CRITICALLY CONSCIOUS WHITE TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to me. This work is a testament to my interests, hard work, sacrifices, frustrations, and patience over a long journey. I thank myself for trusting the process and never giving up. This is another goal accomplished!

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This dissertation bears my name on the cover page; however, many other names made writing and completing this work possible. I am thankful to many people who have played varied and crucial roles in helping me get to this day. The following acknowledgments are an effort to recognize and express gratitude for those contributions.

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Mary Louise Priester-Hanks

CRITICALLY CONSCIOUS WHITE TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY

Racism is a pervasive and destructive force in society and has no place in schools. White teachers, like all teachers, are responsible for creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. This means being aware and actively working to combat their own biases and stereotypes, providing equal opportunities and support to all students. This instrumental, qualitative study captured the narratives of five White-identifying critically conscious teachers to understand how their critical consciousness is expressed and the opportunities and challenges they experience because of their anti-racism work. The central research question of this study was: *How do critically conscious White teachers in a Southern Indiana school district experiencing demographic shifts engage in anti-racism work?* Janet Helms's White Racial Identity Development (WRID) theory was used to explain the teachers' work towards anti-racism in schools. The findings from this study indicated that White identifying critically conscious teachers White teachers: a) leverage their privilege to promote anti-racism, b) use culturally relevant practices, c) engage in co-conspirator work, d) actively collaborate with BIPOC students and teachers, e) are instrumental in supporting anti-racism efforts, f) are content with making a positive impact on students and society, g) perceive and experience negative professional consequences as a result of their anti-racism work. This study has important implications for teachers, school administrators, and education system stakeholders.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIPOC	Black Indigenous People of Color
CRP	Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
CSP	Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy
CSRP	Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy
CC	Critical Consciousness
U.S.	United States
WRID	White Racial Identity Development

Chapter One: Introduction

Background

Racism is a pervasive issue that affects all aspects of our society, including schools (Alansari et al., 2020). It manifests in various forms, such as prejudice, discrimination, and unequal treatment of individuals based on race or ethnicity. It can be overt, such as using racial slurs or discriminatory policies, or subtle, such as making assumptions about someone's abilities or behaviors based on race. It is rooted in violence and has a global impact on people throughout the world (Thompson, 2019).

According to Alansari et al. (2020), racism can manifest in schools in several ways, such as unequal access to resources, discriminatory discipline practices, and a lack of diversity and cultural representation in curriculum and teaching staff. It also creates an unwelcoming and hostile learning environment for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, with a lack of student engagement and motivation in school and academic and social disparities for BIPOC students, hindering their success and well-being (Hurtado et al., 1999).

Racism manifests in schools when institutions and teachers claim "they don't see race" or "don't see color." These types of attitudes are rooted in an ideology known as racial color-blindness. Racial color-blindness is a newer form of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014) that seeks to downplay the salience and importance of race by focusing on the commonalities people share (Holoien & Shelton, 2012). According to Neville et al. (2013), people employ racial color-blindness as a sign of trying to be fair-minded and thus as a strategy designed to address racism. However, teachers' denial or refusal to see race leads to inadequacy in addressing racism or discrimination in education (Chubbuck,

2004; Edwards, 2017; Knowles et al., 2009; Picower & Kohli, 2017). This inadequacy in addressing racism has more negative than positive consequences (Castro-Atwater, 2008; Neville et al., 2013; Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Within school settings, this manifests through tracking policies, poor graduation rates, subpar test performance, low expectations, and other success indicators based on race/ethnicity (Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Castro-Atwater, 2008; Chubbuck, 2004; Dutro et al., 2008; Neville et al., 2013). For years, racial color-blindness in K-12 schools has failed Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinx, African, and Native American (BIPOC) students. However, it has become more of a problem in schools especially given the growing racial divide between a majority White teacher workforce and the increasing BIPOC student population (Geiger, 2018; Kaplan & Owings, 2013; McFarland et al., 2019; Wepner & Gómez, 2017).

The growing racial divide between the student body and the teaching force has been described as the "demographic imperative" (Lowenstein, 2009; see also Jupp et al., 2019). It raises questions about whether an overwhelmingly White and middle-class workforce is adequately prepared to teach a student body that is increasingly multiracial or multiethnic and "likely to be divided along linguistic, religious, ability and economic lines that matter in today's schools" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 14). According to the NCES (2019), the teaching workforce comprises nearly 75% White women though the percentage of school-age BIPOC children is increasing. In the Projections of Educational Statistics to 2022, Hussar and Bailey (2013) reported the 2009 racial/ethnic makeup of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools was 54% White, 17% Black, 22% Hispanic, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 1% two or more races. However, the report indicates that by 2022, White students

will make up 45%, while BIPOC students will make up 55% (Black students will remain steady at 15%, Hispanic students will grow to 30%, Asian/Pacific Islander will increase to 5%, while American Indians/Alaska Natives and two or more races will remain steady at 1% and 3%, respectively).

Scholars believe this racial divide between teachers and students ultimately leads to numerous educational disparities (Irvine, 1990, Ladson-Billings, 2006; Sleeter, 2017; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Tatum, 2017). However, teachers who espouse racial color-blindness and other racist beliefs and practices fail to see or understand these educational disparities. Furthermore, adopting color-blindness beliefs, ideologies, worldviews, and practices assists in the possibility of educators consciously and subconsciously avoiding, missing, and overlooking an important identifying characteristic of students, which is race (Milner, 2013).

Failure to acknowledge a student's racial identity, background, or experiences, makes it impossible to build relationships. Likewise, educational systems and practices designed and implemented without the whole child in mind create a disconnect between the classroom and their lived realities. Such a disconnect makes it impossible for educators to recognize broader, systemic disparities in educational policies. Therefore, the changing racial demographics of school settings call for teachers who recognize educational inequities and promote fair educational practices.

Researchers call for teachers who oppose racism and other deficit perspectives (Caraballo et al., 2017). Teachers who are willing to become allies with their students and their communities (Sleeter, 1996; Villegas & Irvine, 2010) take social action against an educational policy that further contributes to the marginalization and oppression of

BIPOC students and families (Bartolomé, 2002; Caraballo et al., 2017; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 1995; Sleeter, 1996; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). These teachers have come to a consciousness of awareness and can critically reflect on their understanding of BIPOC students and how that understanding affects their practices. Possessing this knowledge is known as "critical consciousness" (Freire, 1974, 2013; see also Diemer et al., 2006).

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness is a construct that counters racial color-blind beliefs, actions, and outcomes. Critical consciousness refers to how individuals understand, analyze, and act against systems of oppression (Freire, 1970, Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ullucci, 2011). Paulo Freire (1970) defines critical consciousness as recognizing oppressive social forces shaping society and acting against them. The following definition provided, beautiful in its simplicity, highlights the fundamental elements of critical consciousness: (a) recognizing, understanding, and interrogating oppressive social forces and (b) the action that takes place to combat or correct it, to seek justice. Practicing critical consciousness in schools "requires teachers and other educators to examine what they do or do not do in relation to a social order replete with inequities that include but extends beyond their classrooms" (Parsons & Wall, 2011, p. 17).

Critically conscious educators can take their understanding of educational injustices to the next level and advocate for fair educational practices for their BIPOC students (Apple, 2011; Freire, 1974/2013). Critically conscious educators also foster the development of critical consciousness within their students through critical pedagogy (Luter et al., 2017). As a result, teachers and students become allies in the fight for

educational justice. While many educators oppose deficit perspectives about BIPOC students (Caraballo et al., 2017), critically conscious educators go further to practice critical and asset pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2014; Luter et al., 2017), and engage in social action, alongside their students, to advocate for socially just educational practices (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Critically conscious educators possess the disposition to serve their BIPOC students and empower them and educational communities to advocate for systemic change (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Problem Statement

Research demonstrates that critically conscious teachers are more effective educators of BIPOC students because of their abilities to critically reflect on and act toward the fair and just learning of all students (El-Amin et al., 2017) and implement methods of critical pedagogy within their classrooms (Luter et al., 2017; Villegas, 2008). However, we know very little about critically conscious White teachers' understanding of racism or the opportunities and challenges they encounter. Therefore, scholars have called for more attention to understanding and cultivating critical consciousness among the oppressors or those in dominant positions (White teachers; Baker & Brookins, 2014; Jemal, 2017; Watts et al., 2003). To fill this gap, this study offers a closer look at the variations among critically conscious White teachers regarding their understanding of racism, their anti-racist work, and the opportunities and challenges they have encountered as they promote anti-racist practices in their schools.

Instead of aspiring to color-blindness, this study posits that there is a benefit to teachers achieving greater critical consciousness as a collective goal for school environments. The current scholarship is limited in understanding the dominant White

culture members who practice critical consciousness. Most research focuses on White teachers' difficulties in serving BIPOC students. Based on different experiences with racism, it is assumed that BIPOC teachers will have greater critical consciousness than White teachers. According to Pope-Davis and Ottavi (1993), only when educators have reached cultural or ethnic identity clarification can they provide appropriate and needed leadership for students around such issues as racism. This understanding is relevant when considering the desperate need for teachers to be actively involved in promoting equity and excellence among all students (Banks et al., 2005; Caraballo, Martinez, & Zoch, 2017; Carter, 2005; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 1995; Sleeter, 1996; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to offer a closer look at the variation that exists in critically conscious White teachers in terms of 1) their understanding of racism as they engage in anti-racist practices in schools 2) the opportunities they have encountered while engaging in anti-racist work in their schools, and 3) the challenges they have encountered while engaging in anti-racist work in their schools. Toward this purpose, this study investigates the following research questions:

RQ1: How do critically conscious White teachers in a Southern Indiana school district experiencing demographic shifts engage in anti-racism work?

RQ2: What challenges do these critically conscious White teachers experience as they engage in anti-racist work in their schools?

RQ3: What opportunities do these critically conscious White teachers experience as they engage in anti-racist work in their schools?

Significance of the Study

This research contributes significantly in several important ways. First, a study of White teachers that prompts participants to reflect on their commitment to anti-racism serves as an opportunity to give voice to White teachers who are often unrepresented in the literature. Second, much of the work on or related to critical consciousness and teachers focus on purposefully crafted critical educational experiences and pre-service teachers (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2001; Zamudio et al., 2009; Hill-Jackson, 2007; Beilke, 2005; Bradley-Levine, 2012; Zion et al., 2015; Willey & Magee, 2016; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). The previous studies also demonstrate that structured experiences alone may not be enough to stimulate critical consciousness. With its focus on understanding critically conscious White teachers' experiences, this study draws data from practicing K-12 public school teachers. Their experiences and reflections are rooted in the everyday realities, opportunities, and constraints of teaching. Contrary to pre-service teachers, whose thinking regarding action is mainly confined to theoretical and hypothetical discussions of classrooms, schools, communities, students, and teaching, the participants in this study all have experiences firmly grounded in practice and the contexts thereof.

Additionally, by exploring the experiences of teachers' thinking about critical consciousness, this study remains focused on how they "think" and what they "do" regarding being critically conscious. Unlike a narrower study of development throughout pre-service or in-service training, this study also expands on how and what we understand about critically conscious White teachers. Therefore, what we learn from this study contributes to pre-service and in-service teachers' development of critical consciousness

and how it impacts their professional experiences. Further, it sheds light on factors that might have facilitated these teachers' critical consciousness. Having more insight into these experiences, teacher educators and school leaders may better inform their diversity training opportunities and recruitment efforts.

Finally, this study is significant because it provides the narratives of White teachers that step outside of traditional ways of thinking about education. Data from this study can inform the practices of current teachers who serve BIPOC students in schools experiencing demographic shifts. Undoubtedly, there is a need to make narratives available to White teachers, both pre-service and in-service, that can serve as examples (or counterexamples) for them in their practice. These are teachers' perspectives, experiences, and stories from which other White teachers may draw inspiration for their reflection and practice for developing or maintaining their critical consciousness. An increase in critically conscious educators and educational leaders, engaging more students and classrooms in critical practices and pedagogy methods, can create safe and equitable school environments for all students and teachers. It could be the case that when schools become the safe and equitable learning communities they were meant to be, the teaching profession may become more appealing to a more diverse population. These teachers' stories will play a role in undermining the dominant narratives about teachers and schooling that uphold our stratified society.

Definition of Terms

In this study, you will encounter several key terms. While these terms may be familiar at the university and in higher education, I provided definitions to eliminate the possibility of confusion.

Anti-Racism—Active work that raises one's consciousness about race and racism and takes action in response to racial power inequities in everyday life (Kendi, 2019).

BIPOC—Individuals who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Co-conspirator—Moves beyond the idea of being an ally; it takes matters into action (Love, 2019). It is to use one's privilege to benefit Black, Indigenous, Asian American, and Latin/a lives.

Color-blind Racial Ideology—A contemporary form of racism in which one believes race is irrelevant to how one views or treats others. The research shows that there is variation in color-blindness. Still, the primary finding is that having comfort in 'seeing' and understanding race and racism is important to the development of critical consciousness.

Critical Consciousness—Freire (1970) defines critical consciousness as recognizing oppressive social forces shaping society and acting against them. In the context of this proposed study, critical consciousness is a teacher's broadened awareness of oppressive forces that impact BIPOC students and the actions taken to dismantle such forces that produce inequity and oppression.

Racial Identity Development Theory—A conceptualization based on a developmental process through which people experience coming to an understanding of themselves and others as racial beings and of the society or world as affected by racism. It captures both critical consciousness and color-blindness by proposing that people experience patterns in this development and that as they develop further, they become more critically conscious and less color-blind.

Racism—An oppressive system rooted in overt and covert harmful beliefs and actions of both individuals and institutions that unequally distribute privileges, resources, and power based on race, and in which one race/color group benefits from dominating another and defines itself and others through this domination (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2013).

White Racial Identity Development Theory—A conceptualization based on a developmental process through which White people experience coming to an understanding of themselves and others as racial beings and of the society or world as affected by racism.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter One highlighted that most of the research is about how critical consciousness develops and what prevents it from developing. Additionally, it explained how pre-service teacher education programs are not particularly effective in fostering a critical-conscious disposition. Such a gap in the research knowledge concerning teachers and critical consciousness justifies knowing about the experiences of those within public schools.

In Chapter Two, the theoretical framework of this study, which explains the scholarship on White racial identity development and its relevance to the critical consciousness of White teachers, will be discussed. Following the theoretical framework discussion, the chapter uncovers the theories and methods proposed in the literature to address academic disparity and constraint. Next, the chapter transitions to an in-depth discussion about critical consciousness, which counters racial color-blindness. Drawing from educational scholarship, I provide examples of critically conscious educators and, necessarily, critically conscious White educators. The chapter culminates with a discussion about the current trends within the literature relating to critical consciousness in education.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is situated in Helms's White racial identity development theory. Helms's framework details racial color-blindness along a continuum of development that culminates in its opposite, critical consciousness. This theory suggests that one comes to understand behavioral dispositions by analyzing their own identity at present (Helms, 1995). The levels of racial identity development depend

on one's environment, individual attributes, and personal life experiences. Helms and Cook (1999) asserted that racial identity models describe interpersonal and intrapsychic reactions "for overcoming internalized racism and achieving a healthy socio-racial self-conception under varying conditions of racial oppression" (p. 81).

Theoretically, this developmental process involves progression through qualitatively distinct statuses of racial identity, each characterized by unique cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to race and race-related information. Helms's explanation of racial identity suggests the racial identity process is an experience that all racial or ethnic groups share, however, not in similar ways. For instance, racial identity development occurs differently in White people because interactions with people from other races can be avoided (Helms, 1990, 1995; Malott et al., 2015; Pope-Davis et al., 1993). Considering that this study focuses on White teachers, I will emphasize the White racial identity development theory proposed by Helms (Helms, 1990; 1995). Helms often refers to "People of Color" as non-White individuals. For purposes of this study, in the following section, BIPOC and person of Color are used interchangeably.

White Racial Identity Development Theory

White racial identity development theory is particularly important when discussing racism. According to Helms (1995), White racial identity development theory raises the awareness of White people about their role in creating and maintaining a racist society and the need for them to act responsibly by dismantling systemic racism through a framework of power and privilege" p. 183. The theory outlines the intersection of racism and White privilege. Helms (1990) states, "the development of White identity in the United States is closely intertwined with the development and progress of racism in

this country" (p. 49). As White educators, a deeper understanding of the developmental response to people of Color; how they are socialized to interact with people of Color; and how they can seek to transform their racial identity as it relates to people of Color are pivotal in practice and professional associations. Therefore, it is important to consider how racial identity development and the awareness of racism play an integral role in perpetuating or dismantling educational inequities in educational settings. White racial identity development theory provides the framework for analysis in this study regarding teachers' understanding of racism and how they address racism and social inequity.

Helms's theory has two sequential phases, each with three corresponding statuses. Each status is one step in a White person's development to better understand their Whiteness and then perpetuate racism or encourage a non-racist society. The "Abandonment of Racism" is the first phase. The three statuses associated with it are contact, disintegration, and reintegration. The first status, contact, is primarily typified by "innocence, ignorance, or neutrality about race and racial issues" (Helms, 2020, p. 27). Individuals primarily situated in *contact* status tend to employ a color-blind racial ideology, downplaying the importance of race and remaining in denial or oblivion regarding the impact of racism. A White individual who maintains a contact status is satisfied with the racial status quo and is unaware of racism and their participation in it. Individuals with this status may also have a color-blind perspective around racial prejudice and discrimination (Sue & Sue, 2008). This person sees the world in a color-blind manner, and their strategy for processing race information is through being oblivious to racial power differentials. Additionally, this person believes that everyone

has the chance to succeed if they work hard enough, lack an understanding of race and racism, and have had few interactions with people of Color (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Any association with People of Color at this initial status may be marked with fear or extreme cautiousness. However, if the White person regularly has interactions with People of Color, then "sooner or later the Contact person will have to acknowledge that there are differences in how people of Color and Whites in the United States are treated regardless of economic status" (Helms, 1990, p. 57). Understanding the differences between the races will bring the White person closer to the second stage, Disintegration.

The second status is a conflict for the White person, as the White person acknowledges that Whites and People of Color in the United States are treated differently. Helms (1990) noted that this conflict is also accompanied by questioning what one has been taught and the values of their belief system. During this status, the White person becomes aware of race and racism but feels caught in a quandary because the new information they face clashes with the racially color-blind perspectives they had internalized (Helms, 2020).

Reintegration is the third status marked by acknowledging that the White person is superior and that the person of Color must be subservient because of their treatment towards their people. Here, the person acknowledges racism but has fully reintegrated into the status quo, embracing Whiteness as normal and superior and using racial inequity as "proof" of the inferiority of BIPOC individuals (Helms, 2020). This status often marks a regression for the White person, and it is only when the White person can disavow these beliefs that they move into the second phase (Helms, 1990).

"Defining a Non-racist White Identity" is the second phase, and the statuses are pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. Helms (2020) argues that the shift to phase two "probably requires a catastrophic event or a series of personal encounters that the person can no longer ignore" (p. 28). Thus, it is intentional or explicit acts or events that prompt the White person to develop from a color-blind racial identity to an anti-racist racial identity. Pseudo-independence is the first status of the second phase. During this stage, the White person begins questioning whether Whites are superior to People of Color. Helms (2020) argues that this status is relatively stable, as White people promote assimilating BIPOC individuals into existing norms and structures rather than pushing for fundamental change to the system.

Suppose the White person gains greater awareness of the problematic implications of assimilation. In that case, they may shift into the second status of the second phase, Immersion-Emersion, which includes actively exploring race and racism on a personal and societal level. This means that the White person reflects on how Whiteness has shaped their own experiences, thinks critically about interpersonal and structural racism, and seeks ways to confront it. The hallmark of this status is that White persons will begin to develop a positive White identity and read about others who work toward becoming anti-racist.

The final status, Autonomy, is when the White person no longer "feels a need to oppress, idealize, or denigrate people based on group membership characteristics such as race" (Helms, 1990, p. 66), and the person can abandon cultural and institutional racism (Helms, 1990). It is important to note that this final stage extends beyond acknowledging and confronting racism to address other intersections. Individuals may enter a status,

regress, and return to a stage. Achieving the Autonomy stage does not mean one has earned the ideal place. According to Helms (2020), in the *Autonomy* status, White individuals are involved in ongoing personal reflection and societal engagement to dismantle systemic oppression. During this status, the White person is actively working on a White racial identity and is drawn toward the concept of a non-racist society. In the Autonomy stage, an individual clearly understands and has a positive connection to their White racial identity while actively pursuing social justice and eliminating racism (Helms, 1995).

According to the theory, "as long as one has White skin in America, one is entitled to feel superior to BIPOCs. This sense of entitlement seems to be a basic norm of White society" (Helms, 1990, p. 54). To better understand Helms's theory, it is essential to acknowledge that institutional and cultural racism is fully integrated into society, so much so that a White person may not even realize that racism exists (Helms, 1990). Due to these circumstances, the "abandonment of individual racism, as well as the recognition of and active opposition to institutional and cultural racism" (Helms, 1990, p. 55), are required for a White person to traverse the developmental task of obtaining a healthy White identity. Simultaneously, the White person must become acutely aware of their Whiteness and accept a positive view of being White (Helms, 1990).

Helm's White identity development theory is the theoretical framework that will guide this study. The theory is characterized at its most basic level as the person's inclination to approach rather than avoid race and racism matters. Paulo Freire (1998) describes critical consciousness as important to White racial identity development as interactions with BIPOCs "open their eyes" to inequalities and inspire a desire to join in

collective action to eliminate structures and systems designed to keep BIPOCs oppressed. Both Helms's (1990, 1995) White racial identity theory and Freire's (1973, 1993) critical consciousness theory concur on the notion that those with privilege (White teachers) must become actively engaged in combating inequality and working toward social change. The study will probe into the depths of teachers' emotions, cognition, and behaviors and, as such, will attempt to reveal richer intricacies of the phenomenon of racial identity development of critically conscious White teachers. Considering that the White racial identity development theory framework is based on how the individual views and behaves in a world embedded in racism, it is an ideal framework for furthering the explorations of critical conscious White teachers' understanding of racism. Furthermore, this framework is useful for framing racial identity development and critical consciousness as a process of becoming rather than a static way of being. The framework also considers that racial identity is not simply about bias reduction or forming new ideas about BIPOCs; rather, it is about forming new ideas about oneself as a White racial being.

Demographic Imperative

A nationwide problem that most scholars call the demographic imperative is an argument focused on three realities within American public education—a White, homogeneous teaching force, a growing racially diverse student population, and the disparities evident in educational opportunities, resources, and achievement among racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse student groups (Banks et al., 2005; McDonald, 2007). These three realities explain the educational disparities within the American public school system between opportunities and outcomes for BIPOC students

(Banks et al., 2005). The following section will address concerns within the literature related to the homogeneous, White teaching force, the BIPOC student population, and the educational disparities for diverse students.

White, Homogenous, Teaching Force

White dominance is so strong in the public school culture that race and racism are considered a thing of the past and is no longer relevant in the classroom. As a result, many practicing White teachers and teacher candidates enter the profession with false notions that racism is no longer significant, and many will profess their refusal to see race (DiAngelo, 2010; Leonardo, 2009). Bonilla-Silva (2014) identifies this phenomenon as color-blindness. As a result of monolithic, White cultural domination in school settings coupled with the color-blind racism of White teachers, modes of deficit thinking surrounding the academic performance of BIPOC students are created. Teacher deficit thinking focuses on what diverse students cannot do or do not have (Gay, 2010, p. 13). For example, deficit-oriented teachers quickly find areas from which to blame poor academic performance, such as absent parents or the culture of poverty (Irvine, 1990; Sleeter, 2017). Furthermore, deficit orientations exist in stereotypical representations of various ethnic and cultural groups carried into schools and classrooms. For instance, certain racial groups are "stupid, lazy, dangerous, hypersexual, or all of those things combined" (Tatum, 2017, p. 51).

In a review of research studies, Irvine (1990) found eighteen studies with conclusions that the attitudes of teachers were more negative toward African American children than White children in areas of "personality traits and characteristics, ability, language, behavior, and potential" (pp. 57–58). Over time, African American students

embody these attitudes and live up to their teachers' negative expectations and stereotypes. Steele and Aronson (1995) studied the effect of negative stereotypes of African American students on standardized testing and found negative stereotypes to impair performance. This phenomenon is known as the "stereotype threat." It is defined as "the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype" (Steele, 2003, p. 111). To genuinely promote high academic achievement and expectations with BIPOC students, teachers must draw from a base of critical consciousness, which supports their ability to reject dominant narratives about BIPOC students and thereby genuinely believe in their ability to achieve academically.

Impact of an Increasing Diverse Student Populations

Another important factor of the demographic imperative is the rapidly increasing population of BIPOC students within U.S. public schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). As previously mentioned, the majority White teaching force and the hegemonic White dominant culture of schools place BIPOC students at an academic disadvantage. Adding to this problem, many scholars report that teachers are ill-prepared to provide equitable teaching and learning practices for BIPOC students (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Hollins, 2012; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Matias, 2016, Sleeter, 2001, 2017). Educational researchers have found theories and phenomena that resulted from the ethnic and racial divide between teachers and students, which ultimately led to numerous educational disparities (Irvine, 1990, Ladson-Billings, 2006; Sleeter, 2017; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Tatum, 2017).

Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital applies heavily to understanding cultural incongruences between students and teachers. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital consists of an individual's cultural assets in three states: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized (Bourdieu, 1986). Embodied cultural capital consists of belief systems within the mind and body, such as values and understandings, whereas objectified cultural capital exists within tangible objects that one possesses. Lastly, institutionalized cultural capital is the assets placed upon individuals by outside institutions, such as professional promotions or college degrees (Bourdieu, 1986; Carter, 2005). All persons have their very own cultural capital. However, in society, only certain forms of cultural capital are valued (Carter, 2005). The dominant Eurocentric (White) cultural capital, which values Western art, music, and literature, is much more valued in the educational community than other forms of cultural capital (Carter, 2006). Those possessing the dominant cultural capital within educational settings have the resources and ability to achieve social and academic success (Bourdieu, 1986; Carter, 2006; DiMaggio, 1982). Since White teachers and students dominate the educational realm, BIPOC students lack the dominant cultural capital necessary to achieve the same success. According to McGrady and Reynolds (2013), cultural capital theory suggests that racial mismatch complicates the interactions between students and teachers and undermines academic achievement, thereby contributing to the reproduction of inequality across generations. For instance, in an empirical study of U.S. high school students, DiMaggio (1982) found that students possessing higher levels of the dominant Eurocentric cultural capital significantly correlated to students' achieving higher grades on test scores.

Not only do BIPOC students lack the dominant cultural capital to achieve well in school, but they may also develop opposition to school achievement. Due to the heavy White monolithic culture permeating every aspect of schools within the United States, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) discovered that African American students associated school with Whiteness, and as a result, to avoid "acting White" and facing judgment by fellow peers, African American students purposely underperformed academically. The researchers found that African American students developed a conscious or unconscious resistance to high academic achievement because of the contradiction it causes between the students and their racial and ethnic identities (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Carter, 2005). The researchers call this phenomenon the "burden of acting White" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Tyson, Darity, and Castellino (2005) disagree with Fordham and Ogbu's hypothesis, citing little empirical evidence to support the "burden of acting White," and further provide their own empirical evidence to support the opposition of negative peer influence on African American students. Tyson et al. (2005) found African American students at only one of the eight schools they studied to be contradictory to achievement. Tyson et al.'s (2005) study joined Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey's (1998) study, which reported more positive school attitudes present with African American students than with White students. Tyson et al.'s (2005) study also aligns with Cook and Ludwig's (1997) study, which suggested that African American and White students share similar values in academic achievement, in opposition to the "burden of acting White."

Carter (2005), in her study of sixty-eight Latino and African American middle and high school students growing up in poor neighborhoods north of New York City, was able to categorize the identity formation and academic achievement of students into three

categories: non-compliant believers, cultural mainstreamers, and cultural straddlers. Her study confirmed Fordham and Ogbu's earlier work by classifying a typology of students as non-compliant believers. In Carter's description, a non-compliant believer challenges the dominant culture of schooling and refuses to comply with an educational system that does not acknowledge diverse cultures. Carter also adds to Fordham and Ogbu by identifying other categories of behaviors of BIPOC students. She found that some students, which she calls cultural mainstreamers, understand their racial and ethnic differences yet still accept White as the standard and comply with dominant culture schooling (Carter, 2005). Lastly, Carter (2013) found some students can "negotiate schooling in a way that enables them not only to hold on to their native cultural styles but also to embrace dominant cultural codes and resources" (p. 13). These students are called cultural straddlers, which Carter found to have the most social success among peers because of their ability to code switch between cultural codes. Code-switching is a way for low-income BIPOCs to remain authentically engaged with the values of their communities while taking advantage of opportunities for further education and higher incomes available to those that participate in the White middle class (Morton, 2014)

Critically Consciousness Addresses Addressing the Demographic Imperative

One of the most well-known disparities is the discrepancy in academic achievement between these groups of students. Known as the "achievement gap," BIPOC students and students whose native language is not English score lower on standardized testing measures than White, European-American, English-speaking students (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2013). In addition to the achievement, racial disparities exist in the number of special education referrals of BIPOC students (Artiles et al., 2010; Bal et

al., 2019; Dunn, 1968; Heller et al., 1982). Coutinho and Oswald (2000) identified 25 years of records with BIPOC students' civil rights violated because of the discriminatory practices that labeled them as special education. Across the country, African American, Latinx, and Native American students are disproportionately underrepresented in gifted and talented education (GATE) programs (Tyson, 2013). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2011), African American students are 16.7% of the total student population in the United States. Yet only 9.8% of the students in GATE programs are African American. These disparities highlight why scholars have shifted the conversation from the "achievement gap" to the "opportunity gap" to emphasize that there is not some innate difference in students' academic ability based on their race. Instead, there are structural inequalities that BIPOC students face that determine their opportunities in life, which leads to the achievement gap as an outcome (Eizadirad, 2020).

A careful analysis of disciplinary data also reveals disproportional suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary measures for BIPOC students (Majors & Billson, 1993; Skiba & Sprague, 2008; Skiba et al., 2011). Some behaviors cited include cultural practices rather than actual malignant behavior, "While many African American males are suspended from school for fighting, just as many are suspended for culture-specific behaviors—strutting, rapping, woofing, playing the dozens, using slang, wearing hats, or expressive clothes, or wearing pants with loosened belts" (Majors & Billson, 1993, p. 14). Research such as this suggests that African American and Latin students are more heavily scrutinized and sometimes disciplined for not embracing White cultural norms and styles. Thus, the overrepresentation of White educators helps to maintain an

educational system of White supremacy that not only values dominant (White) cultural norms of behavior and success over BIPOC students but also shuts out opportunities for new cultural norms that are representative of BIPOC students to be accepted or incorporated. Such a problem calls for teachers to understand how legacies of racism and racial domination continue to interact in complex ways to shape disciplinary practices and opportunities for learning (Carter et al., 2017; Noguera, 2003). Teachers must consider how racial difference in the classroom shapes students' schooling experiences and opportunities. Additionally, they must critically rethink BIPOC students' cultural capital in the context of teaching and learning (Goldenberg, 2013). The following section will review the various initiatives set forth by critical educational scholars to address the demographic imperative.

One of the hallmark publications calling for teacher reformation was by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), wherein she proposed the theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). The theoretical model proposed by Ladson-Billings (1995) conceptualized culturally relevant teachers as possessing abilities in three areas: increasing the academic achievement of all students, increasing the cultural competency of all students, and developing all students' sociocultural competence. Ladson-Billings's suggested theory resulted from an in-depth qualitative study with eight highly effective public school teachers working with diverse student populations over three school years. The eight teachers, although of different races, ethnicities, and ages, all demonstrated a high regard for cultural diversity, helped their students maintain their cultural identity, and critiqued cultural inequities with their students. These teacher efforts ultimately led to an increase in student standardized test scores. High emphasis was placed on the

chosen term “relevant” for Ladson-Billings’ proposed theory to ensure all cultural backgrounds were regarded and accepted (1995).

Over a decade after Ladson-Billing’s publication, Paris (2012) proposed new terminology he believed better addressed modern cultural conceptions. His theory of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) was built upon Ladson-Billing’s initial theory of CRP (Paris, 2012). Paris’s focus identified the growing population of individuals identifying as multilingual and multicultural. It advocated for a theory encompassing individuals who may not identify with certain categories of cultural or linguistic groups because of the ever-changing cultural plurality within a more globalized society (2012). Ladson-Billings welcomed Paris’s reconceptualization of her initial work and encouraged many scholars to do the same (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

As a result, McCarty and Lee (2014) took Paris’ work one step further to add the term “revitalizing” into the theory of CSP to address educational sovereignty with Native American populations of students. McCarty and Lee (2014) proposed a theory of Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy (CSRP), which encourages the reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous communities through community-based educational accountability. McCarty and Lee use two ethnographic case studies of American Indian education to illustrate the main goals of CSRP. One of the cases is identified as National American Community Academy (NACA) is a state-funded public charter school in Albuquerque, New Mexico serving middle and high school students (McCarty & Lee, 2014, p. 107), while the other is known as PdH (Puente de Hózhǫ́) which is an elementary trilingual magnet school in Flagstaff, Arizona (p. 112). These school sites serve many indigenous students (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Through qualitative

ethnographic data obtained through these case students, the researchers illustrated various goals of CSRP, including validating and sustaining native languages and cultures, forming relationships, acknowledging emotions, and "an inward gaze—a loving but critical stance that counters colonization within and outside the school setting" (p. 117).

In contrast to the three previously stated theories, Villegas and Lucas (2002) proposed six characteristics teachers must possess to effectively teach children from various ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds. Understood as culturally responsive, these teachers would possess the qualities of a sociocultural consciousness, affirming views of diverse students, a responsible advocate for change, understanding of knowledge construction, ability to learn about students, and a commitment to implement culturally responsive teaching practices (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). According to Hollins (2012), culturally responsive teaching provides the best learning conditions to better serve an increasingly racially diverse population. Through an extensive review of the literature and previous research, Villegas and Lucas (2002) argue that student ethnic, racial, and social diversity must be at the forefront of teachers' educational practices and the forefront of the curriculum.

Geneva Gay (2010) presents five premises for her foundational work on culturally responsive teaching to support the academic success of lower-achieving BIPOC students. The first premise states that all forms of cultural capital are important and valid in schools. The second premise states that current educational reform is deficit-based and inadequate. In contrast, the third premise states that reflection and awareness of unjust teaching and learning practices must be accompanied by social advocacy. For large-scale change to occur in educational settings, the simple awareness of educational disparities

for BIPOC students is not enough. The fourth premise is the belief that cultural diversity is an asset with its full potential unknown. To support this premise, Gay cites numerous empirical studies demonstrating how stereotypes of certain ethnic and racial groups are eliminated by including the group's culture in the curriculum. The last premise states that test scores are not the cause of academic achievement problems; they are symptoms. Using the "achievement gap" (p. 17) as evidence, Gay explains that the lowered achievement of BIPOC students results from disparate educational practices.

Despite all the theoretical developments, few studies empirically operationalize and test the tenants of these theories. Many empirical tests for CRP/CSP/CRT/CRE/etc. use a scale developed by Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) called the CRTS Culturally Responsive Teaching Scale. Yet, Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2009) do not cite these theories in developing the CRT scale. This may be due to the semantical fluctuation and the slight, nuanced differences between the previously mentioned theories. However, Aronson and Laughter (2016) synthesized numerous studies that empirically tested a combination of CRP and the later transformation into CSP and Gay's proposition of culturally relevant teaching, called Culturally Relevant Education (CRE). By synthesizing the three tenets of CRP/CSP and the five tenets of culturally relevant teaching, Aronson and Laughter (2016) identify four CRE markers: connecting culture to academic skills and concepts, engaging in critical reflection, facilitating cultural competence, and critiquing discourses and power. Their review of 37 empirical studies across many content areas first identified which markers were present in each study. Through careful analysis, the researchers found that using the four markers of CRE in the

classroom resulted in positive increases in academic skills and concepts and promoted cultural competence in all content areas studied.

Examples of Effective Critically Conscious Educators

Research on critically conscious teachers is limited mainly to single-course experiences in teacher education programs, with a scarcity of research exploring classroom teachers and their practice. In this study, I intend to add to the research on teachers and critical consciousness by exploring the experiences of currently practicing White teachers. According to hooks (1994), critically conscious teachers provide students with ways to better interpret their position in society and engage in a humanizing transformation. Effective critically conscious teachers are highlighted in research concerning myriad critical pedagogies, including culturally relevant teachers, critical multicultural teachers, and sociopolitical conscious teachers. Critical pedagogies are devised to strengthen learners' critical literacies in a dynamic and reflexive approach to reading the world (text, media, audio, interactions) that strengthens one's understanding of power, inequity, and injustice (Freire, 1985). To engage with students in developing critical pedagogy and critical literacy, teachers must embody complex understandings of inequity, carry asset-framing of student culture and knowledge, and reflect critically on practice (Milner & Howard, 2013; Yosso et al., 2005). This section will explore the various forms of critical teacher effectiveness and prioritize the prerequisite development of critical consciousness.

Ladson-Billings (2009) identified three major tenets of culturally relevant teaching from a 3-year study of eight successful culturally relevant high schools conducted from 1988 to 1990. The study focused on how "teachers see themselves and

others" (pp. 28–29), how social interactions are structured, and how knowledge is conceived. The findings of her study revealed characteristics of teachers that fall within the three tenets: They see their teaching as an art rather than a technical skill. They believe that all their students can succeed rather than that failure is inevitable for some. They see themselves as a part of the community and teaching as giving back to the community. They help students connect their local, national, racial, cultural, and global identities. Such teachers can also be identified by how they structure their social interactions: Their relationships with students are fluid and equitable and extend beyond the classroom. They demonstrate a connectedness between the students. They encourage a community of learners; they encourage their students to learn collaboratively. Finally, such teachers are identified by their notions of knowledge: They believe that knowledge is continuously re-created, recycled, and shared by teachers and students. They view the content of the curriculum critically and are passionate about it. Rather than expecting students to demonstrate prior knowledge and skills, they help students develop that knowledge by building bridges and scaffolding for learning (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 28).

Concerning critical consciousness, Ladson-Billing's study demonstrates a great connection with the construct of critical reflection in a teacher's ability to situate themselves and others as cultural beings and form relationships and connectedness through this deeper and critical reflection of self, students, community, and curriculum. Although elements of critical action are not evident in Ladson-Billing's language when describing the culturally relevant teacher, advocacy might be implied with a teacher's ability to recreate and recycle knowledge through a praxis of reflection and action.

Reyes et al. (1999) completed an empirical study on eight high-performing Hispanic schools on the Mexico-American border in Texas in 1993. He found similar characteristics of the teachers within these schools. This study by Reyes et al. was more concerned with establishing a positive learning community for Hispanic youth but found that the teacher's reflections and actions play a crucial role in accomplishing this task. The researchers found four vital components necessary to create a high-performing learning community for Hispanic youth, including: "(1) collaborative governance and leadership; (2) community and family involvement; (3) culturally responsive pedagogy; and (4) advocacy-oriented assessment and quality control" (Reyes et al., 1999, p. 12). Embedded within these four components exist elements of teacher critical reflection and teacher critical action. The researchers understand culturally responsive pedagogy to mean that teachers accept all students, regardless of language and culture, expect each to be highly successful, collaborate within a school that maintains nonhierarchical leadership structures and is willing to accept new ideas. An educator capable of functioning in a non-judgmental, nonhierarchical, frequently changing environment must possess this critical, reflective ability. The last component of the learning communities by Reyes et al. (1999) suggests that assessment be "advocacy-oriented." In other words, teachers and school administrators advocate for authentic assessments of students' knowledge and ability that factor in English proficiency and cultural practices rather than simply relying on standardized measures (p. 15). The advocacy orientation suggests that teachers in this highly successful environment critically reflect on the biases of standardized assessment for students and critically act by developing more authentic measures.

Having established that teachers must be critically reflective and advocacy-oriented to promote a positive learning environment for BIPOC students, teachers must also demonstrate the qualities of multicultural navigators. In an extensive study of 68 New York City schoolchildren, Prudence Carter (2005) found that the most successful BIPOC students within the public schools had teachers, administrators, and other school role models who exemplify the qualities of what she calls "multicultural navigators." A multicultural navigator is a teacher who can embody the cultural capital of both dominant and non-dominant cultural groups and can move fluidly through these groups within different sociocultural settings and is also critically aware of the inner workings of "dominant and mainstream social institutions, organizations, places, and cultural spheres" (p. 173). A multicultural navigator can take their critical reflections and critically act on them by seeking "to raise consciousness and bring about equality and equity through actions and deeds … and dedicate themselves to both personal achievement and the collective achievement of groups with limited access to the opportunity structure …" (pp. 173–174). Although not directly addressed within this study, a teacher must possess some form of critical consciousness to exemplify what Carter labels as a multicultural navigator.

Through an extensive review of 40 years of studying and collecting data on teacher preparation programs, Haberman and Post (1998) found that effective multicultural teachers require a certain knowledge base. Much like the previous studies, evidence of critical reflection and critical action is evident within this knowledge base. According to Haberman and Post, effective multicultural educators must understand and accept their cultural roots while simultaneously understanding and accepting the cultural

roots of students, parents, and communities to form genuine and trusting relationships. Effective multicultural educators must also have the skills to connect curriculum to students' lives, critically problem-solve through cultural conflict, and constantly self-reflect and change teaching practices to meet diverse student needs. Haberman and Post's discussion of accepting the self and others' cultural roots directly matches Freire's critical reflection notion. At the same time, Haberman and Post's discussion of critical problem-solving and changing teaching practices relate directly to Freire's notions of critical action.

Mary Cowhey (2006), an elementary school teacher and author of *Black Ants and Buddhists: Thinking Critically and Teaching Differently in the Primary Grades*, dedicated her work to her students and encouraged educators to recognize, embrace, empower, and marvel at what young children can learn and advocate for when they are truly and authentically engaged in their learning. In her book, Mary Cowhey forges a nurturing and caring environment where children learn to become socially responsible and critical. Mary enables her students to have meaningful dialogue around everyday classroom incidents, such as a small invasion of black ants and connects them with Buddhism concepts. Mary helps her students come to consciousness about the world around them and provide them with ways to act and promote change. Cowhey states,

> I choose to teach critically because I believe young children are capable of analyzing things far more than is usually expected of them. I choose to teach critically because it lets me keep learning alongside my students. I teach this way so I can hear every child's voice and see each jewel sparkle. (p. 18)

Cowhey's attitude toward teaching each of her students embodies critical pedagogy. She shows how to extend the state-prescribed curriculum in directions that interest the students and the larger community. For example, Cowhey's students not only learned the

standard required for being a 'good citizen,' they lived, practiced, advocated, studied, and embraced definitions they self-identified. Cowhey's approach aligns with Freire's notion of critical reflection and critical action.

In addition to critical reflection and action, Gay (2010) identified qualities of what she called culturally responsive teaching through an extensive analysis of published works. According to Gay, culturally responsive teaching is validating because teachers use "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). Culturally responsive teaching is also comprehensive, multidimensional, and empowering teachers commit "to helping students of Color maintain identity and connections with their ethnic groups and communities; develop a sense of community, camaraderie, and shared responsibility; and acquire an ethic of success" (p. 32). She goes on to explain it "encompass curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instruction techniques, classroom management, and performance assessment" (p. 33). She enables "students to be better human beings and more successful learners" (p. 34).

Finally, culturally responsive teaching is transformative and emancipatory: teachers obligate students to advocate for their diverse communities and encourage action that liberates cultural groups from oppression. Although this study focused on students' outcomes and ability to develop critical consciousness, the argument persists that teachers must first be critically conscious of advancing these principles in their students. The above literature review demonstrates a wide semantic variety in labeling the traits, qualities, and characteristics of what constitutes effective teachers of BIPOC students.

However, through careful dissection of the elements within each of the studies mentioned above, it is evident that a teacher's experience and development of critical consciousness is necessary to embody any of the previously mentioned characteristics.

The Relevance of Critical Consciousness

Both Helms's (1990, 1995) White racial identity theory and Freire's (1973, 1993) critical consciousness theory concur on the notion that those with privilege (White teachers) must become actively engaged in combating inequality and working toward social change. However, the components of critical consciousness of critical reflection and critical action are masked within much of the previously mentioned literature concerning culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Paris, 2012). Furthermore, much disagreement exists about the terminology that should be used to describe educators with critical reflection and action skills (Banks & Banks, 2004). For example, in Ladson-Billings's proposed theory of CRP, one of the three criteria teachers should meet to be considered culturally relevant is to develop a sociopolitical consciousness within students, which she defines as the ability to understand and critically analyze social inequalities throughout society (p. 476-477). Additionally, Ladson-Billings (1995) specifically mentions the influence of Freire's work when discussing critical consciousness in the context of CRP. Freire's ideas about oppression, power, and class, which directly drive his focus on critical consciousness, can be traced back to those of Gramsci, an early 20th-century Italian Marxist philosopher who coined the notion of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci used the word hegemony to connote the process of social control "carried out through the moral and intellectual

leadership of the dominant sociocultural class over subordinate groups" (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003, p. 12). Gramsci emphasized the need for structural action and ideological action, and transformation through which the oppressed realize their complicity in their oppression.

Similarly, in Villegas and Lucas's (2002) proposed characteristics of culturally responsive teachers, the first of the six strands include the development of a sociocultural consciousness in which teachers can critically reflect and act on the social injustices between the hierarchies of power that exist between BIPOC students and the public school system. Gay's (2010) five premises also promote the importance of teachers' willingness to act upon social injustices rather than merely understanding them. Although slightly different in semantics, these landmark publications call for K-12 public school teachers to become more critically reflective and active, the essential subcomponents of critical consciousness, to provide students with equitable educational opportunities.

The Call for White, Critically Conscious Educators

As previously mentioned, myriad scholars are drawing attention to the desperate need for White teachers to deeply understand and engage BIPOC students (Banks et al., 2005; Caraballo et al., 2017; Carter, 2005; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 1995; Sleeter, 1996; Watts et al., 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), yet little research has explored the variations that exist among these types of teachers as it relates to their understanding, development, and practice. Moreover, because critical consciousness was initially conceptualized as a way for the oppressed to understand their marginalization and advocate for themselves (Diemer et al., 2016; Freire, 1974/2013), the question exists

whether White individuals have the potential to develop critical consciousness, as well, to become allies toward achieving social justice (Thomas et al., 2014).

Certain scholars understand this question as furthering the stereotypical ideology that Whites are needed to swoop in and save the day (Matias, 2016; Straubhaar, 2015). Straubhaar identifies this idea as the "White Saviour Complex" (2015), which he defines as the "problematic lack of recognition of social privilege" (p. 382). Supported through countless films and novels, the idea of the White Savior is especially problematic among White pre-service teachers who enter the profession with delusions of becoming the White "martyr-messiahs" (Matias, 2016, p. 9), to save the poor, BIPOC students (Matias, 2016).

Although eliciting White teachers as allies in the fight for socially just educational practices has the potential to further the White Savior complex, other scholars argue that social justice struggles are the responsibility of all citizens, including Whites (DiAngelo, 2010; Leonardo, 2009; Martin, 2013; Thomas et al., 2014). Thomas et al. (2014) argue that raising critical consciousness among White individuals will allow the understanding of their privileged social position and help break the cycle of further oppressing those that fall lower on the social hierarchy. DiAngelo (2010) furthers this goal by stating the importance of White people engaging critically in racial discourse and developing the stamina to do so.

Focusing on White Teachers

This study focuses on White teachers because they exist in a sphere of experiences highly influenced by their status as White people (and often, too, as middle-class people). As Parsons and Wall (2011) explain, "The United States, like many societies worldwide, is stratified. On a large scale, because of history, public life in the United States is stratified by wealth, education, and race, and these strata do not exist in isolation. Still, they often overlap" (p. 21). Experiences and views of being members of U.S. society differ across strata. Rather than there being one universal lived experience of the U.S. citizen, "groups and the individuals that comprise different strata in the United States perceive and live substantially different realities" (Parsons & Wall, 2011, p. 21).

White teachers occupy positions within the strata that are privileged (e.g., White, college-educated, and often middle-class), and their positionality can make it challenging for them to understand the importance of teaching in culturally relevant, equity-oriented ways (Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Picower, 2009). Moreover, their privileged positions make it difficult, often, for "people and groups to acknowledge the existence of inherent inequities in a stratified society that privileges them—a herculean obstacle to surmount to interrogate and disrupt social inequity" (Parsons & Wall, 2011, pp. 21–22). In overcoming this obstacle, privileged individuals must be able to "perceive inequities that are evident to those who occupy less privileged strata in the United States" (Parsons & Wall, 2011, p. 22). This study's central concern is the process and experience of perceiving, recognizing, understanding, and engaging with social inequities.

Current Trends of Critical Consciousness Scholarship

Much attention has been drawn to developing critical consciousness within BIPOC K-12 students (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Hipolito-Delgado & Zion, 2017; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). Also known as sociopolitical consciousness (Seider et al., 2017; Watts et al., 1999), social justice education (Stachowiak, 2017), or democracy education (Giroux & McLaren, 1986), researchers find that fostering critical consciousness development in youth positively affects academic motivation and achievement for BIPOC student populations (El-Amin et al., 2017), and positively affects their career development (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). The following section will review the current studies on youth critical consciousness to inform the expectations for educators' critical consciousness development.

Democracy education is not a new concept and has existed within the literature for several decades. Giroux and McLaren (1986) heavily urged and argued for educational reform that places teaching and learning into the political structures of society and encourages teachers to become "transformative intellectuals" in teaching the children (p. 215). The goal of democracy education, according to Giroux and McLaren (1986), is to empower "students to become critical, active citizens" (p. 216), and the way to do that is to prepare teachers to "treat students as critical agents, question how knowledge is produced and distributed, utilize dialogue, and make knowledge meaningful, critical, and ultimately emancipatory" (p. 215). Giroux and McLaren demonstrate the need for teachers to develop a critical consciousness to empower their students to do the same (Giroux & McLaren, 1986).

Through an empirical study of African American male high school youth, Watts et al. (1999) found critical consciousness development's role as an antidote for

oppression. The scholars used an action research approach to identify whether critical consciousness development in high school-aged African American male youth involved in the Young Warriors program led to a sociopolitical development. Researchers define sociopolitical development as "the psychological process that leads to and supports social and political action" (p. 256). The Young Warriors program was designed to "enhance young men's awareness of their collective social condition and the social forces maintaining it" (p. 256). In other words, the researchers aimed to identify whether the Young Warriors program facilitated critical consciousness development in African American youth, which is a prerequisite to taking political action (sociopolitical development) toward their situations. Although the study results were inconclusive regarding youth sociopolitical development, a clear increase was noted in the critical consciousness development of study participants, thus suggesting that the young men developed a much greater awareness of the social structures that define their social status.

Critical consciousness development is also an important theme in a quasi-experimental study by Hipolito-Delgado and Zion (2017), which sought to identify if the Critical Civic Inquiry (CCI) initiative impacted high school students 'psychological empowerment. In this study, psychological empowerment consisted of critical consciousness, positive identity, and social action, which were components built into the CCI initiative. Because critical consciousness development is important as a precursor to psychological empowerment, the researchers paid close attention to the critical consciousness development of research participants. The study's findings indicated statistically significant increases in youth ethnic identity and civic self-efficacy after participating in the critical consciousness component of the CCI initiative (Hipolito-

Delgado & Zion, 2017, p. 712). Further findings also demonstrated that student psychological empowerment was promoted with supportive adult relationships, including those of the CCI teacher.

Diemer et al. (2006) also noted the important influence of peers, family, and community members, including teachers, on the critical consciousness development of urban adolescents. Through a mixed-methods study, the researchers examined the impact of perceived support toward challenging racism, sexism, and social justice on urban adolescents' critical consciousness development. Findings indicated that youth who perceived support from peers, family, and community members significantly developed the critical reflection component of their critical consciousness development.

Finally, although yet to be empirically tested, Stachowiak (2017) presents a framework for social justice education in the classroom that involves three phases toward developing critical consciousness within students. Most importantly, Stachowiak identifies the importance of teacher critical consciousness development to facilitate student critical consciousness development and the social justice framework she presents, "We can't lay the foundation for our students if we don't have the foundation ourselves" (p. 29).

Chapter Summary

This chapter explained the theoretical framework for this research study, followed by proposed theories, methodologies, and ideologies to address the identified demographic imperative. The demographic imperative highlights the disparities between the diversifying student population and the stagnant homogenous White teaching force in education. This disparity is combined with unjust and inequitable educational practices

for BIPOC students leading to a gap in achievement for BIPOC students and their peers from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The achievement gap for BIPOC students prompted educational scholars to identify various methods to address the demographic imperative elements, including culturally responsive teaching methods, also known as culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy.

Through this discussion, the importance of critical consciousness was revitalized, and a thorough review of literature on critical consciousness in various spaces of education was completed. Numerous empirical examples of critically conscious educators and their students' heightened achievement, engagement, and career efficacy demonstrated the importance of further developing critical consciousness within educators. In addition to their heightened levels of critical consciousness, these teachers also embody elements necessary for educational reform and change. For example, teachers' ability to respond to the growing racial divide plays an integral role in the success and failure of BIPOC students (Kolano & King, 2015). Therefore, White teachers need to develop their critical consciousness further and become allies for more socially just and equitable educational practices because the voices of those in dominant roles and power positions have the unearned privilege to contribute to faster change (Milner, 2013).

Engaging in a constructivist study about critical consciousness, White teachers require examining one's understanding of how their racial identity is perceived to one's critical consciousness development. A review of studies in this work found that BIPOC teachers were more likely than White teachers to possess critical consciousness due to their acquired experiential understanding of discrimination and outsider status by

growing up in a society characterized by White privilege and racism (Merryfield, 2000). Much of the current scholarship addresses the development of critical consciousness within BIPOC students to empower them to advocate for their own equitable education. However, little scholarship exists on the White teachers that facilitate the development of critical consciousness—especially those who work in schools experiencing racial demographic shifts.

There were two major findings after conducting a thorough review of the literature: (a) critical consciousness is the foundation of most pedagogical methods and practices that respond to schools' racial differences and systemic inequities, and (b) across different regions of the U.S. White teachers are less likely to be critically conscious than BIPOC teachers (Porter, 2021). Critical consciousness is closely aligned with White racial identity development, in which one moves from lacking awareness of race and racism (racial color-blindness) to a more critical understanding of racism and acts against oppressive practices (critical consciousness). Therefore, I chose to use the critical consciousness of White teachers as a factor for selecting the participants in this study. I believe that White teachers are in the position to empower other White educators and students to promote change within schools.

If we continue to depend on educational reform led by a government, it will not happen. I believe the last and best resort to a vibrant, lasting educational reform must come from within the schools themselves. Therefore, I aim to explore the variation of critically conscious White teachers to better understand how they navigate issues of racism with their students. It opens areas for deeper interrogation and leads to questions regarding teachers' capacity to reinvent schools from the inside out. It also considers

action, resistance, and historical struggle. In this study, I do not attempt to label critically conscious teachers. Instead, I am interested in my participants' awareness of their own and their students' social placement and the conditions under which it has been constructed. Additionally, I explore if and how it plays out in participants' practices. The following chapter explains how this research informs the design methodology of how to study the variation of critical consciousness among White K-12 teachers for this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the selected methodology for exploring the research question:

How do critically conscious White teachers in a Southern Indiana school district experiencing demographic shifts engage in anti-racism work?

This chapter describes the foundations of instrumental case study methodology, research approach, participant, and site selection. Further, the chapter discusses the case boundaries, case participants, and how the participants were selected. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the process used for data collection and analysis, the approach used to produce quality research, ethical considerations, and the trustworthiness of the findings.

Case Study Methodology

A qualitative methodological approach to research is used when an issue needs further exploration. Understanding the context in which participants situate themselves within the problem is warranted (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through an inductive process, a researcher uses data and literature to fill gaps in existing theory to build a hypothesis or theory (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) discuss that when developing a research question to guide a problem statement and methodology through an inductive approach, one must understand the context of the study, determine if a gap in the literature exists, and examine if the problem is significant enough to warrant a research study. As discussed in Chapter Two, empirical research describes that critical consciousness can be a gateway to academic motivation and achievement for BIPOC students. However, there is a gap in the literature that specifically discusses the actions,

behaviors, and experiences of the critically conscious White teachers that support BIPOC students in motivation and achievement. Therefore, a qualitative research approach was selected for this research design because it provides an in-depth complex understanding of the actions and behaviors exhibited and experienced by critically conscious White teachers within the context of engaging in anti-racist, empowering work in their respective schools.

Methodological Approach

The work of Sharon Merriam (1998) heavily guided this case study approach. However, the methodology was also informed by the works of Robert Stake (1995) and Robert Yin (2018). While all three scholars provided different perspectives from each component of the case study methodology, each offered an alignment to this study that enhanced the problem under investigation.

Yin (2018) leans toward a realist, post-positive approach through the examination of absolutes within the context of the case (Harrison et al., 2017). Recognizing that there are no absolutes and there can always be an outlier, the post-positivism paradigm expands from positivism. Instead of looking for the absolute truth, post-positivism seeks to find the falsification of the absolute. Yin (2018) observes that through a case study approach, how or why questions are answered about a phenomenon, behaviors cannot be manipulated, and the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are unclear (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yazan, 2015). Yin (2013) strongly supports a more deductive approach to a case study that relies heavily on a strict design, dependence on literature, and a grounding theoretical framework. In a Yinian study, construct validity, external and internal validity, and reliability are deemed as criteria for a quality study (Yazan, 2015;

Yin, 2018). Through this guidance, a Yinian study would be more rigorous and less reliant on the ethnography established through a Stake (1995) or Merriam (1998) guided study (Yazan, 2015).

Contrasting the Yin (2018) post-positivist approach, both Stake (1995) and Merriam (1998) approach a case study methodology through a constructivist lens. While Stake (1995) and Merriam (1998) address the case study methodology through philosophical similarities, each scholar has unique divergent approaches. Given the connection the researcher has as a BIPOC educator, an approach more closely aligned to the constructivist approaches of both Stake (1995) and Merriam (1998), where the researcher is immersed and interacts within the phenomenon, was more appropriate than a Yinian, post-positivist approach where the researcher is typically detached and neutral (Boblin et al., 2013).

Stake (1995) views the case study approach as holistic, empirical, and interpretive, elevating the researcher as both an interpreter and gatherer of interpretations (Stake, 1995; Yazan, 2015). Stake (1995) suggests that humans construct knowledge through external realities, interpretations of external realities, and rational reality, which is the blended interpretation of integrated experiences (Stake, 1995). The researcher must explore the relationship between a phenomenon and its context through this approach. Stake (1995) found that through the constructivist paradigm, trust and authenticity with participants would guide interviews with participants and therefore gain deep insights, perceptions, and hermeneutical discoveries into their experiences (Ponterotto, 2005). Stake (1995) generalizes that the researcher expects to deliver the reader enough raw

material to generalize and then construct meaning through rich narrative descriptions and storytelling (Harrison et al., 2017).

While the case study approaches of Yin (2018) and Stake (1995) are important when defining a case study approach, the researcher found the pragmatic constructivist approach paired with the clear design guidelines offered by Merriam (1998) to be most appropriate for this study (Harrison et al., 2017). Merriam (1998) regards the case study method as pragmatic, particular, descriptive, and heuristic (Harrison et al., 2017; Yazan, 2015). Merriam's (1998) approach to the nature of the case study is pertinent to a novice researcher and provides a framework to ensure the case remains bound and focused. Like Yin (2018), Merriam (1998) emphasizes the need for a rigorous process, and research questions are derived from theoretical frameworks and pertinent literature (Harrison et al., 2017). The heuristic nature of a Merriam (1998) study is a social construct that illuminates the reader's understanding of a particular phenomenon to understand a situation through a process rather than an outcome (Yazan, 2015). Merriam (1998) also adheres to a strict set of techniques and strategies to enhance internal validity and ensure reliability which is critical to a novice researcher (Yazan, 2015).

Philosophical Assumptions/Interpretive Framework/Worldview

Qualitative research falls within three main paradigms; each approach aims to explore, seek to understand, or establish meaning from participants (Harrison et al., 2017). First, a constructivist case study approach was used to understand the variations of critical consciousness among White teachers using the interpretive framework of Helms's (1990) White racial identity development theory. White racial identity development theory is an ideal framework for furthering the explorations of critically conscious White

teachers' perceptions and experiences. The framework is based on how the individual views and behaves in a world embedded in racism. White racial identity development theory outlines how Whites begin with minimal awareness of race and racism (racial color-blindness) to one of developing an acceptance of people's experiences based on racism and seeking opportunities to eliminate racism and oppressive practices (critical consciousness). The work of Paulo Freire (1974) that describes critical consciousness is important to an understanding of White racial identity development; for White people, interactions and increased familiarity with the experiences with BIPOCs "opens their eyes" to the moral injury that is embedded in societal racism. The more critically conscious they become, not merely aware of these experiences but engaging in the process of meaning-making, therefore helps them ascend the path toward more mature racial identity development. This development also helps inspire them toward collective action to eliminate structures and systems that keep individuals (especially BIPOCs) oppressed.

The constructivist approach is appropriate because race is understood as a social construction with no biological basis (Banks, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) but as having a strong influence on the lived experiences of everyone in our society. The salience of racism is also more acknowledged in this study through the focus on critical consciousness, which aims at issues of racism, including social inequity. This idea is also evident in rejecting any pretense of "colorblindness" (Gotanda, 1991) in the study's conceptualization by directly considering the lived experiences of critically conscious White teachers.

Racial identity development theory has often been described as an important component of self-concept for all ethnic/racial groups (Hughes et al., 2015; Roberts et al., 1999). It has been linked to various important outcomes, including decreases in racist attitudes (Carter, 1990; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1993) and increases in racial awareness (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). According to Thompson (2003), racial identity can facilitate teachers' development as practitioners as they learn about themselves as racial beings and social change agents. How White teachers make meaning of their racial identities and place them within their context of work with BIPOC students is important to understand how they can negotiate race issues within their classrooms and school community. Grounding this study in the theoretical underpinnings of White racial identity development theory guides the understanding of how teachers know who they are, understand the contexts in which they practice, and question their knowledge and assumptions, the knowledge that is as vital as mastery of effective teaching techniques and practices.

This case study approach allows for a deeper understanding of the critical consciousness of White teachers. Everyone recruited for this study ostensibly will exhibit variations in their levels of critical consciousness. How their consciousness is exhibited in their work will show this variation; the researcher will also probe the commonalities across participants. These narratives can show as instruments in furthering the knowledge of what is known about the development, practice, and experience of critical consciousness among White teachers. It also provides knowledge from an unrepresented voice, critically conscious White teachers in the research.

Research Questions

Formulating rich research questions is an instrumental part of designing a solid case study. Stake (1995) states, "The design of all research questions requires conceptual organization, ideas to express needed understanding, conceptual bridges from what is already known, cognitive structures to guide data gathering, and outlines for presenting interpretations to others" (p. 15). The design of the research questions is also an essential deciding factor in which research method is chosen (Yin, 2009). Given that the purpose of this study is to understand the development, practice, challenges, and opportunities of critically conscious White teachers, the following questions were used to frame this study:

1. How do critically conscious White teachers in a Southern Indiana school district experiencing demographic shifts engage in anti-racism work?
2. What opportunities do these critically conscious White teachers experience as they engage in anti-racist work in their schools?
3. What challenges do these critically conscious White teachers experience as they engage in anti-racist work in their schools?

These research questions guided the case study and refocused the researcher when needed. The research questions were designed to help narrow the focus of critically conscious White teachers by investigating their development, awareness, understanding, practice, and experience. The questions aim to explore the variations of critical consciousness among White teachers.

The Case

When determining the boundaries of the case, Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that often the case is too broad; therefore, determining what the case is not is equally important as establishing what will bind the case. Typically, a case must focus on a contemporary issue bound by time, place, and context (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Miles et al., 2014; Stake, 1995). The instrumental case study approach allowed for an exploration of various perceptions of critically conscious White teachers, all tied to one phenomenon within a context that allowed for a conclusion of facts to drive theory. An instrumental case study approach was highly suitable for this problem of practice due to the level of reliance on an inductive approach to the research versus a highly theoretical deductive approach (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) defines an inductive approach as one where a framework should emerge from a literature review, problem statement, and research problem closely tied to the researcher's interests (Merriam, 1998; Yazan, 2015).

Further, the instrumental case study was suitable for this study because, unlike an intrinsic case study approach where the case itself is the primary interest, in an instrumental approach, the case was of secondary interest to the researcher (Crewell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 1995). The researcher was not intrinsically interested in the case; rather, the case served as a secondary role in understanding the work and experiences of critically conscious White teachers in this southern Indiana school district (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Racism has always been present in society and public schools. However, the intensity of racism has increased dramatically, as well as the different forms of racism and racist acts that negatively impact BIPOC students. Our schools need critically conscious teachers who recognize systems of oppression and take action against these

systems. Throughout the study, the researcher provided a detailed exploration of this contemporary issue to provide insight into the phenomenon of the work and experiences of critically conscious White teachers. Telling the story of the participants through the lens of White racial identity development theory (Helms, 1997) enabled the researcher to summarize the case and make recommendations about solutions and suggestions for educators in schools experiencing demographic shifts.

The Site

A case can be defined as a thing or an entity. Therefore, the parameters of the case are strictly defined or bound (Stake, 1995; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The site included a school district located in southern Indiana, about one hour from Indianapolis, the largest city and the state's capital. As one of the top 20 largest school districts in the state in terms of student enrollment, the school district spans 360 square miles and encompasses 14 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 4 high schools that cater to uniquely diverse populations (based on ethnicity, special education services, free and reduced lunch, and English language learners).

The school district was chosen as the research setting because of its growing BIPOC student population and stagnant teacher population. In the 2019-2020 academic school year, approximately 10 Asian, 12 African American, 0 Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 20 Latinx/Hispanic, 6 Multiracial, 1 Native American, and 816 White full-time teachers were employed by the school district (*Monroe County Community Sch Corp (5740) | Indiana*, n.d.). The district's total student enrollment for the 2020–2021 academic year for pre-K to 12th grade was approximately 10,483 (Indiana Department of Education, 2020-2021), out of which 16.1% received special education services, 14.5%

participated in the high ability program, 3.3% were English language learners, and 34.6% were considered economically disadvantaged. Student racial demographic data broken down into 499 Asian, 628 Black, 8 Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 659 Latinx/Hispanic, 780 Multiracial, 21 Native American, and 7888 White students enrolled (IDOE corporation enrollment, 2020-2021). Table 1 illustrates the increase in the BIPOC student population over the last 10 years. Additionally, Table 2 shows a slight drop in the number of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in the school district, and Table 3 show a drop in students with disabilities and English language learners over the last 10 years.

Table 1. Demographic of Student Population

Race	Academic Year	
	2021	2011
American Indian	21	70
Asian	499	505
Black	628	466
Hispanic	659	509
Multiracial	780	783
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8	5
White	7888	8378
Total Student Enrollment	10483	10716

Table 2. Economically Disadvantaged Data

Academic Year	**Economically Disadvantaged**	**Paid/Lunch**
2022	3803	6810
2021	3631	6852
2011	3971	6745

Table 3. Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

	Academic Year	
	2021	2011
	n (%)	*n* (%)
English Language Learners	302 (2.8)	350 (3.34)
Students Receiving Special Education Services	1591 (14.8)	1706 (16.27)

The city in which the school district resides consists of single-family homes, condominiums, apartment complexes, government-subsidized housing, industrial parks, businesses, and some farmland. Two institutions of higher education are in the city. The community includes professional, educational, and blue-collar workers. Most professionals work in white-collar professions, such as business management, government, and medicine, or as faculty or staff at the local research institution. The average household income is $37,077, while the individual income is $15,467. The city has many rural and small-town characteristics. Yet, it is known anecdotally as a "cultural oasis" due to the local university and the numerous artists and musicians in the area.

According to the 2020 census, 86,987 residents and 30,063 households were in the city. The city's racial makeup was 81.9% White, 3.7% African American, 0.2% Native American, 6.0% Asian, 0.0% Pacific Islander, 1.5% from other races, 6.6% from two or more races, and 4.2% from the Hispanic or Latino population. Over ten years, from 2010 to 2020, the city experienced a decline in White residents as the number of BIPOC residents simultaneously increased, which mirrors a national trend in several U.S. cities. The number of White residents decreased by 5.5% in the study setting. African American residents increased by 14.5%, Asians increased by 16.1%, Hispanic or

Latinx increased by 57.8%, and individuals with two or more races increased by 169.2%. Across the nation, the White, non-Hispanic population fell by 8.6% (2020, Census).

The city is socioeconomically divided, with most BIPOC students living on the North and West side of town. Less affluent low-income housing, underdeveloped communities, and a lack of resources exist. The median household income in the city is $41,995, with approximately 32.3% of the total population in the city living below the poverty line. Across the state, 14.1% of the population lives below the poverty line.

Identifying the Participants

Traditional status quo measures largely reward what many consider "good" teaching and practice (Stroebe, 2016). I am seeking a different type of teacher, the kind of teacher that might disrupt the status quo in significant ways. These candidates have a specific attribute of critical consciousness, that is, an understanding of their own and their students' placement along an unfair and immoral racial-social hierarchy. Teachers possessing this knowledge are aware of the role that schooling and society play in various aspects of school culture, including the marginalized placement of students of color relative to Whites (Freire, 1974; Giroux, 2001; Kincheloe, 2004). I was aware that finding participants who fit the narrow criteria described below and are willing and able to participate in the study might be problematic.

For this reason, I asked the district's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator, an African American man, to identify teachers they believed to be White and critically conscious. The DEI coordinator facilitates diversity training and leads district-wide diversity initiatives. The DEI coordinator's familiarity with what teachers

do inside and outside their classrooms to disrupt inequitable practices will provide insight into teachers who fit the criteria.

Building principals, which consisted of White men, were also asked to identify teachers who fit the criteria. The building principals helped triangulate the DEI Coordinator's list. The process consisted of a set of questions (Appendix B) that focused on the teachers' propensity for and ability to address issues of mistreatment of students based on race and the use of constructive efforts to build community and increase motivation and achievement equitably among all students. Table 4 shows descriptors of the would-be participants of this study.

The DEI coordinator and building principals were contacted via email for efficiency so that I could share the list of descriptors and forms that will be used to identify participants. In addition, Hennink et al. (2017), Malterud et al. (2016), and Stake (2005) suggested that 8 to 16 participants are sufficient to ensure code, data, and meaning saturation. Therefore, I sought to recruit up to 20 potential participants to gain between 8 to 16 willing participants to ensure code, data, and meaning saturation (Hennink et al., 2017; Malterud et al., 2016). Individuals who implement social justice and culturally responsive pedagogy promote anti-racist practices to enhance the learning environment for BIPOC students. Examples are included in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptors of Potential Participants

Descriptors of Potential Participants
Teachers who actively participate in committees/organizations that advocate against racism and racist practices.
Teachers who provide safe spaces for BIPOC students and cultivate positive student-teacher relationships with BIPOC students, or teachers that sponsor clubs/activities that are heavily populated by BIPOC students.
Teachers who address racism in school, including teachers who are able to recognize race issues and offer possible ways to address it.
Teachers who actively seek out professional development opportunities to enhance their skills in promoting anti-racist behaviors and practices in school.
Teachers whose students demonstrate positive outcomes (beyond those measured by standardized testing)—including encouraging student action relevant to social justice.
Teachers with at least two years of classroom experience so that they are no longer learning how to implement teaching methods, but they are now at least beginning to reflect on their practice and intentionally shaping it.

Selection Procedures

The DEI coordinator and school principals identified eleven teachers they perceive to be critically conscious and White. I contacted the 11 identified teachers via email using the recruitment script approved by the IRB. The script explained the purpose of the study, my role as a researcher, and the role of the interviewee. I sent a follow-up email explaining the study's purpose and attached a consent form to formally request their involvement. I also attached the interview questions and an information sheet to the email for participant review. I requested each participant to sign the consent form if interested in participating in the study. Additionally, I requested each participant to review the interview guide and inform me of any questions they would like to remove or if they needed clarification. Finally, a brief screening survey asked participants the following questions to determine if they fell within the sample frame:

- Do you hold a valid teaching license?
- Do you identify as White or non-Hispanic?
- Are you a full-time teacher?
- What do you think makes a good teacher?
- What do you think makes a good teacher for BIPOC students?

All 11 teachers identified by the DEI coordinator and building principals were contacted. Five of the eleven teachers agreed to participate in the study, and six individuals declined. Because the DEI coordinator and building principals were asked to identify participants they perceived to be critically conscious, this is a convenient snowball sampling. According to Magnani et al. (2005), a snowball sample, based on convenience, is best utilized in defining a problem but cannot be generalized to a larger population. Convenient snowball sampling is necessary to access a sample frame of teachers within sample parameters due to the lack of any dataset housing this demographic data for the researcher to access or draw upon.

The chosen sample frame excludes currently practicing teachers who serve students outside of the district or those who identify as BIPOC. A multitude of research identifies teachers who serve students in urban areas and BIPOC teachers as two variables that contribute to further the development of critical consciousness (Haberman & Post, 1998). Because this study is interested in racism and anti-racist practices outside of urban environments and lived experiences of non-BIPOC teachers, these factors were controlled for within the sample frame.

I incorporated interviews and eJournal entries of five White teachers from the school district to gain insight into how they engage in anti-racist work in their respective

school communities. Merriam (1998) is explicit that there is no guidance on determining a sample size; she simply states there should be an adequate number that is continued until a point of redundancy where the researcher begins to see the same behaviors or observations. However, Merriam (1998) further recognizes that a minimum sample size should be established. Therefore, since case study methodologies typically utilize a small sample size, a sample of five critically conscious White teachers was suitable for this study.

Data Collection

This instrumental case study used semi-structured one-on-one interviews and eJournaling data collection methods. Before entering interviews, the researcher will thoroughly discuss the informed consent form. Creswell (2013) explains that informed consent gives potential participants sufficient information on whether to participate. The informed consent form includes the purpose of the study, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and highlights confidentiality and withdrawal (Creswell, 2013). Once participants were selected and consent was granted, the data collection began via one-on-one interviews and weekly eJournal entries from the participants. The purpose of the two forms of data will serve to enable triangulation and to seek consistency within cases.

Interviews

According to Yin (2009), interviews are one of the most important sources of information obtained in case study research. There are three traditional types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and group (Brinkmann, 2012). Structured interviews use surveys and are a standard way of asking questions. Semi-structured interviews are planned, flexible, and aim for the interpretation of meaning related to a

phenomenon. Group interviews allow the researcher to focus on group discussion and specific themes of interest. With semi-structured interviews, the researcher has "much more leeway for following up on whatever angles" (Brinkmann, 2012, p. 85) are necessary to encourage the participant to elaborate on their responses.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for this study to allow the participants to expand on their thoughts, ideas, and experiences in their own words (Esterberg, 2002). The interviews aimed to understand (a) the ways they engage in anti-racist work, (b) what opportunities teachers experience while engaging in anti-racist work, and (c) the challenges teachers encounter while engaging in anti-racist work in their schools. Participants will be guided through an interview guide with predetermined questions (see Appendix B) and allowed to expand as needed to increase their understanding of the phenomenon. The interviews were conducted in a conversational format with participants, and the researcher engaged in dialogue.

A second interview with each participant took place after completing all four eJournal entries. The purpose of the second interview is to get a self-report from participants of their eJournaling/reflections experience, anything they cared to add to the previous interview and provide clarifying information. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed to be used for member checks. The dissertation committee validated interview questions before use in the field. Their professional feedback informed possible revisions for use in the field. The Zoom application was used to record the interviews.

eJournaling

eJournal entries are a key qualitative research method used in this study to capture data for case study analysis. Stake (2005) argues that journaling as a method of data collection can be used with other data collection methods to enrich information gathered from interviews. eJournal entries can be used to triangulate claims made by respondents in different data sources (Hussein, 2009) or provide more richness and detail to the individual narrative. eJournaling was selected because its approach offers the potential to explore participants' experiences in detail. Participants were asked to complete a confidential electronic journal (eJournal) weekly for one month. The eJournal template used for each session can be found in Appendix C.

Data from eJournals was used to answer Research Question 2, "What challenges do critically conscious White teachers experience as they engage in anti-racist work in their schools?" and Research Question 3, "What opportunities do critically conscious White teachers experience as they engage in anti-racist work in their schools?" The questions addressed in the eJournals are meant to bring forth deep discussion on opportunities and challenges they have experienced while engaging in anti-racist work to promote educational equity in their schools.

Recording and Storing Data

Interviews with participants were conducted and recorded via the Zoom application. According to Creswell (2013), the researcher should take notes along with the recording of the interview for additional information and "unseen" details. I took notes throughout each interview to capture observed participants' emotions and highlight other information that may arise during these interactions. All recordings were

transcribed for data analysis, along with the notes from the interviews. All recordings, transcripts, and eJournal entries were entered into Qualtrics, a qualitative software program. Data from this study was saved in a locked folder on my personal computer that is password protected. The data were to be saved for at least 3 years and destroyed when deemed no longer useful for research purposes.

Reporting of Findings

Reporting the findings in an ethical framework requires the researcher to be honest and accurate when sharing the collected data, even if it is inconsistent with the researchers' expectations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The main goal of the research is to combine "theoretical elegance and credibility appropriately with the many ways social events can be described and to find intersections between the propositional thinking of most conventional studies and more creative thinking" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 324). This study uses instrumental case study methods and data collection procedures to address issues and ensure the highest ethical standards.

Data Analysis and Procedures

Data analysis is the process in which the researcher and participant make sense of the data collected. According to Stake (1995), there is no right way to analyze data; researchers must determine the best way to answer their research questions. Data analysis in qualitative research includes preparing and organizing the data for analysis, reducing the data into themes (through coding), and representing that data in discussions (Creswell, 2013). Making sense of the data involves "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 202). Additionally, it involves "looking for patterns, putting together

what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said." (Patton, 1990, p. 347). Following each interview, I independently reviewed and corrected each interview's transcription and began analyzing the results.

I used Merriam (1998) and Saldana (2016) for specific coding and data analysis. I was drawn to the clear and explicit data analysis guidance offered by Merriam. Following the initial verification of the transcription of the interviews, it was essential for the researcher to read through the transcript in narrative form, which Merriam and Tisdell (2015) refer to as category construction. In this analysis stage, I utilized open coding to notate and identify any unit or piece of data pertinent to the study (Merriam, 2009). I often referred to Saldana's (2016) questions to consider: How does the participant characterize or understand what is happening? What assumptions are they making about anti-racist work in their school? What is striking about the perspective of the participants? (p. 22). I then utilized pattern coding and sorting for second-cycle coding and identified consistent themes and categories of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Saldana, 2016).

Next, I moved from an inductive approach which relied heavily on the literature, research question, and problem statement guiding the process, to a more deductive approach where certain themes or categories were eliminated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Following sorting, I named categories in a purposeful way to the research and led back to the research question. As Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest, the categories and themes were comprehensive, exclusive, and encompassed the data. Afterward, I member-checked the transcripts and results with each participant. The transcriptions were kept in a

secure location that only I could access. Each interview response was reference coded and linked to its subsequent research question and the research field.

Ethical Considerations

There are multiple steps a researcher can take to minimize the risk to participants during all phases of the research process (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2013). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that the main ethical issues researchers encounter are informed consent documents and the protection of participant identity.

Institutional Review Board

Before the identification of participants and data collection, I obtained Institutional Review Board approval from both the university and the case study site. The participants were over 18, and pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity.

Informed Consent

Each participant received an informed consent form and was reminded that participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were afforded ongoing informed consent in a manner that provided the purpose of the study before participation, with explicit explanations of the research questions. Further, participation in the study was free from coercion from the district level or outside sources, and participants were permitted to leave the study at any time without retribution. I ensured limited interference with instructional time and educational processes and only conducted research during specified windows, including avoiding scheduled testing and end-of-year school activities. All video and audio recordings were viewed and analyzed using Nvivo20. Recordings were permanently deleted upon validation of the study. Once the study was completed, the transcripts of interviews, analysis of documentation, and field notes from

observations were stored in a secured and locked location in the researcher's home office. All documentation was to be deleted and shredded 5 years after the study was validated (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial in qualitative research in protecting the participant's identity. Seidman (2013) writes, "the participant has the right to privacy and the right to request that identities remain confidential and not be revealed" (p. 69). Therefore, all participant names, names of school districts and/or schools, and any additional information provided by the participant that involved naming specific organizations were replaced with pseudonyms to minimize the potential of the participant's identity being compromised.

Design Issues: Goodness and Trustworthiness

An ethical manner is crucial to the validity of qualitative research and can be attained by using strategies to ensure goodness and trustworthiness as recommended by researchers (Anfara & Mertz, 2015; Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). For example, Creswell (2013) describes validity as "a distinct strength of qualitative research" (p. 250) and discusses eight validation strategies researchers can use to help add validity to their work: prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rich, thick description, and external audits. Similarly, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) summarize eight strategies for ensuring rigor and trustworthiness: triangulation, member checks/respondent validation, adequate engagement in data collection, researcher's position or reflexivity, peer review/examination, audit trail, rich,

thick descriptions, and maximum variation. Given these criteria, the following strategies were incorporated into this study to ensure trustworthiness and goodness.

Dependability

Peer evaluation and an audit trail were conducted to ensure dependability in this study. Through an audit trail, I reviewed the data collection process constantly to ensure it produced reliable findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). When analyzing data, I looked for themes, conducted initial data coding, and followed up with another session a few days later to ensure nothing was missed.

Credibility

Many strategies in qualitative research can increase the credibility of the findings (Maxwell, 2012; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest that "what someone tells you in an interview can be checked against what you observe on-site or what you read about in documents relevant to the phenomenon" (p. 245). Audio recordings ensured accuracy in transcription and subsequent meaning-making of experiences (Hyett et al., 2014). Using triangulation across data points is a powerful strategy for increasing the credibility of the research. Triangulation was achieved in this study via the use of multiple sources of data collected (individual interviews, eJournal entries, and a second interview).

Member Checks

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) describe that, when possible, the researcher should verify interpretations with the participants from whom they were derived. Unless the study includes confirmatory interviews, the study may be more illuminating than confirming (Bassey, 1999). Therefore, I cross-checked transcripts with the participants

and allowed for follow-up probes and clarification for individual interviews. When necessary, I contacted participants to clarify the context of the interviews.

Rich, Thick Descriptions

This research was presented as a bound case, specific in context, space, and time. To ensure the transferability of the study, rich and thick descriptions were necessary to allow the reader to transfer the findings to other settings and contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Stake, 1995). Using a constructivist approach, the researcher provided a narrative description to allow the reader to construct a generalizable meaning (Stake, 1995). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) outline that within a case study, the researcher should continually ask if the findings capture what is there and if the findings match reality.

Delimitations

This study focused on the teachers' understanding of racism, actions, and experiences engaging in anti-racist work in their respective schools. Therefore, the scope of this study was delimited to K-12 schoolteachers who are actively critically conscious, identify as White, and teach in a southern Indiana school district.

Positionality

This section contains a brief personal biography to explain my interest in this topic and provide insights into my positionality. Growing up as an African American child, I had two noteworthy experiences attending school. In elementary school, I attended a predominately White school. While in elementary school, I experienced not feeling accepted by my peers and teachers. I sometimes felt I received harsher disciplinary actions for the same offenses my White peers committed. The teachers did

not include my culture or experience in the curriculum and programming. I often felt left out and disempowered in affirming my presence in the classroom or school. Once I entered secondary school, I attended majority African American majority schools, and I had a different experience.

I felt like I belonged when I attended an African American majority school. White and non-White teachers used a curriculum that celebrated my culture and affirmed me. Teachers at these schools also forged relationships with me that extended beyond graduation. I felt like success was within my reach, with limitless opportunities and encouragement to do my academic best. This sense of belonging and feeling valued extended into my college years, during which I attended a Historically Black College/University (HBCU).

When I began my career as a school counselor, I accepted a position at a predominately White school district far from the southern U.S. region where I was raised and educated during my formative years. While I embraced the opportunity to be in a new area far different from where I attended school, I ultimately decided that I wanted to be the school counselor that I was fortunate to have when I was a student. I wanted BIPOC students to see themselves in me. As one of three African American educators in the school, I also wanted to play some part in navigating change. Just as important, I wanted to build meaningful relationships with White students and staff so that they know that people like me, African American educated women, exist and, we too, can thrive and excel just like everyone else with the proper support. When my colleagues learned that I was from the south, they expressed their understanding of the racism they understood to be prevalent in the south. However, it was this school community in which I experienced

the most racism and saw it manifest and negatively impact BIPOC students. In my position, I saw first-hand how teachers consciously and unconsciously prevented students from opportunities and supported inequitable educational practices. In contrast, I witnessed very few teachers actively challenge inequitable practices and empower others to do the same.

As a former school counselor who currently works at the district level, my prior work experience and coursework have shaped my thinking about teachers' role in impacting educational inequity in schools. This thinking informs how I collect and make sense of the data. For example, schools experiencing increased racial demographic changes undergo transformations that widen the racial divide between students and teachers. I believe critically conscious White teachers can influence other educators to adopt new ways of cultivating a culture that accepts racial differences in the school and community.

A researcher's characteristics sometimes pose challenges, and my identity as an African American female in an environment that is mainly White and female is worth noting. The site for this study is experiencing an increase in its BIPOC student population and a decrease in its White student population. Exploring critical consciousness necessitates speaking about race, making some participants uncomfortable or unsure how to respond to certain questions. Groves et al. (2009) found that discussing sensitive topics such as race can result in biased responses due to social desirability. Social desirability is the tendency to portray oneself more favorably by limiting undesirable attributes in favor of more desirable ones. Indeed, Whites sometimes display more positive responses about race issues when being interviewed by African Americans, resulting in the race of

interviewer effect (Hatchett & Schuman, 1975; Krysan & Couper, 2003). Qu & Dumay (2011) also noted that in studies involving interviews, there is always the chance that interviewees change their responses based on how they relate to the interviewer.

I believe that my positionality as it relates to this site will encourage more honest answers and rich data from participants due to my previous role in the schools. Participants might have been comfortable with me as a researcher because I was previously a school community member. As a former school counselor, I had prior professional relationships with some of the research participants. However, it has been four years since I was a school counselor, and this will be the first time I will hear from participants in any depth regarding ideas and concepts related to critical consciousness. Additionally, participants were not chosen based on whom I know; instead, participants were selected based on meeting the eligible participant criteria.

Data interpretation is influenced by the researcher's interpretation and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). For this reason, I will review the interview data several times to become fully immersed in it while acknowledging any existing biases and assumptions throughout the analysis process. I must be transparent about any biases that can influence my interpretations. I will also make low-level inferences in the first coding cycle to ensure that data decisions were made because of what the data showed and not what I assumed about the research participants. This process will require me to frequently review data points and review them within context to ensure that unsupported higher-level inferences are not being made. When it became necessary to make higher-level inferences to reach a thematic level, I recorded how and why I made decisions based on the data.

Additionally, I utilized a reflective journal to record personal biases, thoughts, and feelings on the data (Creswell, 2013). This reflective journal served as an audit trail, allowing me to observe myself. The reflective journal was reviewed frequently for trends in thoughts obtained throughout the case study.

Summary

This chapter focused on the methods of the study and provided an overview of the design of this instrumental case study. The chapter also reviewed the study's research questions, setting, and participants and provided a detailed list of the procedures for completing this study. Another key element of this chapter is the breakdown of data collection and analysis, including a demographic survey, one-on-one interviews, and eJournal entries. Additionally, this chapter focused on trustworthiness and ethical considerations for this instrumental case study on the development, practices, and struggles of critically conscious White teachers. Finally, the conclusion of this chapter highlighted the researcher's characteristics and their influence on the study.

Chapter Four: Findings

This case study explored how the critical consciousness of White teachers influences their engagement in anti-racist work and their perceived experiences of the opportunities and challenges while promoting and engaging in anti-racist work in their respective schools. The target population of this study was critically conscious K-12 White teachers from a Southern Indiana school district. The researcher collected, analyzed, and interpreted the multiple realities and perspectives of White identifying critically conscious teachers. This study addressed three primary questions:

RQ1: How do critically conscious White teachers in a Southern Indiana school district experiencing demographic shifts engage in anti-racism work?

RQ2: What opportunities do these critically conscious White teacher participants experience as they engage in anti-racist work?

RQ3: What challenges do these critically conscious White teacher participants experience as they engage in anti-racist work?

Participant Demographics

Demographics are presented in a general summary to maintain the confidentiality of individual participants. There were five participants, all women, ranging in age from the mid-40s to late 50s. All participants identified their race as White. All participants lived and taught in Indiana. One participant taught at the elementary level, and four at the high school level. Years of teaching experience ranged from 12 to 20 years. All participants had participated in at least one district-level initiative in the past two years that required professional development related to anti-racism.

Participants

The data represented in this study were collected from eJournal entries and individual semi-structured individual interviews. The five participants who participated in individual interviews and completed eJournal entries comprised female interviewees who were full-time teachers in the Southern Indiana school district. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions, and eJournals entries were gathered using Qualtrics. As outlined in Chapter Three, participant selection was determined via purposeful snowball sampling. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym that is referenced when quoting individual statements made during the interview. Table 5 summarizes the participants, followed by more descriptive paragraphs and information to contextualize the participants within the Southern Indiana school district.

Table 5. Participant Background Information

Pseudonym	Years Teaching	Native	School Level	Content Area
April	19	Yes	Secondary	English Language Arts
Brenda	18	No	Secondary	English Language Arts
Cathy	18	No	Elementary	English as a New Language
Deborah	18	No	Secondary	English Language Arts
Emma	12	No	Secondary	Science

Participant One: April

April has taught high school English Language Arts for the last 19 years. She is the only participant in this study who was born and raised in the same town where the school district resides. She has matriculated through schools within the district, earning a

degree from the local university. According to April's understanding of the needs of BIPOC students, "I think it's helpful for a teacher to educate themselves about the cultures that exist in their classroom and what micro-aggression looks like and the willingness to teach students and re-direct those micro-aggressive behaviors when we see them." In addition, April believes teachers must promote anti-racism in schools to encourage/teach a future generation (current students) to eradicate racism and its negative effects. One way that April promotes anti-racism is through her work with several student organizations in her school and active involvement on committees that promote anti-racism.

Participant Two: Brenda

An English Language Arts instructor of 18 years, Brenda teaches at one of the smaller secondary schools in the district. According to Brenda, many students in her school have experienced trauma or live in poverty. Although her school has a small population, Brenda has witnessed her colleagues treat BIPOC students unfairly. Some practices described by Brenda included teachers targeting BIPOC students, especially African American males, for dress code violations and disruptive behavior. To her, teachers also have lower academic expectations for BIPOC students than their non-BIPOC peers. Recognizing these unfair practices, Brenda focuses on promoting anti-racist practices through modeling behavior, respecting differences, and supporting all students. Her goal, as she explains, is "to educate every student in my classroom, and not to sort the kids out based on some arbitrary … What appears to me to be an arbitrary thing."

Participant Three: Cathy

Cathy has taught English Language Arts for almost 18 years. According to Cathy, her school is one of the most diverse elementary schools in the district, with racial and ethnic differences throughout the entire range of the socioeconomic spectrum. Cathy is originally from the southern region of the US and graduated in the first fully integrated kindergarten class in her community, to which she credits her understanding of racism. She shared that teachers at her school have implicit bias and are unaware that they might treat students differently. As Cathy stated,

> I think it's really easy for White women to look at a situation and think, well, it's not that bad, right? There's nothing that needs to be done here. No one's being hurt or called a name, so instead of voicing how change needs to occur, they exit the situation. They avoid (dealing with) what they might see as conflict.

However, Cathy reports that she tries her best to advocate for BIPOC students in her school by creating safe, inclusive spaces and encouraging her colleagues to do the same.

Participant Four: Deborah

Deborah has taught English Language Arts and ESL (English as a Second Language) for 19 years within one of the bigger schools (in enrollment) in the Southern Indiana school district. Deborah believes structural racism is a factor that contributes to the low number of BIPOC students in her English honors courses. Deborah described the Accelerated Learning Program (ALPS) as a program emphasizing obedience over originality, conformity over authenticity, and that students who are not identified as being polite rule-followers early on are often not given the opportunity or encouraged to apply for honors programs.

Participant Five: Emma

Emma has taught Science for 12 years at one of the larger high schools within the district. She reports that her school has an underrepresentation of BIPOC students in gifted and talented programs and that there is a disproportionate number of BIPOC students in the special education courses, who are mostly identified due to behavioral disciplinary issues. Emma is aware of racial inequities and keenly understands their negative impacts on students. She admits that everyone, including herself, has played a role in promoting racist practices in schools. Emma believes teachers must develop a critical consciousness about their own teaching, and commit to being reflective, iterative educators about their personal biases. Like the other participants, Emma believes her role and efforts as a teacher are most impactful in building an anti-racist future.

Although each participant in this study has a different background and upbringing, each has experienced unique pathways to becoming a teacher. However, there are a few commonalities among them. For instance, they all believe that the monocultural platform from which school norms, values, and practices emanate is underserving BIPOC students. For BIPOC students, this means having an added burden of decoding features of their school environment (i.e., norms, values, and practices) while learning and performing to meet academic achievement standards. In addition, the participants in this study believe the social injustices that occurred in 2020 during a global pandemic made starker the inequities present in the United States. Though the participants are very aware that the pervasive lack of justice for and continued danger to BIPOC people is not new, the events of 2020 influenced them to become more active in their anti-racism efforts to ensure that their classrooms were not part of the problem of

perpetuating racism. In total, seven themes were identified. Table 6 provides a summary of the findings according to themes and subthemes.

Table 6. Summary of Findings by Research Question

RQ1: How do critically conscious White teachers in a Southern Indiana school district experiencing demographic shifts engage in anti-racism work?
Critically conscious White teachers leverage their privilege to empower ● Role model anti-racist work ● Interrogate the curriculum and practices ***Critically conscious White teachers use culturally responsive practices*** ● Inventive ways of promoting anti-racist classrooms ***Critically conscious White teachers engage in co-conspirator work*** ● Student-led organizations ● Educator-led organizations
RQ2: What opportunities do these critically conscious White teacher participants experience as they promote anti-racism practices in their schools?
Critically conscious White teachers are instrumental in supporting anti-racist efforts ***Critically conscious White teachers actively collaborate with BIPOC students and teachers*** ***Critically conscious White teachers are content making a positive impact on students and society***
RQ3: What challenges do these critically conscious White teacher participants experience as they promote anti-racism practices in their schools?
Critically conscious White teachers experience negative professional consequences ● Denied opportunities for upward mobility/leadership roles ● Tensions/conflict with other anti-racist educators ● Challenges supporting overwhelmed teachers

RQ1: How Do Critically Conscious White Teachers in a Southern Indiana School District Experiencing Demographic Shifts Engage in Anti-Racism Work?

All the teachers in this study felt responsible for ensuring that their classroom was not part of the problem of perpetuating racism. They all believed that as educators, they have a responsibility to dismantle racism and challenge the normalization of practices that devalue individuals, perpetuate concepts of inferiority, and create barriers to

educational equity. Three primary themes from the data helped answer the first research question: How do critically conscious White teachers promote anti-racist work in their schools? Critically conscious White teachers within the school district promoted anti-racist work in schools by (a) Leveraging their privilege to empower, (b) Using culturally responsive practices, and (c) Engaging in co-conspirator work. In the following section, the researcher will present the findings primarily through participant interviews and eJournals. Each of the emerging themes has subthemes which are described below.

Theme 1: Critically Conscious White Teachers Leverage Their Positionality and Privilege to Empower

All the teachers in this study acknowledged that they leveraged their privilege to empower others to engage in anti-racist work. For example, they provided insight into how they promote anti-racism during a time when so much is happening in the world around them and that they must have high levels of critical consciousness because their BIPOC students were most impacted by racism. For White educators, their race is a privilege as they experience it. They have racial privilege in terms of removing systemic barriers to learning for BIPOC students. Awareness of their privileges makes these teachers even more aware of the racial barriers BIPOC students face. But instead of feeling bad about it, the teachers in this study use it to empower others to engage in anti-racist work.

These teachers actively role-modeled anti-racist work. They teach about racism and see themselves as allies with people of color. Role modeling anti-racism helps students, regardless of race, acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential to promoting anti-racism. By role-modeling anti-racist work, these teachers demonstrate

advocacy skills and productive ways to react to racism. Deborah shared that role modeling anti-racist work

> gives all students the vocabulary to challenge the status quo. It helps them develop the critical thinking skills that are so crucial to living in a pluralistic society and to effect change. It gives them (students) agency and a place to speak their truth, both individually and collectively.

April uses her racial privilege to influence students to engage in anti-racist work. She believes it is especially influential on her White students who express racist ideas. April, born and raised in the same town where the school district is located, shares how she deeply understands the White students because that's the culture in which she was raised. She explained:

> They can trust me, and they see me relate to them … they see my ideology, and they see my belief systems, and they see that I have the same relationships with the students of color and women, even though that's not my culture.

April believes that her privilege of being White might have more effect on people with racist attitudes. Recognizing the privileges that stem from being White, April uses both her race and working-class background as a starting point for understanding students who are racist and to emphasize a possible way forward.

Another privilege afforded to the teachers in this study is their institutional power through their curricular and instructional practices. While teachers are usually bound to a set of state standards they must teach, they generally have autonomy in deciding how to teach the material. The teachers in the study admitted to using their privilege as educators to create moments to interrogate curricular and institutional practices. In doing so, they have created opportunities to critique traditional pedagogy and engage in reflective and purposeful dialogue in the classroom intentionally and explicitly.

The teachers in this study believe it is important to include opportunities for students to consider their positionalities and biases to help foster their critical awareness. Related to these opportunities, the teachers foster a classroom environment that makes reflection and interrogation possible. Their students come from various perspectives and experiences, with a wide range of beliefs and understanding of a particular topic. No matter the content of the course, when engaging in anti-racist work, the teachers in this study consider starting by meeting students where they're at and working from there. For some teacher participants, it means embracing difficult conversations and student resistance in the classroom. April shared that social justice is a focus in all the classes she teaches, in which she helps her students explore issues of power, privilege, and oppression to create a more equitable and inclusive classroom. Using books and media, April challenges her students to self-reflect on issues of racism and discuss perspectives that haven't been considered. Typically, it is a perspective from someone who is BIPOC or traditionally marginalized in society. April said, "It forces them (resistant students) to think about racism and social justice without me having to teach it."

Cathy uses her racial and professional privilege to engage in anti-racist work through her commitment to promoting diversity year-round in her classes, not just during specific months. For example, Cathy explained that a grade-level curriculum assignment required students to compare nonfiction texts about the same topic but written from different perspectives. Cathy chose two short biographies of a Black author while her colleagues teaching this skill taught something like the life cycle of a frog or something.

Cathy shared, "You must take advantage of opportunities to embed culturally responsive material and instruction."

Comparably, Emma believes both her racial and educational identities allow her to build moments to engage students in learning about anti-racism. She teaches an anti-racist session series in one of her science classes in which she carefully unpacks racist ideas in historic ways of teaching Science by weaving anti-racist ways of knowing into her classroom practice and using critical analysis of common classroom materials. For example, when a video positions certain parts of the world as more intellectual than others. Emma said,

> Those interruptions take only a few moments, and they help me model the language that students might use when they are offering similar analyses out in the world. Like … my privilege allows me to pause the button and say, Okay, we are going to take about 30 seconds to discuss the history of Science in Africa … like all these other things you care about, right? … and like valuing indigenous knowledge.

Like most effective teachers, Emma identifies inventive ways to utilize the limited resources and time available to ensure their students' academic achievement and equitable learning.

The teachers in this study are aware of, reflect on, dialogue, engage, and act against dominant ideologies, and they guide their students to do the same. They are aware of and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in the curriculum and their own teaching practices. They encourage their students to question, analyze, and challenge so that they are actively moving toward cultivating their understanding of systems of oppression and marginalization. Additionally, these teachers provide the space for students to embrace anti-bias, anti-racist work. They openly question and critique what is happening in their educational experience as well as what is happening in society.

Theme 2: Critically Conscious White Teachers Use Culturally Responsive Practices

Another way the teachers in the study engage in anti-racist work is by incorporating culturally responsive practices and curriculum. Part of this approach is uncovering and addressing biases and embracing curriculum and other culturally responsive strategies relevant to the families and students in the district and/or school community. By doing so, the teachers foster an inclusive learning environment for students.

Brenda creates a classroom where students engage with content that highlights and challenges racist and other deficit ideologies. Using "mirror and window" pedagogy, Brenda helps her students see the world through reading. *Mirror and Window* is a task in which students decide if the author, speaker, characters, or content in a text reflects students' lived experiences (mirror) or provides a window into the lived experiences of people whose identities differ from the students. Brenda shares that her reading class is the perfect place for civil discourse. She includes books and inquiry in the classroom that "allow students to examine other perspectives and the history of racism and its impacts."

Brenda has a critical understanding that students cannot truly learn about themselves unless they also learn about others. Therefore, Brenda incorporates culturally relevant/responsive practices in her classroom by challenging her students to think about and question themselves and their own experiences, as it also helps them understand the experiences of others. Additionally, Brenda is creating a learning environment that respectfully reflects each child's home culture while inviting children to accept and explore unfamiliar cultures. According to Purnell et al. (2007), this is a way teachers can model interest in and acceptance of difference.

Another culturally responsive practice that Brenda incorporates is the funds of knowledge pedagogy. Funds of knowledge is a teaching strategy in which the teacher draws on the knowledge and skills students acquire in their families and communities to support academic learning**.** Brenda explained that she uses the funds of knowledge pedagogy to better understand and embrace the socio-historical and cultural backgrounds of her students, families, and communities. She recognizes the differences they both bring to the classroom and how this dynamic can foster an environment conducive to learning for all students. By tapping into students' funds of knowledge, Brenda is creating spaces of resistance critical to prioritizing educational equity for BIPOC students.

Theme 3: Critically Conscious White Teachers Engage in Co-Conspirator Work

In this theme, teachers expressed how they work as co-conspirators by partnering with their BIPOC colleagues and students toward collective action against oppression and in service to justice. They used the term "co-conspirator" because of how these teachers showed up. Their conspiracy work includes but is not limited to committing to anti-racist practices; speaking out and standing up against oppressive others and policies in meetings, on committees, and in classrooms; eradicating policies that have disproportionate negative impacts on colleagues and students with subordinated identities, championing colleagues' work (teaching, research, and service); and centering the experiences and practices of BIPOC people by including and acting upon their input, as common practice.

Based on the information in the interviews and eJournals, these teachers are committed to seeking and creating meaningful relationships with the people they support.

Co-conspirators show up with (not just for) BIPOC people, and they listen. They do not co-opt the cause; instead, they respect the anti-racism work already done by leaders and offer meaningful support. This was apparent when they consistently acknowledged the students and other educators committed to anti-racist work. Co-conspirators are not trying to be saviors and do not fancy themselves superior to the people they work alongside. Instead, they are conscious of their privilege and use it as fuel to help erode barriers that are tougher for affected individuals (BIPOC people) to surmount. Co-conspirators ask how they can show up for the people already doing the work, and they leverage their privilege in service of freedoms that they already enjoy. I believe what separates co-conspirators from allies in this study is these teachers' willingness to put themselves on the line. Whether it's assets, reputation, time, connections, or other resources, the teacher participants in this study acted as co-conspirators and always had skin in the game (an invested interest). While the participants described different contexts and methods of engaging in conspiracy work, they used their privilege/power through their positions and dominant identities to engage in co-conspiracy work to enact enduring change in schools.

Based on information gathered in the interviews, the teachers in this study all work in schools where BIPOC students regularly experience racism. Each teacher admitted to situations where they had to address students and/or colleagues regarding their racist behavior and practices. Recognizing these issues, BIPOC students have created and led organizations to bring awareness to the issues, and these teachers actively support them. Some of the teachers currently co-facilitate organizations led by BIPOC

students. They actively support BIPOC students and empower them to continue their work to promote anti-racist work.

For instance, Deborah and Emma have co-facilitated several BIPOC student-led organizations in which they played an active role in helping BIPOC students impact change in schools. They use their privilege and influence to engage in active anti-racist work. Deborah explained how she helped student organizations sharpen their presentation skills and information in preparation for upcoming school and district meetings. Deborah shared,

> I try to be supportive and ask questions to help guide them (BIPOC students) about how to share in ways that both expose the realities of being BIPOC in our community and do not put their audience, mostly White people, on the defensive.

Similarly, Emma believes she is a conduit between students and school-level institutional change regarding race and bias issues. For example, she admitted to supporting BIPOC student-led organizations by helping them create a survey to probe student experiences around school culture and curriculum concerning diversity, representation, inclusion, and belonging. Emma, alongside another colleague, taught the students about qualitative study design and rehearsed conversations with administrators to polish and deploy the survey.

The teachers in this study are unapologetically anti-racist, committed to listening and learning, willing to cede power while using privilege to invite their BIPOC students to lead, uncompromising in providing high-quality, inclusive education for BIPOC students, and prepared to take risks to advance their needs. Additionally, the teachers are willing to use their privilege to catalyze anti-racist actions in partnership with, advocacy for, and support of their BIPOC students and peers to create the conditions for BIPOC

students to thrive. They recognize their privilege and understand their work must be done in full and equitable partnership with BIPOC individuals. However, some teachers choose to use their agency within organizations not led by students.

Some teachers felt they had more agency to promote anti-racist work by taking a more active role in educator-led organizations. For example, Cathy engages with other educators to establish the norm of equity/diversity/inclusion practices. She shared that she has traveled to the State House to speak publicly with the state representatives and senators about legislation that, if passed, will either help or harm students. When it was her turn to speak, Cathy said, "We cannot let this House Bill pass. This is how it would affect my students …" Cathy added, "He (the state representative) gave me 25 min of his time, and we couldn't be more opposite in our beliefs. But I listened to him, and he listened to me … I think that at least kept the conversation going."

Comparably, Emma works with a group of science educators to address common racist misconceptions within science education. In addition, one of the groups conducts anti-racist educational dialogue amongst people of all races. Through this work, Emma self-educates and is instrumental in promoting change in her school.

The teachers expressed that they advocated for anti-racism in spaces where they felt they had the most influence. Therefore, the teachers go beyond "performative allyship," such as citing buzzwords, creating social posts to perform allyship with rudimentary understandings of race and racism, and gestures that promote the significant moral compass of an individual, as opposed to dismantling oppressive systems. Instead, these teachers take risks and sometimes break the rules to promote an anti-racist agenda. Through this work and engagement with other BIPOC students and educators, these

teachers confront and work through their white emotions, such as anger, guilt, and shame. Furthermore, they understand their privilege and actively work against systemic oppression. Therefore, their work extends beyond simple allyship to becoming a co-conspirator.

RQ2: What opportunities do critically conscious White teacher participants experience as they engage in anti-racist work in schools?

Two primary themes emerged from the data that helped to answer the second research question, What opportunities do critically conscious White teacher participants experience as they engage in anti-racist work in their schools? For the critically conscious White teachers in this study, the opportunities that they encountered engaging in anti-racist work included (a) Supporting anti-racist efforts, (b) Strengthening relationships with BIPOC students, and (c) Receiving non-tangible rewards.

Theme 4: Critically Conscious White Teachers are Instrumental in Supporting Anti-Racist Efforts

All teachers in this study currently lead or facilitate anti-racist efforts supporting educational equity. Educators gave examples of their intentional actions, including but not limited to teaching and training pre-service and in-service teachers, engaging in education policy, or facilitating change within organizations. For example, in her eJournal, Cathy shared how being on the School Improvement Plan committee allowed her to use that platform to make anti-racist practices a goal for staff for the next few years.

Cathy shared that she wrote a goal to increase staff's awareness of, attention to, and deliberate reporting/responding to any act of intolerance/discrimination within the

school community. Cathy believes this was an opportunity for her because if any committee members weren't on-board with this goal, they would never voice an objection for fear of sounding insensitive. Cathy explained, "By placing this goal into a state-mandated document, I am (hopefully) forcing an otherwise "uncomfortable" issue to the forefront of my colleagues' attention."

Cathy further explained how she and the other committee members were strategic in writing the goal to ensure accountability, data-informed decisions, and additional support provided to teachers. As a teacher, Cathy understands the challenges teachers experience engaging in anti-racist work. Therefore, she and her committee members used their professional teaching experiences to identify factors that must be in place for teachers to effectively encourage teachers to shift to using anti-racist practices.

Theme 5: Critically Conscious White Teachers Actively Collaborate with BIPOC Students

All the teachers in this study have encountered opportunities by working closely with students to support anti-racist efforts. For instance, Deborah explained that she worked with her BIPOC students to plan yearly Black History Month sessions. Deborah considers these opportunities because she can provide BIPOC students a platform to share their experiences with others who might not have been aware of the racist things BIPOC people go through regularly. Similarly, Emma said, "I value the opportunities afforded to me to support student voices more directly in their school experience." Emma adds that although the broader outcomes might vary and are still in progress, she can support students in their efforts to impact change.

All teachers in this study felt that their anti-racist work helped to foster positive relationships and connections with their BIPOC students. For example, April shared, "I have really close relationships with my BIPOC because they know how I feel about them, and that definitely strengthens those connections." Similarly, Deborah believes that her anti-racist work impacts her relationship with students. Deborah said, "It fundamentally changes that relationship from us against the system, so we are in this together … giving them the opportunity to share their strengths and expand on those things which can lead to higher learning."

Deborah explains that she, like many other teachers, can teach students in a better way. Through their anti-racist work, these teachers have cultivated more positive, meaningful relationships with BIPOC students. By building meaningful relationships with students and creating classroom cultures prioritizing student voices, these teachers work to make school a place where all students feel free to honestly share their beliefs, hopes, fears, and questions, ultimately setting the foundation for all students to excel academically.

Theme 6: Critically Conscious White Teachers Value the Non-Tangible Opportunities

On the other hand, April found it hard to identify opportunities she has experienced while engaging in anti-racist work. In her interview, April admitted that she hadn't encountered many opportunities related to her engagement in anti-racist work. She explained,

> I wake up in the morning, and I know that I'm doing something good for the world, you know? … I can sleep at night. The fact that just knowing that I'm affecting the world positively for people who need that you know. That's just enough. for me.

In other words, April values the non-tangible rewards and opportunities she receives while engaging in anti-racist work. April, the non-tangible reward/opportunity that she receives while engaging in anti-racist work is her contentment in knowing she is making a positive impact on students and society.

RQ3: What challenges do critically conscious White teacher participants experience when engaging in anti-racist work in schools?

Although engaging in anti-racist work benefits all students, it presents challenges for the teachers in this study. One primary theme emerged from the data that helped to answer the second research question. What challenges do critically conscious White teachers encounter when engaging in anti-racist work? For the critically conscious White teachers in this study, the challenges they encountered engaging in anti-racist work included (a) Experiencing negative consequences at work, (b) Conflicts with colleagues, and (c) Supporting overwhelmed teachers. The next section highlights the challenges that the teachers encountered while engaging in anti-racist work in schools.

Theme 7: Critically Conscious White Teachers Experience and Perceive Negative Consequences as a Result of Their Anti-Racism Work

The teachers in this study all have over 10 years of teaching experience. However, their teaching experience and anti-racist work do little to strengthen their employability or protect against negative experiences at work. For instance, April has had a principals license for several years and hopes to become a school principal one day. Her goal was to be in a position where she could be heard and impact change. April shared in her eJournal that she applied for several building-level leadership positions and other leadership roles that do not require licensure but never received a call back for an interview. April wrote,

"I am pretty sure that my work and focus on anti-racist work have caused me to lose potential opportunities." April explained that individuals involved in the hiring process know her intentions to promote anti-racism as a building leader, and they do not support it. April has multiple advanced degrees, administrative licensure, several state and local awards, and recognitions. However, she's been rejected from many employment opportunities. April adds, "I couldn't even get an interview when I applied to be a Teacher Mentor ... I've watched teachers with way less experience and education get interviews and positions over me for years." April shared in her eJournal, "I wanted those positions so that I could make a larger impact and bring about change for students that needed it the most." Since then, April has given up trying to apply for leadership roles in the school system and has backed off on being involved in so many committees; instead, she focuses her energy on the students in her classroom and clubs.

On the other hand, the other teachers in this study were never interested in becoming school principals or other leadership positions. In their interviews, they shared how working closely with the students is where they see their anti-racist work as the most impactful. However, these teachers are still at risk of experiencing employment issues due to their anti-racist work. Emma shared in her eJournal that not everyone in her school has the same feelings about promoting anti-racist work, about making the anti-racism work public. Emma shared in her eJournal that she hesitated to answer this question during the study: "Even with all the power I know I hold … I also know that talking about this could have serious repercussions." Emma added that teachers like her experience serious repercussions that are not as visible from the outside. For example,

she explains how an involuntary teacher transfer is an example of a negative repercussion, which she admits would burden her family.

All the teachers in this study believe that they have some responsibility in providing a safe space that is racially just and conducive to learning for their students. Therefore, these teachers take it upon themselves to provide support and offer critical feedback to their colleagues in the face of errors. However, they find it challenging to provide support and critical feedback to other anti-racist White colleagues. For example, April feels that her BIPOC colleagues and students should not be solely responsible for providing critical feedback to their White peers. Therefore, she takes it upon herself to provide critical feedback to her White peers who are less inclined to engage in anti-racist work.

Conversely, there are times when providing critical feedback presents more challenges for professionals than supporting the needs of students. For instance, in hopes of supporting her school principal's anti-racism efforts, April kindly provided critical feedback. April thought providing critical feedback would be more appreciated since she had a longer history with the school community than her administrator. Instead, it was not as well received as she had hoped. April went on to add:

> There are things that they went ahead and did, although I tried to discourage them. Those things did backfire on them, and I'm sure that after the fact, they wished that they had listened to me when I said you really shouldn't do that.

Similarly, Cathy shared a time in which she offered critical feedback to a colleague about a racist remark that a teacher made toward a BIPOC student. Cathy explained that the teacher got extremely defensive when she confronted her. It took over

half an hour for Cathy to explain and convince the teacher to see the situation from different perspectives, not just her own. Cathy added,

> It was ridiculously challenging because she and I were both "right." She (the teacher) truly loved that student but couldn't see what potential damage could be done in one remark. She and I have since had follow-up conversations in which I reference that incident, and she (with hindsight) sees what harm might have been inflicted.

Cathy admitted that the situation gave her confidence in her ability to have difficult conversations with colleagues where they can begin to use their established, trusted relationships to tackle uncomfortable conversations and increase awareness of biased actions and racist thoughts. Building relationships with other White anti-racist people is essential, as she believes White people play an important part in other White people's development.

Aside from the overwhelming daily responsibilities, the teachers in this study also feel overwhelmed with consistently engaging in anti-racist work. At times, these teachers feel like they are one of very few in their school building called upon to initiate the engagement of anti-racist work when other teachers are also capable. As a result, some teachers expressed how they fall short of meeting the needs of all the students they serve. For example, Deborah explained how she feels overwhelmed always being called on to initiate the engagement of anti-racist work. In addition, with nearly 100 professionals working in her school, most events and meetings related to anti-racism work are left for April to organize (sometimes with student help). Deborah finds this challenging because it takes lots of time away from supporting her other students in non-anti-racism work and who need academic support.

Additionally, being continually tapped for this work gives the impression to the larger school community that not only are her colleagues disinterested in promoting anti-racism but that this state of affairs is acceptable. Deborah shared in her eJournal, "[But] this is simply not true! Many teachers care deeply about the experiences of BIPOC students, and I am not some lone, compassionate anti-racist outlier while other teachers passively support racism by not addressing it." Although appreciative of these opportunities to lead anti-racist work in the school, Deborah feels it necessary to encourage other teachers in her school to lead anti-racist efforts.

On the other hand, Cathy explained that her challenge is other interactions with teachers not committed to anti-racism teaching. According to Cathy, these teachers feel exhausted and overwhelmed by the call to incorporate anti-racism within their instructional curriculum. Cathy shares that from a teacher's perspective, things are presented as one more thing to add to their plate when, in actuality, everyone is working through this together. Cathy added, "Best practices are a slow, steady everyday occurrence, and the biggest challenge is getting other teachers to see that, and not just one more thing added to their tasks … It's just shifting, not adding." Cathy believes these teachers see it as one more task added to their plate instead of understanding that it is a shift in how all students are taught. It takes much coaching, mentoring, encouraging, and convincing these teachers to stay committed to anti-racist teaching/work.

Chapter Summary

The chapter began by briefly describing each of the five teachers who agreed to participate in this study. The chapter findings included five themes that emerged from the

analysis of the interviews and eJournals and revealed the participants' answers to the questions posed in this instrumental case study:

RQ1: How do critically conscious White teachers in a Southern Indiana school district experiencing demographic shifts engage in anti-racism work?

RQ2: What opportunities do these critically conscious White teacher participants experience as they engage in anti-racist work in schools?

RQ3: What challenges do these critically conscious White teacher participants experience when engaging in anti-racist work in schools?

The theoretical framework used in this study helps determine if this development is apparent and better understand the teachers' experiences promoting anti-racism in schools. Each theme revealed connections to White racial identity development theory (Helms, 1995) and critical consciousness (Freire, 1974). While critical consciousness is characterized as the awareness of racism, racial identity is more characterized by the cognitive structures that impact an individual's willingness to embrace anti-racism.

Theme 1 discussed how these teachers leveraged their privilege to empower others to engage in anti-racist work and affirmed what previous literature has found regarding promoting anti-racism in school. Theme two argued that teachers in this study used culturally responsive practices to ensure that the school and classroom environment is inclusive and conducive to learning for all students. In Theme 3, teachers engaged in co-conspirator work, working with other BIPOC individuals to actively fight against oppressive practices. Theme 5 highlighted the instrumental role these teachers play in supporting anti-racist efforts in school. Theme 6 added to opportunities by discussing the non-tangible rewards/opportunities that teachers receive. The final theme revealed what

the teachers believe to be challenges they have experienced while engaging in anti-racist work in schools. Chapter Five discusses the finding related to the literature, explores the implications for practice, and recommends further research related to these research questions and results.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Seven conclusions were drawn from this study outlined in Chapter Four and allowed the researcher to convey how White teachers in a Southern Indiana School District engage in anti-racist work:

- Critically conscious White teachers leverage their privilege to promote anti-racism.
- Critically conscious White teachers use culturally relevant practices and engage in co-conspirator work.
- Critically conscious White teachers actively collaborate with BIPOC students and teachers.
- Critically conscious White teachers are instrumental in supporting anti-racism efforts.
- Critically conscious White teachers are content with making a positive impact on students and society.
- Critically conscious White teachers perceive and experience negative professional consequences as a result of their anti-racism work.

The key findings from this instrumental case study highlight White teachers' experiences attending to anti-racism in a southern Indiana school district that is undergoing demographic shifts with the existing White Racial Identity Development Theory literature. According to Derald Wing Sue (2016), White racial identity development (WRID) and critical consciousness occur when we understand ourselves as racial and cultural beings with values, biases, prejudices, and assumptions based on socialization. Following an analysis of the findings, the systems that are in place in the

southern Indiana school district suggest that the actions and behaviors of the White teachers are instrumental in promoting anti-racism in schools. The findings also highlight the perceived rewards and challenges these teachers encounter while promoting anti-racism work.

There must be an internalization and application of understandings for new statuses of racial identity to be realized (Helms, 1990) and for any substantive development of Leonardo's "third space" to be possible. This allows for the successful application of a critically responsive pedagogy. As the movement toward a positive, anti-racist White identity continues, this provides a basis from which White educators can begin to divest from Whiteness and its connected culture and invest in Leonardo's (2009) "neoabolitionist" "third space" with more awareness. Finally, we must remember to seek a balance between reflection and action. Freire (2005) warns that speaking based on reflection without doing active work becomes mere "verbalism" (p. 87).

In contrast, emphasizing action without reflecting is mere "activism" (p. 88). An imbalance on either side is an inauthentic expression. In the end, this article challenges White teachers to investigate how their identity affects all aspects of teaching. This includes curricular design, instructional practices, classroom management/ discipline systems, grading and evaluation, and relationships with students, families, and colleagues. Further research is warranted, particularly longitudinal empirical study, to better understand how this racial identity work impacts the teaching practices of White educators and how "third space" exploration by White educators affects students of Color.

Teaching practices cannot remain static; those willing to change and adapt to student needs will most effectively serve their students. Therefore, the call to develop a positive, anti-racist White racial identity is to hone and improve White educators' educational praxis to effectively implement a culturally responsive and/or anti-racist practice in urban schools.

The findings from this study also align with research regarding the necessity for this work to be ongoing (Crowley, 2016; Raible & Irizarry, 2007) with ample opportunities to disrupt narratives, with a new population not frequently investigated—White teachers working in predominantly White schools that are experiencing demographic shifts in their student population. Each teacher in this study expressed that they have achieved a deeper understanding of themselves and others concerning their anti-racist practices. In similar and different ways, they demonstrated crucial steps in disrupting Whiteness and promoting anti-racist work (Berchini, 2019; Michael, 2015). This aligns with the mindset that the development of critical consciousness and White racial identity is more of a halting, complex, ongoing hard-won process. The development of critical consciousness has an impact on how the teachers experience themselves in their work and their interactions with others in the work setting. Therefore, critical consciousness development is not a linear or straightforward journey but a constant struggle to challenge and question dominant narratives and power structures that perpetuate racism and privilege. It requires a deep commitment to self-reflection, learning, and action, as well as a willingness to confront one's own biases and actively work towards dismantling oppressive systems. Ultimately, this process can be transformative and empowering for individuals and for schools. The following section

expands on the overall findings, then connects these findings to the existing literature and research, and lastly utilizes the White racial identity development theory as a framework to discuss the broader impact of the research findings.

Conclusion One: Critically conscious White Teachers Leverage Their Privilege to Empower Others to Engage in Anti-Racist Work

To dismantle the systems of racism in schools, White teachers must first look within. This is a central component of the White racial development theory which highlights the commitment White teachers must strive towards for understanding personal bias and developing positive views of BIPOC students (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). Helms's (1995) White Racial Identity Development (WRID) model suggests that a person develops an anti-racist intrapsychic and interpersonal view through interactions with others and as they reevaluate and reflect on their self-development and belief systems (Killam & Degges-White, 2017). They must be aware of their privilege and use it to promote educational equity. Such work requires that White teachers actively and continuously interrogate their White privilege and how it may show up in curriculum and instruction. The first conclusion reached through the analysis of the findings suggested that the White teachers leveraged their privilege to empower others to engage in anti-racism work.

Leveraging Privilege to Empower

As Matias and Mackey (2016) stated, "Whites, as a dominant racial group, have the responsibility and power to enact change. White teachers hold an outsized presence in the school system and occupy privileged social positions. Therefore, this change must come from a deep need to undo the abuse of denying race altogether" (p. 26). A desire to

change the abuse that stems from racism must begin with acknowledging one's White racial identity, followed by understanding the unearned and often unacknowledged privileges associated with Whiteness (Picower, 2009). To this end, teachers must recognize how their own race has shaped their past experiences—social, economic, and educational—and how it continues to influence their work as a teacher and the decisions they are likely to make in the classroom (Milner, 2013). For teachers who are White, this means developing a positive, nonracist White identity (Tatum, 2017) in which one accepts the reality of their White socialization and recognizes how Whiteness operates to establish and maintain norms by which raced "others" are compared and defined (Gillborn, 2015) in and through schooling. This calls for White teachers to become conscious of the ways in which they deem themselves and their experiences as superior to their students and then consider how these notions of superiority operate implicitly to position students in their classrooms as "good" or not, "ready to learn" or not, and "able" or not. Also, it involves attending closely to how power is negotiated in the classroom and how racial difference factors into student-student and student-teacher interactions and classroom conflicts (Carter et al., 2017; Howard, 2013; Milner, 2013). Throughout the interview process, teachers described how they used their privilege to empower White and BIPOC students to engage in anti-racist work. Based on discussions with these teachers, they believed that their privileges, either from being White or simply being the leader in the classroom, provided a model or guide in which others could also model anti-racist work.

Anti-racist individuals often serve as allies to BIPOCs and strive to challenge White individuals' racist beliefs and actions (Trepagnier, 2010). By being role models

and working for change, these teachers encourage students to engage in anti-racist activism. They recognize their work as part of a history of anti-racism and demonstrate to their students that White people can be, and have been, part of anti-racism. In turn, striving to be part of a culture of White anti-racism, over time and through sustained work and action, provides other White teachers with a confident stance that supports healthy relationships with BIPOC students. It can also offer a hopeful vision to students acting for justice efforts. This conclusion aligns with the scholarly work that suggests that White anti-racists understand that their racial privilege can lend additional power and influence to their anti-racist actions (Ayvazian, 2010).

Giving up one's White privilege is an aspect of the highest status of White identity development. These educators sought to give up their privileges and feelings of superiority and were aware of the importance of doing so. They wanted to give up any sense of racial entitlement and superiority over their students and instead focus on creating a more equitable and inclusive learning environment. This meant being more empathetic and understanding of their students' backgrounds, experiences, and needs. It also meant challenging their own biases and preconceived notions and being open to learning from their students and the communities they served. These examples indicate the variety of understanding one's social location, analysis of oppression, and options for engagement with an anti-racist stance. By giving up their privileges, these educators sought to create a more inclusive and empowering learning space for all students. Such actions align with characteristics of the autonomy status of WRID in which the abandonment of personal racism and racial privileges, including avoidance of life options

that entail participation in racial oppression or racially oppressive organizations (Helms, 1995).

White racial identity development holds that as people evolve and ascend to higher statuses, they also engage in transformative practices. The difficulty is that these practices are met with obstacles and hostilities. Therefore, the individual can be caught between "doing the right thing" and feeling good about her identity on the one hand, while feeling isolated or ostracized and not good about the self. These findings show persistence in doing these acts of activism. Although it is unclear whether there are lapses in the struggle, the findings suggest constant work.

Conclusion Two: Critically Conscious White Teachers Use Culturally Relevant Practices

The second conclusion suggested that critically conscious White teachers use culturally relevant practices. Culturally relevant practices are approaches that recognize the importance of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds and experiences into the learning process. This can include using materials, examples, and activities that are relevant and meaningful to students' lives, as well as teaching in ways that are respectful and responsive to students' cultural identities. Ladson-Billings (2009) asserts that without the addition of cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness, constructivist teaching that gives students voice, leadership, and ownership is merely progressive, and not culturally relevant. According to Ladson-Billings, teachers must move beyond superficial "niceness" and celebrations of students' cultures. They must acknowledge that the world (and schooling) is unequal, privileging some students and disadvantaging others. To move towards anti-racist education, teachers must shift from the comfort zone

of progressive pedagogy to culturally relevant practices. As demonstrated by the teachers in this study, this involves teaching about the history and ongoing impact of systemic racism and providing opportunities for students to learn from and engage with diverse perspectives and experiences. It also means actively challenging and confronting biases and stereotypes and creating an inclusive and safe space for all students to learn and grow.

To implement culturally relevant practices, the teachers in this study engage in ongoing professional development and reflection on their power, privileges, biases, and assumptions. They also seek out diverse resources and perspectives, collaborate with colleagues, and seek feedback and support from experts in the field of anti-racism education. Their goal is to empower students to be agents of change in their communities and create a more equitable and inclusive society. According to Ladson-Billings (2014), "all students develop skills that will allow them to critique the very basis of their privilege and advantage" (p.83).

For the teachers in this study, implementing culturally relevant practices is much more than a prescribed curriculum. It is ongoing, consistent work that, at times, is challenging, highlighting the complexities within the malignancy of racism. It requires a deep understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and experiences and a willingness to continuously reflect and adapt practices to better serve the unique needs of all students. Cultural relevance also involves actively engaging with and listening to members of marginalized communities and working to address the systemic issues that have contributed to their exclusion and oppression. This can include challenging dominant narratives and confronting biases within educational systems and institutions.

According to Utt and Tochluk (2020), as White teachers move through racial identity development, they often attempt to provide students with a complete view of the horrors of U.S. racism and its continuing existence within contemporary institutions and systems. Ultimately, implementing culturally relevant practices means creating inclusive and equitable learning environments where all students feel seen, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential. It requires ongoing effort and commitment, but it is essential for creating a more inclusive and just society.

Muhammad (2018) criticized curricula solely focused on standards, explaining that it excludes cultural relevance and subscribes to a culture of White supremacy, thereby negatively impacting BIPOC students. Instead, she argued that all curricula should focus on identity, intellectualism, criticality, and standards. Equipping all students with the knowledge they need to succeed in the real world outside of school means ensuring that the curriculum includes a diversity of perspectives. It also means naming the unjust systems and historical oppression against marginalized communities while celebrating the joy of BIPOC students or individuals.

Each of the teachers in this study explains that they use culturally relevant practices to create classroom climates that are respectful and inclusive, which help students value and understand the cultures of their peers. Culturally relevant practices are important to reduce achievement gaps and promote positive ethnic-racial identities for BIPOC students (Dickson, 2015; Sleeter, 2012). There is also a parallel need for White and BIPOC students to see and read about clear examples of empowered BIPOCs. The teachers in this study understand that teaching about racism should not be only a litany of

how oppression has victimized BIPOCs. It must also include examples of the resistance of BIPOCs to victimization.

Additionally, they understand that just as White students are not eager to see themselves as oppressors, BIPOC students do not want to be characterized as victims. Therefore, they speak up against systems of oppression and challenge other Whites to do the same. They understand that teaching about racism needs to shift from exploring the experiences of victims and victimizers to that of empowered BIPOCs and their White allies, creating the possibility of working together as partners to establish a more just society.

Culturally relevant teaching practices require teachers to examine their power and privilege and empower them to nurture students to be critical citizens. It involves building a caring, student-centered, asset-based, community-based atmosphere in service to social justice (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The teachers in this study are taking a hard look at their curriculum to identify whose perspectives are overrepresented and whose perspectives may be missing. Incorporating students' perspectives in education by considering their culture and experiences to make learning meaningful and more effective allows all students to reach equitable academic success. For example, during her interview, Cathy shared that she encourages students' understanding of their own and others' cultures by including content from students' homes and communities and by representing people of many backgrounds in instructional materials. Furthermore, Brenda discussed how she uses students' previous experiences and "funds of knowledge" gained from their families and communities as assets in the classroom. These teachers create

bridges from students' funds of knowledge to the classroom content, thus affirming their identities and values.

Making an effort to modify the curriculum to include all students' cultures and experiences demonstrates how these teachers assume responsibility for their racial identity and its influence on their students. Developing a nuanced anti-racist White identity involves recognizing the impact that racism and Whiteness (Leonardo, 2009) have on other people's lives. White educators must recognize their racial identity and understand how it impacts their beliefs, behaviors, and actions. They must also actively engage in anti-racism education, learning about the history and impact of racism on people of color and working to dismantle systems of oppression in education.

Conclusion Three: Critically Conscious White Teachers Engage in Co-Conspirator Work

This adoption of culturally relevant practice specifically impacts students and allows White teachers to move towards co-conspirator work. Therefore, these teachers are committed to ongoing learning and growth and have the willingness to challenge the status quo and strive for social justice. Without this knowledge and understanding, White educators may perpetuate harmful stereotypes and biases, ignore the unique experiences and needs of BIPOC students, and reinforce systems of inequity in education. This not only harms BIPOC students but also undermines the goal of creating a truly inclusive and equitable educational system. By engaging in White racial identity development and anti-racism education, these teachers are becoming allies and co-conspirators in the fight against racism and working towards creating a more just and equitable education system for all students.

As we move towards a culture of equity, teachers must become active participants, which Garza (2016) and Love (2019) refer to as "co-conspirators" in the process. According to Bettina Love (2019), the co-conspirator's role furthers and deepens [anti-racist] work through commitment beyond showing up. As agents of societal change, teachers play a critical role in fostering social justice and abolishing racism and other forms of oppression. These teachers' co-conspirator work involves actively working alongside the BIPOC students to impact change. For instance, Emma shares in her interview how she actively works with her BIPOC student-led organizations to bring to light the issues of racism in her school. She explains how she helps the students enhance and sharpen the skills necessary to promote change.

As a co-conspirator, White educators should aspire to be culpable in the liberation of BIPOC students. They should also continue to self-reflect and examine their responsibility to use their privilege to promote equity, take action against systemic racism, and build solidarity with BIPOCs (Spanierman & Smith, 2017). However, "White folks cannot be co-conspirators until they deal with the emotionality of being White … Studying Whiteness, White rage, and violence is a fundamental step to moving from ally to co-conspirator" (Love, 2020, p. 144). White teachers cannot move from ally to co-conspirator without confronting their privilege. Again, the teachers in this study are aware of their privileges and understand how using that power can influence change. For instance, Cathy discussed that her influence on educational committees allows her to be more involved in helping pass policies and legislation that supports BIPOC students. In her interview, she boasted about how she helped incorporate language that explicitly addresses racism in their school improvement plan. The co-conspirator works these

teachers execute highlight how racial identity plays a huge role in whether or not one can use their privilege to promote equitable change in education.

Since co-conspirator work requires collaboration and cooperation between individuals from different racial or ethnic backgrounds, it is imperative to establish a positive cross-racial relationship with BIPOC students. This type of collaboration can be beneficial for both parties as it allows for the sharing of diverse perspectives and experiences, which can lead to more effective activism and social change. Developing cross-racial relationships can be challenging due to various factors, including historical and systemic racism, unconscious biases, and societal stereotypes. These barriers can make it difficult for individuals from different racial backgrounds to connect and form meaningful relationships. However, despite these challenges, the teachers in this study recognize the value of cross-racial relationships and strive to foster them in their classrooms. They have overcome the challenges of developing cross-racial relationships by actively working to build trust and establish common ground with students from different racial backgrounds. They facilitate discussions on race and ethnicity, promote dialogue and understanding, and challenge stereotypes and biases. They understand that cross-racial connections can help bridge cultural divides and promote understanding and empathy among students. They also recognize that such relationships can help to combat racism and promote equity in education. By valuing and prioritizing cross-racial relationships, the teachers in this study help to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students. This can ultimately lead to stronger connections, deeper understanding, and greater success for all students, regardless of their racial backgrounds.

White-identifying teachers can expect to develop comfort in uncomfortable situations where they push themselves to learn about their privilege and begin to work against racism. They move through the developmental phases as they experience meaningful cross-racial relationships (Helms, 1995). For the teachers in this study, cross-racial relationships serve as a catalyst of self-evaluation and further examine their unearned White privilege, they can move into the second phase (Harper & Quaye, 2007; Helms, 1995; Killam & Degges-White, 2017).

Conclusion Four: Critically Conscious White Teachers Cultivate Positive Relationships with BIPOC Students and Teachers

Student-teacher interactions have been identified as one of the most important facets of the system of education (Roorda et al., 2019). Building relationships across races allows for the development of trust and an opportunity to learn what specific action steps are required for accountable justice efforts in schools. This dedication to relationship-building across races is part of creating a healthy, anti-racist White identity. All the teachers in this study are committed to cultivating positive relationships with BIPOC students. They described how cultivating positive relationships with BIPOC students helped to facilitate meaningful, difficult conversations about racism.

Additionally, the teachers in this study were concerned with maintaining positive relationships with BIPOC colleagues. For instance, the teachers shared in the interviews that they often ensure that the school environment is welcoming for BIPOC educators as they understand that their presence is needed in the predominantly White school. They are aware of the importance of building trust and respect with their colleagues of different backgrounds and strive to create an inclusive and supportive work environment. They

recognize the value of having diverse perspectives and experiences in the classroom and work to incorporate cultural competency into their teaching practices. In addition, they are proactive in engaging in ongoing self-reflection and professional development to improve their understanding and sensitivity toward issues of equity and inclusion. Overall, the White teachers in this study demonstrated a commitment to creating a more equitable and inclusive school community. The third conclusion is that critically conscious White teachers cultivate positive relationships with BIPOC students and teachers. Their actions align with characteristics of Helms's (1995) White racial identity development theory's highest status in which one has established cross-racial relationships, marked by flexible interactions and an appreciation of the complex identities of BIPOCs.

Student-Teacher Relationships

The teachers in this study believe in maintaining positive student-teacher relationships with their BIPOC students. Teachers who have positive relationships with their students experience fewer problematic behaviors and lower disciplinary issues (Roorda et al., 2019; Wilkins, 2014), as well as increased student engagement (Duong et al., 2019; Roorda et al., 2019). With graduation rates, discipline referrals, attendance rates, and overall student success in desperate need of revitalization, student-teacher relationships with BIPOC students are vital to reaching equitable academic success (Whitford & Emerson, 2019). The way these teachers actively build relationships with and among their students reflects the value they place on connectedness with all students. The teachers believe in the importance of developing a community of learners in which students learn collaboratively and take responsibility for one another.

These equitable relationships that the teachers value with and among their students exemplify how culturally relevant teaching/practice is a "humanizing pedagogy" (Freire, 2005, p. 68), which reduces the traditional hierarchical nature of student-teacher relationships. This reflects a deep commitment to a collective, rather than individual, philosophy on community and learning. Teachers fostering relationships with their students originate from a foundation of trust, respect, and communication (Keyes, 2019). Together, students and teachers act to address systemic barriers and racism.

BIPOC Teacher Relationships

As teachers are challenged to focus on relationships with their students, they are less focused on relationships with their colleagues. However, the teachers in this study believe it is important that White educators cultivate positive relationships with their BIPOC colleagues. The teachers in this study support their BIPOC colleagues by taking the time to build trusting and caring relationships with them. In her interview, April shared how she understands how racism puts enough burdens on BIPOC educators; therefore, they do not expect them (BIPOCs) to end it.

Cultivating positive relationships with BIPOC teachers is extremely helpful in establishing an environment where BIPOC teachers feel welcome and supported. Lack of diversity in the teacher workforce doesn't just stem from problems of recruitment or disinterest in teaching; there are higher turnover numbers for BIPOC teachers than for white teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Therefore, a key step to solving the problem is increasing the number of teachers who understand the experiences of BIPOC educators in predominantly white schools.

Cultivating positive relationships with BIPOC teachers is crucial for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students. The teachers in the study are aware of the importance of diversity and inclusion and actively work to build strong connections with their BIPOC colleagues. This kind of collaboration helps to create a more equitable and inclusive school culture where all teachers and students feel valued and respected.

Conclusion Four: Critically Conscious White teachers are Instrumental in Supporting Anti-Racism Efforts

To achieve racial equity in education, not only do individuals' mindsets need to be shifted to a more anti-racist ideology, but the institutions in which they work need to make profound anti-racist changes. When Whites truly understand the role of race in their own lives and society, they have a greater capacity to interrupt racism (Helms, 1990). The critically conscious White teachers in this study actively confront and challenge racism by cultivating an explicit focus on addressing inequity and advancing understanding of equity issues in schools. The fourth conclusion suggested that critically conscious White teachers support anti-racist efforts and value non-tangible opportunities/rewards.

Supporting Anti-Racist Efforts

To effectively interrupt racism, White people must develop the capacity to effectively advocate for racial justice by challenging and supporting other Whites (Tatum, 2017). Additionally, it requires that Whites possess the willingness and emotional capacity to acknowledge and deal with the racist implications of their own thoughts and behaviors. When feelings of shame, anger, guilt, and denial are at the root

of someone's racially problematic thought patterns, education and exposure alone are not sufficient interventions (Tochluk, 2010). In situations like this, anti-racist White teachers foster a racial identity and critical conscious development for their White colleagues. They provide support for White teachers to implement more effective, culturally responsive, anti-racist teaching practices. Sharing the often-painful processes of self-assessment, acceptance of personal responsibility, and commitment to change with those who are similar in race, age, and educational level provides the universality and hope that can facilitate change. Additionally, creating a positive anti-racist identity through self-reflective work among other White people allows for more effective engagement around pedagogy and social justice issues. As these teachers learn about and explore racism with White school peers, they come to appreciate that Whites need to assume responsibility for educating other Whites about racial injustice.

In addition to their anti-racist teaching and practices, the teachers in this study facilitate difficult conversations about race, racism, White privilege, and bias with students and educators. For instance, three teachers in this study are co-facilitators of student-led organizations committed to anti-racism. By providing a safe and supportive environment for interactions around sensitive topics, these critically conscious White teachers enable the honest exploration and reflection necessary for individuals to grow and develop. Their continuous anti-racist work demonstrates their commitment to helping students build a better future for everyone.

Furthermore, by addressing issues of social justice and racial inequality in the classroom, the teachers in this study raise students' critical consciousness. Each participant in this study discussed how they feel it's their responsibility to provide an

accurate view of the past to better prepare students for community participation and robust civic engagement in the present and future. These teachers are empowering students in the classroom and giving students opportunities to participate in decision-making instead of teaching that one race is superior to another or that anyone should feel guilty for the past actions of members of their race. Through their teaching, they acknowledge societal oppression and encourage students to notice how those dynamics are evident in their everyday lives.

Becoming an anti-racist is an ongoing process (Okun, 2006). It is not a one-time event, decision, or identity you ever finally and fully achieve, but a commitment. The critically conscious White teachers in this study explicitly advocate for anti-racism by participating in ongoing professional development for educators to productively counter racism and other forms of bigotry. For instance, Emma, Cathy, and Deborah actively participate in organizations encouraging White educators to talk to their peers about racism and White supremacy in education. Through these efforts, these teachers continuously leverage support towards anti-racism work within their schools.

According to its five-year plan, The Southern Indiana School District strives for educational equity. One way the district has outlined an approach is by establishing a district-wide anti-racism policy that provides the school community with a guide for implementing anti-racism education. The district promotes an environment of equitable opportunities for all students, continuous learning for staff, engaging and supportive school environments, consistent communication with stakeholders, and safe and secure learning environments. As outlined in the strategic plan, the school district plans to place continuous emphasis on academic rigor, continuous learning for staff, and purposeful and

frequent communication with stakeholders. Throughout the interviews and eJournal entries, the teachers repeatedly addressed the purpose of their anti-racism work, which promotes equitable learning outcomes for all students. Essentially, these critically conscious White teachers are instrumental in supporting school districts seeking to disrupt the status quo and address the inequities in student outcomes.

Conclusion Five: Critically Conscious White Teachers Value Non-Tangible Opportunities/Rewards

Each of us has a choice to either continue the cycle or challenge racism (Harro, 2010). However, according to Bell (1995), Whites will eliminate racism only if it is in their interest. For instance, Barndt (2007), Tatum (2017), and Bell (1995) assert that Whites need self-motivation to do so because White people benefit from racism, whether they intend to or not. For the critically conscious White teachers in this study, the interest in addressing racism stems from a sense of moral obligation to do the right thing and defend the basic human rights of their fellow humans. The opportunities they experience due to their anti-racism work is having a sense of moral fulfillment and knowing they are doing the right thing for their students and future generations. Although a non-tangible reward for these teachers, it keeps them motivated to continue the fight against racism. These actions align with the second phase of Helm's theory, in which Whites understand the effects of racism on BIPOCs.

Conclusion Six: Critically Conscious White Teachers Experience Negative Professional Consequences

Although responding to the needs of an increasingly diverse student population is a great opportunity/reward, it also presents various challenges for the teachers in this

study. The hierarchy in education and the main stakeholders in decision-making, like in any business or societal functioning area, are predominantly White. This means that there are codes of "White culture," "White privilege," and "White dominance" that occur in the life and work of teachers (DiAngelo, 2012; Gillborn, 2005; Leonardo, 2009). For the teachers in this study who are staunch believers in anti-racist teaching practices, these codes present challenges, which can be emotionally and psychologically exhausting (Sue, 2017), frustrating, leaving them disconnected from others (Malott et al., 2015), and present negative consequences that impact them professionally. According to Sue (2017), they are punished for their societal transgressions and are frequently tempted not to resist but, instead, to go along to get along. The sixth conclusion suggested that critically conscious White teachers experienced negative professional consequences.

Upward Mobility

According to Buller (2015), for real change to happen, leadership is what is most essential. Just like there is a call for White teachers to practice anti-racism, there is also a need for school leaders committed to eliminating systemic barriers that deeply "entrench" and recreate racism in PK–12 schools (Solomon, 2002; Galloway et al., 2019; Swanson & Welton, 2019). Anti-racist school leaders can be influential in building the anti-racist capacity within the school.

Although all the teachers in this study held some leadership role within their school, only one aspired to become a building-level administrator. In her interview, April shared her challenges applying for a building-level administrative position and other school leader roles. She attributed denials for an interview to her commitment to anti-racism because many people within the school district, some of whom are "gatekeepers"

to promotions, do not fully accept anti-racism. Another participant, Emma, shared the same sentiments in her interview. She explained how educators who support anti-racism efforts and practices experience negative consequences from others in leadership who are less inclined to engage in anti-racist work. Working under such conditions and seeing the retaliation against White teachers who promote anti-racist work often discourages others from further engaging in anti-racism work in their schools.

Tensions

White people struggle to create anti-racist relationships with other White people. This is partly because White people tend to fall into patterns of either "proselytizing or distaining," whereby they "shut down dialogue while acting out [their] individualism and [their] sense of superiority, reflecting [their] White investment in hierarchy and competition" (Utt & Tochluk, 2020, p. 130). These patterns occur when one of several racial identity statuses, as described by Helms, leaves White people trying to convince others, both White people and BIPOCs, that we are the "good White person."

All the teachers in the study shared tensions with other White teachers in their school. These tensions/challenges related to their anti-racist beliefs and/or actions left them, at times, frustrated because they felt isolated or disconnected from others. In most cases, these tensions in the workplace are to be expected, and they move on from it. However, tensions between colleagues create problems for White teachers. First, White teachers are left without critical relationships offering growth and learning about race and racial identity. Second, "proselytizing or distaining" limits White anti-racist teachers from becoming influential in their schools regarding the merits of employing anti-racist teaching practices. Third, if White teachers are not in consistent dialogue and do not seek

out White anti-racist people for support and learning, there is no one to act as an accountability partner. White teachers do not have relationships that invite critical feedback about their attitudes, interpretations, and teaching strategies regarding how they might include prejudicial elements. As Tatum (2017) describes it, "Participation in White consciousness-raising groups organized specifically to examine one's own racism [is] another way to 'keep moving forward" (p. 110). Therefore, critically conscious White teachers need resources and support to help eliminate such tensions in the workplace.

Inroads Against Staff Resistance

In addition to the tensions in the workplace, the critically conscious White teachers in this study experienced challenges making inroads against staff resistance. Much evidence suggests that attempts to engage White teachers in education toward critical consciousness are often met with resistance or apparent disinterest on the part of the teachers (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Martin, 1995; McAllister & Irvine, 2000; Zeichner, 1994). In her work on White fragility, DiAngelo (2022) discusses White individuals' tendencies to respond to dialogue around race with fear, anger, defensive behavior, or lack of change in mindsets. These reactions lead to backlash, refusal, or a general lack of response from educators in a professional development context. Such resistance to engagement prevents any change in their mindsets and viewpoints on how racism manifests in society. As a result, this resistance reinforces the status quo. In addition to her teaching role, she is often asked to provide critical feedback to other teachers to help them effectively incorporate culturally relevant teaching practices. In her interview, Cathy shares how staff resistance is a major challenge. Although these teachers have become accustomed to anticipating resistance/pushback, working alongside teachers who

are resistant to anti-racism is often challenging and exhausting work. These findings align with other scholarly thought, such as Malott et al. (2015), who found that many participants felt alienated from other White people who were less reflective about race and Whiteness.

Relating Back to White Racial Identity Development Theory

When reflecting on White people's conceptualizations of racism and understandings of the historical implications of race and racism, Helms's (1990) Model of Racial Identity Development is an appropriate academic model that can be applied to analyze the development of White racial identity. While I initially thought it might be helpful to utilize the theory to better contextualize participants' understandings and actions or position participants in relation to each other, throughout the research, I have gained a new perspective on the theory. As a result, I hesitate to utilize the theory to assign a position to individual participants. Despite my hesitance with placing individual participants in particular statuses, I will highlight that collectively, most participants seem to be in the Immersion/Emersion status of Helms's (1990) model. The Immersion/Emersion status is associated with constructing a positive White identity while working to overcome racism. This stage involves recognition of White privilege, positive acceptance of one's Whiteness, and commitment to disseminate accurate information about race. Additionally, along with self-exploration of their own racial status, individuals positioned in this stage tend to connect with other similarly aligned White individuals who are also interested in confronting racism and their personal biases.

While Helms (1990, 1992, 2020) highlights the fluid nature of the statuses and explains that people fluctuate between phases, it is important to consider the influence of

time and place in this assessment process. For example, if people are in an environment seemingly unreceptive to the promotion of racial equity, they may fail to engage (or secretly engage) in purposeful, justice-promoting action. Contrariwise, if people are in an environment seemingly receptive or supportive of racial equity, they may be more likely to take action to challenge racial injustices. For example, Emma talked about how many of her colleagues do not support anti-racist work. Hence, because of her desire for approval, she secretly supported her BIPOC students. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that the greater the extent that racism exists and is denied, the less possible it is to develop a positive racial identity" (Helms, 1997, p. 207). Developing a positive racial identity requires that the vast majority of people overcome the impacts of individual, institutional, and cultural racism. Consequently, the findings of this study also suggest that negative racial climates – which lack inclusion of BIPOC students, faculty, and administrators; a curriculum that reflects the historical and contemporary experiences of BIPOCs; support for recruitment, retention, and graduation of BIPOC students; and a mission that reinforces the institution's commitment to diversity (Hurtado et al., 1999; Solórzano et al., 2000)—enhance racism and create barriers that undermine the potential for teachers to develop sophisticated anti-racist identities.

Even though individual choice is necessary for action, environmental factors seemingly influence these choices. Thus, it is important to consider that not all actions, or lack thereof, are solely representative of an individual's personal, racial identity development. The context appears to be highly influential in thoughts and actions. Additionally, researchers have found that Whites will exhibit traits of more than one status simultaneously, albeit with traits from one status as more dominant and with a

corresponding information-processing strategy that governs their race-related interactions (Carter et al., 2004). Therefore, while the theory highlights different degrees of anti-racism and suggests individuals positioned further right on the continuum as anti-racist, given the findings, I would not place any participants in the final, most advanced stage.

According to Jones (2020), there are three things people must undertake to develop an anti-racist identity, including: (a) naming racism, (b) asking how racism is presented in given situations, and (c) strategizing and acting. Jones emphasizes that the most critical of the three behaviors is organizing and taking action. Consistently, across all literature, the characteristics of White anti-racists include an essential comprehension of White privilege and their complicity in the racist society, as well as intentional, proactive, and consistent behaviors that work toward dismantling racism (McKinney & Feagin, 2013; O'Brien, 2000). The study results indicated that the participants recognized their White privilege and, in some cases, their collusion with societal racism. In addition, it showed their clarity around the importance of purposeful, ongoing action as part of being a critically conscious White teacher. The study revealed that the participants understood what being critically conscious represents, and their self-reported actions were consistent with the late statuses of anti-racist identity development.

Implications and Significance of Findings

These findings from this study have important implications for teachers, school administrators, and education system stakeholders. School districts must go beyond simply promoting the fair and equal treatment of all students. Teachers should consider how acknowledging and incorporating the disparate experiences between White and BIPOC students into their pedagogy might aid in fostering more awareness of and

commitment to disrupting racism in education. This study contributes to the current literature related to anti-racist identity development and the importance of engagement in anti-racist action. The study findings support the literature regarding how racial identity development is a catalyst for change in the teachers' understanding of White privilege and racism. When examining the opportunities they experience while engaging in anti-racist action, it became apparent they could not identify many opportunities other than feeling self-fulfilled, knowing they are doing the morally right thing. The study results suggest that participants have progressed beyond early levels of an anti-racist identity.

Through this instrumental case study, the researcher hoped to provide practical implications on the experiences and processes of critically conscious White teachers that may be applied to the greater issue of the outcomes of other schools experiencing demographic shifts. The following paragraphs outline three implications for critically conscious White teachers who work in schools experiencing demographic shifts: (a) examine their Whiteness; (b) cultivate anti-racist relationships (c) take advantage of ongoing systemic support.

Examining Whiteness

Being aware of the presence of race and racism is not enough. White teachers must individually work through Whiteness rather than normalize Whiteness (Cabrera, 2014). Critical interrogation moves individuals from ignorance and defenders of the status quo to respectful relationships, with a preference for one another and commitment to equity. In working through Whiteness, White teachers exert personal effort to develop a nonracist identity.

Helms's (1990, 2008) White identity model serves four purposes for White people: (a) accept proper responsibility and actions to challenge oppression and racism, (b) discern the impact of racism on Whites and minoritized groups, (c) analyze racism through a model of White racial identity development, and (d) learn alternate ways of being and doing within a multi-racial context. Helms (2008) noted, "The way to overcome aversive racism is to make explicit one's biases and then actively attempt to counteract them" (p. 28). Helms (2008) developed a two-phase process of identity development: the internalization of racism and the evolution of a nonracist White identity. White teachers must move from internalized racism to an equitable view of their inter-relatedness. No longer can White teachers perceive their experience as the normative or singular experience.

This study calls on White teachers to critically examine their Whiteness and embark on a journey of White anti-racist identity development. Individuals aware of their racial identity and the statuses associated with their sense of self are better equipped to connect meaning with identity (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012) and, thus, more effective with their practice. In turn, any reality of equity and fairness will fail to exist if identities continue to be molded through invisible, naturalized standards of Whiteness. Although knowing and having personal awareness of racial identity is relevant for all individuals, considering the role and purpose of race in the United States, individuals with a White racial status hold positions of special importance for such research. As benefactors of advantage, the need to situate oneself within the greater context of the social system and be knowledgeable of what privilege is, how it works, and why it exists is necessary for change in the system (Hughey, 2010). Specifically, such knowledge is important for

educational practitioners in both K-12 and higher education settings charged with educating students, pre-service teachers, and the continued professional development of practitioners. Given the requirements for all citizens to participate in education, identity is paramount for such individuals. Acknowledging race as a social construct (Omi & Winant, 2009) purposed with the intent to marginalize some while benefit others and being able to situate oneself as an individual within the greater scheme of society will create a base of individuals equipped to advocate for social justice and equity through education in schools.

The implications are both paramount and limitless for educational practitioners in K-12 settings. Praxis that values ideals of criticality will engage students and educators in practices that promote critical thinking about and a more keen awareness of unjustsocial norms. The value added to both teaching and learning would be infinite as both students and educators would work together to deconstruct thoughts, principles, and perspectives learned through the various ideologies present in the development of an individual's racial identity. For example, as faculty, staff, and administrators become more conscious of their identity and the processes connected to its development, they will become more aware of how to incorporate fairness in the design and implementation of teaching instruction and assessment. In turn, the increased awareness linked to the processes of racial identity development will bridge knowledge of difference with processes of how and why to create an environment conducive to just and equitable teaching and learning.

The implications in higher education also have the potential for great rewards. Charged with preparing future teachers, incorporating practice designed to examine the processes of identity development and constructions of social norms is of utmost

importance. Students knowledgeable of not only their own identity but the processes linked to the development of that identity will be more aware and appreciative of differences as they take on the responsibilities of being effective teachers for all students, regardless of race. Likewise, having faculty, staff, and administration aware of the processes of hegemonic ideologies, socially constructed norms, and racial identity development will increase the effectiveness of anti-racist practices in schools.

Anti-Racist Relationships

Critically conscious White teachers proactively foster relationships and coalitions geared toward combating racial oppression (Spanierman & Smith, 2017; Utt & Tochluk, 2020). These relationships scaffold allies' learning, sustain their efforts for social justice (Mio, 2000), and encourage accountability in their beliefs and actions (Brown & Ostrove, 2013). The responsibility of interrogating institutional structures and practices that marginalize BIPOC students falls to White teachers because they directly benefit from the oppression of others (Linder, 2015). In times of collaboration, White teachers have the privilege of remaining silent when observing manifestations of Whiteness out of fear of being criticized. Therefore, White teachers must find ways to voice concerns to work against racism and White supremacy in education and support one another throughout the challenges of self-reflexivity (Gardner, 2009; Scott & Robinson, 2001). Forming these relationships and participation in consciousness-raising groups support group learning and recognition of racist behaviors and help to construct positive identities.

Systems of Support

It is imperative to support White teachers in building confidence with knowledge and terms relating to racism to reinforce teaching through an anti-racist lens. This study

inspires the need for White teachers to acknowledge the invisible embedment of White hegemonic power and work towards dismantling systemic racism. However, there is a lack of support and resources for educators. The lack of interest by elected officials and education policymakers in social justice, anti-bias, and anti-racist curriculum and instruction is predictable and unsurprising. Despite pressures for teachers to address inequities in education, the training and support needed to equip teachers to promote educational equity and tackle racism do not always appear to be getting through. We do not adequately prepare and immunize these teachers for the painful challenges they are likely to encounter as they go forth as social justice advocates. Speaking up when racist jokes are told, making known their displeasure with discrimination in the workplace, objecting to biased school curriculums, confronting others about their microaggressions, and advocating for organizational change is likely to result in negative reactions and consequences. Additionally, the pushback can be great and with many consequences. These White teachers are often labeled troublemakers, isolated by fellow White colleagues, threatened to be disowned by family members, or risk not obtaining a raise or promotion they hoped to receive. Doing anti-racist work is exhausting unless these White teachers develop support systems that can nurture and encourage them along the way. Therefore, forming systems of support that encourage anti-racist practices and teaching requires a closer look.

Although some school boards have continued to address it, this research is a reminder that professional development is a push in the right direction, setting the stage for continued and more involved work in equity achievement. However, anti-racist work cannot be done individually or just in the classroom. Administrators, faculty, and staff at

primarily White or otherwise privileged institutions must also question how this has affected their students and community. This study also highlights the need for stronger, continuous, and more prevalent support to address racism in schools, such as the many ways racism and codes of Whiteness show up in schools harming staff and eroding school culture. In her interview, Emma explained that the codes of Whiteness discourage teachers from engaging in anti-racist work. Other examples may include a lack of diverse representation in schools, which may indicate racism within recruiting and hiring practices. Another example is that the language used in performance evaluations may reveal internal biases that impact pay and promotions, like in April's case.

School districts must set up systems that enable and empower teachers to come forward if they confront racist, unsafe, or illegal workplace practices. Specifically, there should be a focus on providing support and resources for White teachers to develop their anti-racist identity and critical consciousness. Such support may include regular professional development opportunities, mentorship programs, and access to resources such as anti-racist literature and trainings. These should cover a range of behaviors, from the most egregious acts to microaggressions that deprive staff of the dignity they deserve at work. All teachers must feel comfortable shining a light on workplace practices that jeopardize their safety or undermine their dignity. Teachers must also feel encouraged to unearth problems early and be protected from retaliation, like in April's and Emma's cases. Therefore, school districts should consider outlining a clear process that facilitates learning, growth, and correction when incidents arise. In a quickly evolving world, processes may need to be reevaluated or revised regularly. These systems of support cultivate and promote an environment conclusive to supporting educational equity.

Considering this research, education that provides pre-service teachers with a thorough understanding of racism, especially institutional racism, must be an integral part of teacher education programs. This training needs to be of high quality and delivered without apportioning blame, so pre-service teachers can understand the need for change without becoming defensive (Jones, 2020). Evidence suggests that challenging the racism of pre-service teachers can produce a decline in racist attitudes and encourage them to take up the issue during their teaching careers (Bhavnani et al., 2005). Therefore, all pre-service teachers should undergo a compulsory assessed unit on race equity and attend quality ongoing training on issues of racism in education. If training on these issues is not provided during pre-service training, it is unreasonable to expect teachers to have the resources to tackle racism and promote race equity in the classroom.

Limitations and Future Research

As mentioned previously, this study was based on a small group of teachers who identified as critically conscious White women living and teaching in a southern Indiana school district. It occurred during an incredibly tumultuous time, a global pandemic, demonstrations for racial justice, and a toxic political climate. These elements combined create an environment where Americans of all races and identities were engaging in conversations that months and days before had been taboo for some of them. As I write this final chapter, we are still in the grasp of a pandemic, justice has been denied to victims of police violence, and our nation has survived an attempted electoral coup. Given the conditions during which this study occurred, it is quite possible that the desire to explore the structures of racism and White privilege may begin to wane. Support for racial justice is fading a bit (Pan & Moore, 2020, Tesler, 2020), and it is not clear how

committed the players within our education system will remain to the calls for dismantling the structures that obstruct access to meaningful learning for our BIPOC students. I remain hopeful that the seed of disruption has been planted in enough educators to see continued progress in this area.

While the case study approach does provide opportunities to explore a phenomenon using a rich and deeply reflective set of data, there are limits to this approach. This study used a case study methodology that included five cases. The limited number of cases may pose restrictions to generalizability.

Another limitation is that the participants were public school teachers only. Hence, educators who worked at a private educational establishment could have had a different experience. However, the educators that participated in this study were chosen from four different public schools in a school district experiencing demographic shifts, so their perspectives and experiences came from different school environments, which can be representative of educators who worked at other schools. Lastly, the data collection process was limited to interviews and eJournals. Since no observations were made of the participants, the findings were limited to the participants' opinions which may fail to reflect educators' actual experiences. Hence, it would have been beneficial to incorporate observations on anti-racist practices.

The main sources of data in this study, semi-structured qualitative interviews and eJournals, rely on self-reported data by teachers. Therefore, there may exist some bias in how participants shared their experiences. That said, self-reported data is a strength of what interviews are intended to provide. "What you get in an interview is simply the informant's perception of the phenomenon of interest at that particular point in time"; as

the researcher, my responsibility is to consider the information from one interview "in light of other interviews and other sources of data" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 136). In this study, teachers participated in two semi-structured interviews separated in time, and they also shared reflections in an eJournal.

Another limitation is that participants were identified based on how others (the DEI coordinator and building principals) perceive them as White identifying critically conscious teachers. Also, another potential limitation is that participants were living through a traumatic and new experience, the pandemic, which may have led to an increased workload and other challenges. Additionally, in the aftermath of the pandemic, teachers across the country have been experiencing unusual demands that make it hard for them to commit fully to additional activities like research participation. Therefore, interviewees may have been less likely to provide quality, in-depth answers due to the need to complete necessary work tasks before participating in a research study. Lastly, the restrictive nature of the coronavirus pandemic reduced the setting of the study to a virtual environment. This limitation of the interview format to a Zoom meeting may have prevented the researcher from noticing certain non-verbal cues.

Future work should address this study's gaps while continuing to explore White racial identity and critical consciousness development across contexts. The teachers in this study had administrative support for their engagement in anti-racist work and a diverse group of students to work with. Critical consciousness development is particularly useful for teachers of systematically marginalized students and their capacity to teach effectively and equitably. However, more privileged students also need critically conscious teachers. Future work should explore what this looks like and the related

effects of diversifying the curriculum and learning strategies taught to White and economically privileged students.

While a significant amount of research exists on White teacher identity in pre-service teachers (Hill-Jackson, 2007; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Pennington, 2007; Picower, 2009), limited research addresses how White racial identity continues to develop once pre-service teachers enter the classroom. Studies on in-service teachers typically focus on how Whiteness influences teaching and relationships between a White teacher and a diverse student population (Berry, 2015; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Sleeter, 1993). White racial development and unlearning racism is a process that may take a lifetime and therefore needs to be studied even as White pre-service teachers enter the profession (Helms, 1995). Additionally, research needs to consider the impact of the intended curriculum on White racial development. Standards where Whiteness works as a hidden curriculum, such as World History, are especially important. A White teacher's ability to decenter Whiteness and develop anti-racist teaching practices may be constricted if the standards openly reinforce racism. How racism manifests with different groups within public schools, such as colleagues and students, also provides an avenue for further research. Scholars have long-established the role of racism and Whiteness in developing relationships and teaching practices with BIPOC (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Paris, 2012; Yosso et al., 2009). However, Whiteness in teacher-to-teacher relationships is limited and often focuses on relationships between colleagues in higher education (Boutte & Jackson, 2014; Linder, 2015). The results of this study illustrate differences in how White teachers engage in anti-racist work with students and colleagues, which opens questions surrounding performative allyship (Picower, 2009) and anti-racism work in

schools. A study with this focus could be informative, considering the changing demographics of public school teachers and students.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand critically conscious White identifying teachers in the context of their schools' experiencing demographic shifts in their student population. Using Helms's (1995) White Racial Identity Development theory to understand participants' identity development, this study showed their understanding of their racial identities along with the privilege and power associated with their race. The teachers' anti-racism work, including leveraging their positions and privileges, using culturally relevant practices, and engaging in co-conspirator work, is critical in their development as they created opportunities to learn and reflect on their positions as White individuals in a racialized society. Teachers' learning and acceptance of their place in society enable them to commit to making change.

Despite the teachers in this study being content with positively impacting students and society, they experience negative professional consequences in their efforts to promote anti-racism in their schools. These consequences include tensions with colleagues, denial of upward mobility of employment, and resistance from other White teachers who may not understand the importance of promoting anti-racism. These challenges highlight the need for increased support and resources for teachers working to combat racism and discrimination in education.

Furthermore, the findings from this study demonstrate the importance of identity development for White teachers to take action against systemic racism. In addition, as White teachers make changes within their school culture and climate, they guide others to

work toward racial justice and equity. Overall, the results of the study provided a nuanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by critically conscious White teachers in schools experiencing demographic shifts in the student population. Additionally, the results highlighted the importance of ongoing professional development and support for teachers to address issues of racism in schools effectively.

We are in the year 2023, more than 60 years since the civil rights movement, and significant events such as the publicized murder of George Floyd prove that we are in a racialized society where the twofold phenomenon of White privilege and BIPOC denigration is not lost. There is an urgency for White individuals to learn, reflect, and understand their racial privilege and power to work alongside BIPOCs to fight against systemic racism. The findings from this study suggest that White teachers play an important role as their positions allow them to remove systemic barriers and set examples for others working as anti-racists to support BIPOC students.

Appendix A

Nomination of Potential Participants

Thank you for agreeing to nominate potential participants for my study. As part of my dissertation research, I am interested in exploring the variations of critical consciousness among White teachers. The term critical consciousness has often been associated with teachers who recognize structures of oppression and try to promote school environments that are equitable and just. To this end, I want to learn how critically conscious White teachers' understanding of their race influences how they address race issues in their school.

For this study I am seeking candidates with a specific attribute of critical consciousness, that is an understanding of their own and their students' social placement. Below, is a list of descriptors to help you identify potential participants for this study. Please note that the individuals that you nominate must be White teachers and work at your school. After you have read the descriptors below, please complete the questions that follow.

1. Name of teacher(s) that you are nominating. Please include their school email address.
2. Why did you nominate the teacher(s) to participate in this research study?
3. How do you believe the nominated teacher(s) creates an impact specifically for the experiences of BIPOC students? For White students? For White teachers?
4. How do you see the teacher(s) contributing to the promotion of anti-racist practices in the school?

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Semi-structured interview #1 questions for teachers
Responses will be transcribed and analyzed in Nvivo

Hello [Insert Participant's Name]:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As part of my dissertation research, I am interested in exploring the variation of critical consciousness among White teachers. The term critical consciousness has often been associated with teachers who recognize structures of oppression and try to promote school environments that are equitable and just. To this end, I want to learn how critically conscious White teachers' understand racism and the opportunities and challenges they encounter promoting anti-racist practices in their school.

The series of questions that I am about to ask you are focused on your understanding of specific terms, your thoughts and perspectives on issues of education, race, and promoting anti-racist practices in your school. There are no right or wrong answers. Just to remind you, your name, school, and state affiliation will not be attached to any of the comments you provide. This is to ensure anonymity to you as a research participant. You are not required to answer any questions you do not wish to. If you would rather not answer a question, please say "pass". If you need to stop or take a break, simply stay "stop." If you do not understand the question or would like clarification, please say, "clarify." After this interview, I will provide you with the opportunity to add any additional comments that you feel may be pertinent to what has been stated today.

Before beginning this interview, do you have any questions about the purpose of this study or your rights as a research participant? [Wait] I will now start recording this session.

1.	Are you familiar with this term, critical consciousness? **PROBE:** What does critical consciousness means to you?
2.	Who do you think is responsible for promoting racist practices in schools?
3.	How do you explain the existing racial inequities in the "pseudonym" school district in terms of GPA? Test scores? Gifted and Talented Programs? Special education placements?
4.	Based on your explanations, what can be done about the inequities in these areas?
5.	Do you feel you are well-prepared (as it relates to training, pre-service teacher training, etc.) to promote anti-racist practices in school? **PROBE:** What causes you to feel well-

	prepared or ill-prepared?
6.	Specifically, how do you promote anti-racist practices in school?
7.	Do you feel that your racial identity influences the way that you promote anti-racist practices in school? [How do you as a White person see yourself influencing racism in school?] **PROBE:** How does your race influence the way that you promote anti-racist practices in school?
8.	What events, people, or ideas have shaped your thinking and practice in serving BIPOC students and promoting anti-racist practices in school? (Adapted from Merryfield, 2000). **PROBE:** What attribute or quality about this person, event, or idea affected your understanding of BIPOC students?
9.	**Additional Probes Throughout:** Can you tell me more about…? Can you elaborate more about…? How did that situation affect you? How did that situation make you feel? What do you feel you learned, or understand differently because that situation occurred? Can you provide an example of …?

Appendix C

Journal Prompts

To be organized and analyzed in Qualtrics and sent via an online link at the end of each week for one month.

1. Describe challenging situations that you encountered promoting anti-racist practices in your school.
    a. What made the situations challenging?
    b. How did you respond?
    c. Did the situations influence, affirm, and/or change your perspectives about racism? How?
2. Why do you feel it is necessary for teachers to actively promote anti-racist practices?
    a. How should teachers actively promote anti-racist practices in school?
    b. How should teachers be supported by colleagues to promote anti-racist practices in school?
    c. How should teachers be supported by leadership to promote anti-racist practices in school?
3. Describe the opportunistic situations that you encountered promoting anti-racist practices in your school.
    a. What made the situations opportunistic?
    b. How did you respond?
    c. Did the situations influence, affirm, and/or change your perspectives about racism? How?

4. What are the associated opportunities/challenges of being a critically conscious white teacher?
5. Do you feel that there is a change in support or commitment to anti-racist practices at different levels of leadership? Why or why not?
6. Do you believe that because of your racial identity there exist barriers to having an equitable relationship with your students? Do you feel they will perceive you differently because of your race? Do you perceive them differently because of their race?

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview #2 Questions for Teachers

Responses will be transcribed and analyzed in Nvivo12

1. Describe the past month of reflecting and journaling?
2. Anything that you care to add to your previous interview?
3. Do you believe that your racial identity presents barriers to having an equitable relationship with your students? Do you feel they will perceive you differently because of your race? Do you perceive them differently because of their race?

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Curriculum Vitae

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- Designs systemic PreK-12 curricular offerings and programs that promote college, career, and life readiness
- Collaborates with school stakeholders to identify and address students' postsecondary readiness needs
- Promotes future postsecondary readiness implementation plans
- Contributes to grant proposal writing totaling over 2.5 million dollars to support postsecondary readiness
- Supports school partnerships in the expansion of work-based learning opportunities for students

DISTRICT READINESS COORDINATOR **2018-2020**
Monroe County Community School Corporation **-** Bloomington, IN

- Designed systemic PreK-12 curricular offerings that promote college, career, and life readiness
- Collaborated with school stakeholders to identify and address the needs of the school community
- Shared information with district and school-level leadership about future implementation plans
- Wrote grant proposals, submitted proposals, researched new grant opportunities
- Assisted in coordinating professional learning resources that promote effective teaching practices

SCHOOL COUNSELOR **2011-2018**

Bloomington High School North - Bloomington, IN.

- Implemented interventions and outreach programs that promote college and career readiness
- Counseled students for academic, social/emotional, and career development
- Executed the coordination and implementation of standardized assessments
- Collaborated with school stakeholders to promote an effective school counseling program
- Monitored students' progress toward meeting graduation requirements

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH ASSISTANT **Fall 2016**

IUPUI Research Assistant – Indianapolis, IN

Lead Researcher: Jim Scheurich, PhD

- Researched Indiana Charter schools since its inception in Indiana

MBRS-RISE RESEARCH ASSISTANT **2005-2008**

Spelman College Research Assistant- Atlanta, GA

Lead Researcher: Karen Brakke, PhD

- Investigated the cognitive and motor skill development of infants

PROJECT LIFT **2006-2008**

Spelman College Research Assistant- Atlanta, GA

Lead Researcher: Sandra Patterson, PhD

- Examined and developed effective interventions of at-risk teens

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

G575: MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY Spring 2015

Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis Teaching Intern- Indianapolis, IN

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

II Hanks, L., **Priester, M**. Smith, C. (2016). November Game Ready, Prepared for the Future? Oral Presentation at North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference, Tampa, FL.

Gatza, A., **Priester, M**., Portillo, W., Robbins, K., Schuerich, J., Shaver, E., Williams, N. (2014, October). White educators talk about their white racism: Educators of color respond. Panel discussion at Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice, Dayton, OH.

Clark, R., **Priester, M.**, & Shipp, C. (2014, July). Is There One Best System? A Critical Viewpoint of the Complexities of Urban Educational School Systems. Poster presented at the Black Expo Education Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Clark, R., **Priester, M.,** & Shipp, C. (2014, May). Is There One Best System? A Critical Viewpoint of the Complexities of Urban Educational School Systems. Poster

presented at the Critical Race Studies in Education Association (CRSEA) 8th Annual Conference, Nashville, TN.

Priester, M., & Brakke, K. (2007, July) Development of Children's Object-Play Imitation Between 16-25 Months: 2 Case Studies. Poster presentation at the RISE/Howard Hughes Summer Research Symposium, Atlanta, GA.

Priester, M., & Brakke, K. (2008, April) Development of Children's Object-Play Imitation Between 16-25 Months: 2 Case Studies. Poster presentation at the Twentieth Biennial Conference on Human Development, Indianapolis, IN.

Priester, M., & Brakke, K. (2008, April) Development of Children's Object-Play Imitation Between 16-25 Months: 2 Case Studies. Poster presentation at the Atlanta University Center Psychological Research Day, Atlanta, GA.

Priester, M., & Brakke, K. (2008, April) Development of Children's Object-Play Imitation Between 16-25 Months: 2 Case Studies. Oral presentation at Spelman Research Day, Atlanta, GA.

Daniels, R., Phillip, J., **Priester, M.,** Williams-Chandler, J. (2010, November). First to the Finish Line, Head of the Class: Extracurricular Activities and its Relationship to Academic Achievement. Poster Presentation accepted at the annual conference for the Georgia School Counselor Association, Athens, GA.

Moncrief, A., Johnson, E., Jones, G., **Priester, M.** & McCormack, K. (2008, March) Does Rap Music Influence the Evaluation of Violent Images? Poster Presentation at the annual conference for the Southeastern Psychological Association Charlotte, NC.

Ojelade, I. I., Daniels, R., Herbert, K., **Priester, M.**, & Williams-Chandler, J. (2010, July). African Spirit Ritual and Healing. Oral Presentation at the annual convention for the 42nd Association of Black Psychologists 2010 Convention Oral Presentation, Chicago, IL.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE (COMMUNITY)

RESOURCE ADOPTION COMMITTEE **2018-2019**

Monroe County Community School Corporation – Bloomington, IN

- Reviewed instructional resource materials to ensure a curriculum that supports diverse learners
- Provided constructive feedback on instructional resource materials

DIVERSITY ADVISORY TEAM **2017-Present**

Monroe County Community School Corporation- Bloomington, IN

- Collaborated with district-level leadership regarding diversity, equity, and inclusive practices

- Served as liaison between school and central office regarding multicultural concerns and issues

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLANNING TEAM **2017-2018**
Monroe County Community School Corporation - Bloomington, IN
- Planned future professional development opportunities for the district
- Identified professional learning opportunities that align with the school district's mission and vision

CULTURAL RESPONSIVITY TEAM **2016-2018**
Bloomington High School North – Bloomington, IN
- Served as advisory council to educators at the school level
- Implemented culturally competent programs and trainings for educators
- Promoted culturally competent practices in the school

ACADEMIC COORDINATOR **2016-2018**
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Bloomington Alumnae Chapter – Bloomington, IN
- Coordinated a curriculum to promote college, career and life success
- Encouraged young teen girls to actively participate in community service learning opportunities
- Coordinated and supervised community field trips

FACULTY COUNCIL **2015-2018**
Bloomington High School North – Bloomington, IN
- Established relationships and maintained positive communications among the faculty and staff
- Proposed changes to policies and practices to promote positive morale and effective practices

AREA UNION REPRESENTATIVE **2013-2018**
Bloomington High School North – Bloomington, IN
- Served as the liaison between staff union members and the union leadership team
- Encouraged employees to join the teacher union
- Informed educators of their privileges and rights

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR **2013-2019**
Indiana Association of College Admission Counseling (INACAC) – Bloomington, IN
- Coordinated college planning programs for students and families
- Provided equal access and opportunity to post-secondary education information
- Coordinated the Monroe County College Fair

CO-ADVISOR **2013-2017**
Sistahs Who Care, Bloomington High School North – Bloomington, IN
- Mentored young high school girls about life skills
- Advocated the importance of volunteerism and civic engagement

CO-ADVISOR **2012-2017**

The Movement, Bloomington High School North – Bloomington, IN

- Supported students in planning programs that promote diversity and inclusion
- Advocated the importance of volunteerism and civic engagement

VOLUNTEER **2011-2015**

Social Graces, Indiana University – Bloomington, IN

- Mentored high school students about the importance of professionalism and etiquette
- Coordinated programs to promote life skills development

SELECTED COMMUNITY/UNIVERSITY LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

Priester-Hanks, M. (2020). Using Naviance to Complete the Graduation Transitions Portfolio. Discussion Facilitator, Bloomington H.S. South, February 13, Bloomington, IN.

Priester-Hanks, M. (2018). There's An App for That: College and Career Planning Tools. Discussion Facilitator, Bloomington H.S. North, November 6, Bloomington, IN.

Priester-Hanks, M. (2018). The School Counseling Profession. Class Lecture, Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis, April 10, Indianapolis, IN.

Priester-Hanks, M. (2018). College Readiness. Panel Discussion, Indiana University, February 5, Bloomington, IN.

Priester, M. (2013). How to Show your Activism. Panel Discussion. Bloomington H. S. North, November 14, Bloomington, IN.

Priester, M. (2012-2018). College Planning 101. (Annual Event) Panel Discussion, Bloomington H.S. North, Bloomington, IN.

Priester, M. (2012). Relationship Between School Counselors and Teachers. Guest Speaker, Indiana University, March 27, Bloomington IN.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Equity and Access
- Professional Development
- Education Law and Policy
- Social Justice in Education

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American School Counselor Association
- Indiana School Counselor Association
- Indiana State Teachers Association
- National Educational Association