organic nature. I like that we're willing to adapt, but I think that…there does come a point that if you're always changing and always adapting, then you're also avoiding naming your curriculum.

Elaborating further, Deborah expressed concern that due to the constant evolving nature of the curriculum, outcomes to objectives were hard to specify:

> Shouldn't they [students] come to some understanding? Aren't there some truths that we're all hoping to get to? And so in those essential questions, who am I, who are you, who are we together, what am I called to do…what *are* we hoping our kids are called to do? Those questions don't seem to be firmly answered. Um, they seem to be grasped at, but I'm just wondering if we can't clean that up a little bit.

Deborah’s comment was a callback to the importance of the school mission in directing the curriculum at its root, and diverged from the more pedagogical concerns of book choice and topic selection mentioned by other participants. Her concern was reflected within fidelity issues of other curricular endeavors across academic subjects. For example, lack of cohesion and fidelity in implementation of language arts curricula

may result in negative student outcomes (Moon & Park, 2016). Deborah's desire for tighter objectives may help identify possible issues of fidelity within Central Episcopal's diversity initiative, and presents important considerations for curriculum designers.

In their discussions of curricular evolution and change, teachers seemed to invoke tenets of Critical Race Theory in education (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Lynn & Dixon, 2013). By initially providing students of Color a specific space to discuss matters in ways assumed to be more comfortable than the regular classroom, the administration and teachers at Central Episcopal seemed to have had intentions for both challenging Whiteness and resisting colorblind rhetoric. Ultimately, however, this initiative was limited by simultaneously reinforcing Whiteness as a norm (White children stayed in the classroom) and removing minoritized voices from discussions of race in the presence of White students. This is an interesting aspect of how Whites in the upper stages of Helms's (1992) and Hardiman's (1982) models of identity development may question their role and actions when exploring anti-racism.

Characteristic Four – Multi-Faceted Topics

The diversity curriculum in place at Central Episcopal was guided by four core questions: Who am I? Who are you? Who are we together? What are we called to do? These questions were reflected in all interviews as the guideposts of the curriculum, and allowed for a multi-faceted focus of various topics related to diversity. Principal Allison offered insight into the origin of and rationale behind these questions:

> We began thinking like, well, first of all, we need to figure out our own identity. So we need to do some identity work. And so somebody said that and I said, "Oh yeah, like the question would be, who am I?" And then the next question would

> be, well, if you're different than me, then who are you? That would be diversity. And then if we wanted to talk about community, who are we together? And that would be the community piece. So, identity, diversity, community. And then the fourth question was, “What are we called to do?” And that really comes from the Episcopal Church school sort of doctrine. We are here to help our neighbors, no matter who our neighbor is. So what, you know, what are we being called to do once we figured out the answers to those three questions?

Administrator Carlie explained the questions as quarterly focuses for the curriculum:

> So for two months we do on identity work with "Who am I?" as our guiding question. And then we do "Who are you?" with diversity kind of being our guiding theme question. Then "Who are we together?" with the belonging sort of theme, and then "What are we called to do?” with equity and justice.

The four questions were evident in lesson plans collected for this study. Each lesson plan provided the “Theme/Unit” that aligned with the guiding question and associated topic (identity, diversity, belonging, or equity). The fourth/fifth grade lessons I reviewed focused on the first three questions. The “Who am I?” identity lesson asked students to create an identity chart using a Facing History resource that included family roles, interests and hobbies, as well as background information, such as religion, race, and nationality. The “Who are you?” diversity lesson explained the concept of microaggressions to students and had them create a chart with a list of microaggressions, why they’re offensive, and possible responses to the microaggressions listed. Finally, the “Who are we together?” community lesson had students interact with the text, *The World as 100 People*, which provided statistics about different aspects of the world, such as

religion demographics, literacy rates, and poverty rates. After reading and discussing, students were to reflect in their personal journals. This is the lesson I was able to observe in fifth grade.

Who am I? Identity was a subtheme among both teacher and student interviews and approached the question, "Who am I?" Teacher Samantha described the first type of identity work she does with her Kindergartners at the beginning of the school year:

> One thing we do at the beginning of the year is "Name of the Day" and I feel like this is where it really starts for us. We just truly draw somebody's name out. And let's say, whoever it is, we do a little interview in front of the class and we talk about their favorite food, their favorite color, who lives in their house, um, what color their eyes are. And then we just look at the kids, you know, and I'm like, "Well," and I always compare it to me, "You see I have sort of tan, I have freckles. And your skin is really dark. And I have a mole right here and you have this pretty bow in your hair." And then we talk about skin tones and every child in the class draws that kid and writes their name, and then the child takes all those pictures of themselves home at a book. It really makes them intentionally look at each other and say, "Oh, you have glasses. You're missing two teeth or your skin is very, very white. And so is mine." We actually talk about nobody is literally white. We don't even have white crayons to color people. It just helps them really take a look at each other and just to start notice. I think that's really the beginning at Central Episcopal – it's where they can really just be open and just notice and celebrate that, you know?

Principal Allison also discussed identity work done with young children as, "…pretty easy. I mean, you can ask a kindergartner, you know, to do some identity work and it's not a huge stretch." Fifth grade teacher Deborah explained the goals of identity work as "push[ing] the thinking of students in front of us" and forming a sense of "how we fit into the world."

Two students interviewed also specifically mentioned doing identity work. Student 1 Lizzie, when asked about what students learn during the monthly diversity lessons, replied, "It's like who am I and who are we as a community." She also specifically used the word "identity" later in the interview when replying to specific topics she'd learned about. Student 6 Beth also commented about identity in her response to what students learn from the curriculum, stating, "We learn about, like, our identity and different ways that different people are changing the world."

Who are you? The "Who are you?" theme seemed to be where students were exposed to specific different types of diversity. One of the lesson plans reviewed and interview data from both adults and students gave insight into the scope of the specific diversity theme of the curriculum. A "takeaway" in the "Who are you?" themed lesson plan I reviewed, which was about microaggressions, sought to make students aware that "Over time, microaggressions can add up and can be hurtful. …one microaggression might feel like a papercut, but over time, many, many papercuts are damaging to someone's self-esteem."

When asked to describe which topics are covered over the course of the curriculum, Administrator Carlie explained, "We have had discussions around religious diversity. So along with that, race and ethnicity or nationality, some around like, um,

immigrants, migrants, refugees, and country of origin. Biracial families." She had also mentioned lessons about ability and disability earlier in the interview. When referencing the different types of diversity for the curriculum, Principal Allison noted the standards put forth by the National Association for Independent Schools as a guide for what's included:

> So NAIS has, I think, different kinds of diversity groups. This could be physical ability or ablebodiedness as it is called. It includes color. Socioeconomic differences. It can be language. Gender is certainly one of them that we talk about. Gender identity and awareness. Age is another one, generational differences. We try to make sure that we're not, you know, spreading it out so much that you know, it's just surface work. So we go deeper into issues of race and ethnicity. And then religious diversity is also another, sometimes, that can come up with whenever you're talking about ethnicity and can sometimes get tied in there, like Judaism and Islam, which we kind of talk about those at the same time. There's definitely, there are definitely those categories that we try to find books that help children to understand and see what those differences look like and understand what does that mean for them?

As described earlier in the chapter, Allison had also noted the importance of including current event topics, such as immigration, in the yearly iterations of the curricular topics. Fifth grade teacher Deborah also shared an anecdote of a student who identified as non-binary, and how that sparked conversation about gender with a group of students.

During student interviews, all fifth graders were able to describe at least one topic

they remembered learning about from the curriculum. These responses included very specific concepts like stereotypes and microaggressions, and other topics were related to religion, race, gender, and immigrants/refugees. These responses are further explored in the subsection regarding students' perceptions and attitudes about the curriculum.

The scope of topics covered under the second theme of curriculum lent strongly to its multi-faceted nature. Rather than focusing on a single area of diversity, the curriculum emphasized the range of differences people have, and chose to focus topics on an evolving basis based on the needs of students and current events in the nation and community. While students did not name as many areas of diversity as adults did, the circumstances of the interview, which was over the phone during the remote learning phase of school under the coronavirus pandemic, may have contributed to lack of additional detail. On the other hand, their responses also shed light onto which topics students tended to remember, which were primarily focused on different elements of race and racism.

From a multicultural perspective, the topics and instructional strategies represented by interview and lesson plan data suggest the school primarily reflected Banks's (1993) Additive Approach, in which multiple diverse and minoritized groups were regularly discussed in the classroom. There were also areas in which the Transformational Approach was tapped into, such as including structural issues of problems faced by immigrants and how microaggressions reflect broader social issues. The data represented here, however, suggest more connection to the Additive Approach due to the timeline of lessons being formally delivered only once per month. More data would need to be collected to speak to more integration of the diversity content

throughout other parts of the curriculum and school day.

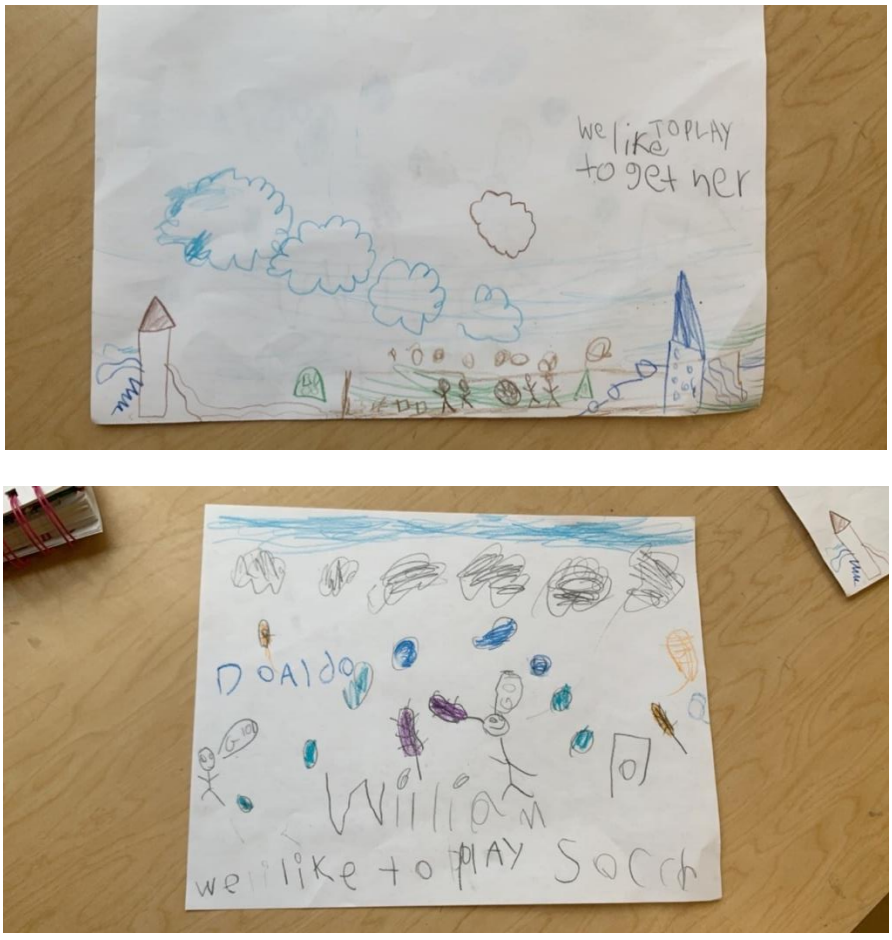
Who are we together? The third guiding question of the curriculum, "Who are we together?" was centered on the theme of community. I completed my lesson observations during this quarterly theme. In Kindergarten, the class read the book, *Little Humans of New York*, and had a discussion about similarities and differences of the real-life children shown in the book. From my field notes, I observed:

> After the book, the teacher began a discussion with students by asking the questions, "What did you notice about the people in the book? How are they the same or different?" Students replied with answers like: they can do things because they learned, they just have to stick to it, they look different, their hair is different. Teacher asked, "Are we all the same?" Students: No! Teacher: "No, that would be boring." A White girl student said, "They're all different sizes and some have glasses." Teacher elaborated that they do all look different by height. The teacher then asked, "How are they all working together?" White girl student replied that they were working as a team. Teacher asked, "What does that mean to you?" The little girl referenced the honor code, which the teacher later explained to me was part of their daily routine to discuss, and included character traits like honesty and teamwork. The teacher then asked, "What do you notice about their clothes? Why might they be different?" She [teacher] mentioned culture and how background might explain the different clothing styles. A Black boy student sitting at the back of the group made a comment that the people in the book all had different skin colors. The teacher replied, "Yes, and that's important because we're all made special in God's image."

Following the discussion, students were paired and assigned the task to draw a picture of them working together as a team. Teacher Samantha noted they would then put all the pictures together in their own "Little Humans of Central Episcopal" book. I was able to stay through students working, and noticed most students wrote sentences focused on playing, such as, "We play soccer together" or "We play housekeeping together." Examples of student work are included in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Kindergarten work samples.



During the second grade lesson I observed, the class was also working on building community through the "Who are we together?" question. In this lesson, there was no

read-aloud. Students were instead tasked with creating a Flip Grid to identify their place in their class and school culture. From my field notes, I documented that the teacher asked students to respond to three primary prompts: “What gifts do you have to share as an individual?” “What makes you unique and special?” “How do you contribute to the school family?”

Students were then provided iPads and tasked with recording themselves talking through their answers to these prompts. Once finished recording, students were to then post their video to the class page so other students could watch their videos. Students were generally engaged with the lesson, as I noted in my field notes:

> As students worked, some seemed more timid than others to start recording their words. Many looked around at each other recording their videos and waited to start their own. Others, though, immediately got started. One student I noticed was sitting at his desk and seemed quite passionate with how he was recording his video – looking straight at the camera, talking with confidence, and even using hand gestures, like putting his hand over his heart for emphasis. I noticed he saw another student watching him and giggling. He stopped for a moment, but then finished his video. Some students needed help submitting, but teachers were readily available to show how. Once students submitted their videos, they were able to see everyone else’s videos. Teachers encouraged students to get headphones and watch each other’s videos. By this time, students were a little louder in the room, and some had even formed groups to watch videos together.

The fifth grade lesson I observed also followed the theme of “Who are we together?” through a global perspective. The teacher led students through an interactive

read-aloud of the book, *The World as 100 People*. The read-aloud was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation, which posed different questions to the class. From the lesson plan document for this lesson, one example of perspective-taking students engaged with concerned ethnicity:

> There are two "Ethnicity" slides: 4 and 5. Turn to the first Ethnicity slide. Talk about the different continents and to see if each student can guess the number of people represented on each continent. They should write their answers in their noticing book. The number should add up to 100.
>
> Students can put down their pencils to show that they are done. After they have all guessed, teacher can show the Ethnicity pages (pages 14 and 15) of the book and turn to the second slide for Ethnicity. They will be able to see the numbers and compare against their guesses in their noticing book.

Students continued with this process for native languages, religion, literacy, and wealth/poverty statistics.

Although community did not emerge in adult interviews as a theme specifically related to the curriculum, several students did mention community when discussing their experiences with the diversity lessons. When asked about what she learned through her diversity curriculum, Student 1 Lizzie mentioned, "Who we are in a community," and when asked how he liked participating in the lessons, Student 3 Michael explained, "It's cool to learn about, like, just generally everything that we do. It's fun to be there as a community, as a class, and just talk and listen." Student 5 James also showed appreciation for the feeling of community, sharing, "You can feel safe in the community."

What are we called to do? The groundwork built for identifying oneself through "Who am I?" and recognizing others' differences in "Who are you?" seemed to have provided a strong foundation for having conversations of community during the "Who are we together?" theme. However, there was not as much data regarding the final question, "What are we called to do?" I did not observe instruction or receive lesson plans for this theme, and it was not a theme among student interviews. Among the adult interviews, though, there was an acknowledgement of this question within the curriculum and two subthemes of "service-learning" and "action" that indicated the question was a part of the culture of the school and program.

Described by Administrator Carlie, the school's service-learning program was a complement to the school's diversity initiative, and fulfilled all four of the curriculum's core questions:

> Every grade level has a partnership with a community service-learning partner. That's, again, part of our diversity work. That's not like intentional, I mean, it is intentional, but it's not like, "Okay, now we're gonna talk about diversity." It's like, "Now you're going to go to, um, the local homeless shelter. We're gonna garden there with some of our neighbors in there. They're going to tell us their stories about what they have for lunch and what they eat, you know?" And so, um, it is like, seek someone to experience outside of your own and learn from their experience. Fifth graders go to a refugee support service center. They've also been doing some intentional lessons on their own stereotypes and questions. Like, one of the stereotypes they had a question about was all Muslims aren't terrorists,

> you know? I hope when they encounter someone who maybe is a refugee, they are making that connection.

Principal Allison also made connections between service-learning and the diversity curriculum:

> And for instance, third grade's service-learning partner, [name redacted], which is a homeless shelter, they learn about the issue of homelessness and also understand who those people are and how they got that way. And then they also get to know those people. So they're not just learning statistics. They're actually learning real people's stories and lives. So again, that's a little bit of who am I, who are you? Um, so, really it's very well integrated very well together.

The administrators did not position service-learning from a deficit perspective of the partnerships and individuals with which the school worked. By identifying students' experiences as learning opportunities from others with unique knowledge, the service-learning work seemed to avoid an essentialist posturing of minoritized communities important to anti-racist work.

Fifth grade teacher Deborah discussed the social justice question in relation to decision-making, noting, "'What are we called to do?' is, 'Now that I know this, now that I'm aware of how my perspective was bigger or smaller…how should that inform, you know, decisions I make in my life?'" She also related the question to the lesson I observed in fifth grade, describing how shifting from awareness to intuitive action and meaning-making can be difficult to facilitate:

> And that's a lot of what you saw in class the other day, just these very finite academic number sense answers. And so the work that I'm doing is that to me,

> that conversation wasn't enough in class the other day. Now I'm challenging what they're thinking. So I'll say, “So what does it mean when there's 5% of the world,” and I throw out a big pie graph on the board and their quick answer is, um, the quick easy answer is, “It means there are more people in the rest of the world.” Like, yes, you're right. You are completely right. And that's what I mean by easy answer. They're not wrong. It is a true answer, but what does that mean? If the majority of the people are in the rest of the world, what does that mean for who I am? And then you can imagine that goes back to our essential questions of, “What am I called to do?”

School closures related to the coronavirus pandemic interrupted the fourth quarter theme of “What am I called to do?” as a specific focus, but it, along with the other themes, did seem embedded in aspects of most data regarding the lessons. For example, in the lesson plan about microaggressions, which students brought up regularly in their interviews, they were tasked with creating action plans for confronting microaggressions. Although not a specific lesson on how to be an activist, it did provide tools for students to act in situations related to injustice and inequality.

By providing multiple lenses into what it means to be diverse and allowing students to opportunities to investigate identity, the curriculum seemed to heed Banks’s (2016) call for multicultural education to include an examination of culture as dynamic, and by discussing topics related to history, global perspective, and political policy. As described by Deborah’s comment, though, it seems the school struggled with employing and/or communicating a structural lens in its discussions of various topics, which is the cornerstone of anti-racist education (King, 2016). The integration of the four guiding

questions seemed interwoven through the curriculum and provided students with multi-faceted opportunities for engaging in a diverse society, but again seemed rooted in Bank's (1993) Additive Approach rather than the structural-based Transformative and Social Action Approaches.

Characteristic Five – Instructional Strategies

Central Episcopal's diversity curriculum employed a variety of instructional strategies, primarily read-alouds and exposure to diverse literature. Read-alouds were used in two of the three lessons I observed, and both teachers and students discussed or mentioned the use of books during the lessons. Although books were not used in every lesson as part of the diversity curriculum, they were content anchors for most of them. Kindergarten teacher Samantha mentioned, "It [the diversity lesson] is always off the book. I think for most of the grades it's a book, you know, really good rich books." She also described them as "really intentional, really good books." When asked about her favorite lesson to teach from the curriculum, her answer was based on a book:

> I can't even remember what we did to go with it, but there's a Jacqueline Woodson book, *The Other Side*, that's my definite favorite book that we do within this. And, um, it's so funny. The book obviously overpowers whatever lesson we did with it, but every year I always love it. I've always looked forward to when we do that.

Administrator Carlie also discussed books as foundations of the lessons, mentioning, "A lot of times we try to have a children's book that we're focused on for that month. So we'll read a children's book, we'll have a discussion and we'll do an activity." Teacher Deborah also discussed books as a learning tool for the curriculum:

> Um, you know, there are several books we use that are fascinating and maybe kind of, um, a little bit downhill. You know, like *Brown Like Me*, which is an interesting book to read in front of a primarily, um, Caucasian groups of students. Another one, what is it? Um, I'm trying to recall. It was all about hair. I know there are several out now, but the awareness in the book that the characters were presenting was, "Why does everybody want to touch my hair?" And I'm just trying to think about those lessons of perspective, which are probably the biggest ones that come out.

Principal Allison discussed the importance of diverse classroom libraries in general as well, in ways that both highlight racial difference and simply allow main characters to be children of Color:

> We're really mindful. We have library audits because all of our classrooms have their own libraries so we can make sure that there's enough representation there, of books that are both windows and mirrors. So okay. If I am, you know, um, an African American girl, are there books that represent me where I can see myself? You don't want books that are all about Martin Luther King or all about Harriet Tubman. Yes, you're learning about famous, historical, African American people. But we also look for books where the character is who's having this problem is not because she's black or Latino. It's because she's seven and her brother's mean to her or whatever, or whatever it might be, but are there other characters in that book of color or are they all white kids?

Referencing the evolving nature of the curriculum, Administrator Carlie remarked on the importance of adjusting books year to year:

> Books are constantly coming out, too, you know, and anytime I see, like, just something I come across, you know, an email or something that says, "Check out these books on empathy," or "Check these books out on diversity," or, um, you know, "These are good books on identity." You know, we're constantly building our diverse library.

Students also mentioned the use of books in diversity lessons. Student 3 Michael, when asked to describe what he learned about during the lessons, mentioned, "We usually read a book, um, to, um, like kind of represent what we're learning about." He also referenced *The World as 100 People* from the fifth grade lesson I observed:

> We read a book about how if there was one Christian of 100 people in the world, like how…how different things are. Like the percentage of different religions and, like, how many people would speak this certain language and, like, how many people, uh, couldn't read. And I remember doing that because we kept the book in our classroom for a while. I thought it was cool to learn about that.

Student 5 James also mentioned books when describing the lessons, noting, "We read a lot of books about, like, diversity and stuff and then we talk about it." When discussing her favorite lesson, Student 6 Beth also referenced the book they read during the lesson as how she learned about the struggles of immigrants and refugees.

The importance of diverse books to Central Episcopal's curriculum is grounded in research. Diverse literature offers students glimpses into people and characters different from themselves and provides groundwork for students to build their own identities (Schachter & Galili-Schachter, 2012). At the same time, however, excluding or essentializing minoritized identities in children's literature can have detrimental effects,

such as minimizing the implied importance of such people and stories (Earick, 2010). Central Episcopal's work to anchor their diversity curriculum with diverse children's books seemed to be well-informed and age-appropriate for elementary school.

In addition to the use of books, instructional strategies for the diversity curriculum from Central Episcopal included active learning strategies, content and learning standards, and cross-curricular integration.

Active learning strategies. Discussions seemed to be a common strategy for the curriculum. All three lesson plans reviewed also included guiding questions for leading discussions. For example, in the fifth grade lesson about identity, the following questions were provided to facilitate discussion after students had made their own identity charts:

- What identifiers are easier to name? Are there identifiers that are more challenging than others? If so, why? Can you apply any of your comments to what you've learned about the world? During social studies?
- Think for a moment: Are there some identifiers that are obvious for others to see in you? Are there some identifiers that are less obvious, ones that you'd share if and when you want to?
- What might be a situation in which someone wouldn't want to share an identifier?

In the lessons I observed, lesson time was purposefully used for discussion in Kindergarten and fifth grade. Both discussions guided students through the books used as read-alouds, and students were engaged with the teachers and each other when talking about the lesson.

Kindergarten teacher Samantha mentioned the use of discussion with books during her interview:

> You just read through the books and you, um, you know, and then you maybe draw a picture with your skin tone. You know, kindergarten is such a simple level, so like, "Do you know why they couldn't be friends?" or, you know, "Wonder why they couldn't go on each other's yard or how do you feel about that?" And, um, it's just being very open and honest about it. So one beautiful thing I love about that at [school name], especially with kindergarten, you know, you just talk about it and it is what it is and they're very open about it. And, um, and a lot of those books give us a jumping off point.

Samantha also noted that her class "talk(s) openly and comfortably about real life scenarios." Fifth grade teacher Deborah also discussed the impact of discussions on her students' engagement with the diversity content:

> We really get invested in these conversations to the point of inferential work, you know, "How does this…how does this really add to my thinking and what can I let go of that I used to think?" I think that's amazing for kids to actually name it, to open up a notebook and say, "I used to think this one thing, and now I'm starting to think this."

Other active learning strategies discussed during Kindergarten teacher Samantha's interview included, "Role plays. And we usually do some sort of, you know, pencil and paper work, like drawing, coloring, or comparing, um, contrasting, talking about alike and different." The lesson plans reviewed also gave opportunities for fifth graders to write and make charts, and the third grade lesson I observed used technology as a

learning strategy. The microaggressions lesson also included a video, which students sometimes referenced in their interviews. For example, Student 4 Kaylee described the video as “really nice” with a “really, really, like, positive message.” The varied active learning strategies used during and planned for the lessons seemed to promote student engagement and honor different learning preferences.

Standards-based. Both administrators mentioned the use of standards within the curriculum during their interviews, particularly from Teaching Tolerance. As Administrator Carlie described, “We look also at the standards, social justice standards, that come out from Teaching Tolerance. They have identity standards, the diversity standards, um, justice standards. Um, so we've linked to those as well.” This was echoed by Principal Allison when asked to describe the planning process for the curriculum, “The lessons are very specific. You have the objectives, they're tied somewhat to the social justice goals, especially in the older grades, and those come out of Teaching Tolerance.” The standards referred to by Carlie and Allison were available on Teaching Tolerance’s website, https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/social-justice-standards.

Standards were also written in all three lesson plans reviewed. At the top of each digital lesson plan, there was a hyperlink titled, “Anti-Bias Education/Social Justice Standards” that linked to the Teaching Tolerance resource referenced above. Two of the lessons had specific standards tied to the lesson. For example, the following standards were provided for the fifth grade microaggressions lesson:

> Diversity 6: DI.3-5.6 - I like knowing people who are like me and different from me, and I treat each person with respect.

> Justice 12 JU.3-5.12 - I know when people are treated unfairly, and I can give examples of prejudice words, pictures and rules.
>
> Justice 13 JU.3-5.13 - I know that words, behaviors, rules and laws that treat people unfairly based on their group identities cause real harm.

The knowledge and use of standards for the curriculum demonstrated an awareness beyond the school walls for importance curricular goals. Interestingly, however, the teachers themselves did not reference the use of standards in their interviews.

Integration. Another instructional strategy mentioned throughout adult interviews is the purposeful integration of the curriculum within the school day. Teachers referenced these connections particularly in regard to social studies. Fifth grade teacher Deborah had several examples of integration between the diversity curriculum and teaching social studies:

> I think, starting in fourth grade, the conversations from historical perspective around racism are embedded in all of the timeline. I'm always trying to get them to make connections. Um, from as early as who decided who got off the boat and did the farming and who stood back to supervise. You know back in Virginia, the people buying land... the stratification of people of Color who actually owned land during the 19th century and what happened. And how did that happen. And what was, the quote, "other" difference that made some sort of a class society…all of that lends to our thinking, especially when you think about some of our essential questions [from the diversity curriculum], and the upper grades when we study history.

Administrator Carlie also referenced social studies and diversity integration, mentioning, "It [diversity] is covered in our social studies standards. Like when we're talking about civil rights movement. That diversity work and studying different countries." Principal Allison shared the same sentiment about social studies:

> You know, a lot of the curriculum that we teach really comes from that place of multiple stakeholders. And so we actually have social studies standards that talk about just that. So it wasn't a big leap because diversity work, I guess, if you want to call it that, is already very embedded in what we do.

The connection to social studies is likely rooted in the role of social studies to teach about diverse people and cultures, as well as to explore structural systems and historical changes in society (National Council for the Social Studies, 2013). King and Chandler (2016) also posit the potential for anti-racist education within the social studies, which would provide for natural subject integration for Central Episcopal's curriculum.

In addition to social studies, fifth grade teacher Deborah also mentioned how she purposefully tries to connect diversity content to other areas, like math:

> We're so lucky in the fifth grade because, you know, there are…whether it's the decimal and percentage unit that will end right now, or the idea that we're turning the corner into the Missouri compromise in two weeks, there's an enormous connection all over the place with just what we most recently explored. I think anything that can connect back and add onto old conversations is always great.

When asked if the teaching of the diversity curriculum impacted her teaching of other topics, Kindergarten teacher Samantha mentioned areas in both literacy and social skills where she saw the diversity content being integrated:

> Oh, always. Maybe even another book that we're teaching and, um, literacy lessons. Some that might come out like, “Remember back in that book we read about solving problems in the classroom?” Or you know, like there's a problem on the soccer field or in the blocks center, you know, you can often refer back to those lessons, and talk about, um, whatever book and ask, “How would that make you feel? This is just like the book.” It has a heavy influence in the classroom.

Moving forward with the diversity curriculum, teacher Deborah noted how she hopes the curriculum will become more intentionally integrated with other academic standards in the school by sharing, “It [integration] is not written down anywhere. I mean, that may be as much of a concrete next step as anything. That we put those very clear connections into our curriculum map.”

Characteristic Six – Informed Parents

The last predominant characteristic of the diversity curriculum at Central Episcopal to emerge from the data was the emphasis on parent communication. Since parent pushback can be a factor of diversity initiatives (Delale-O’Connor & Graham, 2018), including parents in the plans and conversations around diversity was a priority for the teachers and administrators at the school. While the program did still experience pushback, the proactive communication among school staff seemed to be a helpful resource for the school’s diversity goals.

The biggest strategy Central Episcopal used to capture parents as stakeholders was the use of a parent website, which was consistently updated with monthly themes, books used during lessons, and questions for discussion at home. Administrators created

the website after receiving complaints from parents about what was being discussed at school. As Principal Allison described:

> So we need[ed] to step up and be more explicit and get plenty of lead time and give some guidance [to parents]. Like "Here's the lesson we're doing at school. Here are questions you can ask your child at home." So, you know, we were being really direct and pointed as to how they could just follow up conversations in their house, rather than saying, "Talk to your kid about, you know, um, gender differences" or whatever that could go all kinds of ways. So we needed to do a better job of educating our parents.

Administrator Carlie, who was the go-to person for parent communication, shared more information about the development of the parent website:

> Well, I think the thing with parents that we found is that…that's kind of why we started that blog. Because they just want to know what's going on with their kids. Especially if you're having these conversations sometimes around race, around physical difference or whatever it is, they just want to know what you're saying to their kid, like what you know, talking about and what will be presented to them. So we found that communication, especially around these topics, is best. That led to the blog and every month we go update the book. If you want to talk on it at home, you know, here's a little summary of what we did.

Carlie also described opportunities for parent workshops during the school year to learn more about the concepts being taught in the diversity curriculum, "We have one [parent workshop] here at night focused on diversity, um, at least one a year. Sometimes it's a

night, sometimes it's like a day workshop." She also described active parent groups that focus on diversity and the work they do:

> So they have a diversity parent group who provides workshop and conversation spaces for any parent about the curriculum. Um, and within the diversity parent organization, we have like smaller parent groups as well that have been started around like, learning differently. So we have like, um, one group called [name redacted]. And it's parents who used to have learning differences. They come together to hear speakers and to just have a support group, um, with other parents with learning difference. Um, we have [name redacted], which is a family of African descent. And then we have a Latino group, which is called [name redacted]. We've also in the past had an adoptive parent group for like kids who are adopted, for parents to come together and talk about that. They're not currently an active group that we have. So those all have kind of like grown up in the past, they've kind of come out of like a need for parent conversation. Um, and there's been parents to step up and lead these groups.

The nature of Central Episcopal as a private school likely helped with parent buy-in. As Principal Allison noted,

> We have overwhelmingly supportive people. You know, we are an independent school, so you don't – this is not the neighborhood school that you have to go to – you choose to come to our school. There is definitely a desire on the parts of our parents to have for their children to have this experience.

Parent pushback. Despite strong buy-in, however, the adult participants still described instances of parent pushback among both White families and families of Color.

Principal Allison discussed pushback when describing the launch of the curriculum initially, noting, “There was definitely pushback from parents who didn't want us to do this - both Black parents and White parents. Not too many Latino parents, but a few.” Administrator Carlie also described pushback concerning the affinity groups for students of Color (that were previously held during the class monthly diversity lessons away from the White children):

> There was some pushback and some questions around the affinity group part of it, you know, some students and some parents were like, “Is this segregation?” Part of that is education and awareness and understanding of what it is that we're doing and what we're providing for all students. So I think there was some pushback at first. I don't feel it now. And, you know, of course when new families come in, some have a lot of questions and we try to, of course, explain to them and bring them in and just kind of talk about where we are and why we're doing it. I think communicating, again, helps with the what and the why around that.

Both Deborah and Samantha had personal stories of parent pushback from the perspective of teachers. Deborah had two examples of concern from parents of Color about the curriculum:

> So we would have families of Color come and say, um, “You know, you're not helping my child of Color because you're making their life too easy.” And they were very worried about the transition from our school, which ends in eighth grade, into other schools and how other schools were not going to be ready to talk to them about race, and that they needed to be ready to hear it the hard way. And so that surprised us a lot.

> We had, um, a parent of Color actually last school year who was very worried about the diversity curriculum making her child uncomfortable, as a matter of fact, and making her child feel singled out because we were talking about it. And, um, and so that feedback has been really helpful for us.

They both described biracial families in particular, as well, as being uncomfortable with some of the curriculum. Samantha shared her experience with a biracial student with an Asian parent:

> I would say the hardest questions from parents come from the ones who are unsure if they want to put their kid in. Like, "What are you…what exactly are you gonna be saying?" A lot of mixed race families. Sometimes those come from really, um, hard places where the parents have been. Whether they've married interracially or one of them is biracial. Some of that carries a lot heavy baggage and they sometimes…they just opt out. I had one little boy whose father was Asian, but he was brought up here and the mom really wrestled with it. She didn't know what to do. She just didn't, because she was like, "He just doesn't see himself as anything." Um, so that's where the hardest questions come and kindergarten level again. We just tell the parents, "We're just taking a close look at ourselves and celebrating our differences."

Deborah also shared an anecdote from an experience with a biracial student that helped make the major change in student grouping during the monthly diversity lessons:

> So I had her from fourth grade and her father was White and her mother was Chinese. When they put the diversity groups together from what I remember, they were actually sending invitations for that class, and then that group was pulled out

> and going to lunch. And I did identify those kids who might benefit from different conversations, different spaces. It would always go to them [the family] and they would turn it down. So they talked, they [administrators] actually called them in and wanted to know why not, and not to chastise them, but just to understand what was missing or what we were misunderstanding. And, um, so from that conversation, they [the parents] asked the daughter to go ahead and try to go with the kids to the other classroom. Um, remember that was when they were sending kids to the other room to have the parallel conversation. And she went and she came back and she said to me, "I don't fit there." And she said, "I know it seems I also don't fit the regular classroom." And it was probably her feedback and their willingness to stand up, and say, "Hey, this isn't working for us," that made us realize that we were creating more segregation. And you know, it never felt right…the teachers who were having to round up the kids of Color and send them to another room. We never felt right sending them to another room either, but it was this young girl and her parents who said, "I just, I don't understand...it's making her feel uncomfortable, and if that's the case, then are you doing the work that you're trying to do?" That's some of the feedback we've gotten from parents.

It is important to note the sharing of these anecdotes from White teacher participants – these are not stories from the families of Color themselves. Ultimately, however, from what the administrators and teachers described in their interviews, it seemed parents' concerns about the curriculum were taken into consideration at the school. School staff seemed to have an awareness and respect for parent concerns and feedback, which led to specific changes in the curriculum, the parent website, and school-

sponsored learning opportunities for parents. The recognition of parents as stakeholders may have contributed to the durability of the program, as pushback is more specific among parent groups (such as biracial families), and parents are not surprised by the content being discussed. The benefit of a selective parent population is an important quality of this characteristic as well, as those who choose to attend Central Episcopal likely already hold the same views about diversity being taught by the school.

The six characteristics of the diversity curriculum to emerge from the data suggested a multicultural curriculum in place, particularly aligned with Banks's (1993) descriptions of the Additive and Transformative Approaches to multicultural education. The investment in teachers and parents was also an important aspect of the curriculum, as teachers needed to have a foundational understanding of the content being taught to effectively teach it, and parent buy-in not only provided support, but helped to lessen friction. The evolving nature of the curriculum also maintained a fresh perspective that took new knowledge into account as the curriculum grew. These structural components of the curriculum, which involved organizational decision-making, embodied aspects of the Transformative Approach from a macro lens as teachers engaged with diverse critical racial perspectives. The school mission, investment in teachers and parents, and the changing nature of the curriculum also reflected Banks's (2016) call for multicultural education to include positive perceptions of diversity among school staff and the school culture.

Other aspects of the curriculum, such as the exploration of multiple avenues of diversity and use of diverse instructional resources, attended more to the Additive Approach of Banks's (1993) framework. Although the teachers in this study were able to

reflect on structural and institutional perspectives of professional development regarding race, structural approaches to educating *students* was not as evident in the data from this study. Additionally, although several other avenues for multicultural and anti-racist work took place at the school in different ways, such as professional development and the consulting group, the relatively little formal time devoted to the curriculum lessons (although more than traditional schools), did not signal a fundamental change to the curriculum as required by the Transformative and Social Action Approaches to multicultural education.

As the school worked toward strategic anti-racist education, the adult participants identified several areas for improvement in the curriculum. As described by participants, the teachers of Central Episcopal existed on different spectrums of readiness for teaching the diversity content, indicating opportunities for growth among the school's faculty through ongoing professional development. Attending to concerns of biracial parents was also of importance, and moving forward, the school may need to consider more inclusive spaces for these students and families. The reflective nature of one of the teacher participants, Deborah, also indicated the difficulty in pushing forward student thinking into the fourth essential question of the curriculum, "What are we called to do," and identifying more specific objectives as the answers to the essential questions. Fortunately, the faculty interviewed at Central Episcopal, who all had influence over the curriculum, demonstrated an effort to grow, which is a theme explored in the following section.

Perceptions and Attitudes of Curriculum among Teachers and Administrators

This section will present the findings from the second research question of the study: What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among

school administrators and teachers? Interview data from Principal Allison, Administrator Carlie, fifth grade teacher Deborah, and Kindergarten teacher Samantha were analyzed to assess patterns of perceptions and attitudes about the diversity curriculum at Central Episcopal. Five themes emerged from the interview data. The teachers and administrators sampled from Central Episcopal indicated they believed: (1) transformation was a prerequisite and product of the diversity curriculum; (2) in the need to provide space for students, parents, and faculty/staff of Color; (3) that White students benefitted from the diversity curriculum; (4) that they held personal investment in the curriculum, and (5) that there was room for growth within the curriculum.

Transformation as Prerequisite and Product

Three of the four participants, Allison, Deborah and Samantha, talked at length about the learning and changes they had experienced from their previous understandings of diversity, particularly regarding race. Administrator Carlie also mentioned this shift, but didn't elaborate as much as the other three. Among the participants, there was an acknowledgement of growth around understandings of race and racism in American society as a product of intentional work, professional development, and experience, which they related to their ability to teach the curriculum. Both Principal Allison and Kindergarten teacher Samantha explained their understanding transformations from positions of colorblindness:

Principal Allison: I'd say that, before [school name], there was, um, a mentality that's on that continuum called, "I don't see color." Um, "I just see people," you know, a lot of people used to say that, that was a very politically correct. I don't know if I ever said that, but I probably

practiced that in some way. I tried to just let every child...make sure they had what they needed as if they all needed the same things. But to not see someone's color, it's denying them their identity, that's who they are and it's a part of who they are. And so that was good. And so that's what I think has become different in some of the work that I have been doing other way, in which I think not only just seeing color, but understanding, especially from an anti-racist lens, that there is so much history and, um, depth and layer.

Teacher Samantha: That was something that was sort of hard for me at first, I guess. I was like, "Do I really want to show them? I don't see color. Do we want to already get there? They're so innocent." But now I understand that it's so important to celebrate our differences. Um, so that, I guess, was probably one of the biggest aha moments for me throughout the years at this school.

Samantha and I were actually from the same home county, so I also asked her about her mindset change moving from a rural, predominantly White area that hushed talk about race. Her reflection was similar to mine growing up:

Jessica: This question isn't on here [the interview protocol], but I also grew up in [county name]. I grew up there. Um, so can you just describe kind of the community that you grew up in? Because I know mine was very White, very rural. Um, it was kind of an insular experience where, you know, you go through life saying "I

don't see color," and you know what I mean? That's kind of that's how I grew up. Did you grow up similarly?

Samantha: Oh, okay! I mean, I just didn't have very much exposure there. There were two Black kids in my graduating class, I think? I thought we were all friends and had one little friend in elementary school and I always heard she was gone when we wanted to play at her house. Or we chose my house and you know, and it was always [from Samantha's parents], "Well, she can't come over today. And you can't go over to her house." And it just never worked out. I'm looking back and I'm like, "Oh, that's probably on purpose, and it was my family." And then, I mean, lots of race looking back, I mean, blatant racism. Just saying bad words about, I mean, you know…I just, I didn't really realize that growing up. Because it wasn't like really, really mean, it was just not like that. But it was definitely a racial divide. It wasn't like going to go out and be directly mean to a person, but looking back, I'm like, "Oh, so much racism." What a divide there was.

Samantha's reflection about growing up and her use of "I don't see color" as a classroom teacher indicated a transformative shift in her thinking, which she credited to the professional development she had experienced at Central Episcopal. I found this reflection particularly interesting, as Samantha seemed to be on a different place in the racial literacy continuum than her colleagues I interviewed. Through growth though, rather than feeling uncomfortable about discussing race, Samantha began understanding the complexity of race instead, acknowledging the importance of "seeing color." She also shared this new framework in action during a meeting with a family:

> I had a conference this year with an affluent Black family. I've got a little boy who…he's just busy. He's just, he's all boy. And he needs, um, we were looking about getting some OT [occupational therapy] and just some things just to keep him moving. And, um, and they said – I mean, they're a big supporter in the classroom and at the school – but you know, he said, "We knew from my friends before we started here, that we would be here in a conference," meaning because they were Black, which was hurtful. So he and I went there. I was like, "I'm not you, okay. I'm not Black. I'm not a doctor. I'm not any of those things. Here's who I am." But then I was able to, I have some of those books, like we did the big study with White women teaching Black boys. And I was like, "We did this big study," and I pulled out my book and I was like, "I'm not claiming to, no matter how much work we do, I'm not trying to be a Black woman teaching, you know. I'm just doing the best I can." And I told him, I was like, "I'm looking for your input too." And then I went to one of the coaches we have, a Black man, and I was like, "What do you think?" And, um, but with the training I've had at [school name] and reading all these books, I would have never been able to speak so frankly with that family before all this.

Samantha went on to describe the positive outcome of the meeting, noting the family, "were like, you know, 'Thank you for just letting us be honest and thank you for being honest.'" She also reflected that she likely would have been "totally offended or put off" before completing some of the race-centered professional development at Central Episcopal, but that her newfound understanding of perspective was helpful in handling the situation. It is not surprising to have heard themes of colorblindness from

respondents, as teacher education programs and school practices alike have traditionally held this philosophy as comfortable positions of race without acknowledging its damaging effect on critical thinking and racial literacy (Castro Atwater, 2008).

Fifth grade teacher Deborah also noted a transformation of understanding in her approach to diversity work, describing how, “I think maybe my early self, 25 years ago, maybe even would blow this off as not important work.” She described the catalyst for her shift in understanding through graduate school:

> During grad school, we did action research. Social studies professional developments were about thinking, “Whose voice is missing here,” and really thinking, “How am I teaching children how to read and understand if I'm not teaching them what's missing?” And then it dawned on me very early on in my program, like ten years ago, thinking about social studies people and looking at critical evidence and, um, primary sources and really trying to extract understanding – and not somebody else's opinion from an article or book. How hard that is in our society and considering what I have been taught or what I learned may not be right.

Deborah also reflected on the different levels of readiness for these conversations among other colleagues at the school:

> I think it’s fascinating how people have these conversations about the importance of diversity and inclusivity in the classroom, and some take it personally as some sort of a reason that we are excluding their way of thinking. And so my personal reflection is just an understanding that whether they're somebody older than I am

> or younger than I, everybody is definitely on a different trajectory of a readiness to understand what diversity means.

In addition to comments about changes in perspective they had experienced either before teaching at Central or as the result of teaching at Central, the adults interviewed also indicated they believed there was a transformational power of teaching the diversity curriculum itself. Administrator Carlie mentioned, "I do think that being involved with this work with kids makes you kind of evaluate yourself and your own biases or experiences. And, you know, you grow in your own way as well." Following up more specifically on perspective, she noted, "I think it can encourage even adult conversations or different understanding of things to really try to see and hear where someone else is coming from." Principal Allison echoed the same sentiment about learning through doing:

> We teach it [the curriculum] enthusiastically and with fidelity. Um, and at the same time, there's still growth that we're all concerned with, but the teaching of it is its own professional development when you're teaching those lessons. You're reading these books to children about, um, you know, all kinds of different issues around diversity and social injustice, right? You are growing too within that, so that the teaching of it actually serves as its own kind of training and, and people are definitely, *teachers are definitely being transformed through this process.*

Teacher Deborah also referred to teaching the diversity lessons as an opportunity for self-examination, explaining:

> You can't teach these rich lessons without examining your own biases. So, I mean, I think I just continue to grow and maybe even feel a little bit more solid in how I understand it, because we teach it and talk about teaching it a lot.

Kindergarten teacher Samantha referenced this theme as a product of interacting with children, noting, “The curriculum often drives, you know, talking about books and what the kids say just gives you, as an adult, new and different perspective.”

The adults’ perspectives and attitudes about mindset growth and transformation were strongly held through the interviews, and the awareness of developing competence, perspective, and understanding of diversity seemed to underlie the investment in professional development among teachers and administrators alike. The participants seemed to believe in the value of strong background knowledge around diversity before and during the teaching of the curriculum to students. This indicates a feature of Banks’s (2016) model of multicultural education, which situates teachers’ positive attitudes toward multiculturalism as pivotal to success. Further, given that Whiteness is rarely challenged among White teachers, this shift in positionality as demonstrated by the participants may indicate a cultural, political and racial competence that helps them to better teach the diversity curriculum at Central Episcopal (Picower, 2009).

Providing Space for People of Color

All adult participants articulated their concern for making space for their students of Color in a predominantly White school. In fact, before the diversity curriculum at Central Episcopal was officially started, the school had designed affinity groups for students of Color to have opportunities during the school day in their own spaces for

connecting and forming relationships with staff of Color. Principal Allison described the rationale behind these groups:

> Affinity group stuff is voluntary – you don't have to join if you don't want. But we're working to educate children or help children become more aware of their own identity and how their identity impacts the school and others, especially White students. And none of that had come together around the four questions yet, it was very organic. There was also a very big…it was definitely a big part of what we were doing. It wasn't this small thing that happened, you know, after hours, once a week. It was much bigger than that.

While students of Color would meet, Allison mentioned there would be a concurrent "White allies" group meeting as well. After her meeting with Tim Wise, as described in the previous subsection, Allison then decided to create an expanded diversity curriculum that educated White students intentionally about matters of diversity. With the curriculum implemented, Administrator Carlie described how the affinity groups for students of Color shifted:

> Now we have affinity groups primarily for students of Color who want to participate, and they meet with faculty who are people of Color and they, um, and it's less structured. It used to be more structured, lesson time, but now it's more of kind of check-ins on the group, fellowship, community-building kind of time. Parents get invited to sign their children up if they want. If they want to attend – we have some students who attend and some who don't attend – its purpose is to bring them together with other students who are not in the majority, for lack of a

> better word, in the school, and they kind of build relationships across grade bands, K-2 and 3-5.

Carlie further elaborated by connecting the importance of affinity groups to the mission of the school:

> I'm grateful that our school kind of began with this idea of wanting to be representative of the city and trying to build some diversity within the school, but then also not to just kind of get a diverse group of kids together, but to actually kind of have a community that belongs together. Finding some intentional ways to really make that happen.

Carlie also described affinity groups for parents of Color, including Black, African, and Latinx families, detailed in the previous section's subsection about parent communication.

In addition to acknowledging the need for physical space for students of Color, Principal Allison had welcomed a consulting group to the school in order to make sure the building and classroom settings were representative of their students of Color, describing the need for "diverse libraries" that were both "windows and mirrors" of characters for students, a racially-conscious dress code, and inclusive classroom decorations.

Fifth grade teacher Deborah, noting the dearth of literature for upper elementary students with characters of Color, explained how she liked to use her classroom library diversity as a learning opportunity to acknowledge racial disparity:

> We sort books based on, um, all different kinds of topics. You know, character sometimes, sometimes loosely by race, and children will sometimes challenge

> placement of books in the library. Um, and that comes up a lot around characters of Color, which we do have baskets to make our children of Color be able to quickly identify books. But there's a very small percentage of novels for upper grade readers with characters of Color. And if our library actually had all the books that exist at the right reading level with characters of Color, it would still be an unbelievably small number of books, even if that's the only kind of book that we had. So, um, we try to separate those out and make the kids actually aware of the disparity in the classroom because, you know, 90% of our class is highly represented in our library and 10% is not.

All adult participants also commented on the input from faculty of Color on the curriculum, often remarking on the importance of not having only White women writing curriculum. Referring to the leaders of the affinity groups for students of Color, Administrator Carlie mentioned, "Those leaders are also part of the planning process for the lessons to get intentional diversity on the planning team. So that it's not like, three White teachers sitting around, planning these lessons." Kindergarten teacher Samantha also noted this, explaining:

> It's not just some sort of cookie cutter curriculum, it's very intentional because people in [school name] are coming up with this. It's not just a group of White women sitting around writing it, there are teachers of Color who are on this committee who helped write the curriculum in the beginning.

Finally, both teachers Deborah and Samantha shared stories of reaching out to faculty of Color for information about incidents involving race. Samantha's story was related to her experience with the Black family mentioned in the previous subsection

regarding transformation, during which she spoke with a Black male faculty member about how to approach a family who felt they were being targeted for a conference because of their race. Deborah's story centered on advice from an administrator of Color after using the word "articulate" to describe a Black male student in a quarterly report:

> I think I'm well read, and I studied all of these things, but I was writing very detailed, springtime reports about each child and their accomplishments, and I was teaching first grade at the time and writing about a young man of Color. I wanted to talk about how, when he would raise his hand, um, to make a connection, kids in the classroom would listen in such a beautiful way. And in my report, that I'm writing that with a little bit of my academic vernacular and my love of writing, I described this young man of Color as "articulate." That's the word that I used. And in my journey, I had not bumped into using the word articulate to describe a person of Color and somehow meaning that all they're capable of is using clear language. So I had a, um…I was horrified. And they [administrators] gave us feedback and a chaplain read it and posted an article to it and said, "Hey, let's talk." So, um, for a woman of Color to offer perspective, she really helped. I then understood that my simple comment, that I thought was a compliment, was capable of producing damage.

Ultimately, while the student and faculty bodies were predominately White at Central Episcopal, as part of the school's diversity mission there was an intentional look at how to best serve both students and adults of Color in the school community. There were some fumbles reported by the participants, such as separating students of Color from White students during initial roll-out of the diversity curriculum, but it seemed the

teachers and administrators interviewed exhibited an awareness of Whiteness as limited perspective and made attempts to incorporate other perspectives as well.

Through their consideration of staff and students of Color through and beyond the diversity curriculum, Central Episcopal administrators and teachers seemed to be invested in culturally responsive pedagogy by using culturally representative materials, calling attention to inequalities, and promoting the cultural identities of their students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Further, using Villegas and Lucas' (2002) framework for culturally responsive teaching, the teachers' and administrators' efforts to promote space for people of Color at Central Episcopal seemed to, at least philosophically, indicate that they: (1) were socioculturally conscious; (2) viewed students and faculty of Color as resources for learning instead of problems; (3) believed they were responsible for making school responsive for all students; (4) understood how students learn; (5) knew about their student's lives; and (6) used the knowledge of student lives to create instruction. It is important to note, however, that without additional longitudinal observation, it was beyond to scope of this study to assess the extent of these beliefs as practice.

Benefits for White Students

Given Central Episcopal's large White student population, both teachers and administrators were able to remark on the curriculum's impact on White students. Overall, the adults seemed to believe that the curriculum was beneficial for White students' understandings of diversity, both directly and indirectly. Administrator Carlie mentioned the need for this type of curriculum for White students, noting, "We noticed that sometimes in homes, it [discussions of diversity] happened more naturally with

students of Color. Their families were having some conversations and it wasn't happening as often or as broadly with White families." Principal Allison identified this need, too:

> I think it's *more important* even for the dominant culture in our school, which are White students, to understand that, um, even if this one child seems to have all the same kinds of experiences or things that you have as a White student there, historically their lives are very different and will always be different in this country until things one day fully change. And that they don't appreciate that they [White students] don't see color, you know. In other words, in their friends they are missing, you know, they're missing a lot about that child or about that friend. They just think, "Oh, he's just like me, he likes video games and he likes to play basketball." You know, whatever is normal for all kids. Um, but there are some differences that I think it's important for us to help children to begin to see. And as they get older, that will become more and more important for them so that they can be part of a system of change in the system for improvement and around equity and social justice.

Teacher Deborah gave an example of how her White students had discussed race within the classroom library:

> Occasionally it [racism] will also come up inside books about the way characters are being talked about or left out. Um, things like, um, "I think they're only leaving her out because she's Black," or they'll say things like, "If she wasn't Black, this wouldn't even be happening." And that's almost always a White kid who says that.

Principal Allison also noted the ability of White students to identify issues of injustice, sharing, “I think one of the biggest rewards is for our White students to understand that their friends of Color have many challenges that they [White students] don't understand, but can appreciate that they can learn and try to understand.”

Teacher Deborah also indicated an indirect way White students benefitted from the diversity curriculum through discussing the purpose of affinity groups with her students during the time students were separated by race for the diversity lessons:

> I had a child ask me in the classroom, “So what are they learning?” And I said, “Well, they're learning the same thing.” And she said, “Well if it's the same thing, why can't they just sit here with us?” And I actually said to them, “Think about why they might not be staying with us.” And it was a tough one because they thought it was because of something really negative. And you can imagine, when you don't make things transparent, children do the same thing that we do. They begin to fill in the answer. And so with fifth graders, you can be more forthcoming. And I said, “What if they want to say things that they don't feel comfortable saying in here with us?” And this blew the minds of a handful of my White kids, that they might not be the safest person for these other people.

Through a process of “layering perspective” for White students as described by Deborah, the adult participants in the study seemed to believe fully in the importance for White students to engage with diversity work for their ultimate goals of social justice as a school, and anecdotes from their interviews suggest that White students were considering these concepts in different ways. For example, Deborah’s comment about her White students realizing their friends of Color may have preferred to speak in a separate place

reflected an attempt to decentralize Whiteness. Other studies have documented similar racial understandings among White students at the elementary level (Husband, 2010; Miller & Tanner, 2019; Rogers & Mosley, 2006), indicating the importance of this work for challenging Whiteness and promoting anti-racist teaching.

Personal Investment in the Curriculum

Due to the organic nature of the diversity curriculum at Central Episcopal as a product of teachers and not a store-bought program, all adult interviewees expressed a personal investment in the curriculum itself by acknowledging the role they played in its development and implementation. Principal Allison was a key figure in designing the curriculum, including the four essential questions, and enjoyed sharing the details of how the program came to be, including the refinements and adjustments along the way. These are discussed in more detail in the previous subsection about the evolving nature of the curriculum.

Both teachers acknowledged their ability to influence the curriculum, either through formally serving on the curriculum planning committee or in less formal ways like recommending books or offering suggestions for changes. When asked about her input into the curriculum, fifth grade teacher Deborah explained:

> Well, I could have a whole lot. I am someone at my school who is tapped for a lot of curriculum work anyway. I've delegated and removed myself from this planning team, because there were other people who were willing to do this. Um, but, I could put my stamp on this. I'm allowed to at our school. If there was a point that I said, "This needs to be different," and I really needed to speak up about it or stop by and say it needs changing, that would be listened to.

Kindergarten teacher Samantha shared a similar sentiment:

> So they have a diversity committee that I could join if I wanted to, but, um, I mean, I haven't. They're always open to it, but I'm just not on that committee right now. So I'm not involved in writing the lessons or anything, but you have the opportunity to be, if you would like. And anytime, you know, you run across a book, you just send it. I'll send it to [Administrator Carlie] as an attachment or whatever, anything I might run across. Some people just share out and yeah, there's always, there's always input for sure.

Administrator Carlie also described ways that teachers are involved in lesson planning even if not on the committee:

> So there's teams of at least two, sometimes three, teachers from each grade band on each planning team. So the hope is that these people will be checking in with their grade levels and…I think there's a teacher from every grade level. Yeah, there is. And so the hope is that they would be checking in and sharing back. We check in as a team leader. How's it going? You know, what, what worked, what didn't work, you know, how's this, you know? So we try to, um, check in with teachers.

When further elaborating on how teachers have responded to the curriculum, Carlie mentioned how, “You know, teachers are here because they know it's an important part of our mission and they, um, they want to do it and they want to do it really well.”

Principal Allison described the collaborative aspect of teachers as well when asked how much input teachers have on the curriculum:

> A lot. They're the ones who are writing it. Sometimes more than they would like! They volunteer to be on these committees. It's not like, “You must do this thing this year.” They say, “Hey, I want to be part of that.” We solicit at the end of the year to ask who wants to be a part of this. They raise their hands and sometimes you have to turn people away. You'll say, “We already have five people and five people is plenty.” It's definitely comes from a teacher-led place and then they're ultimately the ones writing it. Then we're all kind of weighing in on it.

Allison also agreed with Carlie about the reception of the curriculum among teachers, noting:

> It's been really well received primarily because they've had such an important role in writing it. So rather than something that was just handed to them, you know, um, to teach without their input or voice, they've had a lot of input and voice and pulling all of it together for kids.

The administrators and teachers interviewed for this study had a positive attitude regarding the impact of teachers on the curriculum, indicating a sense of ownership among all curriculum stakeholders at the school. Even when not on the diversity committee, the two teachers suggested they still felt they were or could be involved with the planning process. Through offering training, support, and sense of control over classroom decisions during school reform initiatives, schools may facilitate meaningful teacher buy-in for optimal student outcomes (Lee & Min, 2017; Turnbull, 2002). Maintaining the sense of collective responsibility for the curriculum at Central Episcopal may assist not only in its implementation, but with student success as well as teacher-writers adapt lessons to the needs of their learners.

Future Changes

The final theme to emerge from the interview data regarding the teacher perceptions and attitudes of the curriculum was the acknowledgement that the curriculum needed to continue growing. All participants were asked how they envisioned the future of the curriculum. Administrator Carlie identified a potential sequence for the future that she'd like to see developed, but in the same sentence, discussed the limitations of such a sequence:

> I would love to get to the place where we have like a "year one" into "year two," but at the same time, I don't know that that's gonna ever happen because you know, a lesson that works two years ago can't necessarily be the same this year. So I don't know. I guess I see it continuing and just continuing to grow up, you know, with a wealth of resources to draw from.

Kindergarten teacher Samantha didn't specify an area of improvement for the future, but hinted that timing can be challenging, signifying a potential area for concern moving forward:

> Sometimes the timing…you don't have enough time or too little time, and that's the beast of the school day, you know. You might be in the middle of the really great discussion while you're doing your lesson and then be like, "Oh, well, I'm late for P.E.," or whatever. That's just the beast of any work day or school day. But the beauty of it is, like I said, it's so woven together. You can always come back to them [the lessons].

Both Principal Allison and fifth grade teacher Deborah discussed the potential for more specific curricular connections in the curriculum to make integration more obvious

for all teachers. Allison discussed the importance of the lessons having their own special time as a school priority, but also being more intentional about where else in the school day to have similar conversations:

> I think that more of this, and it's happening already, more of this will become integrated into all the other things that we teach. I think that, you know, the more we can do that, the better. But at the same time, I think it also has its own special place. I hope that we are talking about this in more spaces and places than just this, you know, one specific area, but that we don't give up this one specific area. You can tell a lot about a school's mission and philosophy and what they value by looking at their schedule and by looking at where they spend their money. So when I think about those parts of our programming of our school, I want to make sure that there's still always time in the schedule, but, you know, also a daily and weekly, monthly schedule where we are dedicating time to this conversation and moving into these other lessons, because there is still stuff to teach. I'd love to see that evolve to there, so that it is more baked in, instead of, you know, a separate entree.

Allison pointed out that "it's not going to happen by osmosis," and reiterated that there were areas in the curriculum where integration should be, "naturally happening on the part of our teachers" through "conversations with students about what's going on in the world or what's going on in their classroom or the way in which we treat each other."

Fifth grade teacher Deborah also described the importance of outlining the cross-curricular connections for the teaching faculty at Central Episcopal. After describing the ways she tries to incorporate connections to the diversity curriculum throughout the

school day, she explained that, “It's not written down anywhere. I mean, that may be as much of a concrete next step as anything, right? That we, that we put those very clear connections into our curriculum map.”

She also mentioned the benefits of outlining such connections for future teachers, sharing, “Let's put the breadcrumbs in so that we can all get back to it [curricular integration], when a teacher leaves and we need another teacher to come in. We don't want that, um, core knowledge to leave with them.”

Further, possibly inspired by her previous work in consulting, Deborah also had structural suggestions for change regarding the curriculum, including identifying outcomes for the four essential questions, pondering, “Shouldn't they come to some understanding? Aren't there some truths that we're all hoping to get to? And so in those essential questions…what *are* we hoping our kids are called to do? Those questions don't seem to be firmly answered.” She also suggested a more thorough training process for teaching the lessons themselves:

> I also described earlier that, um, that the people who are actually going to lead the lessons do get a lot of support and they have those meetings. But I can't help but wonder though, if we're only planning those meetings a couple of weeks out across the whole year, are we really doing our best instruction? What if I only planned my math a couple of days before I taught it? What if I only talked about my reading a couple of days before I taught it, you know? We have to look in broader strokes across an entire year so that we can also look vertically.

Overall, the teacher perceptions and attitudes about the diversity curriculum were overwhelming positive, flanked by themes of reflection and awareness. While the

participants did not consider the curriculum perfect and identified areas for growth, the intentions within the development and implementation of the diversity work at Central Episcopal seemed productive. Strong teacher support for any initiative is crucial for its success in schools (Turnbull, 2002), and particularly within diversity work, allowing room for teachers to grow and assess their own strengths and weaknesses among such topics is integral to fidelity of such curricula (Theoharis & Haddix, 2013).

Teacher reflection of the curriculum, as positive as it may be, however, is not indicative of student outcomes. As such, this study also incorporated student interview data to glean attitudes and perceptions of the curriculum among a sample of White fifth graders. The results from student data are presented in the following subsection.

Perceptions and Attitudes of Curriculum among Students

Six White fifth grade students were interviewed for the study, and the results from their interview data are presented below. White students were chosen specifically to gauge the reach of the curriculum into White students' understanding of diversity. Student interview data suggested three themes regarding their perceptions and attitudes of the curriculum: (1) mixed feelings about the enjoyment of the lessons; (2) specific memorable topics; and (3) an understanding of diversity as difference.

Mixed Feelings

Positive feelings. All of the students interviewed for the study shared that they enjoyed the lessons and found them an important part of their learning. For example, Student 1 Lizzie explained that she liked doing the lessons because, "It's interesting to hear what your friends say." Student 3 Michael shared a similar sentiment about being with classmates, sharing, "I think they're fun. It's cool to learn about like, just generally

everything that we do, and it's fun to be there as a community, and as a class talk, and just talk and listen." He also mentioned that it was "cool" to learn about the different topics from the curriculum. Student 4 Kaylee also seemed to enjoy the lessons with the company of her classmates, explaining, "I think it is like a great thing. Um, like I said, it keeps my school, like…we're all like, nice. I think it's a great thing to have."

Students also appeared to see value in learning from the diversity curriculum. Student 1 Lizzie explained that, "There are people in the world that are separated because of race and religion," and that the curriculum helped "people learn their stories." Similarly, Student 6 Lizzie believed the curriculum was important because "It helps people learn about the world around them." Student 3 Michael shared the curriculum's importance related to perspective:

> I guess it's important for us to learn about things that you don't know and that you disagree with sooner because of the way people judge others, even if you don't. That doesn't mean that it's not going on in the world and that doesn't mean you shouldn't learn about it.

Student interest in the curriculum was evident in the observations I completed of all three grade levels. I observed strong student engagement for all lessons, particularly in fifth grade, where students actively discussed in both small groups and as a class during the lesson.

Negative feelings. While students expressed interest and value in the curriculum, they also, however, acknowledged the tendency for lessons to become uncomfortable. Five of the six students mentioned some aspect of comfort level, and how sometimes they felt uncomfortable either participating in the lesson directly or with the topics being

discussed. Student 6 Beth, who was one of the most thoughtful with her responses, described the lessons sometimes as feeling “awkward,” noting, “I feel like it's kind of awkward because sometimes I don't really understand what they're talking about. Or I don't know how to answer a question.” At same time, however, she shared that, “I feel like we really easily openly talk about stuff that can be hard to talk about normally,” which made her feel better about the awkwardness. Student 4 Kaylee also tempered her favor of the curriculum with being uncomfortable, sharing, “It's an amazing thing to have, but then also…I don't really know how to explain it, but like, it can be uncomfortable.”

Several students mentioned being uncomfortable as part of being successful with the lessons. When asked any advice they would have for new students encountering the curriculum, Student 1 Lizzie mentioned, “It’s good to know that you might be uncomfortable about it and it’s okay to talk so you're not so uncomfortable with it.” Student 2 Sarah also shared that it was important to “be comfortable” while participating in the lessons, and Student 5 James mentioned, “It’s ok to be scared.” Student 6 Beth also reflected on the value of recognizing discomfort, sharing, “It’s ok to be uncomfortable with like answering questions. Just like try hard to think about it, even if makes you uncomfortable.”

The lesson plan data reviewed for this study indicated a similar theme of comfort mentioned by the students. The list of the norms found at the beginning of each lesson plan included the following items: “It is okay to feel uncomfortable. Sometimes disagreements help us change. Be comfortable with silence.”

Besides comfort level, two students also shared additional reasons they sometimes

did not enjoy the diversity lessons that were more related to pedagogical decisions than the concept of diversity itself. Student 2 Sarah mentioned, “Sometimes it’s too much talking and doesn’t keep my attention as much. Like when there’s no book or video…just talking.” Student 4 Kaylee also shared that “sometimes I don't [enjoy the lessons], just because I don't feel like participating.” When probed further, she explained that all students were generally expected to talk in some way during the lessons and she didn’t always want to. Another community norm from the lesson plans provided did indicate an expectation of participation with the norm, “Participate fully.”

Ultimately, it seemed the students interviewed had positive attitudes about participating in the curriculum with an awareness of the nature of comfort and discomfort when discussing topics related to diversity. This is not an unusual finding of White students engaging with discussions about race, particularly in regard to hard conversations about racism (Maxwell & Chesler, 2019). Pedagogically, Kaylee’s comment about not wanting to participate may also come from more “talking” rather than explorations of books, videos, or other content that share diversity content through media. This may be akin to Wexler’s (2019) assessment of the “Knowledge Gap” that limits students’ critical thinking when content is missing from teaching and learning. The curriculum’s use of trade books may bridge this gap through most lessons, and Kaylee may have indicated an area in which more effort toward content should supersede emphasis on discussion.

Memorable Topics

All students were asked to describe some of the topics they learned about through the curriculum as a way of gauging what stood out to students in their exploration of

diversity. Student perceptions seemed related to the first three essential questions of the diversity curriculum: Who am I? Who are you? Who are we together? These were the themes among the lesson plans I reviewed as well.

Two students, Lizzie and Beth, discussed identity specifically in their responses. Lizzie shared, “It's like who am I and who are we in a community,” while Beth mentioned, “There's been times we learn about like, our identity.” Elaborating, Beth continued, “We've learned a lot about like our personal identities and not living like people tell you to be.” Probed further, Beth explained “not living like people tell you to be” meant expectations of behavior based on gender, religion, and race.

Within the same theme, students also shared about experiencing lessons related to confidence and self-esteem. Student 3 Michael mentioned, “Sometimes we talk about how, um, we have to kind of know that we're great just the way we are.” He further shared a specific memory from a lesson about confidence and self-esteem:

> We talked about how we might not be perfect and we talked kind of like about, um, things that we think we should work on. We read a book called *I Am Not*, and we wrote one of those things that we thought we were not enough. Like I'm not smart enough would be an example. I don't know if anybody did that, but that would be an example. We would write that privately in our journals and kind of think about it, and we read a book that talked about how, like, you are enough. You're you and lucky. You're perfect just the way you are.

Student 1 Lizzie also remembered “a lesson about being enough” and learned from it that “you don't have to be enough for other people…you can just be enough for yourself.”

Students were able to reflect on a variety of differences under the “Who are you?”

theme of the curriculum. The most mentioned theme was related to race. When asked what she learned about race, Student 1 Lizzie shared, “I know about how back then people were excluded like Black/White, and it wasn’t a good time for African Americans.” Student 2 Sarah mentioned that she learned “how to deal with racism” and Student 6 Beth shared that she learned, “It’s not okay to judge people by race.” Student 4 Kaylee mentioned learning about race, but couldn’t name anything specifically. Student 6 Beth also shared learning about refugees and immigrants as one of her favorite lessons:

> Well we read a book and it was about a family that had to immigrate to a different country because, um, where they lived had a lot of war and was not safe to live there. And we learned about how, like, hard it is for people and sometimes they're not allowed into certain places.

In addition to race, students also mentioned learning about religion. Student 3 Michael explained, “I briefly remember learning about like, different religions” and then shared his experience with the lesson around the book, *The World as 100 People*. This was the lesson I observed in fifth grade, where the objective was to broaden students’ perspective about religion demographics globally, among other types of diversity. Student 6 Beth shared more specific information about what she learned about religion from the diversity curriculum, “We learned there is like, a lot of different religions. People are on, sometimes people are like, um, told they can't go places because there are certain religions. Can't do things.” Student 4 Kaylee mentioned “a short one about religion,” but didn’t give additional details.

Students Sarah, Kaylee and Beth also shared that they learned about gender. While Sarah and Kaylee did not mention specific information other than, “We talked

about gender" (Sarah) and "We had a lesson where we talked about gender" (Kaylee), Beth gave more detail. Beth shared, "With gender, we have talked about how, um, like some people don't think there are more than two genders and, um, and it's ok to be what gender you to be."

Likely because they were recent lessons, students discussed stereotypes and microaggressions frequently in their interviews – three students specifically discussed learning about stereotypes and three also shared about microaggressions. For example, Student 3 Michael described the stereotype lesson: "We watched a video in class of stereotypes that people thought about themselves and other people. It was cool because we learned about how, like, the different stereotypes and that they're not true." Student 5 James also shared, "We talked about, like, stereotypes and stuff, and then how, like, ways to stop them." Student 4 Kaylee mentioned microaggressions, noting the interesting video the class watched as part of the lesson that taught, "How they [microaggressions] can, like, really hurt people. Even if you think it's not a big deal like that, it can be a big deal to the person you're saying it to."

Students were also asked about what they had learned about inequalities through these lessons. Perhaps due to the verbiage of the question, none of the students indicated they had specifically about inequalities. This would make sense in the frame of "Who are you?" as an exploration of diversity characteristics, but it was interesting that students had not connected the things they had discussed related to issues of race, religion, stereotypes, and microaggressions to forms of inequality as described by the adult participants as part of curricular topics. One of the tenets of anti-racist education is a focus on institutional structures that maintain White supremacy and racial inequality

(King & Chandler, 2016), and the absence of these overt discussions from student interviews may indicate an area of growth for teachers and administrators at Central Episcopal. However, part of the student responses may also be attributed to differences in language used by my interview protocols and the diversity curriculum.

The third and final essential question from the curriculum students seemed to provide connections to was, "Who are we together?" Three students mentioned community in some way. Student 1 Lizzie replied, "…who are we in a community" as part of her response about what she had learned from the curriculum. Student 3 Michael shared it was "fun to be there as a community" during the lessons, and Student 5 James talked about "feel[ing] same in the community." Both Lizzie and Student 4 Kaylee mentioned the importance of kindness in the community as well. Lizzie shared that when participating during the lessons, "You should be kind to everyone" and Kaylee believed, "At school, people are usually really nice to each other and I think that's a lot because of the diversity." Student 2 Sarah also briefly mentioned other community norms from the lessons plans, such as listening and asking questions.

Student interview data did not indicate attitudes or perceptions among students related to social change and activism as called for by the curriculum's fourth essential question, "What are we called to do?" This may be related to the school closing in late March due to the coronavirus pandemic and missing the fourth quarter's emphasis on that essential question within the curriculum. Overall, students did exhibit awareness of understanding their own and others' identities in the context of diversity. The interview data did not capture structural understandings of diversity among most students though, with the exception of Student 6 Beth's comments about immigration.

Diversity as Difference

All students were asked about their perceptions of what diversity means, and students overwhelmingly reported diversity as "difference." Each student response to this question, "What does diversity mean to you?" included the word "difference:"

Student 1 Lizzie: It's ok to be *different*. And if you're *different*, it doesn't mean you shouldn't be treated as a person. Things like race and religion.

Student 2 Sarah: Other people being *different* from you.

Student 3 Michael: I guess like, not everybody is the same. Everybody is *different* and perfect just the way they are.

Student 4 Kaylee: Like *different*. Kind of like people are *different.*

Student 5 James: I think it means even though people are *different* they can be the same inside.

Student 6 Beth: Diversity means to me, like, *different* cultures and *different* ways of life.

The acknowledgement of difference is evidence of the effort within Central Episcopal to carve understanding of perspective within their students. The phrase "embracing diversity" within the school's mission statement seemed to be a key aspect of the curriculum itself and reflected in student's responses to this question. Compared to cultural-deficit perspectives of diversity in which diversity is seen as problematic, student interview data seemed to indicate their buy-in of diversity as celebratory, reflecting a positive, multicultural view of diversity (Hajisoteriou et al., 2017). This also further

reflects the school's Additive Approach to multicultural education, in which a variety of different groups are explored through the program.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the study in relation to three research questions: (1) What are the characteristics of a diversity curriculum at an elementary school serving predominantly White students?; (2) What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among school administrators and teachers?; and (3) What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among fifth grade students?

Interview, observational, and lesson plan data suggest the diversity curriculum at Central Episcopalian held six distinct characteristics. The first two characteristics defined the roots of the curriculum: a philosophy grounded in the school's mission of embracing diversity, and an investment in a teaching staff with strong background knowledge and understanding of the diversity content to be taught. These two factors set the foundation for curriculum to grow, which included three specific characteristics itself: an organic and evolving nature, a multi-faceted approach to diversity, and comprised of sound instructional strategies. The yearly growth and development of the curriculum, coupled with four essential questions that guided lesson planning and a commitment to quality teaching, resulted in a robust, strong curriculum that was flexible for the needs of students, current events, and new understandings of diversity among teachers and administrators. Lastly, Central Episcopal's diversity curriculum was characterized by intentional parent communication and involvement. This characteristic kept parents aware of curricular topics, goals, and processes, and allowed parents space to share

concerns and ask questions. According to the adult participants, the investment in parent education and fellowship also helped to create parent support for the program itself.

Teacher perceptions and attitudes regarding the curriculum were positive, although not so utopic that they didn't recognize room for improvement. Interview data with two administrators and two teachers suggested they believed in the importance of a knowledgeable mindset for teaching the curriculum, including a desire to grow. They also indicated concern for both their White students as well as students, colleagues, and parents of Color in the implementation of the curriculum, including the need to make space for minoritized voices and the benefit of the program for White students. Teachers and administrators also expressed a feeling of personal investment in the curriculum, believing in their ability to influence and direct the curriculum as appropriate. Lastly, all participants believed the curriculum was strong, but not perfect, and required continued refinement and adjustment to bet meet the goals of the curriculum and school mission.

The final research question concerning student perceptions and attitudes about the curriculum was addressed through three main themes. The first theme was an acknowledgement of the enjoyment and value in participating in the diversity curriculum alongside feelings of discomfort when talking about some of the topics in the curriculum. The second theme indicated what seemed to "stick" with students from the curriculum content, which included elements of identity, race, religion, gender, and community. Finally, students overwhelming perceived diversity as difference, which was the third theme to emerge from the data.

Ultimately, qualities of effective multicultural curricula were represented in all three research question findings, such as faculty investment in social justice, welcoming

of student voices, dynamic approaches to diversity and culture, and emphasis on White allyship (Banks, 2016; King & Chandler, 2016). There were also some areas, however, that suggested room for growth and improvement for the curriculum and its impact on teachers and students, such as more strategic emphasis on structural issues of diversity and inequality and specified curricular outcomes. It was evident that the school was working on moving from the multicultural Additive Approach toward anti-racist Transformative and Social Action Approaches by committing to an organizational vision and investment in teachers' racial literacies. When comparing this case more broadly, there are also additional conditions for its success in a relatively homogenous and affluent environment that affect its implications for its application elsewhere. These points are presented and analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The rise of White supremacist groups and events in recent years (Ruiz & McCallister, 2017; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2020) has highlighted the need for widespread and rapid investment in anti-racist education, particularly for White students whose normalized Whiteness is rarely challenged in public or private spaces (Harvey, 2018). The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore a diversity curriculum in place at a predominantly White elementary school as well as the associated perceptions and attitudes regarding the curriculum among White administrators, teachers, and students to provide an example of intentional multicultural education aimed at anti-racist work. By documenting the curriculum and administrator, teacher, and student voices about the curriculum, this work hopes to inform the areas of multicultural education, anti-racist education, and Critical Whiteness Studies as an endeavor in social justice for people of Color.

More specifically, this work is guided by the following research questions: 1) What are the characteristics of a diversity curriculum at an elementary school serving predominantly White students? 2) What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among school administrators and teachers? and 3) What are the perceptions of and attitudes regarding the diversity curriculum among fifth grade students? Findings from the study, elaborated in chapter four, suggested the curriculum studied was indeed striving for anti-racist White allyship through tenets of Additive and Transformative Approaches to multicultural education (Banks, 1993). Further, findings indicated that meaningful multicultural education is not only effective for White elementary students, but also impactful for the White teachers delivering the curriculum.

Results from this study present several implications for a variety of areas, including: the curriculum itself; racial literacy development; social studies as an academic subject and the National Council for the Social Studies as an organization; and public schools. Chapter five presents these implications, followed by recommendations for practice and research as well as a conclusion to the dissertation.

Study Implications

Uncomfortable Conversations

A consistent theme among interview data with administrators, teachers and students alike was the importance of open conversations around uncomfortable subject matter, which is the first implication of the study. Conversations were often described by adult participants as instructional tools and opportunities for exploring themes of diversity even beyond the prescribed lesson times. Fifth grade teacher Deborah often referred to the diversity lessons themselves as "diversity *conversations*" and described the investment in such conversations as transformative for students:

> We really get invested in these *conversations* to the point of inferential work, you know, "How does this…how does this really add to my thinking and what can I let go of that I used to think?" I think that's amazing for kids to actually name it, to open up a notebook and say, "I used to think this one thing, and now I'm starting to think this."

Administrator Carlie spoke in similar terms about the conversational manner of the diversity lessons. For example, when asked to describe the different types of diversity covered in the curriculum, she shared, "We have had *discussions* around religious diversity. So along with that, race and ethnicity or nationality, some around like, um,

immigrants, migrants, refugees, and country of origin. Biracial families." Principal Allison described conversations as opportunities for integrating diversity curriculum work across the other curricular subjects, noting that natural "*conversations* with students about what's going on in the world or what's going on in their classroom or the way in which we treat each other" should be part of the regular school day.

Beyond the informal nature of a conversational approach to the curriculum, however, was the emphasis on developing classroom comfort in managing discomfort. Each sample lesson plan reviewed started with a list of norms that emphasized respect and empathy during the lessons, such as "Do not judge others," "Participate fully," "It is okay to feel uncomfortable," "Sometimes disagreements help us change," and "Be comfortable with silence." Students were able to speak to the importance of leaning into uncomfortable feelings during the lessons in their reflections of how they enjoyed participating in the lessons despite acknowledging the discomfort they sometimes felt.

Five of the six student participants mentioned some aspect of discomfort in participating in the lessons, although all were tempered with the overall assessment that the lessons were beneficial and even fun. As described by Student 6 Beth, "I feel like it's kind of awkward because sometimes I don't really understand what they're talking about. Or I don't know how to answer a question, [but] I feel like we really easily openly talk about stuff that can be hard to talk about normally." Students also echoed this feeling of discomfort as part of the essence of the curriculum. When asked about their advice for other students who may participate in a similar program, four of the six participants mentioned being okay with the uncomfortable. For example, Student 1 Lizzie mentioned, "It's good to know that you might be uncomfortable about it and it's okay to talk so

you're not so uncomfortable with it."

Teachers Deborah and Samantha also noted the feeling of discomfort around discussions of race at staff meetings during their interviews, describing ways in which faculty meetings became (as described by Samantha) "very emotional, angry, happy, sad meetings…just within our own beliefs about being inclusive and about race and, um, with topics." Deborah also explained how some faculty members became "outwardly, vocally, and emotionally offended" after participating in school meetings concerning the nature of White supremacy and what it means to be "racist." Despite the discomfort present in such conversations, it seemed Central Episcopal's leadership was intent on having such discussions not only as a means for teaching the diversity curriculum, but for growing the racial literacy and perspectives of their predominantly White teaching and support staff.

It is unsurprising that the White participants in this study expressed discomfort during conversations about diversity, particularly concerning race and racism (DiAngelo, 2018; Harvey, 2018). Zembylas (2018) posited that "there will always be emotional discomfort when engaging White students and teachers with issues of race, racism, and Whiteness, because Whites' cherished beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions are challenged" (p. 92). Indeed, based on Deborah's account of teachers' reactions to the definition of "racist" as "anyone who benefits from racism," it is logical that many well-intentioned teachers would resist such a label based on their beliefs about what racism is and the rejection of such a label based on those beliefs. Recognizing the inevitability of such affective responses among White staff and insisting on continued experiences with such feelings may be one way Central Episcopal engages in a "pedagogy of discomfort" (Boler, 1999; Zembylas & Boler, 2002) among both students and teachers.

"Pedagogies of discomfort" invite privileged learners "to engage in critical inquiry regarding values and cherished beliefs, and to examine constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others" (Boler, 1999, p. 176-177). This type of pedagogy utilizes uncomfortable feelings as a catalyst toward analyzing and challenging dominant beliefs and social inequalities, positioning learners for transformation (Zembylas, 2018). Based on participants' responses in interviews, the push toward uncomfortable conversations seemed to be a mainstay of Central Episcopal's approach to its diversity curriculum. Through professional development sessions for teachers, conversations with students and parents, and conversations among faculty themselves, an expectation of leaning into discomfort seemed to be part of the school culture when it came to affirming their mission to embrace diversity. Although the school promoted "safe spaces" in which these conversations could occur, stakeholders at Central Episcopal could expect to engage in uncomfortable conversations with the expectation for growth. These purposeful experiences with recognizing racism and racial identities is similar to the pedagogical deployment advocated by Jupp et al. (2016) to operationalize anti-racist teaching practices. Rather than shying away from negative feelings evoked in White staff and students through tough conversations, the school's commitment to providing such experiences for teachers and students may have been another component of the curriculum's investment and longevity.

More data would need to be gathered and analyzed to remark on Central Episcopal's engagement with Zembylas' (2018) assertion that "pedagogies of discomfort" should include an emphasis on the connection between White affect and White supremacy among White students and teachers. The data gathered through this

study cannot speak to Central Episcopal's experiences (or lack thereof) with making those connections. However, findings do suggest that talk and discussion with others (when a growth/open mindset is present with a willingness to critically reflect) can create intentional conversation spaces where individuals can grapple with racialized structures, privilege, inequality, and understandings of Whiteness. As Lensmire et al. (2013) suggest, such discussions beyond White privilege may be the better approach to bringing about racial literacy and anti-racist orientations among White people. Consistent discussions may also facilitate moving White people through stages of White identity development (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1992), as described by Principal Allison's and teacher Samantha's shifts in racial understandings as the product of multiple interactions with anti-racist work. This even holds true among the children interviewed for this study, who, while able to identify the uncomfortable feelings they experienced when discussing race, were able to acknowledge the benefits of discomfort in learning about diversity. This work supports similar Critical Whiteness scholarship that frank discourse of Whiteness and racism can be helpful for promoting racial literacy among White children and adults (Miller, 2015a). As Central Episcopal works toward a more unified anti-racist vision, continuing hard conversations in supportive atmospheres may facilitate growth within both perspectives and pedagogical practices among teachers. Once pedagogical practices reflect the anti-racist tones of professional development, the school may be closer to the Transformative and Social Action Approaches of Banks's (1993) multicultural framework.

Racial Literacy as an Outward Spiral

A second implication from this study is a sense of outward spiraling that emerged

from the White teachers' and administrators' growth in racial literacy. According to King (2016), racial literacy is the understanding of racism as a perennial issue in the United States rooted in "socio-historical, socio-economic, and socio-political structures" (p. 1303). All adult participants in this study were able to reflect on their growth into more sophisticated understandings of racism, typically from former colorblind perspectives. Both Principal Allison and Kindergarten teacher Samantha specifically used the phrase, "I don't see color" when reflecting on how they grew up and how they initially entered the education profession. Through growth in various professional development experiences (all participants), life experiences (Administrator Carlie and teacher Samantha), graduate school (teacher Deborah and Principal Allison), and even teaching the curriculum itself (all participants), each adult participant was able to describe their evolution in thinking about race and inequality.

With their own racial literacies at the center, administrators and teachers described acting on their growing understandings, illustrating an outward spiral of the reach of racial literacy. Central Episcopal's initial investment in a diversity curriculum occurred as a result of Principal Allison's growth in racial literacy from attending conferences about race and racism. From there, the intersection of Allison's growth in racial literacy and her position of authority in the school resulted in an outward effect on her fellow school faculty. Through intentional conferences and professional development opportunities for growing understandings of race, Central Episcopal teachers and staff were encouraged and guided to develop their own racial literacies. This was evidenced by the required race-based conference all Central Episcopal teachers and staff were to attend upon hire, as well as the numerous faculty meetings and book studies devoted to

expanding understandings of race.

The two teacher participants in this study also shared the agency they developed from these professional development opportunities in their teaching and interactions with students and parents. Fifth grade teacher Deborah explained the ways she sought integration opportunities for the diversity curriculum throughout academic subjects: "…there's an enormous connection all over the place with just what we most recently explored. I think anything that can connect back and add onto old conversations is always great." Kindergarten teacher Samantha also noted her ability to discuss race in a difficult conversation with parents who had concerns about being targeted for a meeting because of their race: "…with the training I've had at [school name] and reading all these books, I would have never been able to speak so frankly with that family before all this."

Although the direct effect of teachers' racial literacies on the development of students' racial literacies could not be assessed by this study's design, the approach to teaching about race and racism from the development of teacher racial literacy may indicate potential effects on students as well. At the very least, however, data did suggest that administrators and teachers valued students' input into curricular decisions, as discussed by participants in their decision to shift the nature of affinity groups for students of Color. The valuing of student perspectives, especially from minoritized students, suggests anti-racism in action, likely as a product in the school's investment in developing faculty racial literacies. The White students in this study also demonstrated a positive view of diversity and were able to speak to some aspects of historical racial discrimination, negative effects of racism, and the concept of microaggressions, indicating areas of racial literacy that may have been enlightened for them through the

curriculum, which was taught from their teachers' understandings of race. It is also important to note the access to this type of education at all – even in other iterations of the Additive Approach to multicultural education, rooting into discussions of things like microaggressions are not common in the elementary grades. Although Central Episcopal would need to promote more structural and historical understandings of social issues throughout the academic curriculum (beyond the individual diversity lessons) to reach higher levels of multicultural education, the work completed to offer White students additional perspectives is commendable, and the school's Additive Approach seems to be effective in student reflections of race.

Research suggests the influence of anti-racist school leadership can have positive effects on schools (Irwin & Tatum, 1999; Kennedy, 2010; Lachman, 2018; Rios, 2019). In fact, Gooden et al. (2018) found positive school effects for a predominantly White student cohort of early-career principals who participated in an anti-racist leadership preparation program. During the program, participants experienced a training model that emphasized (1) developing new content knowledge about race, (2) examining their own identities, (3) (re)envisioning the world through seeing others' identities, and (4) tangible anti-racist action (Gooden et al., 2018). This model is reflected in Principal Allison's efforts to grow her teachers' and staff's racial literacies as well as the diversity curriculum itself. Allison's investment in anti-racist work inspired her work for the rest of the school, and through offering professional development opportunities that similarly explore the four themes of Gooden et al.'s program, Allison seems to have paved a way for her teachers to also feel informed and of agency to act on their trainings.

This implication suggests the potential for school leaders to transform their

schools to prioritize anti-racist pedagogies and curriculum. If anti-racist action sparks a spiraling out of racial literacy among other faculty and students, principals and other leadership positions may be gatekeepers to wider anti-racist school efforts. Even as most schools find themselves in the Contributions or Additive Approaches, stable administrative vision may facilitate growth through higher levels of multicultural education into true anti-racist education. For example, as Central Episcopal moves forward in their diversity curriculum, their firm grounding in anti-racist leadership may help restructure curricular content to reflect the anti-racist knowledge they've gained. As the school already hopes to navigate more opportunities for integration of the diversity curriculum throughout the school schedule, reflecting on other subjects' treatment of minoritized groups and discussions of history and institutions may be one way toward the next level of multicultural education, the Transformative Approach.

Meaningful Stakeholder Inclusion

Central Episcopal made an intentional effort to include multiple stakeholders in its curricular decision-making. Administrators, teachers, staff (such as chaplains), students, parents, and community partnerships all affected the curriculum in different ways. Both administrators and teachers, including White and persons of Color, made up the curricular committee, which directed the curriculum themes, lesson dates, and lesson topics, while a larger committee of classroom teachers actually planned the lessons with administrative oversight. Teachers who were not specifically on either committee were also welcome to submit recommendations or suggestions for the curriculum as well. For example, teacher Samantha discussed how she could submit possible book titles for lessons while Deborah mentioned she was responsible for starting conversations about

grade-appropriate books, despite both not being on either formal committee. Administrator Carlie also described how teachers were welcomed to provide input along the way: "…the hope is that they [planning curriculum members] would be checking in and sharing back. We check in as a team leader. How's it going? You know, what, what worked, what didn't work, you know, how's this, you know? So we try to, um, check in with teachers."

Students and parents were also pivotal to the curriculum. One of the major changes to the curriculum, which was the shift from separating White students from students of Color during the monthly diversity lessons, was championed first by students and parents speaking up about the segregating and isolating concerns they had with the program. Principal Allison mentioned specifically wanting to solicit student feedback in the form of surveys for gauging how the curriculum was working:

> "So when we stepped back a little bit, which you could do after doing it for a couple of years, I stepped back and said, how's this going? And we surveyed our kids. And I was really, really adamant that we, you know, put real surveys in the hands of third, fourth, and fifth graders and get them four or five questions to answer."

Allison also mentioned surveying parents about their experiences and brought parents to the school to chat about the curriculum if they were dissatisfied as a way of better understanding their perspectives. Teacher Deborah described an encounter with a biracial student who felt tension with the separation, which the administration considered in their decision to make the change to whole-class diversity lessons.

In addition to soliciting parent feedback, Central Episcopal made the concerted

effort to inform parents about their curriculum through parent nights, parent groups, and a regularly-updated parent website specifically about the curriculum. The website included the lesson topics, any resources used during the lessons (such as trade books or videos), and questions to continue conversations at home. Administrator Carlie attributed to this website, along with intentional parent communication through parent nights and parent groups, to dampening parent pushback against the topics discussed as part of the curriculum.

Both teacher (Turnbull, 2002) and parent (Delale-O'Connor & Graham, 2018) buy-in to the curriculum were likely important for its success in the school. Co-developing the curriculum among teachers, parents, and even students demonstrated tactfulness in situating the curriculum as a community effort and a representation of embracing diversity. Honoring space for people of Color in decision-making, particularly within a predominantly White institution, is critical for maintaining an anti-racist philosophy. It is important to highlight, however, the White participants of this study who assert a community-based approach, which may or may not have been supported or challenged had students and faculty of Color been included in this study as well.

Social Studies as Space for Anti-Racist Integration

The results from this study present implications for social studies as an academic subject as well as for the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) as an organization. Before the formal curriculum was implemented, Administrator Carlie shared that the content from the diversity curriculum was predominantly included in the school's social studies curriculum. Both Principal Allison and teacher Deborah also specifically mentioned social studies as an avenue for integrating diversity curriculum

content throughout the school day. Social studies presents a natural home for explorations of all four themes of Central Episcopal's diversity curriculum, which included identity, diversity, community, and social justice.

Early conversations rooted in history. One implication from this study for elementary social studies as a subject is the importance of history education that centers minoritized experiences and exposes White supremacist structures. Rather than shying away from discussions of historical and present racism during early childhood, Miller (2015b) asserts that the elementary ages are a critical time to begin discussions of the social construction of race. Data gathered from this study are limited in the extent to which Central Episcopal engages its students in historical explorations of race, but racial literacy will be similarly limited without such discussions. It is necessary for social studies curricula to provide the foundation for elementary students' explorations of history and its connection to modern social inequalities, both obvious and covert, in order to help students develop accurate understandings of American institutions (Flanagan & Hindley, 2017). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has recently advocated for this type of history education for grades K-12, calling for centering "anti-racism, anti-harassment, and anti-violence" in social studies curricula by recognizing how "race and racism have been interwoven with American history since its inception" (Heafner, 2020, para. 4-7). Social studies curricula have the ability to support diversity efforts beyond Central Episcopal's program through incorporating hard history discussions as the root of elementary social studies. Such historical perspectives cannot be absent from efforts to help students embrace diversity and develop racial literacy.

Central Episcopal also practiced service-learning as part of their school's mission.

Although not explicitly tied to the curriculum's goal of social justice as described by participants, it certainly offered students experiences with all four curricular themes. One of the lesson plans reviewed, again not explicitly part of the social justice theme, also called for implicit informed action as students made plans to respond to microaggressions. Ultimately, Central Episcopal's diversity curriculum emphasized the NCSS dimension of informed action through promoting active citizenship as a result of diversity education. As NCSS seeks to build "active and responsible citizens" who "identify and analyze public problems" and "deliberate with other people about how to define and address issues" to "influence institutions both large and small" (NCSS, 2013), Central Episcopal's focus on "What am I called to do?" as an effort toward social justice provides insight into ways schools can approach this social studies goal.

National Council for the Social Studies. The purpose of social studies education, according to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), is to prepare students for college, career and civic life. A strong social studies education involves an interdisciplinary approach, strong conceptual understandings, learning through inquiry, and an emphasis on preparation for participation in a democratic society (NCSS, 2013). Given the roots of structural racism in American society, however, one could argue that such an education is only possible through a frame of anti-racist education. Building deep conceptual understandings of the four subdisciplines of social studies – civics, economics, geography, and history – requires an awareness of the role race has played in all aspects of American society since its founding (King, 2016). Unfortunately, however, social studies education has traditionally embodied a liberal and non-racist approach to racial education (as opposed to an institutionally-focused anti-racist approach), limiting

the transfer of structural and systemic understandings of inequality to students. These practices are also often reinforced by Eurocentric curriculum materials (King, 2016) and teachers who are not only reluctant and uncomfortable with discussing issues of race, but also products of the non-racist history and social studies education they received (Skerrett, 2011). Reversing this trend of surface-level or absent race discussions, however, is the call for praxis among anti-racist education scholars recently championed by NCSS for social studies education (Flanagan & Hindley, 2017; Hawkman & Castro, 2017; King et al., 2018; Turk & Berman, 2018).

The National Council for the Social Studies provides guidance for states as they implement social studies education through its *College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework* (NCSS, 2013). However, notably missing from this framework is an emphasis on racism, racial inequality, and White supremacy. In fact, throughout the over 100-page *C3 Framework* document, the word "racism" is present twice and "race" only six times. "Institutional" is mentioned once. While the *C3 Framework* does provide valuable insight into social studies education for states to use in refining standards and is a visionary reference for the future of social studies, the lack of attention to critical aspects of American history is indicative of the treatment of structural and institutional racism in traditional social studies education. Similarly, although the framework does not aim to prescribe content to be taught and NCSS as an organization has released anti-racist statements (Heafner, 2020), revising the important *C3 Framework* to center such discussions may be an important step forward for social studies education. Doing so could be a tool for aiding schools like Central Episcopal on their way toward organizational anti-racist work.

Public Schools

As an independent school, Central Episcopal had several different contextual factors working in favor of its diversity curriculum initiative when compared to public schools. First, Central Episcopal had a selective student and parent population. With its diversity-driven mission statement clearly present on school communications (such as the school website), parents were well aware of the school's commitment to diversity education throughout the application, enrollment, and school attendance processes. Families hostile toward diversity initiatives would likely not choose to send their students to a school with "embracing diversity" as one of its mission pillars, giving Central Episcopal a "diversity-friendly" population for its curriculum. Similarly, the school's Episcopal affiliation also drove its parent and student population. The Episcopal Church has an inclusive tradition (The Domestic & Foreign Missionary Society, 2020), and as described by Principal Allison, "a commitment to social justice." Again, families committed to the tenets of Episcopal tradition may be more open to diversity initiatives than average public school families, giving Central Episcopal a welcoming audience for its curriculum.

The parent population was also special at Central Episcopal for its robust involvement with volunteering, communicating, and participating in parent groups. As described by Principal Allison, one parent group even took it upon themselves to provide diverse texts for classroom libraries out of their own pockets. A strong parent organization was another fortunate characteristic that not all public schools have access to.

In addition to the selective family population, the school, as a private institution,

also had ample funding for its curriculum, including resources (for both the curriculum and classroom libraries), guest speakers, professional development, and diversity conferences. Another benefit as a private school was its flexibility. In her interview, Principal Allison mentioned fewer uphill battles with implementing the curriculum itself as a product of being an independent school:

> We've always been very cutting edge as a school, on working with children and thinking about, um, our own identity as educators and helping children to think about their own identity. So, you know, that's just been something that we've done and, all those other things were easier, I guess you could say, to fall into place. Plus the age of our school, you know, starting in 2000, so we didn't have a whole lot of, um, tradition and weight to lift in order to try new things. We've always been the school that was trying new things. So yeah, some schools that run into some institutional pushback are, you know, they have a lot of fights to fight and hills to climb. So we're lucky in that way.

By being able to "try new things" and define their own curriculum without the same influence as public schools, Central Episcopal was free to make curricular decisions as a school and adapt as necessary. Rather than government oversight, the school was led by a Board of Trustees that was responsive to Principal Allison's requests and decision-making abilities.

This study's implications for public schools must be tempered by the privileged position occupied by a private school with primarily White, upper-middle class student, parent, and staff populations. While public schools may face different challenges from Central Episcopal, there are still some possibilities inherent from the school's experiences

with diversity education.

Perhaps one of the most profound differences between Central Episcopal and a public school setting is the selective family population. Since public school students are assigned to community schools, administrators and teachers hoping to instill a diversity curriculum may face more pushback from parents who would have no or limited choice in their children's diversity education experiences or investment in a diversity mission. Still, as highlighted by Central Episcopal, open communication with parents coupled with intentional parent education and involvement could provide opportunities for public schools to engage both parents and students in multicultural education and anti-racist work. Though the challenges would likely be different and more frequent compared to Central Episcopal, noting the importance of parent communication in any social justice initiative could be a starting place for public schools. In fact, the presence of more diversity at public schools itself is a strong reason for incorporating aspects of Central Episcopal's diversity work into school cultures and schedules.

Beyond parent pushback is the authority of district-level administrators. With the layers of bureaucracy in public schools, even principal discretion may be inhibited by the demands and desires of the district itself (Roch & Pitts, 2012). As a personal anecdote, my first dissertation proposal was crafted around the goal of implementing a similar curriculum in a public, predominantly White school system. Although I was able to find some interested principals to invite me to their schools, I was unable to breach the upper-level red tape for implementing the curriculum. Whereas Principal Allison was central in her school's curricular initiatives, the average public school principal often has district curricula and protocol demands. Meeting these demands while engaging in an additional

program may create strain for administrators and teachers alike, limiting the ability for school personnel to focus on all that needs to be accomplished. In these circumstances, public schools may find hope in curricular integration and professional development at the school level that allows principals to work with teachers to find natural areas in the curriculum for similar multicultural initiatives.

Additionally, districts themselves may also take on a system-wide approach to multicultural education. An informal review of three local school systems mission and vision statements (including the one which Central Episcopal would be) did not suggest a similar goal of embracing diversity for any of the three, which is interesting considering the greater diversity of students served by the surrounding districts. District-level mission shifts akin to the emphasis of Central Episcopal's mission may be a large-scale approach to infusing multicultural education in public schools. Absent such an investment, autonomy among principals and teachers may provide another route toward similar curricular efforts.

Finally, funding presents an additional contentious issue for public schools. If all other red tape is cleared for an initiative to occur, the lack of resources may present challenges for public schools. Central Episcopal was able to allocate funds for professional development, lesson resources, and classroom supplies beyond the immediate curriculum, such as diverse libraries and investment in teacher racial literacy and identity development. Schools already lacking funds for curriculum resources, especially related to tested subjects like math and science, may choose to allocate any extra funds to these goals. Schools servicing students from poverty may choose to direct any extra funds to backpack lunch programs or other social services. This leaves grant

programs, fundraisers, or personal purchases for schools to fund diversity initiatives, which, while possible, seems like yet additional responsibilities for public school personnel. One solution could potentially be a partnership between Central Episcopal and surrounding schools to share curricular resources (such as books and lesson plans) and professional development materials to local schools with fewer resources and less expendable money. This could highlight Central Episcopal's school mission goals of community outreach and social justice alongside their diversity curriculum.

The above implications, developed from the study's data, may provide direction for other multicultural initiatives. Recommendations for diversity curricula and suggestions for future research are included in the next section.

Recommendations

Based on the results from this study, I offer four suggestions as focus areas for further development in multicultural education and anti-racist goals among school personnel, professional organizations, and teacher education programs interested in anti-racist and social justice education at Central Episcopal and beyond.

Professional Development

For effective anti-racist teaching, both in-service and pre-service teachers should be involved with professional development catered to increasing racial literacy (including the significance of Whiteness) and associated implications for education. As elementary teachers tend to be young, White and female, intentional teacher education and professional development should be directed at illuminating structural racism and interrupting centralized Whiteness to facilitate greater understandings of race and racism among teachers. Principal Allison and both the teacher participants in this study specified

graduate studies and school professional development opportunities as catalysts for forwarding their thinking about race and racism. Bringing interrogations of race (and other forms of diversity) to the foundation of undergraduate teacher education programs could situate preservice teachers' teaching philosophies toward anti-racist aims, creating greater buy-in for similar multicultural efforts at their future school employers. Rather than the often singular "diversity" course for education undergraduates (Miller & Starker-Glass, 2018), emphasizing anti-racist content throughout teacher education is a consistent recommendation among Critical Race and Critical Whiteness scholars (Boutte et al., 2011; Jupp et al., 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Lensmire et al., 2013).

Beyond teacher education, in-service teachers may also benefit from continued explorations of Whiteness and racism. Even without a specific curriculum in place, teachers' orientations and racial literacies are important for the students of Color they serve (Boutte et al., 2011), as well as the understanding of race among their White students. The effects of anti-racist professional development can also increase teacher agency, as described by teacher Samantha during her conference with the aforementioned family in which she was able to rely on her training to temper and successfully resolve the situation. Recognizing teachers as gatekeepers to effective multicultural education (Banks, 2016), investment in anti-racist professional development is an important step toward social justice education.

Outcomes

An important implication raised by fifth grade teacher Deborah during her interview was a comment about outcomes. As a former consultant, Deborah focused on objective-based interventions for specific outcomes, and she noticed the lack of specific

outcomes to specific goals in Central Episcopal's diversity curriculum. As described by Deborah:

> I do think we need to be a little bit more direct and shore up what are the outcomes that we're looking for at each grade point are and, um, and stabilizing our curriculum a little bit… Shouldn't they [students] come to some understanding? Aren't there some truths that we're all hoping to get to? And so in those essential questions, who am I, who are you, who are we together, what am I called to do…what *are* we hoping our kids are called to do? Those questions don't seem to be firmly answered. Um, they seem to be grasped at, but I'm just wondering if we can't clean that up a little bit.

I thought this was an important point from Deborah. As objectives and outcomes are specified throughout other parts of the academic curriculum, it makes sense that similar outcomes should be prescribed for the diversity curriculum as well. Establishing outcomes may help teachers direct classroom conversations into the essential understandings Central Episcopal hopes to instill in students, especially for teachers who are not as far in their racial literacy development as others. Rather than leaving outcomes up to individual teachers or allowing the lessons to exist as explorations without outcomes, identifying, as Deborah hinted, *answers* to the four core questions could provide more cohesion as a curriculum in its goal to meet the school's mission. In turn, the outcomes could also serve as markers for teacher professional development, as teachers should also be able to meet the outcomes they are expecting of their students. Specifying these objectives could also help Central Episcopal move into the Transformative Approach to multicultural education by identifying the structural

understandings students should come to through engagement with the curriculum. These structural understandings will then better facilitate anti-racist goals.

Although it may be comfortable and more organic to multicultural content to thrive off natural conversation, establishing outcomes for the whole curriculum and per lesson seems to be an additional avenue toward making the curriculum tangible for both teachers and students. This may also require more specific assessment measures to track meeting goals. Such assessments could be performance-based, such as a role-play of the microaggressions lesson, or narrative-based from student journal responses, and not necessarily calculated as a grade, but as a true formative teaching tool. Overall, developing these outcomes and assessments may help with better solidifying the curriculum from a logistical lens as hoped for by Deborah as well as bring the curriculum through the next level of multicultural education and into a more strategic form of anti-racist education.

Integration

While identifying specific times and places for the diversity curriculum delineated the curriculum's importance at Central Episcopal, the conversations sparked by the monthly lessons had to span much more than the scheduled time to best facilitate growth in racial literacy and multicultural understanding among students. Rather than an isolated aspect of the school's curriculum, anti-racist content needs to be integrated across curricular subjects to demonstrate the ubiquity of diverse themes and to reflect Transformative and Social Action Approaches to multicultural education.

Both Principal Allison and fifth grade teacher Deborah mentioned designing more specific curricular maps for the diversity curriculum content. Since Central Episcopal

teachers varied in their levels of racial literacy and may not have naturally found curricular connections to diversity content, this next step seemed appropriate for strengthening the curriculum. Making connections throughout subjects would also keep the diversity content from feeling segmented or marginalized, potentially leading to increased student retention and understanding of diversity content. Strategic integration may also illuminate typically covert inequalities and social concerns that would otherwise go unnoticed in various areas of traditional academic subjects. For example, Deborah mentioned the ways her White students noticed racial inequalities in different novels, emphasizing race in the ways characters interact. An effort to further map diversity content onto multiple subjects for all teachers could be a step for Central Episcopal to grow its diversity curriculum's presence. Other schools engaged in specific diversity or multicultural curricula beyond Central Episcopal would also benefit from an integrated approach.

In the era of coronavirus, intentional integration of multicultural education and anti-racist work may also offer promise for virtual learning. While curriculum narrowing may occur during the remote learning transition, firmly integrating multicultural education can provide an avenue toward ensuring students have access to diversity curricular content. Through such means as providing diverse representations of literature, integrating social studies perspectives of math, and promoting the work of people of Color in science, students learning from home may still engage with multicultural education beyond the school walls.

Moving Along the Multicultural Education Continuum

Research suggests that most elementary schools' treatment of multicultural

education rarely goes beyond the first two stages of Banks's (1993) framework (Banks, 2016). Similarly, while Central Episcopal reflected some aspects of the Transformative Approach, it most closely matched the Additive Approach. In this approach, schools present multiple representations of diverse and minoritized groups through an "addition" to the mainstream curriculum without fundamentally changing the mainstream curriculum (Banks, 1993; Bierema, 2010). Central Episcopal did this well by implementing an organized curriculum that included multiple and regular explorations of identity and diversity through vertically planned monthly lessons. Through this diversity curriculum, students were exposed to concepts and content that they may not have otherwise received through the mainstream curriculum.

However, as Central Episcopal seeks to move toward more firm anti-racist work, it must move beyond the Additive Approach into higher levels of multicultural education by involving the mainstream curriculum. The investment in teachers' development of racial literacy signaled that the school was prepared to undertake such work, which would involve questioning the curriculum and pedagogical methods employed at the school to form a more critical approach to all academic subjects. For example, in the school's lesson with the book, *The World as 100 People*, and its objective to have students consider global perspectives, bringing in structural reasons for low literacy and high poverty rates would be more Transformative than Additive. While embracing diversity is an important aspect of the Transformative Approach that Central Episcopal does well, the questions of "how" and "why" can stretch the curricular content from observations of society into evaluations of unjust systems.

The highest level of multicultural education from Banks's (1993) framework,

Social Action Approach, provides a reflection of meaningful anti-racist work. The Social Action Approach to multicultural education gives students agency to challenge the social order and status quo through strategic instruction in structural inequality, power, privilege, and oppression. This often requires an entire restructuring of the mainstream curriculum (Banks, 1993), which may seem like an overwhelming endeavor in practice. However, aiming for the goal of such a restructuring can help make anti-racist philosophy tangible along the way.

For Central Episcopal, and other schools in the Additive Approach to multicultural education, beginning with emphasis on critical perspectives may be a first step toward moving along the multicultural education continuum. As Principal Allison and Teacher Deborah noted, integrated curriculum mapping may best help make this a reality for teachers.

Study Limitations and Future Research

This study, as a product of design and circumstance, is limited in many ways. First, the brief time spent in the school itself prevented the ability to capture more organizational aspects of the anti-racist and social justice work taking place at the school, which would have better informed the school's context, particularly in its efforts for diversity education. One example of this would have been capturing more data about the consulting group mentioned by Principal Allison, whose work was aimed at ensuring culturally responsive teaching in the school. This study also had relatively few participants, limiting the perspectives represented from both students and staff. Triangulation of findings and subsequent member checking with students and staff of Color was also not part of the study's design, situating the perspectives represented here

in Whiteness. Finally, and perhaps most notably, this study was impacted by the school closings caused by the coronavirus pandemic. This resulted in six additional scheduled observations being cut from the study as well as the loss of six additional student participants. The missing data may have added substantially more avenues for data analysis and subsequent study implications, especially for analyzing student attitudes and perceptions of the curriculum. Being present in the school for the interviews with both teachers and students may have resulted in better rapport and questions based on the semi-structured interview protocols as well. Losing physical presence at the school was perhaps the most significant limitation of this work.

Moving forward, however, there are several directions for future research from this study. First, Central Episcopal hosts a wealth of data about teaching multicultural education to White students and preparing White teachers for anti-racist work, indicating potential for future studies. Because this study was limited in time, a longitudinal study of students over years, including more in-person lesson and curriculum planning observations, could yield significant insight into the development of racial literacy and diversity understanding among White students. Interviewing faculty and students of Color about their experiences with the curriculum is also an important aspect of this research that would add a more complete picture of the curriculum and associated attitudes and perceptions. While White participants were considered for this research from a Critical Whiteness lens, faculty and students of Color have important perspectives for the ultimate efficacy of the curriculum itself and the approach taken by the predominantly White school leadership and staff.

In addition to continued study of Central Episcopal, documenting similar anti-

racist curricula among White students at other schools will add to the body of knowledge of best practices for educating White students (and teachers) about race and racism. Documenting different curricular forms, content, and approaches will be helpful for examining strategies in an effort to bring anti-racist work to more classrooms. Maintaining the center of people of Color to these initiatives is also important – work undertaken with predominantly White populations needs to be underscored with the intention of working toward rectifying inequalities inflicted upon minoritized communities. As such, voices from people of Color must be included in these studies alongside those from White participants.

Finally, in the age of coronavirus and during an unprecedented time in remote learning, it is of concern to understand how both social studies instruction and any multicultural or anti-racist initiatives are approached in an online setting. While virtual education should not ignore the goals of multicultural and anti-racist education, the implications of the shift to remote learning are enormous for students, and with increased parental influence on teaching and learning, it is important to understand how these factors interact with school initiatives. Although safe return to the school building is of interest to most education stakeholders, the use of remote learning will likely continue for the foreseeable future in various forms.

Summary

There is an urgent need for White Americans to grapple with the legacy and perennial nature of racism in United States society. As children develop racial identity and understanding in childhood, elementary education provides fertile ground for teaching the social construction of race and its effects on history and modern society.

Using a Critical Whiteness and multicultural education conceptual framework, this study documented the efforts of an elementary school, Central Episcopal, to educate its predominantly White student population about diversity and racism. Using administrator, teacher, and student interviews alongside classroom observations and a review of sample lesson plans, this study sought to understand the characteristics of the diversity curriculum in place as well as the attitudes and perceptions of the curriculum among two administrators, two teachers and six fifth grade students.

Results from the study suggested six defining characteristics of the curriculum: an attachment to the school's mission; an investment in teacher professional development; an organic and evolving nature; a multifaceted approach to diversity topics; instructional strategies rooted in best practices; and overarching parental involvement and communication. These characteristics seemed to establish a strong, robust curriculum open to change and subject to influence by administrator, teacher, student, and parent stakeholders alike. Teachers and administrators seemed to have positive attitudes of the curriculum, citing the importance of personal transformation for teaching the curriculum, the prioritization of space for students and staff of Color, the benefits for White students, communal responsibility for the curriculum, and room for growth. Similarly, students also seemed to have positive attitudes about the curriculum, although tempered by mixed feelings of discomfort alongside and investment in the various topics of the curriculum and the understanding of diversity as difference.

Chapter five reviewed the implications and recommendations from the study's results, which included an emphasis on the importance of uncomfortable conversations, the spiraling nature of racial literacy among school leaders, the importance of stakeholder

inclusion, considerations for social studies as a field and NCSS as an organization, as well as potential implications for public schools. This chapter concluded with a list of recommendations for continued multicultural and anti-racist initiatives, a description of study limitations, and suggestions for future research. Ultimately, this case study provided a strong representative of the Additive Approach to multicultural education with promising potential and implications for other schools moving toward higher levels of multicultural and anti-racist education, particularly for White students.

It is important to remember that, in all likelihood, most people involved in the Unite the Right rally and subsequent events mentioned at the start of this dissertation were once students in American classrooms. As anti-racist practice gains foothold alongside the rise in White supremacist rhetoric and visibility, schools are a particular social institution with the capability to interject change in White students' conceptions of history, structural and institutional racism, and the implications of Whiteness. Continuing to research anti-racist initiatives in schools, particularly for White students, may help to dismantle the roots of future White supremacist activity and, most importantly, assist in the effort to promote overdue justice for people of Color.

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APPENDIX A

Participation Consent Forms

UNC CHARLOTTE
Department of Reading and Elementary Education
9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of the Project: Critical Diversity Education in the Elementary Grades
Principal Investigator: Jessica Norwood, Doctoral Candidate, UNC Charlotte

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation in this research study is voluntary. The information provided is to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Important Information You Need to Know

- The purpose of this study is to document the diversity curriculum being implemented at your school and its potential effects on teacher and student attitudes and beliefs toward diversity curricular topics.

- I have already completed observation data collection of a fifth grade diversity lesson. I would also like to interview administrators, K-5 teachers, and 12 fifth grade students by phone due to COVID-19 school closures.

- My goal is to learn about the diversity curriculum itself, rationale behind and characteristics of its implementation, teachers' instructional decisions and attitudes/beliefs about the curriculum and curricular topics, and students' attitudes/beliefs and knowledge about the curricular topics.

- Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this research study.

Why are we doing this study?
The purpose of this study is to document the implementation of the diversity curriculum at your school and to understand any effects on teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs about the diversity topics being taught at your school. This study also intends to gather teachers' perceptions of and instructional decision-making based on the curriculum itself.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
You are being asked to be in this study because you are a school administrator who has influence into this curriculum.

What will happen if I take part in this study?

If you choose to participate you will be asked to complete one interview, which will be approximately one hour long and take place over the phone. It will also be audio recorded. This interview will ask about the school decision-making process, perceptions of, and future plans for the diversity curriculum being used. The audio recording will be transcribed for analysis, and the audio files will be deleted following analysis.

What benefits might I experience?
You may benefit from this study by having access to the findings, which may inform your evaluation of and future plans for the curriculum. Researching your diversity curriculum may also provide societal benefits, such as contributing information to the development of other or similar diversity curricula that can be used with students beyond your school.

What risks might I experience?
I do not expect you to experience significant risk through your participation. You may find some interview questions sensitive in nature due to the content being discussed, but you may stop the interview at any time. There is also the risk of your identity being compromised, although there will be measures in place to protect your privacy, such as the use of pseudonyms instead of your or your school's real names and safety precautions with data storage.

How will my information be protected?
While the study is active, all data will be stored on the university's Google drive and only accessible by the primary researcher and the faculty advisor. Your and your school's real name will never be used in any written form nor used on any audio recordings. You will only be referred to by pseudonyms for the study, and audio recordings will be destroyed after data analysis.

How will my information be used after the study is over?
After this study is complete, study data may be shared with other researchers for use in other studies without asking for your consent again or as may be needed as part of publishing our results. The data we share will NOT include information that could identify you.

Additionally, once the study is complete, findings and conclusions will be shared with you. This information will be shared to help you evaluate the curriculum currently in place at your school. No specific or identifying information will be included in these findings that could reveal participants' personal interview responses or classroom observation data.

Will I receive an incentive for taking part in this study?
There are no financial incentives for taking part in this study.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
It is up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Who can answer my questions about this study and my rights as a participant?
For questions about this research, you may contact the principal investigator, Jessica Norwood, via email at jnorwoo7@uncc.edu. You may also contact my dissertation committee chair and faculty advisor, Tina Heafner, at tina.heafner@uncc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 704-687-1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Consent to Participate

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____

Name (PRINT)

_____

Signature Date

_____

Name & Signature of person obtaining consent Date

UNC CHARLOTTE
Department of Reading and Elementary Education
9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of the Project: Critical Diversity Education in the Elementary Grades
Principal Investigator: Jessica Norwood, Doctoral Candidate, UNC Charlotte

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation in this research study is voluntary. The information provided is to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Important Information You Need to Know

- The purpose of this study is to document the diversity curriculum being implemented at your school and its potential effects on teacher and student attitudes and beliefs toward diversity curricular topics.

- For this study, I was able to observe a monthly diversity lesson in a fifth grade classroom early in the Spring semester. However, I would also like to interview K-5 teachers about their experiences and attitudes about the diversity curriculum at your school. These interviews will take place by telephone.

- My goal is to learn about the diversity curriculum itself, rationale behind and characteristics of its implementation, teachers' instructional decisions and attitudes/beliefs about the curriculum and curricular topics, and students' attitudes/beliefs and knowledge about the curricular topics.

- Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this research study.

Why are we doing this study?
The purpose of this study is to document the implementation of the diversity curriculum at your school and to understand any effects on teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs about the diversity topics being taught at your school. This study also intends to gather teachers' perceptions of and instructional decision-making based on the curriculum itself.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?
You are being asked to be in this study because you are an elementary (K-5) teacher at this school who teaches the diversity curriculum.

What will happen if I take part in this study?
If you choose to participate you will be asked to complete one interview, which will be approximately one hour long and take place over the phone. It will also be audio recorded. This interview will ask about your experience with the curriculum, your instructional decisions based on those experiences, and any changes in your attitudes/beliefs/knowledge about these curricular

topics since teaching the curriculum. The audio recording will be transcribed for analysis, and the audio recording itself will be deleted following the analysis.

What benefits might I experience?
You may benefit from this study by having access to the findings, which may inform your evaluation of and future plans for the curriculum. Researching your diversity curriculum may also provide societal benefits, such as contributing information to the development of other or similar diversity curricula that can be used with students beyond your school.

What risks might I experience?
I do not expect you to experience significant risk through your participation. You may find some interview questions sensitive in nature due to the content being discussed, but you may stop the interview at any time. There is also the risk of your identity being compromised due to the small fifth grade team at your school. Because of this, you should be aware that data will be shared with the principal following the study. This presents limitations to your privacy, but there will be measures in place to protect you, such as the use of pseudonyms instead of your real name, consideration of identifying information within your observations/interviews that could reveal your identity deductively, and safe storage methods for data.

How will my information be protected?
While the study is active, all data will be stored in the university's Google drive, and only accessible by the primary researcher and the faculty advisor. Your and your school's real name will never be used in any written form nor used on any audio recordings. You will only be referred to by pseudonyms for the study. Audio recordings will be deleted after data analysis.

How will my information be used after the study is over?
After this study is complete, study data may be shared with other researchers for use in other studies without asking for your consent again or as may be needed as part of publishing our results. The data we share will NOT include information that could identify you.

Additionally, once the study is complete, findings and conclusions will be shared with your school's principal. This information will be shared to help your administration evaluate the curriculum currently in place at your school. No specific or identifying information will be included in these findings that could reveal your personal interview responses or lesson observations.

Will I receive an incentive for taking part in this study?
There are no financial incentives for taking part in this study.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
It is up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Your decision to participate also has no bearing on your employment. I will not share your decision with your principal.

Who can answer my questions about this study and my rights as a participant?
For questions about this research, you may contact the principal investigator, Jessica Norwood, via email at jnorwoo7@uncc.edu. You may also contact my dissertation committee chair and faculty advisor, Tina Heafner, at tina.heafner@uncc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 704-687-1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Consent to Participate

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____
Name (PRINT)

_____
Signature Date

_____
Name & Signature of person obtaining consent Date

UNC CHARLOTTE

Department of Reading and Elementary Education
9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Study Title: Critical Diversity Education in the Elementary Grades

My name is Miss Jessica Norwood and I am a student at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I am doing a study to understand your experiences with and thoughts about the diversity curriculum being used at your school.

I would like you to take part because you are a fifth grade student at this school. I observed your class during diversity lesson earlier this year, and I want to interview you about your experience with the diversity lessons. You and your parents agreed that you could be interviewed in-person, but I wanted to follow up and see if you still want to participate in a telephone interview since schools closed early this year.

During this interview, I will ask you about your experiences learning about diversity at this school and your thoughts and feelings about what you learned. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions – I just want to know what you think. The interview will take place over the phone at your preferred time. The interview should last approximately 30 minutes.

Your parents said it was ok for you to continue in the study and have signed a form like this one. You do not have to say "yes" if you do not want to be in the study. If you say "no" or if you say "yes" and change your mind later, you can stop at any time and no one will be mad at you. You can ask questions at any time. You do not have to return the form if you do not want to participate.

What you share through the interview might be helpful to your school principal. I will share the study results with her, but I will not tell her your name or what you said.

When I am done with the study, I will write a report. I will not use your name in the report.

If you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

_____ _____

Participant Name/Signature Date

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator Date

UNC CHARLOTTE
Department of Reading and Elementary Education
9201 University City Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

Parent or Legal Guardian Consent for Child/Minor Participation in Research

Title of the Project: Critical Diversity Education in the Elementary Grades
Principal Investigator: Jessica Norwood, Doctoral Candidate, UNC Charlotte

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. Your child's participation in this research study is voluntary. The information provided is to help you decide whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Important Information You Need to Know

- The purpose of this study is to document the diversity curriculum being implemented at your child's school and its potential effects on student attitudes and beliefs toward diversity curricular topics.

- Before the school closure due to COVID-19, your student's fifth grade class was observed during a diversity lesson. You previously consented for your child to also be interviewed in-person regarding their experiences will the diversity curriculum. Since schools are now closed, I would like to interview your child by telephone about the diversity curriculum.

- I do not believe that your child will experience any risk from participating in this study.

- Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether to participate in this research study.

Why are we doing this study?
The purpose of this study is to document the implementation of the diversity curriculum at your child's school and to understand any effects on teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs about the diversity topics being taught at your school. This study also intends to gather teachers' perceptions of and instructional decision-making based on the curriculum itself.

Why is your child being asked to be in this research study?
You are being asked to allow your child to participate in this study because they are a 5th grader whose teacher has agreed to be part of the study.

What will children do in this study?
Following the lesson observation I conducted earlier in the Spring, I would like to interview your child about their experiences with the diversity curriculum. The interview will take place over the phone and will be scheduled at your and your child's convenience. During the interview, your child will be asked about their experiences with the diversity curriculum and any effects of the curriculum on their attitudes/beliefs/knowledge about the curricular topics discussed through the curriculum. Interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed for analysis. After data

analysis, the audio files will be deleted. Student names will not be used in the recordings, transcripts, or analysis.

What benefits might children experience?
Students may benefit indirectly from this study through their voices and perspectives being gathered about what they're learning. Data gleaned from students will be shared with the teachers and principals for instructional decision-making that may potentially improve diversity education for your child. Researching your child's diversity curriculum may also provide societal benefits, such as contributing information to the development of other or similar diversity curricula that can be used with students beyond your school.

What risks might children experience?
I do not believe that there are any risks to your child because this study will occur as part of routine classroom teaching.

How will information be protected?
Your child's, teacher's, and school's real names will never be used in the study. Instead I will use a pseudonym (fake name) and this fake name will be used on all write-ups of the research and in audio recordings of interviews. All data will be stored on the university's Google drive and only accessible by Jessica and the faculty advisor.

How will information be used after the study is over?
After this study is complete, study data may be shared with other researchers for use in other studies without asking for consent again or as may be needed as part of publishing our results. The data we share will NOT include information that could identify your child.

Additionally, once the study is complete, findings and conclusions will be shared with your school's principal. This information will be shared to help your administration evaluate the curriculum currently in place at your child's school. No specific or identifying information will be included in these findings that could reveal your child's behavior during lessons or their interview responses.

Will my child receive an incentive for taking part in this study?
Your child will not receive any payment for being in this study.

What other choices are there if I don't want my child to take part in this study?
If you decide not to let your child take part in this study, they will still take part in the routine classroom activities as they would on a normal day. However, your child would not be interviewed about their experiences with the curriculum.

What are my child's rights if they take part in this study?
Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to allow your child to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop their participation at any time.

Who can answer my questions about this study and participant rights?
For questions about this research, you may contact the principal investigator, Jessica Norwood, via email at jnorwoo7@uncc.edu. You may also contact my dissertation committee chair and faculty advisor, Tina Heafner, at tina.heafner@uncc.edu.

If you have questions about research participant's rights, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 704-687-1871 or uncc-irb@uncc.edu.

Parent or Legally Authorized Representative Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to your child's participation in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will receive a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above. Please complete the two parts of this consent form.

Part I. I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree for [my child OR the person named below] to take part in this study.

_____
Participant Name (PRINT)

_____
Parent/Legally Authorized Representative Name and Relationship to Participant (PRINT)

_____
Signature Date

_____
Name and Signature of person obtaining consent Date

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol: Administrator

Thank you for participating in this interview with me. During this interview, I will ask you questions in regards to the diversity curriculum in place at your school. These questions will ask about your professional background as an administrator, the curricular decision-making that goes on with your curriculum, and your experience with implementing the curriculum. The interview should last approximately one hour, although you're welcome to stop the interview at any time if you want to. You're also welcome to skip any questions you'd rather not answer. Please let me know at any time if you have any questions for me.

Administrator Background

1. What is your education and professional background?

2. What is your role at this school?

3. Why did you choose to work at this school?

4. In what ways have you been trained or educated regarding diversity education?

5. How would you describe the impact of diversity on your own life?

Diversity Curriculum Decisions

6. What was the decision-making process to implement this type of curriculum at your school? How was diversity education approached before this curriculum?

7. Please describe the curriculum, including your goals, content, and teaching strategies for the curriculum.

8. How do you plan your lessons?

9. How do these lessons fit into the school day and school culture?

10. What resources have you used to implement this curriculum?

11. How much input do teachers have on the curriculum?

Diversity Curriculum Experiences

12. How would you describe the teacher response to this curriculum?

13. How would you describe the parent response to this curriculum?

14. Have you received any community response? If so, please describe.

15. What challenges/rewards have you encountered in your implementation of this curriculum?

16. How do you feel this curriculum has served your teachers? Students?

17. What changes have you made, if any, to the curriculum since its inception?

18. How do you envision the future of the curriculum?

19. What have you learned about your school, students, and/or yourself with the use of this curriculum?

20. Do you have any additional information you'd like to share with me?

Interview Protocol: Teacher

Thank you for participating in this interview with me. During this interview, I will ask you questions in regards to the diversity curriculum in place at your school. These questions will ask about your professional background as a teacher, your teaching practices with the curriculum, and your feelings about the curriculum itself as well as curricular topics. The interview should last approximately one hour, although you're welcome to stop the interview at any time if you want to. You're also welcome to skip any questions you'd rather not answer. Please let me know at any time if you have any questions for me.

Teacher Background

1. What is your education and professional background?

2. Why did you choose to work at this school?

3. What formal training or education, if any, have you had regarding diversity education? Are there any informal ways, such as your own reading or professional development initiatives?

4. How did you teach diversity education before the curriculum was implemented, if at all?

5. How would you describe the impact of diversity on your own life?

Diversity Curriculum: Teaching Practices

6. Please describe the curriculum you teach, including the goals, content, and teaching strategies used.

7. Please describe some topics you've taught about and how you've taught about them.

8. Which teaching strategies do you find most effective with teaching this content?

9. How would you describe student engagement and achievement with this type of curriculum? Do students seems responsive? If so, why, and if not, why not?

10. How have parents responded to the curriculum?

11. How much, if any, input do you have into the curriculum?

12. How do these lessons influence your teaching of other topics?

13. Do you feel prepared to teach these lessons? Why or why not?

14. How does your own race impact how you approach these lessons, if at all?

15. How, if at all, has the curriculum impacted your teaching practices, strategies, or philosophy?

Diversity Curriculum: Beliefs and Attitudes

16. What is your personal evaluation of the curriculum in place?

17. How would you describe the impact of this curriculum on your classroom culture, if at all?

18. How would you describe the impact of this curriculum on your relationship with students, if there is any impact?

19. What has been your favorite lesson to teach?

20. Are there any aspects of the curriculum you dislike? If so, what?

21. Has the curriculum had any impact on your own conceptions of race or diversity? If so, how? If not, why not?

22. Do you notice any changes in attitudes or beliefs about race and diversity among your students? If so, please describe.

23. In what ways do you think the curriculum could be improved, if at all?

24. Is there anything else about this curriculum you'd like to share with me?

Interview Protocol: Student

Thank you for participating in this interview with me. I'm going to ask you some questions about your experience, knowledge, and thoughts about the diversity lessons you experience once a month. This interview should last about 30 minutes, but you're welcome to stop it at anytime if you'd like. You're also welcome to skip any questions you'd rather not answer. Please let me know at any time if you have any questions for me.

Diversity Curriculum: Experience

1. Please describe to me what you do or learn about during your monthly diversity lesson.

2. Can you describe your favorite lesson to me? If you don't have a favorite, tell me about the one you remember most.

3. Do you like participating in the lessons? Why or why not?

Diversity Curriculum: Content

4. What different things have you learned about through these lessons that you can remember?

5. What does "diversity" mean? What about "race?" Please tell me all you know about those two words.

6. If I were a new student to your class, what would you teach me to catch me up with what you've learned?

Diversity Curriculum: Attitudes and Beliefs

7. Do you think it's important to learn about these topics? Why or why not?

8. How have these lessons changed your thinking about diversity or race, if at all?

9. Please tell me what you know about race or social inequality. How did you learn that?

10. Are there any other thoughts you have about the diversity lessons that you'd like to share with me?