A Multiple Case Study of Whiteness and Critical Literacy Practices Among White Elementary Teachers in Urban Public Schools

Amanda Rose Vandehei

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A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF WHITENESS AND CRITICAL LITERACY PRACTICES AMONG WHITE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By

Amanda VandeHei

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education
University of Wisconsin Eau Claire
2002

Master of Education
Lesley University
2006

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
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Department of Teaching and Learning
College of Education
The Graduate College

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Amanda VandeHei

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Christine Clark, Ed.D., Committee Chair
Jane McCarthy, Ph.D., Committee Member
Marilyn McKinney, Ph.D., Committee Member
Doris Watson, Ph.D., Graduate College Representative
Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the Graduate College

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ABSTRACT

A Multiple Case Study of Whiteness and Critical Literacy Practices Among White Elementary Teachers in Urban Public Schools

by

Amanda VandeHei

Dr. Christine Clark, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Teaching and Learning
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether white elementary teachers’ perception of Whiteness influences critical literacy practices in elementary classrooms in an urban school district in the Southwest United States. This study consists of six white elementary school teachers.

Using Hardiman’s model of White Identity Development, (WID) this study specifically explores the phenomenon of Whiteness and how teachers view themselves as having white privilege and advantage in American society. Hardiman’s WID model includes five stages of white racial identity development in which a white person begins with no awareness of him or herself as a racial being and can move to an antiracist white identity (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). Using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model, this study also explores the literacy instructional strategies employed by the participants and categorizes them within this four process model. These categories include code breaking, text participant, text user, and text analyst. Freebody and Luke (1990) argue that all of these processes are essential in assisting readers with using texts effectively.

In order to better understand Whiteness and its potential relationship to critical
literacy practices, this study addresses one main question and two ancillary questions. Generally, How does Whiteness influence elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices? More specifically: How do elementary teachers negotiate Whiteness in elementary classrooms? and How do elementary teachers define and implement critical literacy practices? By exploring these questions, this study identifies potential relationships between the teachers’ perception of Whiteness and the critical literacy practices they use or do not use in their elementary classrooms. However, because this study is an explanatory multiple case study, these questions provided various outcomes.

Consistent with case study methodology, data were gathered through one-on-one interviews, classroom observations, and small group discussions. The data were analyzed for patterns and themes using the categories identified in the conceptual models. The themes for Hardiman’s WID include: Naïveté, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition, and Internalization (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model was also used to analyze patterns and themes. These categories include: code breaking, text participant, test user, and text analyst. After a detailed discussion of each case, the cross case analysis identifies themes and patterns across cases.

Results of this analysis suggest teachers’ white identity development is somewhat influenced by their teacher preparation programs and more likely to be affected by interracial encounters, over and underestimating one’s own white racial identity development is associated with characteristics of actual white racial identity, and elementary schools act as structures that stifle racial identity development. In the area of critical literacy this study suggests teachers do not have a strong understanding of critical literacy theory and therefore are not using it frequently in their classroom, and also that
elementary schools are structured in a way that prevent the implementation of critical literacy practices. Last, this study combines the conceptual models of Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model into a conceptual framework demonstrating more advanced white racial identity is related to more frequent use of the four resources processes. The implications for these findings are discussed by addressing policy, practice, in the areas of elementary education and teacher preparation programs, and future research.
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I would like to thank my advisor, mentor, and friend Dr. Christine Clark. My first few years of graduate school were spent navigating the unfamiliar territory of a different university and new people as well as longing to find my academic “home.” It wasn’t until meeting Dr. Clark that I knew I was where I belonged. I will be forever grateful for her encouragement, guidance, and support.

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I cannot forget my critical peers that I was fortunate enough to meet during my graduate work, Zaid, Nayeelee, and Kyle. It was with their camaraderie that I was able to succeed. Taking classes, researching, vising new cities, and everything else graduate work entails, was better with your companionship.

There are some treasured friends that I would also like to thank. Kris, I am so fortunate to have taught with you. You always asked about my studies and celebrated every accomplishment along the way. Heather, I am so thankful you were a part of my educational journey; I will always say you should have done it with me. Laura, even from afar you always had genuine interest in my research and success. I am so lucky to be surrounded by such amazing teachers and women.

I am so grateful to the six participants who made this study come to fruition. There are not words to express my gratitude for allowing me into your classrooms and
volunteering to take part in discussions that are often hard to have. I feel fortunate to have gotten to know each of you.

My graduate studies would have been far less meaningful without my mom’s constant encouragement. She instilled my critical consciousness far before a textbook or journal article was ever read. Thank you mom for always providing the counter narrative, even when I didn’t want to hear it. I would also like to thank the rest of my family for their kind words of praise throughout my graduate school experience. Dad, you always say how proud you are of me, and each time, it means more to me than you’ll ever know.

Last, to my dear niece Hannah. We have both learned that being the voice of those who are often not heard is sometimes a lonely and heartbreaking path. What makes it easier, is knowing I am doing it with you.
DEDICATION

To My Students

Past, Present, and Future

You are my Motivation
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best-educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.”

-President Barack Obama

(2010)

As is typical for numerous reports from the U.S. Department of Education, *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, begins with this crisis statement by the President (Morrell, 2010). While it is imperative to address this change in international educational standing and revisit our educational goals as a nation, Morrell (2010) suggests,

Coming from a criticalist standpoint, there is much to discuss, including the sociohistorical and political contexts of our so-called educational crisis, the framing of the issue in a way that blames teachers, and the absence of discussions of power and ideology. (p. 146)

In order to address the power and ideology Morrell (2010) is referring to, one must take a moment to analyze our current educational system; a system that has returned to a back to basics philosophy with the No Child Left Behind Act that suggests the need for students to master particular skills and demonstrate their knowledge and growth with criterion-referenced tests. At the same time, Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) suggest that
in this educational climate of global competitiveness, schools are being asked to produce, “new knowledge workers, with capabilities such as analytical thinking, independence and creativity” (as cited in Comber & Nichols, 2004, p. 44). This conflict produces tensions at every level of policy and practice.

An additional complexity to our current educational system is that the population of students continues to become more diverse, while the teaching population remains predominantly white and female. According to Giroux (1999) the recognition that race, “as a set of attitudes, values, lived experiences, and affective identification, has become a defining feature of American life” is essential when discussing our educational system and pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, Giroux (1999) argues “However arbitrary and mythic, dangerous and variable, the fact is that racial categories exist and shape the lives of people differently within existing inequalities of power and wealth” (p. 234).

An assumption of this study is that schools are influenced by Whiteness which is the understanding that race is connected to institutionalized power and privileges that benefit White Americans (Winant, 1997). It is also understood that the natural outcomes of an educational system that is not influenced by the cultural lives of its students and communities is going to be in a crisis similar to that which President Barack Obama was referring. For this reason, this study strives to understand elementary teachers’ perceptions of Whiteness and whether it influences their use of critical literacy practices. As Morrell (2010) states,

What we have is a lack of investment of our national economic capital and in our local human capital. Our investment has to be more than rhetorical, and the
resources have to fit that shared vision. Critical literacy educators are well positioned to articulate this shared vision. (p. 48).

According to the National Education Association (1997), more than 90% of teachers throughout the country are White. In high-poverty urban areas throughout the United States, students of color make up 69% of the total enrollment, (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1996) suggesting that white teachers are increasingly teaching children from racial, cultural, and class backgrounds different from their own (Johnson, 2002). Furthermore, because only a small percentage of students of color are in teacher education programs and preK-12 racially diverse student populations continue to grow, there is reason to believe that the racial and cultural divide between teachers and their students will continue to increase in the near future (Johnson, 2002).

One suggestion to assist with the overwhelming number of white teachers has been to recruit students of color “who bring diverse worldviews and discursive fields of reference to the teaching force” (Sleeter, 1993). In some states, in order to address the necessity of a more racially, culturally, and socially diverse teaching field, as well as to meet teacher shortages, alternative routes to licensure have been created. Unfortunately, Lacko-Kerr & Berliner (2002) concluded alternative routes to licensure such as Teach for America (TFA) were harmful educational polices and suggested the need to attend to the legal and moral issues that arise from their data, which indicates [market-driven policy-makers], are systematically providing an inferior education to the children of the poor. “They [children of the poor] start with academic difficulties and then through the policies we adopt we handicap them 20% more per year when we assign them classrooms staffed by under-certified teachers” (Lacko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002, p. 52).
Johnson (2002) suggests a different solution to the racial, cultural, and social divide between the teaching force and the student populations they encounter. Although the possible solution has received little attention from policy makers, Johnson (2002) wonders, “How can White preservice and in-service teachers learn to teach for racial and cultural diversity?” (p. 153). Although this question is considered an imperative component to the conversation, even more significant to me are questions about how Whiteness influences elementary teachers’ pedagogy, in particular, how teachers (preK-college) interrupt the notion of Whiteness in schools today. For this study, the problem of identifying whether Whiteness influences elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices to interrupt “White” culture that is dominant in American schools today is central.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether six white elementary teachers’ perception of Whiteness influences their critical literacy practices in elementary classrooms in an urban school district in a southwestern state. Using Hardiman’s model of White Identity Development (WID) (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) this study will specifically explore the phenomenon of Whiteness and whether teachers view themselves as having white privilege and advantage in American society. Using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model, this study also explores the instructional strategies employed by the teachers and categorizes them within this four-stage model. This study seeks to identify potential relationships between elementary teachers’ perception of Whiteness and their use of critical literacy practices.

This study is an explanatory multiple case study grounded in a constructivist
philosophical and epistemological perspective. It strives to identify elementary teachers’ perception of Whiteness and the influence of Whiteness on their use and/or lack of use of critical literacy practices. Interviews, observations, and small group discussions were used as data gathering techniques for this study. The sequence of data gathering techniques was initial interviews, classroom observations, small group discussions, classroom observations, and final interviews.

This research is advocacy oriented. As the sole researcher of this study, I realize that I have political and ideological motivations for completing this study. I want to push back against white power and privilege that is evident in schools today. I believe that teachers have biases, but I also believe they can change these biases. The advocacy component of this research strives to determine where elementary teacher biases come from, as well as if, and if so, how they can get rid of these biases. West (1993), states that it is difficult for people to work for liberation on behalf of others if they themselves are not emancipated. The emancipation West (1993) is referring to requires self-discovery, and specifically, reflection on how the racist society in which teachers live has shaped their identities and teaching practices.

**Operational Definitions**

**Whiteness**

For the purpose of this study, Whiteness is connected to institutionalized power and privileges that benefit White Americans (Winant, 1997). An assumed understanding for this study is that American legal, economic, and educational institutions are based on White cultural norms, hence privileging and serving the self-interest of the dominant White race. Based on the notion that race is a social construction rather than a biological
reality, Whiteness is seen as one more constructed racial category (Chubbuck, 2004). “Beyond its connection to power and privilege, Whiteness is best understood through the process of its social construction and its function in society… it is socially constructed through a process of negation, an assertion that it is not the “Other” (Chubbuck, 2004, p. 303). Acknowledging the reality of White privilege and its material effects helps clarify how institutionalized privilege and an erroneous belief in meritocracy produce racist outcomes and attitudes in society, schools, and classrooms (Chubbuck, 2004).

**Critical Literacy**

Rooted in critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), critical literacy questions the power, privilege, and oppression that are evident in text. Critical literacy encourages readers to resist hegemonic forces; Stevens and Bean (2007) state, “it [critical literacy] places students and teachers in a questioning frame of mind that moves beyond didactic, factual learning” (p. 7). This resistance to hegemonic forces often entails a call to action by those who are oppressed by text. Cherland and Harper (2007) argue that advocacy research is often a result of text analyst. They further explain:

At this time we consider research and scholarship in critical literacy(ies) as that which engages and challenges the relationship between textual practices and sociopolitical equitable, and democratic world. In this there can be no reading or teaching of the word that isn’t also a reading or teaching of the world. Moreover, to acknowledge and challenge the reading of the word-world is to connect critical literacy education to the possibility of radical social reform. (p. 25)
Topic Rationale

Self-Discovery and Professional Discovery

As a twenty-three year old elementary education graduate from Green Bay, Wisconsin, the idea of moving to a growing school district in the Southwestern part of the United States seemed the perfect way to begin my teaching career. Based on what I had read regarding student populations of the school where I was hired to teach, I expected my teaching Spanish minor would be helpful, as a majority of the students spoke Spanish as their first language. Wanting to teach a culturally and ethnically diverse student population was one of the most significant reasons for my cross-country move.

During my first year of teaching I had great academic freedom to practice with instructional strategies I believed met the needs of my individual students. I felt successful and better prepared every day, month, and year, yet at the same time, my academic freedom to teach as I saw fit was slowly removed. This is because the school where I was working was not making Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as noted in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (United States Department of Education, 2009). My principal was strongly encouraged by our region’s superintendent to implement scripted reading, writing, and math programs. AYP was measured by criterion-referenced test scores of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in our school, and according to the NCLB standards, our school was labeled as not achieving AYP for more than two years. Because we were not able to demonstrate sufficient progress on criterion-referenced tests, NCLB required that corrective action must take place. One corrective action was to institute and implement a new curriculum.
The standards remained the same, but I had lost the chance to use my pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987); I was forced to use scripted reading, writing, and math programs that had been provided by the school district. My teaching job suddenly became very technical. Because the students at my school did not demonstrate mastery of grade level content, I had lost my ability to use teaching strategies I believed were best for them. Instead, I was to follow a newly provided teaching script.

I will never forget sitting in a staff meeting when we received the news that our grade level should create common lesson plans because all of us would be teaching from the same teaching manuals. My principal called it “fidelity.” I called it something else. I was enraged. How was I going to keep the students’ interest with the basal textbook? How was I going to meet the needs of the students that didn’t speak English? How was I going to help the students who couldn’t read the English text? What about the lessons I had spent countless hours creating; I could no longer use them?

Now, nine years later, with a great deal of continued education I have realized my undergraduate and graduate degree had prepared me to be a culturally relevant teacher (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and the scripted programs that were infiltrating my school were removing my ability to be that teacher, that intellectual. As a graduate student, I began to unpack the notion of teacher as technician and teacher as intellectual and became aware of the systematic and institutionalized systems that often prevent people of color from being successful in our educational system (Freire, 1970).

Throughout this learning process and reflection regarding my teacher identity and my goals for teaching, I began to realize, especially when I spoke up once in a staff meeting about “what we were going to do about the African American boys testing
poorly,” that I had quite a different perspective than my fellow teachers on the reasons why some students were successful in our educational system, while others were not. Through this development I began to discover Whiteness, both as a theory, as well as a practice that affected my own philosophy of education. These understandings led me to this study. I am curious about how other elementary teachers perceive Whiteness and how that in turn affects their literacy practices, especially their use (or lack of use) of critical literacy practices. I wonder, are there other teachers like me, or am I wholly alone and isolated?

**Conceptual Framework**

**Conceptual Framework: Whiteness**

In recent years, research on white racial identity has decreased in the field of counseling psychology; however, the theories of Whiteness and research on white peoples’ views of their race and race privilege has increased in a variety of other fields including critical race theory, cultural studies, feminist theory and other social science disciplines (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). Critiques of white racial identity research focus on the early research being primarily about the racial consciousness and racist attitudes of whites toward people of color; more recent work surveys Whites’ experience of their Whiteness in terms of race, privilege and power, and their cultural identification or attachment to an identity with the white group (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012).

This study will use Hardiman’s model of (WID) (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012), to investigate the phenomenon of Whiteness and whether the teacher participants in this study view themselves as having/not having white privilege and advantage in American society. Perhaps different from traditional uses of Hardiman’s WID model, this study
addresses white racial identity development as well as its relationship to understanding
Whiteness. In accordance with the body of research on Whiteness (Apple, 1998; Cooper,
2003), who is considered white, depends on what is at stake. Harris (1993) claims that
Whiteness is best thought of as a form of property, conceived of as legal or cultural
property, and therefore seen to provide material and symbolic privilege to Whites, those
passing as White, and sometimes to honorary Whites. Access to higher education or a
choice of safe neighborhoods in which to live are examples of these privileges.

For the purpose of this study, the stages of Hardiman’s WID (Hardiman & Keehn,
2012) were used as a conceptual model through which data was collected and analyzed.
In addition to describing the development of white racial identity through the model’s
stages, the model will serve as a reference in understanding how white teachers negotiate
Whiteness in elementary classrooms and schools.

Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) includes five stages of white
racial identity development in which a white person begins with no awareness of him or
herself as a racial being and can move to an antiracist white identity (Hardiman & Keehn,
2012). These five stages are Naïveté, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition, and
Internalization (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). Characteristically, people, usually children,
in the stage of Naïveté lack awareness and consciousness about race and racism. The
Acceptance stage occurs when white people discover and begin to internalize racist
programming. While in this stage, white people often believe in white supremacy and the
innate inferiority of people of color, though typically covertly and at least subconsciously,
rather than only in the more easily imagined example of the actively and deliberately
racist Skinhead. Resistance occurs when white people consciously recognize and, often,
begin to feel guilty about their Whiteness, and thus spend most of their time with people of color as a way of avoiding their Whiteness. During Redefinition, white people begin to investigate white privilege, in particular their own white privilege. When white people reach the Internalization stage they become committed to taking action against racism (Hardiman and Keehn, 2012).

For the purpose of this study, these five stages will be used to identify the development of the participants’ perceptions of Whiteness in an applied manner. Naiveté will describe the study participant who lacks an awareness and consciousness about race and racism (as suggested earlier, this is rare in adults, though often feigned). Acceptance will be ascribed to participants who express discovery of racist programming, including belief in white supremacy and innate inferiority of people of color on some level. Resistance will be used to characterize participants who express guilt about their Whiteness. Participants who express interest in examining white privilege, including their own white privilege, will be seen as in the Redefinition stage. Finally, participants will be seen as in the Internalization stage if/when they express commitment to disrupting Whiteness (Chubbuck, 2004).

**Conceptual Framework: Critical Literacy**

In order to assess the ideal impacts of critical literacy on elementary literacy teachers’ praxis, a common understanding of critical literacy is required. Freebody and Luke (1990) describe critical literacy as one of the four processes a reader should employ when encountering text. The critical literacy process involves students learning their role as a text analyst. “Under the heading of text analyst we include an expanded notion of what has traditionally been called critical reading” (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p. 13). It
also calls for the reader to pay close attention to the language and idea systems that are used within a particular text. A text analyst understands that the writer has covertly positioned the reader into ordering their sense-making procedures from a specific ideological perspective (Freebody & Luke, 1990). According to Stevens and Bean (2007) this process forces the reader to explicitly explore and discuss the ways in which text is being used to shape discourses and social practices. “Critical literacy views text meaning making as a process of construction with a particularly critical eye toward elements of the particular historical, social, and political contexts that permeate and foreground any text” (Stevens & Bean, 2007, p. 6).

Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model will also be used in this study as a conceptual model assisting in data collection and analysis. The first of these processes is code breaking during which students learn the relationship between spoken sounds and writing symbols, as well as the contents among that relationship. Freebody and Luke (1990) address the complex system that is learned by children during this process,

while English is largely alphabetic, the fact that spoken language changes more rapidly than does the written and the fact that there are 44 sounds in English and 26 letters together result in a slippery set of conventions that are at work in current English script. (p. 8)

The second of these processes occurs when students encounter texts as text participants, which involves them in developing the intellectual resources to engage in the meaningful understanding of the text discourse in and of itself. This process of comprehension calls upon the reader to, “draw inferences connecting textual elements and background
knowledge required to fill out the unexplicated aspects of text” (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p. 8). The third process includes the social aspect of reading and involves the student recognizing their role as a text user (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Through social interactions around literacy we learn our position as reader and our instinct of what and how to use a text. When children are quite young this process happens when parents and children discuss a character’s motivation in choice making, or disappointment in the ending of a story. In the classroom, this process happens with teacher-student discussion. During such discussion, the teacher sometimes takes for granted the students have comprehended the text and, thus, asks the students to make inferences from the text and support their inferences with evidence from the text. Through extensive modeling and conversational interaction between students and texts, this process then becomes one that students take on as their own while reading independently or conversing about text they have read. The fourth process Freebody and Luke (1990) include as one of the four processes a reader should employ when encountering text includes students learning their role as a text analyst. This process calls for the reader to pay close attention to the language and idea systems that are used within a particular text. Although the writer may attempt to be factual or neutral in their presentation of text, a text analyst understands that all texts are written by people with particular orientations and dispositions to the information (Freebody & Luke, 1990).

**Brief Review of Case Study Method**

This study is an explanatory multiple case study grounded in a constructivist philosophical and epistemological perspective. The essence of this study strives to identify plausible relationships shaping the phenomenon of teachers’ perceptions of
Whiteness and whether it influences the use of critical literacy practices. Using Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and Freebody and Luke’s (Freebody & Luke, 1990) four resources model as conceptual models to interpret data from interviews, observations, and small group discussions, this study will explore the following questions: How does Whiteness influence elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices? How do elementary teachers negotiate Whiteness in elementary classrooms? How do elementary teachers define and implement critical literacy practices?

Case study methodology is the appropriate method for this study because it seeks to clarify the understanding of experiences. According to Stake (2007), this clarification process can be thought of as “naturalistic generalization.”

A case study provides vicarious instances and episodes that merge with existing icons of experience… Sometimes an existing generalization is reinforced; sometimes modified as a result of the case study, sometimes exploded into incomprehensibility…Qualitative case study is valued for its ability to capture complex action, perception, and interpretation. And from case study reports pour vignettes and narratives that feed into the naturalistic generalizations of readers and writers. (p. 3)

Case study methodology allows for the opportunity to use many different data sources of evidence. The use of multiple data sources in case studies allows the researcher to address a broader range of historical and behavioral issues (Yin, 2009). Another advantage to the numerous data sources in case studies is evidence from more than one data source aid in the development of converging lines of inquiry, or a process
Yin (2009) describes as “triangulation and corroboration” (p. 116). When researchers have triangulated their data more than a single source of evidence supports the findings of the case study. “With data triangulation, the potential problems of construct validity can also be addressed because the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon” (Yin, 2009, p. 117).

**Scope and Significance**

**Assumptions**

This study makes several assumptions. First, race is a social construction rather than a biological reality, and, thus, Whiteness is but one more constructed racial category that brings with it exclusive access to certain privileges (Chubbuck, 2004). Second, this study assumes individuals progress through a somewhat formative development and understanding of Whiteness. Third, the context in which most United States schools operate is under some sort of power and privilege associated with Whiteness. Fourth, as Hytten and Adkins (2001) recognize in their work, this study is also based on the assumption that it is valuable to use Whiteness to critique and challenge institutional configurations and discourses and how they convey White privilege because it will assist the educational world to move beyond attempts to combat racism by merely individualistically, “thinking differently about people of color” (p. 435).

Fifth, this study assumes that critical literacy practices are necessary in order to overcome the current crisis facing public school teachers in the United States, which stems from a variety of socio-economic-political forces empowered by a corporate pedagogy (Giroux, 2010). These forces include an attack on the welfare state, neoliberals disinvestment in public education, the replacement of critical pedagogical practices with
instrumental modes of training, and an ongoing attempt to destroy teachers unions (Giroux, 2010). Critical thinking, stretching of the imagination or developing a sense of civic responsibility amongst students have little value in corporate pedagogy (Giroux, 2011).

Sixth, this study assumes that teaching is often reduced to a set of strategies used to teach pre-specified subject matter, which in turn becomes synonymous with a method, technique, or the view of a particular set of skills (Giroux, 2010). Critical pedagogy, rejects this notion, and is situated as a political and moral context. It is political because it is connected to the formation of acquisition of agency, which sheds light on the ways in which knowledge, identities, and authority are constructed in agencies of power (Giroux, 2010).

**Limitations**

A possible limitation to this study is that the participants teach only at the elementary level. With this in mind, the research will seek to identify possible theories and analytic generalizations (Yin, 2009) that can be reasonably related to teaching populations at various levels. The limited sample size may also be a possible limitation of this study. Yin (2009) addresses this limitation of case studies in general stating, “Case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (p. 15).

Another possible limitation to the study is the insider status of the researcher. It is possible that the participant-researcher relationship may be influenced by the fact that I am a white female teacher myself. Merriam (2009) states that the interviewer-respondent interaction is a complex phenomenon and both parties bring, “biases, predispositions, and
physical characteristics that affect the interaction and the data elicited” (p. 109). A skilled researcher accounts for these factors and takes a stance that is nonjudgmental, sensitive, and respectful of the respondent.

**Significance**

The teaching population continues to remain fairly homogeneous: white, middle-class, and female, while the population of the students we serve in the United States continues to become increasingly more diverse. The findings of this study will be significant to teachers and teacher educators who seek to make connections between Whiteness or WID and critical literacy teaching strategies that may interrupt white privilege and power, and thus hold the potential to improve student learning outcomes, especially for minority students. Because many teachers, especially white teachers, have low expectations of students who belong to racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups other than their own (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Irvine 1990), these teachers and their white teacher educator counterparts, have an ethical obligation to our nation’s children to develop cultural competencies, including antiracist pedagogy, in coming to understandings of how Whiteness and the absence of critical literacy practices have shaped their thinking and teaching (Darling-Hammond, MacDonald, Snyder, Whitford, Ruscoe, & Fickel, 2000). This study will provide a framework for teachers and teacher educators to use as they begin to unpack the lofty notions of Whiteness and critical pedagogy, in order to enact socially just classroom praxis.

**Chapter Summary and Dissertation Overview**

Chapter one provides a personal and professional rationale for a multiple case study of teachers’ perceptions of Whiteness and its potential to influence critical literacy
practices in elementary classrooms in an urban school district in a Southwestern state. This chapter also explains how Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model were used as conceptual models to analyze study participants’ perceptions of Whiteness and their understanding and implementation of critical literacy practices.

Chapter two will review the theoretical and empirical literature regarding Whiteness and critical literacy. The review thoroughly discusses historical and current literature in both fields, while also addressing a gap in the literature, which supports the need for this study. The methodological approach and design of the study are discussed in detail in chapter three. This discussion includes important attention to the ethical considerations of the study, especially the informed consent process for the study participants. Chapter four shares the findings of the study while chapter five discusses the implications of these findings.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter one introduces theoretical and empirical research regarding Whiteness and critical literacy. It also provides a personal and professional rationale for a multiple case study of teachers’ perceptions of Whiteness and its potential to influence critical literacy practices in elementary classrooms in an urban school district in a Southwestern city in the United States. Additionally, chapter one provides operational definitions for this study and includes a thorough description of the conceptual models: Hardiman’s White Identity Development (WID) model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model, that were used to analyze study participants’ perceptions of Whiteness as well as understandings and implementation of critical literacy practices. Last, a justification is made for case study methodology and the assumptions, limitations, and significance of the study are discussed.

Chapter two discusses the theoretical and empirical literature regarding Whiteness and critical literacy. The review justifies the need for this study by examining the historical and current literature in both fields and identifies a point of connection in the literature.

Identity Intersubjectivity

White Racial Identity

As a pioneer in racial identity development Cross (1971) developed the Black identity development model in which he argues Black Americans constitute a distinct cultural group that has experienced a history of systemic oppression as a racial minority. Later, Hardiman (1982) developed the first model of White identity, describing how
members of a dominant racial identity group consciously develop racial identity, which can be described as, “shifts in worldview or consciousness in sequential stages” (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). Hardiman and Jackson (1992) refer to stage as,

A convenient metaphor for states of consciousness or worldviews that are developmental in nature and that change over time in response to experience and knowledge to become more complex and more adequate internal reference points for examining and understanding one’s own beliefs, values, and behaviors. (p. 23)

Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) assumes WID is influenced by White racism in the United States.

Hardiman’s WID model includes five stages. (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). These five stages are Naïveté, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition, and Internalization (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). People, usually children, in the stage of Naïveté lack awareness and consciousness about race and racism and may be vulnerable to a worldview. While someone in the Naïveté stage may not be feel hostile or fearful of people different than themselves, the may not always feel comfortable in situations where they are not part of the majority. When transitioning to the Acceptance stage an individual begins to learn an ideology about their own racial group as well as other racial groups. They begin to internalize messages that Black means less and White is equated with power, beauty, authority, and normal. Furthermore, moving from Naïveté to Acceptance, some white people may begin to realize that within institutions that are formal and informal rules that permit some behavior and prohibit other behaviors while also understanding there are negative consequences when stepping out of these rules (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992).
The Acceptance stage occurs when white people discover and begin to internalize racist programming. While in this stage, white people often accept messages about racial group membership, dominant group members, dominant cultures and inferiority of target group members. Within this stage, a white person may be passive or active. An individual in the Passive Acceptance stage may take Whiteness for granted and see it as normal, hold subtly racist or dominant group beliefs, or view "Others" as culturally deprived and feel they need to assimilate (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). Characteristics of an individual in the Active Acceptance stage include pride in being white, membership in White supremacist organizations, and vocalization expressing White superiority (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). Transitioning from the Acceptance to Resistance stage can be painful for some white people because they may become aware that their experiences contradict the accepted worldview, which may be a result of a number of events that have had a cumulative effect. While transitioning they might feel guilt or embarrassment and be afraid of what the implications of this new awareness might be (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992).

Resistance occurs when white people begin to understand and recognize racism in complex and multiple manifestations. Similar to Acceptance, there are characteristics of someone in the Passive and Active stages of Resistance. An individual in the Passive Resistance stage possesses critical consciousness of existence of racism and white people’s relationship to it. They are aware of the problem, but they feel personally impotent to fix it and take little or no action and make no behavioral changes (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). White people in the Active Resistance stage sense a personal ownership of the problem and are aware that they too are racist. Other characteristics of
someone in this stage include but are not limited to realizing that confronting and changing the white community is the responsibility of Whites who are antiracist and indiscriminately challenging racism (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). Moving from the Resistance to Redefinition stage can be especially confusing for some white people. Individuals in the Redefinition stage may not realize what their racial group membership means to them and are sometimes struggling to understand what it means to be white and antiracist.

After conflict during Resistance, Whites move beyond this struggle and toward a new racial identity. They feel pride in being White without superiority and recognize that all cultures and racial group have unique traits that enrich the human experience (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). Last, when white people reach the Internalization stage they become committed to taking action against racism (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). They begin to integrate newly defined values, beliefs, and behaviors into all aspects of life and these new values begin to occur naturally and are internalized (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992).

According to Terry (as cited in Clark & O’Donnell, 1999), in order for white people to own white racial identity they must: see racism, admit that it exists, acknowledge that they benefit from it, and learn to define it as separate and distinct from racial prejudice that people from all racial groups have toward another because white people’s racial prejudice is reinforced at the institutional levels of society. Clark and O’Donnell (1999) state, “the process of transformation in our racial identity development as white Americans ultimately forces us to embrace ourselves as both racist and antiracist” (p. 2).
Teacher Identity

The United States teaching population has looked the same for a number of years now. Teachers are overwhelmingly represented as white, female, monolingual, and middle-class (McVee, 2004). On the other hand, students are becoming increasingly diverse in cultural identity, ethnicity, race, socio-economic class, and language (McVee, 2004). With this educational landscape an “us” v. “them” dichotomy has evolved and in turn, pedagogical practices and ideologies have been suggested to meet the needs of “them.” Anthropologist, Rosaldo (1993) notes that within interpretations of culture, “them,” can be problematic because our attempts to make others more visible often lead “us” to focus on “Others” without an increased awareness of self. The significance of Rosaldo’s (1993) work is that it argues against views of culture that essentialize individuals or groups. Within the educational setting students are often identified with one group and then are intentionally or unintentionally assigned the characteristics of that group.

Important in the formation of identity and teacher identity, is for teachers to reflect not only on their perceptions of “Others’” cultures, but their understandings of and interpretations of their own culture and their positions within it (McVee, 2004). Vital for all teachers, but perhaps white teachers in particular, is to recognize their conceptualization of power and its reproduction in classroom practice. Clark and O’Donnell (1999) state that because the curriculum in most of our nation’s schools is Eurocentric, male-oriented, and middle-class, most schools continue to mark the “Other” as different, which in this context means deficient. McVee (2004) suggests teachers should challenge and identify existing notions of literacy, culture, and constructions of
self and “Other” within our society (p. 896). One must be careful however not to make “us” the “other.” For the purpose of this study, that would mean putting white people in the center of the discussion yet again, which would further perpetuate the “us” v. “them” dichotomy.

A teacher’s identity is built upon the unique histories they bring to their pedagogy (Zancanella, 1991). Agee (2004) further explains teacher identity by stating, “I propose that a teacher also brings a desire to construct a unique identity as a teacher and that in the various contexts of her/his work; she/he negotiates and renegotiates that identity” (p. 749). Other research notes the common notion that teacher identity is dynamic and that a teacher’s identity shifts over time due to a variety of factors (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Bejjard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004).

In order to make sense of the dynamic characteristics of identity, Gee (2001) suggests humans embody multiple forms of identity as they operate across different contexts. Gee (2001) also recognizes that identity suggests a “kind of person” within a particular context; while one might have a “core identity” there are multiple forms of this identity as one operates across different contexts (p. 99). Gee (2001) argues there are ways people can be perceived: nature-identity, institutional-identity, discourse-identity, and affinity-identity. Nature-identity results from one’s natural state. Institutional-identity results from a position recognized from authority. Discourse-identity stems from the discourse of others about oneself and affinity-identity is determined by one’s practices in relation to external groups (Gee, 2001).

The theoretical lens through which teacher identity is viewed results in numerous definitions as well. Shotter (1989) saw “the Self” as constructed in response to a sense of
“Other.” “I act simply ‘out of’ my own plans and desires, unrestricted by the social circumstances of my performances… My action in being this ‘situated’ takes on an ethical or moral quality” (p. 144). A view of identity within the sociocultural perspective makes teaching identity both product (a result of influences on the teacher) and process (a form of ongoing interaction within teacher development) (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

**White Teacher Identity: Intersubjectivity**

According to Chávez Chávez (as cited in Clark & O’Donnell, 1999, p. 1) 80% of all in-service teachers in the United States are White. Clark and O’Donnell (1999) state that when discussing issues of race, specifically antiracism, in multicultural educational contexts, those who are often the least receptive are white students. Accordingly, the multiple identity intersubjectivity of white teachers must be addressed.

Because white identity and teacher identity fluctuate for teachers, it is hard to imagine how, and the extent to which intersubjectivity affects white teacher identity. Although transformation from racist to antiracist is generally difficult, Gannon (1999) suggests teachers need to get uncomfortable [with being White and becoming antiracist] in order to make significant changes in our classrooms. “Change happens with critical questions, open dialogue, and a willingness to leave our comfort zones as students and educators” (Gannon, 1999, p. 156). Teachers need to understand their white teacher identity in order to address the complex issues of racism, white privilege, and the white-centered culture and curriculum of schools. If teachers don’t feel comfortable with their own white teacher identity, how can they teach children about these complicated issues?

As Howard (2006) states, “we cannot begin to dismantle the legacy of dominance without first engaging Whites in a deep analysis of our own role in perpetuating injustice” (p. 99).
Whiteness

Common understanding exists among researchers that Whiteness is linked to hegemonic issues of power and privilege linked to its social construction (Chubbuck, 2004). This shared realization dismantles however, when discussing the best means for disrupting racist effects of Whiteness. While one group of scholars has suggested a reconfiguring or rearticulating of Whiteness into an anti-racist White identity (Apple, 1998; Giroux, 1997), others call for an abolition of Whiteness (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996; Roediger, 1991).

According to Chubbuck (2004), “Whiteness is neither new nor separate from racism; Whiteness comprises ideologies, attitudes, and actions of racism in practice” (p. 303). Conversations regarding Whiteness can move us to a more sophisticated perspective on racism; one in which we do not simply think differently about people of color, but instead begin to critique and challenge “institutional configurations and discourses [and] how they convey White privilege” (Hyatt & Adkins, 2001, p. 435).

Transformative Multicultural Stance

Banks and McGee (2004) suggest educators take a stance in which they challenge structural policies that undermine the academic success of students of color. Using a qualitative research design, Dass-Brailsford (2007) completed a study using transformative approach as their theoretical framework. The purpose of this study was to describe how students understand power, privilege, and oppression that are transformed through a combined approach of increased knowledge, experiential engagement, and involvement in self-reflective activities, describe the instructional process that supports transformational learning, and discuss some of the challenges in teaching a multicultural
course that values student transformation. Rooted in Freire (2002), this framework suggests individuals can be transformed through a process of critical reflection that changes the attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and emotional reactions that constitute meaning schemes. “The transformative approach is based on the premise that because meaning schemes are socially constructed and culturally appropriated they can be unlearned” (Dass-Brailsford, 2007, p. 60).

The participants in the Dass-Brailsford (2007) study were 30 White graduate students who were earning a Master’s Degree in counseling and psychology and were attending a small, private Northeastern university, which is racially homogenous. Findings from this study indicate that it is possible to change student attitudes with thoughtful classroom instruction that assists students in unlearning “racial attitudes and replace them with more culturally inclusive beliefs” (Dass-Brailsford, 2007, p. 59). The participants weekly journal entries, reflection papers, and final self reflection paper allowed the researcher to conclude, “Compared to when they began the course, students displayed a better understanding of the impact of race, power, and privilege in their own lives and the lives of those racially, culturally, and socioeconomically different from themselves” (Dass-Brailsford, 2007, p. 66). Using Helms (1994) White Racial Identity Model (WRIM) as a conceptual framework in the study, an objective of the course was, “White people must accept their Whiteness and its cultural implication to develop a healthy, nonracist, White identity” (Dass-Brailsford, 2007, p. 75).

While the data and discussion of this study support the notion that the participants’ attitudes were changed throughout the multicultural course, one must wonder the lasting effects of this change. Furthermore, while making progress on the non-linear path of
white racial identity, how do we determine when enough progress is enough? Dass-Brailsford (2007) found that the students who participated in the study achieved “personal transformation and a change in their racial identity; they developed racial identities that were more racially inclusive, and increased their awareness of the role that power, privilege, and oppression played in the lives of people” (p. 71). Similar to other studies involving White teachers, the conversation piece that is missing is whether these students have realized their role in pushing back against institutionalized racism that is evident in our schools.

**Disrupting Whiteness**

Chubbuck (2004) conducted a study in order to explore how unexamined racism plays out in everyday pedagogy and policy. By using a series of interviews and consecutive classroom observations as data collection, the researcher concluded that neither an abolition of Whiteness nor a rearticulation of Whiteness sufficiently explains the complex understanding of how the disruption of Whiteness is influenced by the interplay of personal identity, the need to maintain personal congruence, and the cultural constraints of Whiteness. Both participants, white secondary literacy teachers, expressed some of the knowledge, “that rearticulation requires to disrupt Whiteness and the desire to do so that abolition would require” (Chubbuck, 2004, p. 328) and “despite examples of classroom practice and activist involvement indicating movement in the direction of disrupting Whiteness” (Chubbuck, 2004, p. 328), there were instances where the participants displayed elements of Whiteness and its racist outcomes. In other words, “the outcome of their practice and policy, did not match their intention” (Chubbuck, 2004, p. 329). While one participant took on a maternal role, which may have caused her to focus
on protecting her students of color, in turn lowering her expectations for the students, this role caused a continued trajectory of inequity, which did not provide her students the necessary skills they would need to succeed academically and socially. The other participant expressed Whiteness as property (C. I. Harris, 1993) by defending a high school tracking system that established him as an insider with privilege over a system of tracking a non-dominant group (Chubbuck, 2004).

Cooper (2003) completed a case study of white teachers who had been identified as effective teachers by key black educators of an historically black school district in order to discover the teachers’ beliefs and teaching practices and compared these findings to the growing body of literature that explains effective beliefs and strategies of successful black teachers in black communities. Using culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and cultural synchronization (Irvine, 1990) as the conceptual frameworks, the researcher collected data by means of interviews and classroom observations. Cooper (2003) found the white participants have much in common with black teachers who have been successful in black communities. The researcher concluded that the participants focused on reading and writing, with a scripted program that focused on sub-skills, maintained an authoritative discipline style and viewed themselves as a second mother. Another similarity to this body of research that Cooper (2003) found through interviews was that the participants displayed some sort of racial consciousness.

Different from the literature of effective black teachers is that the white participants in this study discussed their investment in the children’s educational triumph over the effects of societal racism, but there was not evidence of the teachers discussion of race and racism in the student’s own lives during classroom observations. During
group member checks, teachers justified this lack of conversation unanimously agreeing they feared such discussions might be misunderstood by administrators, parents, and the community at large (Cooper, 2003).

Cooper (2003) states that this “failure to tackle racism openly with the children undermined the teachers’ espoused beliefs and practices around respect for and empathy with the Black community at large, including a willingness to learn from it” (p. 425). Although this is true, it is possible that all of the findings from this study lack an aggressive means of disrupting Whiteness. While focusing on reading and writing with a scripted program that focused on sub-skills, maintaining an authoritative discipline style, and viewing themselves as a second mother may be success indicators of black teachers in black communities, these practices are a far cry from dismantling the structure and power associated with Whiteness and our current educational system.

Significant in a recent study by Johnson (2002) was what Anderson and Jack (1991) refer to as “the absence of a presence.” Using qualitative research strategies Johnson (2002) attempted to answer the question: How do White teachers learn to go beyond the color-blind approach and “see” race? The six white educators who were participants in the study identified early memories of race that focused on identifying a racial “Other,” not on Whiteness or of themselves as racial beings (Johnson, 2002). Johnson (2002) states,

Participants did not discuss how they continue to benefit from White privilege, even when they acknowledge its existence…Failure to acknowledge the structural aspects of White privilege made it difficult for them to view race as part of a hierarchy and locate their position within that hierarchy. (p. 162)
Critical Literacy

As with many terms used in the educational arena, critical literacy is a phrase that has developed various meanings to different scholars. When making the case for a connection of critical literacy and advocacy research, Cherland and Harper (2007) state the notion of what constitutes critical literacy is shifting and changing even among advocacy researchers. In the opinion of many advocacy scholars, the unsettling politics underwriting critical literacy and its demands for social change have been weakened to a much softer discourse (Cherland & Harper, 2007). Lankshear (2007) argues the meaning of the word “critical” is used without a connection to a theoretical position which makes its meaning difficult to understand. In one instance, critical thinking may be the answer to improving the economy, but on the other hand critical literacy is sometimes advocated to making students more powerful language users (Lankshear, 2007). Although the phrase critical literacy appears in the educational discourse, it appears to be with much hope but not much meaning (Cherland & Harper, 2007).

Implications for Critical Literacy

The ideal impact of critical literacy is fueled by a belief that literacy education can be used as a vehicle for promoting social change (Freire, 1970). By improving social and educational inequities, especially the school failures of significant groups of students, particularly those of lower socioeconomic status, or those from ethnic minority communities, (Cherland & Harper, 2007) the ideal ambitions of critical literacy have been addressed.

An example of the ideal impact of critical literacy can be found in the work of Irizarry (2011). As a new teacher education faculty member in a tenure-track position,
Irizarry (2011) chose to teach a high school course in addition to his responsibilities at the university in order to help keep him connected with the urban youth with which he was accustomed to working. Through conversations with the high school Latino population he was teaching, he realized that their years in public schools had taught them they were not smart (Irizarry, 2011). In order to address the sociocultural and sociopolitical realities of these students’ lives, Irizarry, with the help of his high school students, created Future Urban Educators conducting Research to transform Teacher Education (FUERTE). By familiarizing the students with Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) the group began to explore the educational experiences of Latino youth and other students who have been historically underserved by schools. This work led to the creation of a co-authored book with Irizzary and his students: *The Latinization of U.S. Schools: Successful Teaching and Learning in Shifting Cultural Contexts* (Irizarry, 2011). This work is an exemplary model of the ideal impact of critical literacy because it allowed the students to drive the learning and instruction, which resulted in a publication where the students who had been silenced, were now heard.

**Critical Literacy and the Political Landscape**

In the era of No Child Left Behind, (NCLB) a strong emphasis was placed on high-stakes testing in order to close the equity or achievement gap. Although some teachers, principals, and researchers have expressed the importance of literacy education that is about equitable access to powerful ways of reading and writing in our local and global community, to those in charge of funding, managing and shaping educational policy, these ideas have proved insignificant (Luke, 2012). Luke (2012) articulately explains the lasting effect of NCLB polices:
How convenient it has been for many politicians and bureaucrats (those who remain in their positions and thus can be held accountable), media pundits and public intellectuals, scientists and policy advisors who advocated the ‘fix’ of more testing, standardization, and market competition to now sit silent in the face of, literally, hundreds of published studies that show that not only have their social policy experiments not ‘closed the equity gap’ between rich and poor communities, between mainstream and cultural and linguistic minorities, but that they have led to a host of collateral and unintended negative effects. (p. 9)

One would like to believe the evidence of the NCLB era has encouraged policy makers to change the direction of our nation’s educational policy, but the continual mandates of high-stakes testing has continued throughout the 21st century. On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). This legislation was designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education (United States Department of Education, 2009). According to the United States Department of Education, (2009) the ARRA lays the foundation for education reform by supporting investments in innovative strategies that are most likely to lead to improved results for students, long-term gains in school and school system capacity, and increased productivity and effectiveness. The ARRA provided $4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, (RTTT) which is a competitive program, designed to encourage and reward states that are creating conditions for education innovation and reform. In order to receive funds from RTTT, states had to complete an application indicating how they were making efforts to achieve significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student
achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers. States also had to prove they were implementing ambitious plans in these four areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in a global economy
- Building data systems to measure student growth and success
- Informing teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction, recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most
- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools (United States Department of Education, 2009).

The language of RTTT makes it obvious that our high-stakes testing era is not over, but continuing. Although the unrealistic standards of every child meeting grade level proficiency, as was the expectation of NCLB are notions of the past, the growth model used to measure student achievement, school success rates, and teacher effectiveness still rely on one criterion-referenced test.

**Critical Thinking and Critical Literacy**

Cooper and White (2012) used action research in an elementary school to answer the question: How can elementary teachers in urban schools around the world best help learners-at-risk in literacy education and thus improve their chances for future success in education and life? Throughout the team’s initial small group discussions, it became clear that critical literacy was the ideology necessary to advance their initiative of helping learners-at-risk improve their chances for future success in education and life (Cooper &
white, 2012). The results from this study indicate that to move forward with a critical literacy perspective in an elementary school, the term critical literacy needs to be clearly defined, discussed, and revisited frequently, not only with the staff but with the students as well. While the action research team decided that moving towards critical thinking might have been an improvement from their initial literacy strategies, they considered the need for continued development and understanding of critical literacy (cooper & white, 2012).

vanSluys, Lewison and Flynt, (2006) acted as researchers and cofacilitators of the Critical Literacy in Action teacher research group as they strived to use multiple qualitative methodologies to compare the results of the literacy discourse among two sixth grade students. Important for this review, is the use of Luke and Freebody’s (1997) four resources model to interpret and analyze data. Using this model allowed the researchers to easily identify elements of each of the four typologies; code breakers, meaning makers, text users, and text analyst (van Sluys, Lewison, & Flynt, 2006). “Because the four resources model focuses on more than just critical practices, the researchers were able to examine all of the [participants’] literacy practices as well as the frequency of particular types of practices when using this model” (van Sluys, Lewison, & Flynt, 2006, p. 214). Using this conceptual framework allowed the researchers to evaluate critical thinking (text user) and critical literacy (text analyst).

professional development

as mentioned earlier, cooper and white (2012) led an action research study striving to improve the likelihood for learners-at-risk to improve their chances for future success in education and life. While the action team realized the necessity for critical
literacy in their school, another conclusion made by this study was the need for professional development regarding critical literacy. Throughout the professional development process, teachers were able to share their insights and development using critical literacy strategies and were able to have their voices valued and heard (Cooper & White, 2012). It should also be noted that this action research team mentioned the great amount of time that needs to be devoted to professional development in order to ensure the teachers’ understanding and comfort level using critical literacy practices (Cooper & White, 2012).

Professional development and action research were relevant in the study completed by van Sluys, Lewison, and Flynt (2006). These researchers noted that they had been part of Critical Literacy in Action inquiry group with twelve K-6 teachers for five years (van Sluys, Lewison, & Flynt, 2006). The purpose of the monthly study groups and Saturday workshops was to investigate the teachers’ understanding of critical literacy, the efficacy of a professional development workshop model the researchers were pursuing, as well as the practices that accompanied teachers’ journeys (van Sluys, Lewison, & Flynt, 2006). This long-term commitment to supporting teachers’ professional development in the area of critical literacy further proves that understanding the ideology and implementing it in a classroom can take a lengthy amount of time, even with continued support.

Resistance

Using a teacher researcher conceptual framework explained as, “systematic intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work” (Cochran Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 23), Jewett and Smith (2003) investigated what happens when
university instructors introduce elementary teachers to critical literacy in their children’s literature class. Specifically, they wanted to know how teachers made sense of critical literacy and how they thought critical literacy fit into their teaching lives (Jewett & Smith, 2003). Based on a variety of qualitative data sources, the researchers concluded teachers gradually moved toward a broadening view of literacy, teachers needed to know more about how a critical literacy curriculum might be implemented in their classroom, and the teachers felt concerns about taking a critical approach. “Their resistance focused on two areas – their concern over the political nature of critical literacy and their responsibilities for using accurate texts with students” (Jewett & Smith, 2003, p. 74). Also significant was the teachers’ apprehensiveness to move away from pre-determined curricula and ways of teaching. This concern was linked to the political nature of teaching, particularly in a high-stakes testing and accountability era (Jewett & Smith, 2003).

**Funds of Knowledge**

When moving toward a critical stance in elementary literacy it is important teachers recognize the students’ funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Funds of knowledge refer to the knowledge students bring with them to school about their homes and their communities that are valuable resources for teaching and learning. When students are part of a standards-driven classroom, these funds of knowledge are often overlooked because they are not part of the curriculum that is deemed relevant. Unfortunately, some teachers do not recognize the connection between these funds of knowledge and the learning that is happening in the classroom.

In a study by Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, (1992) the researchers used home visits to get a better picture of the households in which students live. The purpose of the
study was to have teachers assume the role of learner when they visited the homes in order to establish a fundamentally new, more symmetrical relationship with the students and parents. Knowledge about the family and school matters were exchanged between the families and the teachers, which contributed to the authenticity of academic content and lessons (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

In an additional study focusing on home schooling and funds of knowledge Comber and Nichols (2004) analyzed one student’s experiences from pre-school through their first two years of schooling and gained a great deal of information about the young participant from visiting the child’s home and visiting with the parent. Through these interactions the researchers determined that, “though the family’s economic capital was below average, their cultural capital was relatively high” (Comber & Nichols, 2004, p. 48). While in kindergarten, however, the young student was identified by her teacher as a “below average student” and the researchers point out the following:

Early in Rose’s introduction to school, stratifications of the student group began forming…We saw her as watchful and cautious, trying to figure out how to engage with a new set of social conditions. At the same time, she began to be assessed and compared to other children. The tests used to determine children’s literacy levels focused on decontextualized decoding. These tests included alphabet and sight word recognition. Rose’s performance suggested gaps in her alphabetic knowledge. She also stumbled over simple words when reading aloud and her writing in comparison to other female peers was untidy. (p. 49)

With a focus on a “back to basics” mentality, the participant’s funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) were not considered significant throughout the many
lessons observed by the researchers, making the participant’s creative thinking skills her own, private, unarticulated, and unrecognized strengths, and making her a below average student in the eyes of the standardized educational arena (Comber & Nichols, 2004).

Kamler and Comber (2005) also promote the necessity of students’ funds of knowledge when they discuss their findings of a qualitative study in which twenty teachers volunteered and committed to a three-year research project. Through this teacher-researcher collective, the participants, “interrogated the issue of unequal literacy outcomes; teachers examined the effects of their own practices on different students; and they re-designed aspects of their literacy pedagogy to reconnect with their most alienated students” (Kamler & Comber, 2005, p. 122). Through home visits, interviews, informal chats with parents, informal interviewing and surveying of students, the teachers discovered the students were not ‘in-deficit’ (Comber & Kamler, 2004), “but young people whose potential resources remained invisible in the school context” (Kamler & Comber, 2005, p. 123).

In addition to expanding upon the necessity for teachers to investigate and regard students’ funds of knowledge, this study promotes a learning atmosphere where the teacher is a learner with the student (Freire, 1970). In an effort to move toward a critical literacy stance, the teachers must “be partners of the students in their relations with them” (Freire, 1970, p. 75).

**Third Space in Content Literacy**

Moving toward a critical stance in elementary education requires what Freire (1970) calls problem-posing education. “In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which
they find themselves” (Freire, 1970, p. 83). By using dialogue, students and teachers reflect on their position in the world and are able to articulate the knowledge they bring from resources other than school. In order to make a space for the knowledge that emerges from people’s home, community, and peers, first space, and the more formalized knowledge they encounter in school, second space, Moje, Ciechanowshi, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, and Collazo (2004) express the need for teachers to create third space.

Third space is constructed in an effort to make room for students’ various knowledge, such as the knowledge they bring from home, which was previously discussed, as well as Discourses. Gee (1996) defines Discourses as ways funds of knowledge, or networks and relationships, shape ways of knowing, reading, writing, and talking. Moje, et. al. (2004) argue the active integration of multiple funds of knowledge and Discourse is important to supporting youth in learning how to navigate the texts and literacy practices necessary for survival in school and the world they will be a part of beyond school. Funds of knowledge and Discourse are essential if educators want to construct classroom spaces that can integrate in and out of school literacy practices (Moje et al., 2004).

Through a study investigating seventh-graders funds of knowledge and Discourses regarding science literacy content, the researchers concluded the students had a great deal of background knowledge related to the science content being studied in the classroom, but they did not voluntarily choose to share their connections in the classroom setting (Moje et al., 2004). This evidence demonstrates the need for teachers to consciously create a third space where students engage in dialogue with peers and teacher to move literacy to a critical stance.
Filling the Gap: Whiteness and Critical Literacy

As the literature review indicates, racial identity models and critical literacy models are common and suggested means to gather informative data. This study adds to the existing body of knowledge in the field because it makes connections between two highly regarded conceptual models that currently have only been used in isolation. This study is essential in extending the research in this field because the use of these two conceptual models addresses how these ideas can work together to further the negotiation of Whiteness for the numerous white teachers in our nation as well as foster critical literacy skills within the diverse platform of American schools today. It is evident from the literature regarding Whiteness that there is a need to empower teachers to disrupt educational arenas where institutional racism is occurring. Furthermore, understanding and implementing critical literacy practices can be used to deconstruct power structures and therefore empower students and teachers.

While studies have been completed regarding Whiteness, participants have been chosen using a referral system based on nominations by community members, administration, and high-test score results (Cooper, 2002; Johnson, 2003). While the referral system can be justified in their particular studies, this study questions the validity of test scores that are often written from a dominant (white) perspective. This changes the definition of “successful” teacher in the eyes of the research. Were the teachers able to teach diverse students through a critical literacy lens or instead promote a hidden curriculum; one that promotes the ideas and concepts that are evident in criterion-referenced tests? By not using a nomination process for the participant pool, this study fills a gap in the literature because it investigates a “common” teacher in an urban school.
Chapter Summary

Chapter two provides a review of theoretical and empirical research in the fields of Whiteness and critical literacy. While comprehensively discussing the current and historical literature in these fields, chapter two also addresses a gap in the research that calls for the completed study.

Chapter three will clarify the methodological approach and design of the study in detail. The ethical considerations of this study will be specifically addressed, as well as the informed consent process for the study participants. Chapter four shares the findings of this study and chapter five discusses the implications of these findings.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter one provides a personal and professional rationale for a multiple case study of teachers’ perceptions of Whiteness and its potential to influence critical literacy practices in an elementary school in an urban school district in the Southwestern United States. Chapter one also describes the conceptual frameworks for the completed study. Chapter two reviews empirical and theoretical literature in the fields of Whiteness and critical literacy, addresses a gap in the literature, and provides a rationale for the completed study.

Chapter three will explain the methodological approach and design of the study. Chapter three will specify details regarding the informed consent process for the study participants, data sources, and data analysis procedures. Finally, chapter three explains the timeline in which the study was completed.

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether white teachers’ racial identity influences their use of critical literacy practices in elementary classrooms in an urban school district in the Southwestern United States. Using Hardiman’s model of White Identity Development (WID) this study explored the phenomenon of racial identity for six white elementary teachers and how, or if, these teachers view themselves as having white privilege and advantage in the U. S. society. Using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model, this study also explored the literacy instructional strategies employed by the teacher participants and categorized these practices within Freebody and Luke’s (1990) model.
Research Questions

In order to better understand white teacher racial identity and its potential relationship to critical literacy practices, this study addressed one main question and two ancillary questions. Because this study is an explanatory multiple case study, the questions guiding the research provided the possibility of various outcomes.

Main Research Question:

How does Whiteness influence elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices?

Ancillary Questions:

a) How do elementary teachers negotiate racial identity in elementary classrooms?

b) How do white elementary teachers define and implement critical literacy practices?

By answering these questions, this study identified potential relationships between white teachers’ racial identity and the critical literacy practices they do or do not use in their elementary classrooms. Additionally, this study explored how teacher educators and district leaders can foster a learning and teaching environment where students as well as pre-service and service elementary teachers have opportunities to negotiate their racial identities, and reflect upon how these identities influence their understanding and use of critical literacy philosophies and practices in the elementary classroom context.

Overall Approach

This study is an explanatory multiple case study grounded in a constructivist philosophical and epistemological perspective. The study identified plausible relationships shaping the phenomenon of white teachers’ racial identity and its influence
on the use of critical literacy practices. Further, explanatory case study research questions seek to explore what events, beliefs, and attitudes shape phenomenon; specific to this study, how the forces of white teacher racial identity interact to result in the phenomenon of critical literacy practices (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

According to Creswell (2007), case study is “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 63). The bounded system for this study is the group of six white, elementary, literacy teachers. Case study is especially useful for understanding a real-life phenomenon in depth by describing the important contextual conditions that are highly pertinent to the inquiry focus. This is consistent with the goal and context of this study in that the focus was to describe the real-life phenomenon of critical literacy practices in elementary classrooms and the particular contextual conditions of the white teachers’ racial identities in which the study took place.

Moreover, case study is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Merriam (2009) argues that these three characteristics define a qualitative case study. This study is particularistic because it focused on a particular situation, the elementary literacy classroom. This study is descriptive because the end product is a rich description of the phenomenon being studied, white teacher racial identity and critical literacy practices. This study is heuristic because the insights it generated foster greater understanding of the relationship between white teacher racial identity and the use of critical literacy practices in elementary classrooms (Merriam, 2009).

This case study employs a constructivist philosophical perspective asserting that reality is socially constructed, and that there is not one single, observable reality, but,
instead, multiple realities, or interpretations of a single reality and that it is context-bound (Merriam, 2009). Instead of looking to find knowledge, the researcher seeks to construct knowledge. According to Creswell (2007),

In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences…These meanings are varied and multiple leading the research to look for the complexity of views…Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals’ lives. (p. 20)

Qualitative researchers generally strive to understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. Constructivist-inclined qualitative researchers seek to describe, understand and interpret human reality; in this study this reality is whether white teachers’ racial identity influences their critical literacy practices in elementary classrooms.

A case study approach is the appropriate methodology for this study because the questions in the study strive to answer “how” and “why.” The study also explains a present circumstance and provides an in-depth description of a social phenomenon, which are indicators of case study methodology. Although this study used purposeful sampling, it did not seek participants who have experienced the same phenomenon, as is the case for phenomenology, and it did not begin with multiple individuals who have responded to action or participated in a process about a central phenomenon, which lends itself to grounded theory methodology. Ethnographers seek sites or individuals using purposeful
sampling, similar to case study, but rather than seeking a “case” or bounded system, ethnographers seek a cultural group to which the researcher is a stranger. This further justifies the case study methodological approach for this study.

Case study methodologists (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Merriam 2009) present assorted forms of case study methodology and a variety of their ideas are present in the design of this study. Important to note is that all forms of case study methodology seek to develop a clear understanding of the case or cases. In the situation of this study, these forms contribute to the development of greater theoretical and conceptual knowledge. Thus, this study uses cases study methodology to build on concepts and theories focusing on Whiteness and critical literacy while drawing upon the richness of each particular case.

Role of Researcher

I am the sole researcher for this study. I developed all of the data collection protocols including interview questions, small group discussion materials and questionnaires, and document analysis systems. I conducted all interviews and observations for this case study, and have also been responsible for the storage and safe keeping of all data associated with this study. I have maintained the integrity of this study by properly consenting and then protecting the anonymity of all participants.

My role during the interview stages of this study required attentive listening skills, as well as skillful personal interaction, thoughtful question framing, and gentle probing for elaboration (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Further, the interviewing phases of this study required a degree of systematization in the questioning process, and related recording, organizing, and categorizing of the data. During all interviews, my role as the
researcher required that I convey an attitude that communicated to the participants that their views are valuable and useful.

As a participant observer, I became immersed in the setting of the study: the many elementary literacy classrooms. Participant observation allowed firsthand involvement in the social world chosen for the study and allowed me to hear, to see, and to begin to experience reality as the participants do (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Using participant observation as a data source enabled me to triangulate participant responses to interview questions about how they define and implement critical literacy practices with what I actually observed in their classroom practice. For this reason, the extent of my participation was limited to observation. The participating teachers were aware of the purpose of the study, but their students (in the elementary classroom) were not.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) state a disadvantage of small group discussions can be the perceived or actual power of the researcher in the group, as well as the differential relative power of different participants in the group. For this reason, as the sole researcher, it was my responsibility to create an environment in which these potential power dynamics were acknowledged, and then to facilitate the group discussions in a manner that enabled participants to feel comfortable, equitably engaged, and fairly heard. Because I believe the participants’ views, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions do not form in a vacuum, and that the participants often need to listen to other’s opinions and understandings to form their own (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), I asked focused questions to encourage discussion that affirmed the expression of differing opinions and points of view. Small group discussions held near the end of the study were also useful in checking tentative conclusions made at earlier points in the study and cumulatively (Morgan, 1997).
Consistent with a fundamental tenet of qualitative research, this research was conducted through an emic perspective meaning the participants’, not the researcher’s, perspectives on the phenomenon being investigated were followed in the study.

**Methodology: The Multiple Case Study Model**

**Setting**

Participants in this study were teachers from the same school district in which I was also a teacher; a large, urban, school district in the Southwest United States. The participants worked at the same school, Pearson Elementary (pseudonym used). According to the Pearson Elementary School Demographic Profile (2012) from the 2012-2013 school year, Pearson’s total student enrollment was 772 students. Table one represents the ethnicity of the student population at Pearson Elementary and compares this data to the student population of the entire district as reported by the state department of education.

Table 1

*Demographics of Student Population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Pearson Elementary Student Percentage</th>
<th>District Student Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.46%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>62.69%</td>
<td>43.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>24.74%</td>
<td>12.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4.79%</td>
<td>29.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>4.66%</td>
<td>5.98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Pearson Elementary School Accountability Summary Report (2013) indicates that 11.4% of the student population has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 50.26% of the students are English Language Learners (ELL) and 79.02% receive free and reduced lunch (FRL). Furthermore, Pearson Elementary School reported a 42.6% transiency rate. This summary report also indicates that there were no habitual disciplinary problems or habitual truants reported at Pearson Elementary School during the 2012-2013 school year.

The Pearson Elementary School Accountability Summary Report (2013) also reports a summary of standards-based test performance. In the areas of Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science student scores are analyzed using the categories of Emergent/Developing (ED), Approaches Standards (AS), Meets Standards (MS), and Exceeds Standards (ES). Table two reports the percentage of Pearson students in each of these categories compared to the percentage of students in each category in the entire district (K-8). For example, in the area of reading, the results of a standards-based performance test indicate 19% of students in the district are in the category of Emergent/Developing, while the same standards-based performance test indicates 43% of the students at Pearson Elementary are in the Emergent/Developing category. Thus, compared to the district, Pearson Elementary School has a significantly higher percentage of students in the Emergent/Developing category.
Because the population of ELL students is significant at Pearson Elementary School, they are one of fourteen elementary schools in the Spring Valley School District (SVSD, pseudonym used) chosen to receive funds from a newly instated program, FLASH. The governor identified ELL programs as one of his top priorities and decided to invest $50 million into a state wide FLASH pilot program. The schools chosen to be a part of the FLASH program, which began during the 2013-2014 school year, and is funded for two academic years, received additional resources, including free pre-kindergarten programs, expanded full-day kindergarten programs with smaller class sizes, free summer school offerings, and reading development centers designed to provide students with additional support in “gaining key reading skills to unlock a world of understanding” (Spring Valley School District, 2013). Along with these reading centers, the FLASH pilot program funds teachers to work specifically as FLASH reading interventionists. These interventionists teach guided reading lessons throughout the day using the scripted reading plans provided to them by FLASH. One of the participants in this study, Ashley (pseudonym used), is a FLASH reading interventionist. More details
regarding her specific teaching and relation to the FLASH pilot program are discussed in Ashley’s detailed case study in chapter four.

**Participants and Rationale for Participant Sample**

Purposeful sampling was used to conduct this study. Creswell (2007) explains purposefully selecting participants or sites in this way: “The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 178). Merriam (2009) states that purposeful sampling should occur before the data is collected, and that the criteria for the sample selection needs to be pre-determined in order to guide the selection process.

As a classroom teacher for ten years in the school district where the study took place, I have had the opportunity to create relationships with numerous teachers and principals. Using the snowball or chain type of purposeful sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) I was able to identify cases of interest (that are information rich) from people I know and from people I know who know other people (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The recruiting of participants was self-initiated through personal contacts. Negotiating entry in qualitative research requires the researcher to be themselves, true to their social identities and honest regarding their interests in the setting or the topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Keeping this in mind, I made initial contact with two potential principals.

In September I made contact by phone with the principal of Pearson Elementary School and she scheduled a time for me to visit with her on the school campus. During our short meeting I briefly explained the purpose of the study as well as the tentative
timeline and the expectations of the potential participants. During this meeting the principal also had me meet with the school counselor who thought the study would benefit the teacher and student population of Pearson Elementary School. The principal asked me to send her a brief description of the study after our meeting was adjourned and informed me she would present it to her Teacher Leadership Team and follow up with me after. A few weeks later I heard back from the principal who asked me to attend a leadership team because she did not feel as though she had done a fair job explaining the purpose of the study. I agreed and met with the principal and leadership team in October. During this meeting the principal of Pearson Elementary School, along with the Leadership Team of the school, voted to host the study.

After the study was approved by both the university and school district research review boards, I returned to Pearson Elementary School to recruit participants. The principal and I had communicated by email regarding a good time for me to speak to the staff. Although I mentioned that I would prefer to discuss the study with small groups of teachers instead of approach the staff in its entirety, the principal communicated that there were a great deal of matters that needed to be addressed during the staff development and it would work best, in the interest of time, to have me address the staff at the beginning of the meeting. With this permission, I attended a staff meeting in early February where I presented the information on the informed consent paperwork. After my brief presentation I asked interested participants to complete the informed consent and return it to me before the meeting adjourned. From this first meeting I was able to recruit five of the six participants. While three others showed interest in participating in the study, conflicts in scheduling prevented them from following through. While
organizing an interview schedule in the school’s teacher lounge for the five participants that had agreed to participate in the study, another teacher approached me and asked if I had recruited a sufficient number of participants. Because the teacher displayed interest in the study, I expressed my need for one or two more participants and asked if he was willing to participate. He agreed and completed the consent forms that day.

Throughout this study it was important to note that my role as the researcher may have had an effect on the participants’ involvement and the nature of their participation throughout the research process. “Insider” status, or insider research refers to when researchers conduct research with populations of which they are also members. According to Adler & Adler (1987), this membership sometimes allows researchers more rapid and more complete acceptance by their participants. Because this “insider” status can be considered a stigma to the view of outsiders who see the role of insider researcher as creating a heightened level of researcher subjectivity that might be detrimental to the data analysis or collection, I was able to directly acknowledge its potential influence to the study during our small group discussion sessions. While researchers with an “insider” status may create and foster more genuine relationships with participants because of their shared interests, particular attention was paid to objectification when analyzing the research.

Although this case study used snowball sampling, it also included criterion sampling. The participants of this study identified as white. They were also in-service elementary school teachers responsible for teaching literacy as part of their daily instruction. Additionally, they taught at a school that serves a high percentage of minority
students (40% or more). Not relevant to the criterion sampling is the gender of the teacher or the numbers of years they have taught.

**Data Sources, Collection, and Timeline**

Case study allows for the collection of data from various sources. In fact, Yin (2009) states:

The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical and behavioral issues. However, the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of *converging lines of inquiry*, a process of triangulation and corroboration. (p. 116)

An advantage of the case study research method is that it allows for the use of multiple data sources which in turn strengthens the validity and reliability of this study. In order to strengthen the findings, various data sources were utilized for this study.

**Interviews.** Individual interviews took place twice during the duration of this study. Interviews were conducted in person in the participants’ classroom or in a classroom that was not currently being occupied with staff or students. Both interviews were semi-structured, recorded, and transcribed. Each interview addressed the following two themes: 1) Whiteness 2) critical literacy. Open-ended questions were used in order to allow for guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, although I was pursuing a consistent line of inquiry, the line of questioning for each case study interview was fluid rather than rigid (Rubin, 1995). Please see Appendix A and B for a list of interview questions that were used as a starting point for both interviews.
During the initial and final interview, participants were asked to identify their white racial identity stage using an abbreviated model of Hardiman’s WID model. The document included the names of each stage with a few defining characteristics from the stage. Participants were also asked to provide examples that justify their placement in this particular stage. The document shown to participants can be viewed in Appendix A. While not an original intent of this study, it became obvious while analyzing the data that the self-identified WID stage for each of the participants was different from the WID stage that was determined for each participant based on their coded utterances from the small group discussions. For example, some participants identified themselves in the Redefinition stage of WID, while their conversations during our small group discussions most frequently demonstrated characteristics of an individual in the Resistance stage of WID. A more detailed explanation of these findings will be addressed in chapter four.

Initial interviews were held with each participant throughout March 2014. Final interviews were conducted during May 2014.

**Observations.** Informal observations occurred with each participant in their teaching context in order for me to become familiar with the context, people, and routines of the school site. Formal observations happened during two time frames throughout the 2013-2014 school year. The first observation time frame was in March 2014. The second round of formal observations occurred throughout May 2014. In March and in May each participant was observed on three different occasions, during the school day, at a time when they were teaching literacy. This allowed for each participant to be observed teaching literacy six times throughout the duration of the study. All observations lasted thirty minutes each. During each of the observations I sat at a desk or table in the
participants’ classrooms. Using my laptop I recorded all utterances made by the teacher throughout the thirty-minute observation.

My role during the observations was that of participant observer. Because the purpose of the observations allowed me to triangulate the participants’ responses to interview questions about how they define and implement critical literacy practices against what I actually observed in the classroom, the extent of my participation was limited to observation. The students (in the elementary classroom) were not aware of the purpose of the study, but the participating teachers were.

**Small group discussions.** Small group discussions were conducted during April 2014. Small group discussions were held in a participant’s portable classroom that was on the elementary school site. One small group discussion meeting happened each week for the duration of one month. All small group discussions were recorded and transcribed. Before the initial meeting, the participants were provided with the book *Racism Explained to My Daughter* by Tahar Ben Jelloun (1999) and asked to have the text read by the first meeting date. This book was chosen because of its readability. While racism and Whiteness can be difficult topics to discuss, this text explains both matters in an easy to understand manner while yet addressing their complexity. This text was used to drive conversation during the first three meeting times. During our meeting time, open-ended questions were asked in regards to race, racism, and Whiteness. Examples of these questions can be found in Appendix C.

During the third small group discussion, recognizing that a majority of our discussion time had focused on Whiteness in elementary schools and wanting to have an opportunity for the participants to learn about and discuss critical literacy, I asked the
participants if they would be interested in reading a piece about critical literacy and young black males. The decision to choose this article was based on previous discussions regarding the increase of African American students attending the school as well as an indication during the initial interviews that most participants were not familiar with critical literacy or how to implement the practices in their classroom. The suggestion of reading the article was well received by the participants and they agreed to read “I Hate This Stupid Book!” Black Males and Critical Literacy by Summer Wood and Robin Jocius (2013). During our fourth and final small group discussion open-ended questions were asked in regards to understanding critical literacy practices as well as race, racism, and Whiteness.

Because the small group discussions allowed the participants a chance to respond collectively to the material we were reading, as well as hear how their colleagues reacted to and were impacted by the texts, the small group discussions served as an informal means of data triangulation. As we engaged with the ideas of racism, Whiteness, and critical literacy, or forbidden conversations, as Lawrence (2005) states, it was sometimes challenging to facilitate intergroup dialogue (Shoem, Hurtado, Sevig, Chesler, & Sumida, 2001) in a manner that encouraged new, or perhaps more advanced ideologies. Because my role was to facilitate conversation, I had to pay close attention to maintaining the participants’ trust and willingness to speak.

While the conversations during our four, hour long small group discussions were robust, and provided a great deal of data to support the participants’ WID, it should be mentioned that the data from small group discussions did not support the notion that the participants’ white racial identities had changed or further developed from the first small
group discussion to the last. This supports the work of Terry (1981) and Clark (1999) who both address the complexity of discussing Whiteness, particularly in a homogenous group of white participants and further strengthens the argument that consciousness change and related behavioral change take time. Perhaps over a more extended timeframe and with further study and discussion there would be evidence from the small group discussion transcriptions to support the idea of WID change (Clark, 1999; Terry, 1981).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

As is mentioned in chapter one, Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) was one conceptual model through which data from small group discussions were collected and analyzed. Throughout Hardiman’s work (Hardiman, 1982; Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Hardiman & Keehn, 2012), she along with her co-researchers, present common characteristics of individuals in each of the WID stages. Using these characteristics as an initial coding scheme, codes were created and assigned to each stage of WID. For example, six characteristics are used to distinguish an individual in the stage of Naïveté. These include: little or no social awareness of race, vulnerable to worldview, may not feel comfortable with people who are different, no fear or hostility, may be curious about differences in people, and do not see some differences as more normal. A detailed account of the codes created for each stage of WID can be found in Appendix E.

The recordings from the small group discussions were transcribed and then coded using the predetermined codes from each of the WID stages as described above. Once all of the participants’ utterances were coded I calculated the total number of utterances for each WID stage. The stage with the greatest number of utterances then became the participant’s WID stage determined by data. Important to this finding is that while the
number of utterances in each WID stage was significant, special attention was paid to the substance of the utterances and the extent to which they supported the WID stage identified by frequency of utterances.

Along with the closed coding previously mentioned, open coding was used to understand additional themes present from the small group discussions. Socioeconomics was a term identified frequently throughout the small group discussions data, as was the use of deficit language. While not an original intent of this study, how the participants made sense of the socioeconomic status of their students and their students’ families is influential in their understanding of Whiteness and critical literacy. The same is true for the common use of deficit language during small group discussions; if the participants’ attempt to explain the underachievement of their student population as a result of the students’ culture and community, the teachers are not likely to address Whiteness or implement practices related to critical literacy. In fact, teachers who blame the victims of institutional oppression for their own victimization fail to meaningfully, “address problems within schools or society at large that combine to depress the performance of certain groups of students” (Irizarry, 2009). Because these lines of inquiry directly relate to Whiteness and the justification for critical literacy practices, small group discussions were coded using these additional themes.

Also mentioned in chapter one is the use of Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model as a conceptual framework guiding this study. Similar to the WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) described above, Freebody and Luke (1990) have identified the types of questioning and teaching skills used in each of their four processes. Using these characteristics as an initial coding scheme, codes were created and assigned to each
of the four processes: code breaking, text participant, text user, and text analyst. For example, questions and statements related to code breaking include but are not limited to: relationship between spoken sounds and written symbols, contents of the relationship between sounds and symbols, alphabetic awareness, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence creation. Appendix F contains a detailed report of the codes used to identify questions or statements made by the teacher during the classroom observations four each of the processes in the four resources model.

All statements made by the teacher were recorded during classroom observations. These utterances were then coded using the predetermined codes from each the four processes (Freebody & Luke, 1990). For each observation, I tallied the number of utterances for each process: code breaking, text participant, text user, and text analyst. This information is represented for each participant throughout chapter four and special attention is paid to the process used most frequently by the participant. In chapter five, the total number of utterances from all six observations that were identified as examples of code breaking, text participant, text user, and text analyst are used as a means to support the findings and authenticate the discussion.

After coding all of the data from the observations and small group discussions, a model was created to display this information. The processes of the four resources model are identified along the x-axis and the stages of WID are organized on the y-axis. Using the data derived from the coding, a point of intersection occurs along the x-axis (the four resources process used most frequently) and the y-axis (the WID stage of the participant determined by the small group discussion data). The upper right quadrant then is identified as the participant’s Zone of Potential Change (ZPC). Figure one displays an
individual who is at the Resistance stage of WID and uses mostly text participant literacy skills during their literacy instruction. By intersecting the x-axis, most common four resources processes and the y-axis, WID at the Resistance stage, a ZPC of WID and critical literacy practices is established.

Figure 1. Example of Combined White Identity Development and Critical Literacy Conceptual Models

This ZPC model, which I created, is a part of the within-case analysis (Merriam, 2009) used for each participant. The implications for this model, including a point of entry for professional development, are discussed throughout chapter five.

After each case had been analyzed for emergent themes and patterns, a cross-case analysis was used to build generalizations across cases. This degree of analysis, supported by the conceptual frameworks that guided this study, led to categories, themes, or typologies that conceptualize the data from all the cases.

**Ethical Considerations**

The individual investigator is responsible for conducting an ethical study and disseminating the findings in an ethical manner. Because this study involved human subjects, every effort was made to ensure ethical behavior. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the university as well as the school district approved this study and throughout the informed consenting process all participants were informed of their rights.
The purpose of the study and the data collecting methods were clearly explained to all participants. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the duration of the study as well as in all documents created since the study has been completed. All participants signed and received a copy of the informed consent. Likewise, all participants have access to data collected and were sometimes asked to review data and conclusions in order to strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Last, pseudonyms have been used to protect participants’ identities and attached to each record for use in data collection, analysis, and reporting. All data will be safely stored for five years and will be destroyed thereafter.

Because I am a teacher in the same district as the participants, it was important to consider that the participants’ involvement and the nature of their participation throughout the research process may be impacted by my “insider” status. In order to create an environment where participants felt comfortable speaking freely and sharing their notions regarding Whiteness and critical literacy, I explained during the informed consent process as well as during the initial small group discussion that all data will be used for research purposes only and will not impact current or future personal or professional interactions between the researcher and the participants, as well as the relationships between the participants themselves. During the initial small group discussion we also discussed and reviewed the expectations of confidentiality and the process we would ensue if a participant was not following our agreement of confidentiality.
Limitations and Impact

Researcher bias is sometimes described as a weakness of qualitative case study methodology. For the sake of this study, I argue that my vested interest and passion for the line of research are strengths rather than weaknesses. As an elementary teacher, college literacy instructor, and doctoral student I realize there is a possibility that my biases regarding Whiteness and critical literacy may influence the findings in this study. The conceptual framework being used in this study helped to reduce this biasness. When the research is viewed through a consistent conceptual framework, research biases may be reduced.

Being a teacher in the same school district where the research was conducted may also be seen as a limitation to this study. “Insider” status may allow me to create and foster more genuine relationships with participants because of our shared interests; however, it is important to realize that participants may also view this relationship as unequal; a relationship where the researcher has control over data collection and the results. Because the relationship between researcher and participants is a complex phenomenon, all due diligence was made to address that all data was used for research purposes only and will not impact current or future personal or professional interactions between the researcher and the participants.

The topics and conversations of this study may also be a limitation. It can sometimes be difficult for individuals, in particular white teachers, to discuss Whiteness and critical literacy. As the sole researcher, it was my responsibility to create an atmosphere where critical conversations were supported and encouraged.
Case study as a research methodology is sometimes criticized because of a limited sample size. Although the findings from this study may not be generalizable in the probabilistic sense, they may be transferable and it will be up to the reader to make decisions about the usefulness of the findings for other settings.

**Significance of the Study**

The teaching population continues to remain fairly homogeneous: white, middle-class, and female, while the populations of the students we serve in the United States continues to become increasingly more diverse. The findings of this study are significant to teachers and teacher educators who seek to make connections between Whiteness or WID and critical literacy teaching strategies that may interrupt white privilege and power. Because some teachers have low expectations of students who belong to racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups other than their own (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Irvine 1990) teachers and teacher educators have a moral obligation to the children they teach to develop cultural competencies and understandings of antiracist pedagogy that shape their practice (Darling-Hammond, MacDonald, Snyder, Whitford, Ruscoe, & Fickel, 2000). This study provides some suggestions for teachers and teacher educators as they begin to unpack the lofty conversations of Whiteness and critical pedagogy, which we know are essential in our classrooms today.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter three provides the methodological approach and design of the study. This study addressed one main question and two ancillary questions.

Main Research Question:

How does Whiteness influence elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy
practices?

Ancillary Questions:

a) How do elementary teachers negotiate racial identity in elementary classrooms?

b) How do white elementary teachers define and implement critical literacy practices?

By exploring these questions, this study identified potential relationships between the teachers’ perception of Whiteness and the critical literacy practices they use or do not use in their elementary classrooms.

Data collection and analysis were also clarified in chapter three. Hardiman’s model of WID (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and Freebody and Luke’s (1990) critical literacy four resources model were reviewed in chapter three as well. Chapter four addresses the findings of this study and chapter five describes the implications of these findings.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter one provides a rationale for this multiple case study, which seeks to identify potential relationships between white teachers’ racial identities and their use of critical literacy practices. Empirical and theoretical research in the areas of Whiteness and critical literacy are reviewed in chapter two as well as a discussion addressing a gap in the research, which further justifies this study. Chapter three examines the methodological approach and design of this study and provides specific details regarding participant selection, site location, data sources, and data analysis procedures.

In this chapter I reveal the findings of the completed study. First I present the individual cases of each teacher participant. I discuss each case in a similar fashion, starting with the information gained from the initial interview. This introduction reveals the participant’s personal and professional background. Specifically, this section of the case report focuses on the participant’s teacher preparation in the areas of literacy and multicultural education. How the participants negotiate Whiteness is the one of the central tenants of this study and because multicultural education coursework sometimes addresses white identity development (WID) and Whiteness (Dass-Brailsford, 2007) the participants were asked to reflect upon their multicultural education coursework. The same philosophy applies to the questions asked regarding the participants’ preparation in the area of literacy. Because it is most natural for critical literacy to be addressed in a literacy methodology course, the participants were asked to explicate their teacher preparation in regards to teaching literacy. Appendix A contains a list of the initial questions asked. During the initial interview the participants were asked to identify their
WID stage. In order to complete this task they were provided a handout naming each of
the five WID stages with a brief explanation of each stage. Because their self-
identification became relevant to the findings and discussion of this study, their self-
reported WID (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) stage is reported in the first section of the case.

The reporting of each case exactly mirrors the sequence in which the data were
collected. The second step in data collection included observing each participant teach
three literacy lessons. The information gathered during this time, all utterances made by
the teacher, was coded using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model and the
results of this coding are explained in the second section of each case. A detailed account
of all codes associated with each process of the four resources model can be found in
Appendix F and details regarding the structure of this observation can be found in
Appendix D.

Small group discussions were held with all participants after the first three
observations and the data from all four small group discussions are presented next. By
coding the transcripts from the small group discussions using Hardiman’s WID model
(Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) as a conceptual framework, a WID stage was identified for
each participant and is reported in this section. Appendix E contains the specific codes
used for each WID stage and details about the format of the small group discussion can
be found in Appendix C.

After the small group discussions, three additional classroom observations were
completed. In the same fashion as the first round of observations, I coded and organized
the data using the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Exactly the same as
the first round of observations, this included using the characteristics identified (see
Appendix F) for each of the four processes to make sense of the questioning and probing skills evident in the observation transcriptions. The findings from the second round of literacy observations are shared during this section of the individual case report.

The last component of the individual case analysis highlights the participants’ perceptions of how they had or had not changed in their understanding of critical literacy, WID, and Whiteness. Final interviews provided the data for this closing discussion in each individual case.

After each of the six cases are presented individually, I then share the findings gathered after completing a cross case analysis. Individual cases as well as the cross case analysis used the conceptual frameworks of WID (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990) to assist in the coding process, and as a result of that coding process, patterns and themes became evident in the data. Hardiman’s WID model includes the categories: Naïveté, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition, and Internalization (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model was also used to analyze patterns and themes with the categories: code breaking, text participant, test user, and text analyst.

Throughout the individual case reports and the cross case analysis data are reported in a manner that addresses the research questions that framed this study.

Main Research Question:

How does Whiteness influence elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices?

Ancillary Questions:

a) How do elementary teachers negotiate racial identity in elementary classrooms?
b) How do white elementary teachers define and implement critical literacy practices?

By exploring these questions, this study hoped to identify potential relationships between the teachers’ perception of Whiteness and the critical literacy practices they use or do not use in their elementary classrooms. Due to the nature of this explanatory multiple case study these questions provided various outcomes.

**Ben: Through Ben’s Eyes**

Ben grew up in a large urban city in the Southwest part of the United States. As an only child, Ben was raised with a father who graduated from a southwestern university and worked in the gaming industry, and a mother who worked as an administrative assistant in the large urban school district where Ben’s family resided. Even with his mother’s affiliation with the local public school district, Ben’s parents chose to enroll him in private schooling from grades K-12.

Ben earned his Bachelor’s in Sociology and completed his Master’s degree in Special Education from a four-year, public institution. It took Ben some time to complete his goal of becoming a teacher but with an alternative route to licensure program through the school district in which he was employed, Ben was able to obtain his teaching degree. Ben explained his educational path to me during our first interview,

I always wanted to be a teacher but [back] then I didn’t know I wanted to go into Special Education. I started off as a secondary education major and then I went to business for a minute, like every college student does, and then decided on journalism…That was when I took a sociology class and I was like, oh I really like sociology. But then, I knew like, that degree wasn’t gonna get me an actual
career, except in academia or higher education…After I graduated [with a Sociology degree] I was like, oh, I should go back [to school] and get a teaching license. So, it was kind of like, let me finish this and then go back for my real career.

When I asked Ben about what made him want to be a teacher he further explained his journey of how he ended up in his current position. Even though Ben had considered secondary education for a while, after he was unable to pass a pre-calculus class, Ben decided it probably wasn’t in his best interest to pursue a math education degree, and later, when Ben earned a C in his biology course he decided that maybe science education was not a good choice either. Due to these circumstances, Ben initiated a different career path in sociology. When returning to school for his teaching credentials, Ben was interested in a choice that would allow him to teach high school with an aspiration of possibly becoming an athletic coach. After deciding on a K-12 Special Education degree, Ben completed an observation placement at a local elementary school and fell in love with the young student population; this is what led to his focus of elementary education and special education.

When thinking back on his preparation to become a teacher, Ben disclosed during his initial interview that he felt the one literacy course he took in his Master’s program did a good job of teaching him the five major ideas in literacy as well as introduced him to the resources from the Florida Center for Reading Research. Ben was also able to name the few literacy assessments he became familiar with as a result of this literacy course. Although Ben spoke fairly highly of his literacy coursework, he recognized that only parts of this course prepared him to teach literacy in an urban school like Pearson
Elementary School. “It [the literacy course] showed us the research and it gave us the framework of how to teach, but actually when you get in there [the classroom] and get your hands dirty, it’s a lot different than the books say.” Critical literacy was not a focus of Ben’s teacher preparation courses and when I asked if Ben was familiar with critical literacy theory or practices, Ben asked if I was referring to comprehension. When I gave him a few examples of critical literacy, Ben was not able to relate the concept to anything he had been taught in his teacher preparation coursework.

Continuing to reflect on Ben’s preparation in becoming a teacher, he shared that his degree plan in Special Education required him to complete a multicultural education course, which he indicated somewhat prepared him to teach in an urban school. When discussing the multicultural education course, Ben was able to name the professor who taught the course as well as the prospectus that framed the course. He stated, “She [the professor] taught it from a perspective of ‘we’re all, we all have our racism, we all have our bias, it’s just let’s explore it and let’s find out where it was.’” Furthermore, Ben also named all of the texts the students read during the multicultural education course, one of which included Freire (1970). While explaining why he thought this multicultural course only somewhat prepared him to teach in an urban school, Ben stated that the readings and assignments for this course focused primarily on theory: theory that was difficult to bring to life with the presence of the recently added Common Core State Standards and numerous assessments that had to be given. He mentioned that when you actually get into elementary schools it is difficult to blend multicultural theory with the standards and assessments that are being mandated.
According to Ben, adding to the complication of theory and practice was his specialization in Special Education. I asked Ben if he felt as if some of his power to enact the theory he had learned about in his multicultural education course had been taken out of his hands due to the assessment and accountability era he is a part of, and he agreed while further problematizing this understanding with the incorporation of teaching Special Education:

Yeah, I think that is how it is [the power has been taken away], and see with us it is harder because we’re Special Education so we have IEPs (Individualized Education Plans), and we only have [a] certain [number of] minutes [with our students], and we should be targeting certain things [skills]…And sometimes I do feel like the power is taken away and it’s so reliant on, we’re going to take the ASPEC test, we’re going to take the CRT test, or we’re going to take the MAP test, we’re going to take the AIMS WEB test. And it’s just, we’re going to take all these tests, but it’s like, let’s just, let’s just teach them. Let’s give them the knowledge so they can get out there.

In order to further investigate Ben’s preparedness to teach in an urban school setting such as the one where he is a teacher, I asked Ben to reflect upon when he first remembered becoming aware of race. Ben explained that college was the most eye opening realization and further explained his response by stating,

I mean what really opened my eyes was college, probably seeing this disparity. I mean growing up knowing this guy’s black, this guy’s white, this guy’s Hispanic, this guy’s Asian, but [I realized], these are the ideals I hold, and these are the ideals they hold. It’s not really discussed.
It was during this discussion that Ben also realized it was both the material in college as well as the people in his diverse classes that made him more aware of race.

I think it was both [the material and the people] because you could have the material with an un-diverse group [and] you’re probably gonna get a lot of the same ideas. But when you have the material with a diverse group, and a diverse setting, and an open setting, you’re going to have more ideas exposed and more ideas that influence you, and more ideas that you don’t agree with, but they drive your influence.

When shown Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the first interview, Ben identified himself as being in the Redefinition stage:

I recognize the white privileges…I do recognize the privilege that I have…I come from a white middle-class family. That’s how it is. You can’t, I mean you can’t be ashamed of what you come from. You can’t be ashamed of what you are. It’s better just to say, hey, I recognize this and this is how it is. And I’d like to change it, but I don’t know how. That’s, that’s the hard part.

**Ben in Action**

After completing the initial interview, I was able to observe Ben teaching a literacy lesson on six different occasions, each for the duration of thirty minutes. The first three observations took place before the participants took part in the small group discussions and the last three observations took place after the small group discussions had occurred. As mentioned previously, this sequence was intentional in an effort to capture a possible change in instruction based on any personal or professional insights gained from the small group discussions.
Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round One

Ben taught literacy two times throughout the day: first thing in the morning, Ben taught reading to a small group of first and second grade students and in the afternoon, he led another primary small group that focused on writing. Some of the students were in both groups while some only saw Ben once a day depending on the expectations set in place by the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The first three observations took place during Ben’s afternoon lessons and I had a chance to see a variety of students during these observations, because as is common in an elementary school setting, teachers’ daily schedules were often changing, sometimes making it difficult for students from different classrooms to attend their daily lesson with Ben. During these observations there were three or four students present for Ben’s lessons.

Although the purpose of this study was not to focus on the classroom environment, in a multiple case study it is essential to note the classroom context. Ben’s classroom was a typical sized elementary classroom with room to house about twenty students and in this shared classroom, there were two teachers’ desks near the rear of the room; one for Ben and one for the intermediate special education teacher who also called this room home. There was no obvious visual separation of the classroom; however, I did notice that Ben usually taught his small group of students at a rectangle table at the front of the room while the other special educator had more space with a table and six desks that filled the center of the classroom in a fairly haphazard fashion.

Off to one side of the classroom were five computers at a large kidney table and there were a few posters covering the walls. The most detailed bulletin board was entitled
“data board” and it appeared that postings were made to the data chart in the beginning of the school year but no data had been added to the board recently. A few wardrobes and file cabinets lined the walls of the classroom and there was also a sink and water fountain. One large, long whiteboard was on the wall directly behind Ben’s rectangle table, which he sometimes used when modeling for his students.

During all literacy observations Ben’s teaching style was very relaxed as he usually sat at the front rectangle table with his students. During all three of the initial visits the intermediate teacher was also leading a small group lesson while I was observing Ben’s lesson. The students and teachers were clearly used to the format and did not interact with each other in any regard.

During my time in Ben’s classroom I recorded all audible comments and questions he spoke. When coding the data from the first three observations, using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model, I was able to determine evidence of code breaking three times in lesson two and nine times in lesson three. Most of Ben’s code breaking instruction occurred when he was conferencing with individual students on their independent writing, yet he would use a loud enough voice for all of the students to hear his comments. Questions such as, does your sentence make sense? and What do sentences start with? What do they end with? are all examples of Ben’s instruction of code breaking. During lesson one, evidence of text participant occurred while Ben read to the students about the human eye and the butterfly eye. This lesson also involved having the students write a brief paragraph comparing and contrasting the two eyes, and Ben’s prompting questions were mostly evidence of the text participant process. Some of these questions were: What did we learn about butterflies? What can they do? What is specific
about butterflies? How many types of cones do they have? Table 3 displays the findings from the first three observations.

Table 3

Ben Four Resources Examples – Round One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation One</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Two</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Three</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: Small Group Discussions

Throughout the course of five weeks, Ben and the other participants in the study met in a portable classroom to discuss *Racism Explained to My Daughter* by Tahar Ben Jelloun (1999) and *Combating “I Hate This Stupid Book!” Black Males and Critical Literacy* by Summer Wood and Robin Jocius (2013). The small group discussions were held four times. Each time they met for one hour.

After coding Ben’s comments from the four small group discussions, the data indicate Ben is in the Resistance stage using Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). Even though there were a few instances where Ben made comments indicating that he sometimes takes Whiteness for granted and sees Whiteness as normal, which is common of someone demonstrating passive acceptance of racial dominance, the majority of Ben’s comments indicated he was beginning to understand and recognize racism in complex and multiple manifestations. For example, when discussing a new rule for military haircuts, Ben expressed his frustration that the rule was obviously
discriminating against African Americans. Ben also brought up an incident with a black professional football player and told the group that he believed the media used the derogatory word “thug” to describe the football player’s intense comments because the football player was black. Ben also took it upon himself to educate the group that the professional football player had attended Stanford and graduated with a 4.0 grade point average. To further his point, Ben stated that the player might be a “hot-head running on adrenaline, but I don’t think he’s a thug.”

Ben is aware of various educational systems and policies that are intentionally and unintentionally placing students of color at a disadvantage; however, he frequently demonstrated passive resistance, because while he acknowledges institutional discrimination, he mentioned more than once that he felt like the problem is too big and nothing can be done by it. Ben stated, “Obviously we don’t want the cycle [black males disengagement with literacy] to continue, but with the push for the Common Core [State Standards] and the push for this and that, we can’t stop [to teach critical literacy]. In particular, Ben wondered what one person could do to change such a large structural problem.

Table 4 itemizes the coded utterances Ben made during the four small group discussions. Based on this table, you are able to see that throughout the four small group discussions, Ben made eighteen comments that were coded as evidence of having characteristics of someone in the Acceptance stage of WID. As mentioned earlier, the coded comments made by Ben during the small group discussion indicate that he most frequently made comments characterized by an individual in the Resistance stage of WID (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012).
Table 4

*Ben – Coded Utterances – White Identity Development Stage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Utterances</th>
<th>Naïveté</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Resistance</th>
<th>Redefinition</th>
<th>Internalization</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round Two**

After completing the small group discussions with Ben and his colleagues, I returned to observe in Ben’s classroom three additional times. The setup of the classroom had not changed since my first three observations and Ben once again taught his lessons while seated at the rectangle table in the front of the room. It should be noted that observation six took place outside of Ben’s usual classroom. Because the intermediate teacher was conducting standardized testing in their shared classroom, I met Ben and his one student in a different classroom. This particular room was usually used to hold staff meetings, and therefore, did not have anything on the walls. There were numerous rectangle tables set up to make one large square and wardrobe cabinets lined most of the walls. On one wall was a makeshift news desk where the students recorded the daily news.

After coding the data from the last three observations, I was able to note thirty-two instances of code breaking while text participant, text user, and text analyst were not present. During lesson one, Ben helped students with code breaking while assisting a student trying to spell “money” and again when he clarified the difference between letters and words for another student. Ben also aided with the spelling of “shark,” “lash,” and “math” in subsequent lessons and many of his utterances during observation five were
because he was teaching the digraphs /ch/, /th/, and /sh/. Table five is a representation of the coded data from observations four, five, and six.

Table 5

*Ben Four Resources Examples – Round Two*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Text User</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After completing all six observations, it was obvious code breaking was the most frequent process used during Ben’s instruction. Table six displays the totals from all six observations.

Table 6

*Ben Four Resources Examples – Total*

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<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Total</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Revisiting Ben: Through Ben’s Eyes**

Ben shared that he found the small group discussions the most enjoyable aspect of the study and that hearing what other people thought made him feel like he was “not on an island.” Throughout the second interview, Ben reflected upon what he learned or didn’t learn as a result of this study in regards to critical literacy, WID, and Whiteness.
Ben reported that he did not feel as though his understandings regarding critical literacy had changed as a result of the study. Coming from a sociology background and having read Freire (1970) in his Master’s program, Ben stated,

You know we need more stuff like that [critical literacy]. But we’re only allowed to do what we’re allowed to do. And unless we take the step and we all say we’re going against it, you’re going to be on your own on an island.

When reflecting upon his growth regarding WID and Whiteness, Ben explained that he feels “more aware” as a result of being a participant in this study, and he further clarifies this statement by explaining, “It’s just more awareness, really…You see it every day…Race is very evident. It [Whiteness] reflects itself on every level and there are institutions and there are practices that, that hold people down and oppress people.” Ben also shared that he believes with the rise of social media that it is easy for people to make discriminating comments from behind a screen. Ben gave the example of Michael Sam who is the first openly gay man to be drafted into the National Football League (NFL) recently, and stated that before social media if someone was homophobic and thought it was wrong for a gay man to be in the NFL maybe twenty of his friends would know how he felt. Now with one comment made on social media, “five hundred billion know.”

An additional comment that supported Ben’s claim of being “more aware” as a result of the study was identified when Ben mentioned that because of a conversation held during one of our small group discussions, he has begun to look at children’s movies through a different lens; in particular the race and ethnicity of Disney princesses. He furthered explained his progression of understanding by stating that the conversation during the small group discussion led him to think about the lack of diversity portrayed in
Disney movies and explained, “If it’s just Disney or Pixar or this or that, it’s always geared towards Whiteness, the middle-class.”

Ben admitted that before being a participant in this study he was aware of Whiteness and how it was connected to institutionalized power and privilege, and that being a participant in this study has reconfirmed his beliefs. He stated, “I came in with [an understanding] that there is a definite Whiteness and there is a white privilege and everything is favored towards White, middle-class, heterosexual, two and a half kids, two story home living in suburbia. And it [this study], it just reconfirmed it. It just showed it multiple times.”

When shown Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the second interview, Ben again identified himself in the Redefinition stage and admitted that it is very hard for him to move towards the Internalization stage. He referred to the line on the paper separating the stages of Redefinition and Internalization as just a line on paper, but to him, it’s the size of the Berlin Wall. He displayed a bit of hopelessness when he stated, “It’s hard to take that next step. To take action, because you feel like you are just one person, and we are just one school, and we are just in one city in one school district…I’d like to find a way to do it [take action].”

When asked if his notions of Whiteness influenced his literacy practices, Ben stated that he didn’t think so because Special Education focuses more on the rules and skills of literacy rather than on the content of books. Ben again displayed a bit of despair in the idea of interrupting privilege by instituting the ideas of critical literacy when he stated, “How much action can we take? How can we get across that line? It would take all of us, from the janitor to the office manager to the students.” It is evident in Ben’s
comments that any type of change is extremely difficult in the taxing career of an elementary teacher. It is no wonder that the change from Redefinition to Internalization seems like the Berlin Wall when these sentiments are felt:

I think you come in [to teaching] young and idealistic and I’m going to change every life! And then by the [time] December rolls around, you’re just like, I’m going to go on winter break, you know? I know that’s how I felt. I felt that a few times. I’m going in there [my classroom] and all my kids are going to be at grade level by the time I’m done with them. And now it’s May and I’m just like, let’s just get to June; let’s just get out of here. I’m burnt out; I know they’re [the students are] burnt out.

**Hannah: Through Hannah’s Eyes**

Like Ben, Hannah grew up in a large urban city in the Southwest part of the United States. She was raised in a family with both parents and three siblings, and her family remained in the same house in this urban community for many years, even while the population of their neighborhood was greatly changing. Hannah explained during her first interview that during the mid 1990’s her family’s neighborhood mostly consisted of middle-class families. Within a short time frame, there was a large influx of “immigrants,” and her neighborhood began to change. With this change, Hannah remembers being the minority in her community and doesn’t recall growing up among many white people unless she went to church with them.

Hannah attended public school her entire K-12 educational career, having matriculated at her home school—the school which the school district assigned based on her home address—for first grade through third grade, sixth grade, and then again for
high school. When Hannah wasn’t attending her neighborhood schools, it was because
her parents had chosen to enroll her in a new magnet school, which were becoming
popular in her quickly growing urban city. Hannah remembers her home school teachers
telling her she should be attending a magnet school instead of her home schools, but
Hannah explained to me that it was her choice to attend her neighborhood public high
school. She explained that she wasn’t interested in honors classes and was content just
“skatin’ by in life.” Even though Hannah was just “skatin’” she was able to earn a local
scholarship and decided to move a few hours north to pursue her degree in education.

Hannah recalls being in high school and wanting to be a lawyer. It wasn’t until
her high school calculus teacher asked Hannah to tutor a peer for extra credit in her
calculus class, that she realized perhaps the right career path for her would be education.
During this tutoring experience, Hannah realized the students she had grown up with,
who had gone to the same schools as her, and lived in her community, did not possess the
same knowledge and understanding she possessed. “They didn’t know basic reading, or
basic addition and subtraction.” It was this realization that frustrated Hannah and made
her think about the teachers who had just passed these students on from grade to grade
and from Hannah’s perspective, “They [the teachers] weren’t really helping them [the
students].” It was at this point in Hannah’s life that she researched teaching and decided
to make it her future career choice.

I did a whole bunch of research and they [researchers] talk about first grade is a
make or break year, and if students aren’t on grade level by the end of first grade,
then they’ll never read on grade level unless they receive intensive reading
intervention. So I was like, and I want to teach first grade.
Hannah pursued her dream of being a teacher at a state university and completed a traditional teacher preparation program. Even though Hannah was just three credits shy of completing a dual major in both elementary education and special education, she decided not to complete the special education component of the degree. Feeling secure that she would be able to find a position teaching in the general education classroom in the school district where she grew up, which was one of the fastest growing school districts in the nation, Hannah chose not to complete the special education degree. She rationalized her choice by explaining she did not want to be a special education teacher, but instead wanted as much information as possible about the special education population, knowing that she would encounter students with special needs in her own general education classroom.

Since beginning her teaching career, Hannah has also completed a one-year Master’s degree program from a private local college. Hannah admits that she did not have intentions of getting a Master’s degree, but that in order to make more money she knew she had to continue her education. The school district where Hannah is employed was constantly facing budget crises and with the realization that she was stuck in her current salary, Hannah knew that in order to make more money she had to earn another degree. Her areas of emphasis were Teaching Leadership and Teaching English as a Second Language. Currently, Hannah is a first grade teacher in the urban elementary school where this study was completed, Pearson Elementary School.

When describing the literacy courses Hannah completed during her undergraduate program she recalled numerous “intensive literacy courses.” Hannah was fortunate to study under leading researchers in literacy including, Donald Bear and Shane
Templeton. When reflecting upon her experiences in her undergraduate program, Hannah stated that in retrospect, one of her favorite courses was Children’s Literature, even though she hated it at the time. Hannah indicated that the course involved a lot of dissecting of children’s literature. “I just am a surface level reader…college killed my love of reading as a grown up because I don’t want to think about the placement [of words] on a page, or the characters, I just want to sit down and read a book that’s enjoyable and funny to my kids.”

Continuing to reflect upon her undergraduate literacy coursework during our initial interview, Hannah stated that she did not learn about critical literacy in her undergraduate studies but had briefly discussed the theory during her graduate work where she mostly recalled discussions focusing on book selection. During her first year teaching however, Hannah’s mentor teacher introduced her to the work of Frank Serafini, a critical literacy scholar. Her mentor shared Sarafini’s books, book lists, and suggestions for how to foster critical conversations with elementary students, and during her interview Hannah admitted that this was really the only time she discussed critical literacy. She concluded our discussion on this topic when she stated, “But as far as…who is speaking in the passage, I never say this character is being silenced. I haven’t figured out how to do that effectively with first graders.”

While discussing Hannah’s teacher preparation coursework Hannah also indicated that she had been required to complete a multicultural education course. When I asked her whether or not she believed the course helped prepare her to teach in an urban classroom Hannah explained that the course was not taught the way she would teach it and indicated that the course was more, “cultures around the world…and discussed
typical stereotypes…It was a textbook and then we had little fluffy discussions.” Hannah also indicated that the course was taken early in her college career and because she did not have a lot of classroom experience at that time, she was not able to apply the multicultural theories being learned to an elementary classroom.

There was no practicum, go into a classroom and see how this is in a classroom…To me that was always the most effective thing in teacher preparation: Here’s the book, here’s the research, now go do it in real life, because that’s a totally different thing.

Continuing to dialogue about Hannah’s preparation to teach in an urban classroom, Hannah shared that she didn’t believe she became aware of race until second or third grade.

I don’t remember really seeing race until second or third grade. Someone pointed it out to me, like, ‘No, cause you’re white,’ and I went home and talked to my mom and I was like, ‘What does that mean, I’m white?’”

As mentioned earlier, Hannah grew up in an urban neighborhood and her friends from the neighborhood represented this diverse population. Hannah explained that the only white friends she had were from when she was in the magnet program, and Hannah also mentioned that moving from magnet school to her zoned school so many different times also influenced her understanding of racial identity. “Any time I shifted from [my] homeschool to a magnet school, that was another big thing. Like I just didn’t really know how to interact with…the people who were the same race as me.” She further explained the friendship she had with her neighborhood peers:
All the other kids I knew were from my neighborhood. And we would have them [the kids from the neighborhood] over to the house, and my mom was like, ‘I’d rather have them over at the house than out on the streets,’ so I had all kinds of kids over at our house. So for me, I never identified myself as a white female, growing up.

These neighborhood friends were also part of the social environment Hannah chose to be a part of when she attended her local high school, instead of attending a magnet school, which her high school teachers highly encouraged her to do.

Going to college was also a time when Hannah further developed her white racial identity. She explained that the city where her college was located was, “pretty much all white people…I really didn’t even know how to interact with middle class white people. And that was awkward for me.” After completing her coursework in teacher education Hannah returned to the urban city where she grew up to complete her student teaching assignment. She shared with me that she remembers feeling confident in her teaching ability and particularly confident returning to an elementary school that was 98% Hispanic. “Growing up in a neighborhood very similar, I was like, oh yeah, I’ve got this.”

Hannah continued by explaining that once again being white was somewhat of an obstacle for her to overcome because different than when she was a young girl growing up in a similar community, this time she was not as easily accepted. It didn’t take long for Hannah to realize that the parents of this community, where she was completing her student teaching, saw her as a “white, blue-eyed girl – They thought I had no idea.”

Hannah also discussed how she continues to face changes in the development of her racial identity. Her comments throughout the first interview indicate that she has a
strong understanding of institutional racism and later in our conversation Hannah continued to share experiences that shape her racial identity as well as recognize the notion of Whiteness.

I think sometimes I go throughout life and I don’t realize how much you just take for granted. I don’t know…it’s [race] is a hard thing to talk about…but I go to the airport and no one stops to randomly search my bag, I don’t get randomly pulled over by the police. Like, none of that happens to me. I don’t know what it’s like to have that happen to me because that’s not a part of what’s normal for me.

Hannah also shared that she was familiar with Ruby Payne’s work. “At my first school [where I taught] we were big into Ruby Payne. So those hidden rules of the middle class – when I read that – I’m like, yup, that’s me…to a tee.”

When shown Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the first interview, Hannah identified herself as being in between the Resistance and Redefinition stages.

I recognize that there is power associated with being white…I understand with me being a white female there are things that are easier in life for me than there are for other people. I don’t feel guilty about being white…I find white privilege very interesting and I recognize privileges I may have received because of being white.

Hannah further explained her self identification on the WID model by explaining she is not yet in the Internalization stage because she believes she doesn’t take action against racism beyond not letting it occur in her classroom. “I think I don’t let it occur in my classroom. It may be occurring in my classroom, but I feel like, I really try to not tolerate racism.”
My first impression of Hannah’s first grade classroom was that visually, it was very busy, but yet the classroom was extremely organized. This particular classroom had two doorways, one leading to a main hallway and one leading to a central area. After a few visits, I noticed that the door in the central area was used as an entrance and the door to the hallway was used as an exit. Along one wall of the classroom was one wardrobe, a teacher’s desk, facing the wall, a water fountain, and a sink. There was a white board that lined most of the front wall and beneath the wall were various workstations that could be used by students. For example, there was a listening center with headphones and a stereo, two laptops, and book bags hanging from the tray that held the whiteboard markers.

The front right corner of the room was the teacher’s area. There was a kidney table in front of a file cabinet and other bookshelves that were filled with teaching materials. A computer station including three desktop computers were against a third wall and the back wall of the classroom was mostly bookshelves holding children’s books that were categorized in separate bins. A Smart Board was also next to the bookshelves and was resting on top of crates in order for it to be accessible by the first grade students. In front of the Smart Board was a large carpet where students met for reading and writing mini-lessons as well as to view the announcements or news. The projector and laptop computer necessary for the Smart Board were on a cart located somewhat in the middle of the classroom. Although the variation of groupings or number of students in each group changed slightly throughout my six observations in Hannah’s classroom, it was
noted that the twenty student desks were always organized into cooperative learning groups.

There were numerous posters on all walls and flat surfaces in the classroom. Some, such as the alphabet chart were factory made, but most of the posters in the room were teacher created and evidence of what the students were or had already learned. One bulletin board was dedicated to displaying student data and other boards displayed reading group materials and student friendly objectives.

During my first three observations in Hannah’s first grade classroom I was able to determine there were forty-two utterances that were evidence of code breaking, text participant, text user, or text analyst. Table seven exhibits the frequency of each category.

Table 7

*Hannah Four Resources Examples – Round One*

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<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
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</table>

During observation one Hannah was working with a small group of students at her kidney table in order to assist them with their writing. When Hannah was speaking with one child she demonstrated code breaking when discussing the necessity to be able to read what we write. She stated, “Could you make your letters a bit neater? Because this week you did all of this great work and you couldn’t read it to me.” During lesson three Hannah had fourteen examples of asking text participant questions as she was leading a small reading group and discussing new vocabulary terms. After reading a bit about each
term and pointing out the illustrations that could help the students bring meaning to the words, Hannah asked many questions. “What do you think field might be? If he says go run on the field do you run on the blacktop? Does anyone remember what another means?” Finally, Hannah also demonstrated text user in the first three lessons. During lesson three the teacher led a discussion that focused beyond the definition of the word field and facilitated a conversation among the students related to Field Day which moved this vocabulary lesson beyond simply making meaning of the vocabulary word and applying it to the text they had read.

**Observations: Small Group Discussions**

After observing Hannah’s dynamic teaching I was anxious to hear her reactions to the texts during our small group discussions. Hannah was present for all four small group discussions and was an active participant during every meeting. Based on many of Hannah’s comments I was able to glean that Hannah holds many leadership roles in her school and it was apparent in our meetings that Hannah’s peers had a natural respect for her ideas and contributions to our conversations.

Data from the small group discussions indicate Hannah is in the Resistance stage of the WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). Table 8 displays each of the five stages of WID as well as the number of comments Hannah made that were coded in each of the categories. While Hannah displayed characteristics of an individual in the Acceptance, Resistance, and Redefinitions stages, there were significantly more comments made during our four small group discussions that were evidence of an individual in the Resistance stage of WID.
There were some instances during our four meetings that Hannah demonstrated characteristics of someone in the Passive Acceptance Stage such as when she made comments indicating she believes white culture is classical and the “Other” is more primitive, as well as when she voiced some dominate White culture beliefs; however, most of her comments were similar to someone in the Resistance stage. An example of a comment made that was coded as Passive Acceptance was when Hannah explained that she talks to her students about trade schools as well as four-year colleges. Although, her intentions are strong, this confession promotes the idea of the “Other” being more primitive. Another example of Hannah’s utterances that were coded as Acceptance was when she discussed how she made sense of the “hidden rules of the middle class” when reading the work of Payne and Krabill’s (2001).

Hannah often referenced her understanding of institutional discrimination and her frustration with bureaucratic systems that made her use educational programs she knew intentionally or unintentionally placed students of color at a disadvantage. Although the initial interview was not specifically coded using Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012), many of Hannah’s utterances during the initial interview informally triangulated the data supporting the conclusion that Hannah is in the Resistance stage.

Of importance to this case, is that Hannah displayed an equal number of utterances in the Passive and Active Resistance stages. While Hannah displayed a sense
of ownership to fight against institutional discrimination she was also aware that
whatever she does or fails to do was part of the problem or part of the solution. Hannah
was also the only participant who expressed the realization that she herself is racist when
she was discussing how she felt when reading the following statement made in David
Mura’s chapter in *Racism Explained to My Daughter* by Tahar Ben Jelloun (1999),

> I believe white culture, white mores, are superior, and, in the end, I care more
about what happens to white people than black people. I have been taught
through the culture and through my education that white people are superior to
black people and are basically more important to me. (122)

After this statement in the book, David Mura further problematizes this belief when
stating that these beliefs are one reason why Whites avoid intimacy with Blacks. Hannah,
admitted that she agrees with David Mura and shared with the group that after reading
this in the text it, “poked at my heart.”

Although I identified Hannah as being in the Resistance stage, during the second
small group discussion there were six instances where Hannah also commented on her
belief that all cultures and racial groups have unique and different traits that enrich the
human experience. These realizations are characteristics of someone in the more
advanced Redefinition stage.

**Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round Two**

After spending time together during our four small group discussions, I returned
to Hannah’s classroom to complete the final round of observations. When completing
these last three observations in Hannah’s first grade classroom the makeup of the room
was almost exactly the same, but a slight change was that the student teacher that had
been in Hannah’s room during the first three observations, was no longer there. Hannah was back to teaching all day instead of just a lesson here and there. Significant to understanding Hannah’s interest in being a participant in this study, it is important to mention that even though the student teacher was teaching full time when the first set of observations occurred, Hannah asked the student teacher if she would mind allowing Hannah to teach six literacy lessons, three of which were during the student teacher’s “full take over of the classroom.” The student teacher kindly agreed, allowing Hannah to be a participant in the study.

The data indicated there was evidence of Freebody and Luke’s (1990) critical literacy framework during the last three observations in Hannah’s classroom. There were sixteen examples of code breaking, text participant was obvious forty-two times, and text user was evident fourteen times. This data is further delineated in Table 9.

Table 9

<table>
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<th>Hannah Four Resources Examples – Round Two</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Code Breaking</td>
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<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Four</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation Six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During observation five Hannah was reviewing vocabulary, but different than the discussion she had during lesson three that demonstrated text participant, this discussion of new vocabulary words was not based off of a text the students had previously read. During this lesson, the teacher was helping the students to recognize new vocabulary
terms without an association to a text, which is defined as code breaking. Her questions included: What is an edge? What does enormous mean?

Throughout observation six Hannah and the students were reading a story that contains the vocabulary words they learned during the previous lesson. This time when Hannah asked questions regarding the vocabulary words (certainly, vast, and enormous), the students had to use the text and illustrations to assist them in answering the question, thus being examples of text participant. Some examples were: What will certainly happen in the story? What was vast and enormous in the story? Vocabulary was not the only focus of this lesson and Hannah also displayed text participant in other ways: How many different ways does Poppleton sleep? What does Poppleton want to do in his bed?

Text user was also evident when Hannah was reading and discussing the story of Poppleton the pig. One example was when Hannah was asking the students about the sales lady in the story, who is continuously looking at her watch, as the main character Poppleton takes too much of her time. Hannah uses the illustration as a time to converse with the students regarding what emotion the illustrator is trying to convey as well as having the students show what they look like when they are annoyed. This conversation moved beyond simply making meaning of the words or illustrations, which is evidence of text user.

Table 10 is a representation of the total instances Hannah used the four resources model. The totals from both rounds of observations are noted as well as a grand total for each process. These totals indicate Hannah most frequently uses text participant.
Revisiting Hannah: Through Hannah’s Eyes

After completing the final observations and as a final step in the study, I completed the second interview with Hannah, in order for her to share any insight or understandings that were made during the duration of our time together, particularly related to Whiteness and critical literacy. During this interview and similar to Ben, Hannah shared that one of the most enjoyable aspects of the study was having the chance to talk with her colleagues. She also stated that as teachers, they often don’t get time to talk to one another.

When asked if her ideas regarding critical literacy had developed or changed as a result of this study Hannah was able to share examples of reading programs in her school that affect her inability to incorporate critical literacy into her guided reading lessons. Due to some bureaucratic decisions made regarding remedial reading programs, and as a FLASH mandate, classroom teachers are no longer allowed to use their own materials for guided reading and must use a scripted, grade level program and text for all guided reading groups. According to Hannah, the students are not interested in the mandatory text because the characters and plots are not relatable. “Who cares about a kangaroo named Kim who can’t kick a can? The stories don’t make any sense.” In the past Hannah had based part of her guided reading lessons off of student selected texts. Without this

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
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<td>Total Round One</td>
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<td>69</td>
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luxury, she has noticed a disinterest in her students. “I’ve never had a problem getting my kids excited about reading, and this year it was like – well, that’s why. They haven’t gotten to choose what they read at this back table all year long.”

When reflecting on the development of her critical literacy practices Hannah mentioned that during her whole group reading lessons she believes she is more reflective in the moment with her students when they are participating in group conversations. Hannah also discussed that she tries to make an effort every day, outside of the guided reading lessons, to choose texts and activities that reflect her students’ identity and interests. Even though her intentions are good Hannah noted that the task of finding quality first grade read alouds is often challenging because texts that represent her student population usually have a great deal of text on the page. “And they [books] are hard to get through because their [the students’] attention spans aren’t that long.”

Hannah’s effort to include activities that take into consideration her student’s family situations was present when she explained her efforts to plan a Mother’s Day lesson. She shared her struggle to complete a Mother’s Day project when considering the home life situation of some of her students. Hannah displayed a strong awareness of how her family background was different to that of some of her students when she stated, “I think my mom walks on water and my mom is so amazing” and then when referring to a student in her class, “I had another little girl…where there had been custody issues with the mom. How was I going to say, ‘write all these glorious things about your Mom?’” Hannah further problematized this Mother’s Day situation as she explained conversations she has had with her colleagues who express frustration with students who don’t want to write anything nice about their mom. Instead of becoming angry with her colleague
Hannah simply stated, “Well, maybe they don’t have anything nice to say about their mom.”

Developing this voice, to “push-back” to colleagues or administration or family is something Hannah stated is a result of this study. “I’ve just started being more vocal…I’d rather avoid confrontation, so I would just sit and be really quiet about things. But then I felt like, because I knew more, I had more to back up whatever that was going to come out of my mouth at the time.”

Another insightful comment Hannah made during our last conversation together was that one thing she has learned from this study is she still has a long way to go. To further explain what she meant by this, she stated,

I need better resources available to be more culturally aware. It’s [this study] has made me more aware. I thought I was pretty aware of my teaching biases and then I was like, oh my gosh, I really have started to look at things before I start teaching them to my kids to make sure that I’m not just assuming that they have all these experiences.

Hannah also stated that her understanding of Whiteness has deepened as a result of the study. She mostly gives credit to the article we read during our small group discussion for developing this understanding. Hannah also stated that being a participant in this study has made her “hyperaware.” She further develops this idea by explaining,

I would say being in the study, now little comments people make, irk the crap out of me. They really do! I mean, I have my own little caveat kind of deals, but now it’s just like, who, who do you think you are? Do you hear yourself? Do you hear how ridiculous you sound right now? I just, it frustrates me now to no end. It’s
made me hyperaware. And even like, my own family. I’m just like, do you hear yourselves right now – How ridiculous and how uppity you sound? And just, I just shake my head, and I look up and seriously? I just, I don’t even have words for them sometimes. Because I’m just like, it’s not funny.

When shown Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the second interview, Hannah identified herself in the Redefinition stage. She further explained that moving to the Internalization stage of the model would require “giant steps.” Similar to Ben, Hannah’s understanding of the Internalization stage is described as, “I feel like this would be…standing at school board meetings. That to me, is taking action against racism.”

**Ashley: Through Ashley’s Eyes**

Ashley grew up in a small rural town in the Northwest United States. The town had about 10,000 people and Ashley recalled the population of this small town changing as she got older, due to an influx of Hispanic farmers. Although the small town became more diverse, Ashley remembered the high school and community feeling very segregated. “It was kind of White or Hispanic, and you lived on this side of the town, or you lived on this side of town.” When talking about diversity and Ashley’s high school experiences, Ashley also explained that although the community felt segregated, it was only among the two groups present in this small town: White and Hispanic.

In the first interview, Ashley shared her desire to become a teacher and her path of obtaining her degree. Extremely influential in Ashley’s choice to become a teacher was her mother who has been a teacher for thirty-six years. While Ashley had debated other career options throughout her young adult life, she decided before entering college
that she wanted to pursue an elementary education degree. In fact, Ashley also knew that she wanted to study outside her home state. Ashley’s mother was a great asset in helping her determine a college that would best prepare her to be a teacher. “My mom was really helpful in trying to find schools because she knew the questions to ask of education programs. She knew [to ask]: when are your practicums?” Ashley decided on a state school in the southwest part of the United States where she later graduated. She also completed her Master’s degree in Literacy with this same university.

As Ashley continued to reflect upon her teacher preparation she was able to describe two of the literacy courses she took as an undergraduate student. Both of these courses focused on teaching methods, and while one literacy course focused on primary methods, the other one focused on intermediate literacy teaching methods. The set-up of these courses included studying theory for the first half of the semester, where Ashley remembers writing numerous lesson plans, and the second half of the semester was spent tutoring young students using a literacy program created by two of her literacy professors. During the tutoring phase of the semester, course mentors, who were Master’s students, observed the undergraduates’ lessons and modeled small group reading for them. “I felt like that was an incredible piece of our foundation…because we taught small group reading.” At a later time in Ashley’s educational journey, being part of the Master’s program, Ashley was also able to serve in the mentor role for other elementary education undergraduates.

Ashley commented that her Master’s program familiarized her with the term critical literacy; however, when I probed a bit deeper regarding her understanding of the theory, she explained ideas related to critical thinking, not critical literacy. Ashley’s
comments, which indicate misunderstanding of critical literacy, are common for those who are just becoming familiar with the theory. While this confusion often takes place for beginning learners, for the purpose of this study, this confusion is considered the same as not understanding critical literacy.

Ashley continued to describe her teacher training and confirmed that a multicultural education course was part of her undergraduate studies, and she also acknowledged that there was a multicultural component in many of the other courses she completed. When I asked Ashley to explain the multicultural education course, she could remember one project that was influential, and obviously memorable, because she could recall the experience in great detail. The professor had asked the students to spend five hours with a culture that they did not consider themselves to be a part of, and because Ashley is Catholic, she chose to spend five hours immersed in Mormon culture. After going to church with some friends that were Mormon, Ashley also interviewed a member of the church whom she did not know, and then wrote a paper explaining the experience.

Although Ashley was fond of her multicultural education course and some of the assignments she had to complete, when I asked Ashley if she thought the course she took prepared her to teach in an urban school she responded by stating, “No, I mean, I think it was an interesting perspective and it taught a lot about who I was, and then how I projected my culture onto other people,” but then Ashley paused for a minute and continued by stating that she believed other events in her past had prepared her, perhaps better prepared her, to teach in an urban school. To further explain this idea, Ashley stated that she was part of an exchange program when she was sixteen and lived in Mexico for one year. During this experience, she explained that she felt “the opposite of
the racism spectrum.” She clarified this comment by stating that while living in Mexico she was the only blond, white person in the high school. “Those things [being blonde and white] make you uncomfortable and put you in a different perspective as the minority.”

Ashley also struggled with this change in her racial identity when she returned to her small town in the United States and discovered, “Oh my God, my town’s really white.”

Ashley further explained her WID when she shared that she is in an interracial marriage. Ashley dated her husband all through college and after they married Ashley and her husband lived with her husband’s parents for a short while. Even though this was something that was “unfamiliar” to Ashley, she respected that her husband’s family thought it would be foolish, and perhaps disrespectful, to pay for housing which Ashley and her husband could not afford. “That was hard for me. It’s a different culture, but you know, we’re [Ashley and her husband] stronger for it, I think.”

While Ashley and I continued to discuss how experiences with other racial or ethnic groups outside of our own can be life-changing experiences, Ashley described how she realized the difference between her upbringing, as a “typical kind of White middle-class family,” and the upbringing of her husband. Ashley’s utterances are clear indications of an individual who is or has transitioned from the Resistance to the Redefinition stage (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). Here she demonstrates her realization that she doesn’t really know who she is and what her racial group membership means to her. Furthermore, she continues to support the idea she has moved in the Redefinition stage as she moves beyond conflict, towards a resolution, and a new racial identity.

How did I grow up?... Where have I come from?.. What are my values and what, what’s important to me? I think that’s one of the things that has made my husband
and my relationship strong, is that I can assimilate into his family culture and speak to my in-laws and my mother-in-law, you know, family and everything in the Hispanic culture. She [grandma] watches the baby. So, ‘cause God forbid we put him in day care, which is, which is wonderful. I mean, who better than Grandma, right? Grandma and Grandpa. So they only speak Spanish to him, so he’s growing up learning Spanish. My husband now only speaks Spanish and I speak English at home and all of those kinds of things. But if I hadn’t had that background, I don’t know if I would have… We wouldn’t have clicked as easily because I can appreciate that culture and I can be a part of it in a different way than had I not spoken Spanish.

When shown Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the first interview, Ashley identified herself as being in between the Resistance and Redefinition stages and closer to the Redefinition stage. After identifying her own WID stage, Ashley did not give specific examples of why she classified herself in these stages, and perhaps she did not realize that many of her previous statements justified her self-identified stages, however; she did explain that identifying herself using this model was difficult because according to her, “What’s hard, I think for me, it’s more of a class than race.” This idea of race and class is important to note because it is not only present here, in this instance, it also influences many of her comments made during our small group discussion conversations that will be highlighted later. Ashley further explains this philosophy and perhaps her changing thought process.

My husband, he grew up really poor. And his parents have worked incredibly hard. In fact they came to the country through coyotes and have worked their way
up into a middle-class type of family. And growing up, he lived with, you know, a lot of like our kids here [at this school] do – with multiple kids in [and] multiple families in one living situation and everything like that. And I feel like I recognize… this part of the privilege. How I grew up was very different than how my husband grew up. But I don’t know if that’s necessarily a racial thing than a class thing more. My dad grew up really poor, but then we had money growing up. So then, I feel like, my dad, I’m kind of one generation off of where my husband is as far as class goes. So then hopefully our son will not have to feel those negativities and he’ll hear the stories from dad but he won’t have felt them himself. So, but it could be though, of the town that I grew up too, because it was all white so…

**Ashley in Action**

**Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round One**

Ashley has taught elementary education in the past but her current position is as a FLASH reading interventionist. Ashley does not have her own class this year and instead she sees small groups of children and provides half hour guided reading lesson throughout the day. Data from tests is used to determine which students would benefit most from Ashley’s small group lessons, where she is mandated to use scripted lesson plans that have been provided for her. Typically the students that are chosen to work with her are “bubble” children. This means the data from standardized testing indicate these students have reading skills slightly behind their current grade level. According to the literacy framework that was provided to Ashley from FLASH, the students who come to Ashley for their half hour of highly structured guided reading lessons are also receiving
grade level instruction in their homeroom classroom. According to the Response to Intervention model, the students who visit Ashley are receiving tier II instruction with her.

Ashley’s classroom is shared with three other teachers. As part of the FLASH program there are a few classrooms in Pearson Elementary School that are used specifically for the FLASH program. Some of the classrooms house FLASH teachers as well as leveled reader texts, but in Ashley’s case, her classroom is just used for teachers and holding small group reading sessions. There are three kidney tables in Ashley’s room; however, every time I observed, there were only two FLASH teachers teaching: Ashley and someone else. The two teachers almost never interacted during their thirty-minute lessons with the students. The students also seemed very used to this structure as they were focused on the teacher in front of them and were rarely distracted by the conversations or reading that was occurring in the other group.

Ashley’s corner of the room had a computer and a teacher’s desk but the other teachers who used the room did not have a desk or computer. Similar to other classrooms in the building, wardrobes, file cabinets, and bookshelves lined the wall. Overall, the room felt very empty. There were only a few posters on the wall and only one bulletin board was present with a few pictures of students holding white boards where they had written their reading fluency goals.

Ashley was usually seated at her kidney table when I entered the classroom and could be found chatting with the students that had arrived for the lesson while she waited for the other students to join them. As mentioned earlier, FLASH is a program designed to provide an additional thirty minutes of reading instruction to students who are slightly below grade level. Data is used to determine who is a “FLASH student” and after the
students have been selected they then meet with other peers who are in their same grade. Because of this, Ashley teaches five FLASH reading groups, one for each grade level, every day. I observed Ashley teach at many different times throughout the day, which allowed me to see her interact with various grade levels. There were five or six students in her group for most of the observations, however during observation six, there were only three students.

During my first three times observing Ashley’s small group reading lessons, I was able to observe sixty-nine questions or comments that were measureable using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model. Specific data including the number of instances in each of the four resources are synthesized in Table 11.

Table 11

*Ashley Four Resources Examples – Round One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation One</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Two</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Three</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ashley opened her reading lessons by teaching high frequency words and new vocabulary words. Because the mini-vocabulary lessons were usually based on background knowledge and recognizing vocabulary, these comments and questions were coded as code breaking. For example, Ashley said, “We have two high frequency words today. House. Spell it. Food, spell it. Now turn to your partner and use one of the words in a sentence.” Ashley’s small group lessons also consisted of shared reading of a leveled text. During this time, there was often evidence of text participant. “They gave us several
reasons why someone might move. What is one reason the text gave us? What three types of homes did we learn about today?” Using this same text about homes that move Ashley also moved beyond making meaning of the words and demonstrated text user when she asked the students, “Pick one of those [homes that move] that you would want to live in and why.”

**Observations: Small Group Discussions**

After seeing Ashley teach a few times our small group meetings occurred four times to discuss the text and article that were assigned. According to the data collected during our four small group discussions, I identified Ashley as being between the Resistance and Redefinition stages of WID (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). While Table 12 illustrates that Ashley’s greatest number of comments, thirty-five, were coded as evidence of an individual in the Resistance stage of WID she also made a significant number of comments, twenty-three, that were coded as beliefs of an individual in the Redefinition stage of WID. Further supporting the notion that Ashley is moving beyond the Resistance stage of WID were the four comments that were coded as evidence of an individual in the Internalization stage of WID.

Table 12

*Ashley – Coded Utterance – White Identity Development Stage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Utterances</th>
<th>Naïveté</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Resistance</th>
<th>Redefinition</th>
<th>Internalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ashley was able to express her understanding of institutional discrimination as well as intentional and unintentional racism at the policy level numerous times. While Ashley was able to see the problem, there were also quite a few comments made by
Ashley that indicated she felt a sense of hopelessness in the efforts to change this discriminatory system and wasn’t sure how her actions were going to be able to fix the problem, particularly in schools.

Even though she was sometimes pessimistic in her efforts to make change, there were also a number of instances where Ashley demonstrated characteristics of someone in the Redefinition stage. For example, when discussing the idea of colorblindness in one discussion, Ashley mockingly stated, “I only see children” indicating this philosophy did not value the uniqueness of diversity. She expanded up on this idea when addressing the importance of valuing students when she stated, “You are not going to get to the standards if your students don’t think you care about them.”

As was present during the initial interview, during small group discussions, Ashley was able to articulate her movement beyond the conflict she experienced in the Resistance stage and was heading toward resolution and a new racial identity. Ashley made some comments indicating that she recognized all cultures and racial groups enrich the human experience with their unique and different traits, which are characteristics of an individual in the Internalization stage of WID. This was evident in our discussion when Ashley stated, “Right now in 2014 I feel like [I can relate these ideas] to marriage equality.

**Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round Two**

Five weeks after the original observations, I observed Ashley teach three additional FLASH literacy lessons. During these three lessons there were eighty-nine discernible utterances that could be coded using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model. This information is synthesized in Table 13.
Similar to the previous observations, many of the code breaking instances were at the beginning of the lesson when Ashley addressed high frequency words and vocabulary words. “Read the word. Yes, word, spell it. Read the word. Yes, see, spell it.” Code breaking was also generally evident at the end of the lesson when Ashley would lead a mini-guided writing lesson. While helping students sound out words or discussing punctuation and capitalization rules, Ashley was helping children break the code of language and literacy.

Observation six had numerous instances of text participant, many of which happened after Ashley and the students had finished reading their leveled text. Ashley displayed pictures on large magnets that were illustrations of main events in the story they had just read and she asked the students to work together in order to sequence the illustrations. As the students were working together Ashley flooded them with questions relevant to recalling the text. “Good, why do you think that goes first? Do you agree? What happened next? Then what?”

One example of text user occurred in observation six when Ashley was discussing characterization. Moving beyond making meaning of the text, Ashley asked the group if they thought the character in the text was going to be a better brother or stay the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation Four</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Five</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Six</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This required the students to move beyond the facts that were given in the text and discuss how the text was read and interpreted.

Table 14 illustrates the total number of utterances made by Ashley that were coded during all six observations. According to this data, Ashley most frequently uses code breaking during her guided reading lessons.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ashley Four Resources Examples – Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code Breaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Round One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Round Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: Ashley or FLASH?

At first glance, it was apparent that Ashley had significantly more instances of the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990) than her peers. Having an understanding of typical variations in data, I stopped to consider if Ashley’s coded utterances were cause for additional analysis. Remembering that Ashley was teaching from a scripted lesson plan, I questioned whether the coded instances included questions that may have been part of the FLASH lesson itself or if they were questions that Ashley naturally asked because of her teacher intuition and background. As part of the triangulation and member checking process, Ashley and I met to clarify which utterances where provided by FLASH or were natural to Ashley. If the utterance was labeled FLASH, it was part of the scripted plan Ashley had been given and mostly follows on a daily basis. If the utterance was something Ashley added to the conversation it was then coded as Ashley. This delineated coding, represented below, indicates that some of the questions were provided
as part of the FLASH lesson plans, and some of the questions were Ashley responding to a teachable moment. During observation one for example, there were six instances of code breaking. Of those six instances, Ashley created five of the questions or comments as she was thinking and responding to the students, and one of those questions was initiated from the FLASH lesson plan. See table 15.

Table 15

*Ashley’s Questions Compared to FLASH Questions – Round One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation One</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley FLASH</td>
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<td><strong>Observation Two</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley FLASH</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation Three</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley FLASH</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley FLASH</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because a brief high frequency word discussion, as well as vocabulary instruction, which were mentioned earlier in Ashley’s case, are part of every FLASH lesson, most of the instances code breaking utterances recorded, were initiated by the FLASH lesson plan. There were a few instances in lesson one where text participant was also obvious from the FLASH lesson plan.

Observations four, five, and six provided similar outcomes in which the FLASH lesson plan provided code breaking questions. Observation five was a bit different, because in this lesson there were many examples of text participant comments or
questions that were initiated by the FLASH lesson plan. In all observations where text user was present, the utterances were questions or comments instinctively made by Ashley and were not discussions prompted by the FLASH lesson plan. Accounting for the Ashley/FLASH dichotomy, table 16 outlines the coded utterances from the last three observations.

Table 16
*Ashley’s Questions Compared to FLASH Questions – Round Two*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation Four</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Five</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Six</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to compare Ashley’s innate questioning skills to her peers, a breakdown of her own questioning skills and FLASH questions for all six observations needed to be determined. Table 17 outlines this information and verifies that Ashley most frequently uses code breaking during her guided reading lessons. The data that will be used during the cross case analysis is bolded.
Table 17

Ashley’s Questions Compared to FLASH Questions – Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Round One</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLASH</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Total Round Two</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>FLASH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Total</td>
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<td>Ashley</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLASH</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>13</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revisiting Ashley: Through Ashley’s Eyes

After the observations and small group discussions Ashley and I had a chance to sit down for the final interview and during this time she shared that the group sessions and talking with colleagues was the most enjoyable part of the study. “It was…hearing everybody’s [participants’] background and where they’ve kind of come from and how that’s influenced their teaching.”

As Ashley reflected on how her understanding regarding critical literacy had changed throughout the study, at first she confessed that she thought there was little change, but then she continued to explain how being part of the study made her “more aware.” She further clarified this awareness when she stated, “It [critical literacy] is definitely more who’s being left out.” Ashley also stated that she is more aware of the books that she is picking when choosing texts for her small group instruction and she is making an effort to choose books that represent the population of the children she is teaching. While this can be quite a challenge because the leveled readers provided by the FLASH program are limited, Ashley stated that she notices how much of a difference the
right text can make when she is working with her students. To further expand upon what it meant to be aware, Ashley commented that she is also more aware of the conversations she is having with students.

While sharing how the study had impacted her, Ashley stated that her understanding of Whiteness had not changed as a result of the study but what had changed was her willingness to talk about it. “Before I was kind of like, oh, I’m white, I can’t talk about it [Whiteness].” Prior to the study, Ashley knew Whiteness existed but she didn’t talk about it while at work. Providing evidence to this new development, Ashley explained that during the duration of the study when she and another participant were choosing books in a literacy lab they were conversing about books, discussing how the book titles or content were or were not representative of their student population. Along with this, Ashley indicated that the small group discussions made her feel more comfortable with this particular colleague because before the study, they were merely acquaintances, and the study brought them closer and helped them to understand each other’s ideas and backgrounds. “This is somebody I would not have approached about that [Whiteness]. So I think the small group discussion definitely opened that conversation up.”

Ashley also mentioned that she is a frequent listener of public radio and found herself more interested in conversations based on race when she listened. The news coverage of the controversial comments made by the former Los Angeles Clippers owner, military haircuts, and a story in Portland, Oregon were all examples that Ashley was able to provide of stories she believes she found herself interested because of what she was learning during our small group discussions.
When identifying herself on Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the second interview, at first Ashley identified herself between the Redefinition and Internalization stages. After a brief definition of what constitutes “action against racism” which is part of the description of the Internalization stage, Ashley realized that although she believes her actions against racism are “small” they support her development to the Internalization stage. Most significant in her realization here, is the fact that she is taking action against racism by her growing willingness to discuss Whiteness and critical literacy in the school setting.

I don’t think I was there [Internalization] before. I think that I kind of swept it up, swept it under the rug and kind of just didn’t talk about it…But, I feel like I’m more vocal about it now and trying to have conversations with other teachers about books that we are picking, and that has changed.

Part of this change was also attributed to what I call “critical peers.” As mentioned earlier, due to the small group discussions, Ashley began to realize she had allies in the school that shared some of her ideas. “I didn’t know I had that support as much. Cause if you don’t talk about it, you don’t know how people feel and then you don’t know who…you can have those conversations with.”

When asked whether her notions of Whiteness influenced her critical literacy practices, Ashley once again shared that she feels like she is more culturally aware when she picks books for her guided reading groups. Feeling restricted on her book choices this year (because she can only use guided reading books approved by the program/people that are funding the FLASH program), Ashley stated that hopefully next year when she is
a Literacy Coach in the mornings she will be able to assist other teachers with more culturally relevant material for whole group and guided reading lessons.

It is important to note that although Ashley is a teacher in the FLASH program she stated numerous reasons during her second interview why she is a bit skeptical of the program. The first area of concern is that FLASH mandates primary teachers to use scripted grade level material for their guided reading groups and intermediate teachers to use grade level material of their choice with the Common Core State Standards driving their small group instruction. Another FLASH initiative is a computer program that was intended to be used with English learning students two or three times a week for thirty minutes. The directive from FLASH is that every student needs to be on the program for 100 minutes each week.

So those kinds of things are frustrating. I mean, some of the things are nice – small class sizes and kindergarten, pre-k. I think the FLASH Reading Center is not bad. I mean, I think we’re doing good things and these kids need small group reading intervention. But I’ve talked to some of the teachers and based on the requirements of the computer program and all the other minute requirements that the performance zone is requiring, their [FLASH students] only small group instruction is with me. That’s not how tier two is supposed to work. It’s supposed to be on top of what they’re already getting.

**Morgan: Through Morgan’s Eyes**

Morgan and her older brother grew up in a small town in a centrally located state. Morgan described her family as ordinary, and explained that both of her parents worked and together, they took numerous family vacations. Morgan and her family stayed in this
small town for twelve years and then moved to a large urban town in the southwestern part of the United States. It was here that Morgan finished school and has been living ever since.

Morgan wanted to become a teacher because of the strong influence of her second grade teacher. Although Morgan was not specifically able to describe why this teacher was so influential, she did mention that it was something about the way the teacher worked with the students, and taught them, that made Morgan decide she wanted to be a teacher. It was since that young age of seven that Morgan knew she wanted to follow her dream of becoming a teacher and she did not stray from that path.

Morgan completed her elementary education degree at a small state college in the same southwestern state where she completed high school. She explained that her preservice teaching preparation provided a great deal of hands-on practice and experience being in the classroom, which Morgan greatly appreciated. Morgan also shared that while she was attending college she was employed in the local school district as a special education aide. This allowed her to live the life as a teacher and make connections of theory and practice because she was able to see first hand what she was reading about in her education textbooks or discussing during her education courses. Morgan acknowledges that her work as a special education aide was influential in preparing her to become a teacher. Due to some family financial hardship, it took Morgan longer than anticipated to finish her degree but she is proud to have finished as the first teacher in her family. Morgan is currently a third grade teacher Pearson Elementary School.

When Morgan reflected on the literacy coursework, and the coursework in general, that was part of her undergraduate degree she was not able to recall many
specific details. She did however remember that the courses she completed in literacy instruction, during her undergraduate work, were focused on nonfiction and fiction genres and not standards based. Morgan thought that her literacy courses somewhat prepared her to teach in an urban classroom because there was a focus on how to make accommodations for English Language Learning (ELL) students. While discussing Morgan’s literacy coursework I asked her if she recalled critical literacy being a part of any of her undergraduate studies. Morgan was not familiar with the term critical literacy and after I provided a brief definition of the term, Morgan was not able to relate the theory to her past or current understanding or teaching.

As we continued to discuss Morgan’s preparation in becoming a teacher, she did recall taking a multicultural education course as part of her undergraduate degree program but she not remember any details from the course. She stated that she completed the course early in her studies, which may have contributed to her lack of recall. Not being able to remember much from this course, Morgan confessed that the course was not influential or particularly helpful in preparing her to work in an urban school.

During the first interview, Morgan and I continued to discuss her feelings regarding her preparation to teach in an urban school like the one where she is currently working. When I asked Morgan when she thought she first became aware of race she indicated that she believed it was when she moved from the small town, where she spent her first twelve years of childhood, to the large urban southwestern city. Morgan shared that most of the people in her hometown were white and Morgan only recalled a few people of color in her middle school. In her small town, Morgan explained that there were just “little specks” of diversity, and moving to a large urban city and attending a
culturally and racially diverse middle and high school, “I was like the speck in the ocean of all the different races.”

An additional experience where Morgan was made aware of race was in one of her high school English classes. While reading aloud Hamlet, Morgan’s teacher “randomly” choose a black student, the only black student in the classroom, to play the part of the slave. Morgan recalls being angry about the choice and thinking it was not random when there were thirty-five other students in the class that the teacher could have chosen to play the part. Morgan remembers thinking to herself that she didn’t realize that “things like this” were still happening.

Morgan identified herself as between the Redefinition and Internalization stages on Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). She explained that she recognizes there are things that she has been given to her in her life because of her race, although she was not able to name any specific examples.

**Morgan in Action**

**Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round One**

Similar to all of the other participants, I observed Morgan’s literacy instruction six times throughout the duration of the study. Each of these observations occurred during part of Morgan’s ninety-minute literacy block, which was scheduled first thing every day, and included Morgan’s whole group literacy instruction as well as her small-guided reading groups. Even though my observations happened during different time frames of the literacy block all observations lasted thirty minutes.

My first impression of Morgan’s classroom was that it was neat and organized. Similar to the other classrooms described in the study, there were file cabinets and
wardrobe closets that lined the classroom walls, along with three desktop computers, and a teacher’s desk. In one corner of the room was Morgan’s kidney table that she would pull away from the wall when she was using it for small group instruction. Along the front wall of the classroom were three large rectangular white boards; however, the Smart Board was secured on top of one third of the white board space. Similar to Hannah’s classroom set up, the cart with the projector and laptop was located somewhat in the middle of the classroom in order to make use of the Smart Board and display images from the Elmo. There were a couple of bookshelves in a corner of the classroom filled with just a few books.

There were many posters and bulletin boards on Morgan’s classroom walls. Some of the posters had been purchased but there were also teacher made anchor charts decorating the walls, giving reference to previous and present topics being studied in Morgan’s third grade classroom. One bulletin board was labeled “Data Wall” and showed progress of students using a particular computer program. The display had not been updated in at least two months. Another wall was labeled “Word Wall” and it displayed five words and the alphabet.

There were 26 student desks in this classroom and during observation one the student desks were in two large groups. Each group had thirteen desks with six facing another six and one student desk at the end of the long row. During observation two the desks were still in groups but this time they were broken apart into groups of four, five, and six. When I entered the classroom for observation three, I noticed the desks had again been moved and this time the students were not in groups and instead were in rows, not connected to each other, and facing the front of the classroom.
During these three observations I was able to record Morgan’s questions and conversations to and with her class. It is important to note that a majority of the time I visited Morgan’s classroom the students were completing independent work. Even when I made special attempts to move my observation time in an effort to see more instruction by Morgan, I mostly witnessed the students completing assessments and independent work. Within all six observations I was able to see Morgan teach part of a whole group literacy lesson one time and two other observations I was able to watch Morgan’s small group instruction. Unfortunately, both of these small group instruction observations were only for a limited time during the thirty-minute observation.

During the first round of observations there were seventeen coded utterances. An example of code breaking came from observation three when Morgan asked one of her students, “What can we add to the end of walk to make it past tense?” Text participant was evident when Morgan was reading aloud a text to her whole class and asking comprehension questions every few pages. “How do you think the way his father reacted made Mateo feel? Why did he feel sad? What did his dad tell him?” Table 18 is a representation of the data collected during the first three observations.
**Observations: Small Group Discussions**

After completing the first three observations, Morgan participated in the small group discussions with the other participants in the study. It is important to mention that compared to the other participants in the study, Morgan was fairly quiet during our small group discussions. She did speak and was given plenty of opportunities to speak; however, she spoke quite a bit less compared to the other participants.

The data from the small group discussions indicate Morgan is transitioning to the Acceptance stage of Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). Most of Morgan’s comments made during our group meetings were related to the parents of the students she teaches. For example, Morgan stated, “In this area, it’s like their parents put so many ideas into their head…and its hard to instill…it doesn’t have to be that way.” She further provides evidence to being in the Acceptance stage of WID when she stated, “He [a student] said a couple of racial things because that is what he is told at home.” These comments support that Morgan is transitioning to Acceptance because her comments often indicated that she held an ideology about other racial groups and it was also evident that Morgan believes there are informal and formal rules of institutions such as schools

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**Table 18**

*Morgan Four Resources Examples – Round One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation One</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Two</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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123
that permit some behavior and prohibit others. Table 19 is an illustration of the coded comments made by Morgan during the small group discussions and solidifies that most of her comments were evidence of an individual in the Acceptance stage of WID.

Table 19

*Morgan – Coded Utterances – White Identity Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Naïveté</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Resistance</th>
<th>Redefinition</th>
<th>Internalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round Two**

Five weeks after the original observations, I completed observations four, five, and six. During these observations there were a few more instances of code breaking and text participant and one case where the teacher asked a question identified as text analyst. Examples of code breaking were obvious when Morgan was revising a student’s piece of writing. “Are there periods? Do your words make sense? Is it supposed to be plural?” Text participant was identifiable in observation five when the teacher was working with a small group at her kidney table. The focus of the lesson was on identifying figurative language and defining idioms. “What figurative language or idioms did you find in this passage? What two things are they comparing?” The questioning in this mini lesson does not go beyond making sense of the words and illustrations on the page, thus indicating the comments and questions are examples of text participant. Table 20 clarifies how many instances of each process were evident in each lesson.
The totals of all six observations are represented in Table 21. Morgan most frequently uses the text participant process.

**Table 21**

*Morgan Four Resources Examples – Total*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Round One</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Round Two</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Final Total</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Revisiting Morgan: Through Morgan’s Eyes**

When meeting with Morgan for the second interview she explained the most enjoyable part of the study was the small group discussions. Similar to her colleagues, she enjoyed getting to know other teachers on a more personal level and sharing stories about each other instead of only the business type conversations that tend to happen in schools on a day-to-day basis.

When reflecting on being a participant in the study, Morgan confessed that although she enjoyed being a part of the study she realized she was not as critical as the others in the study. She further clarified this statement by explaining that the rest of the
participants seemed to be critical thinkers, while Morgan felt as if she was not a critical thinker, and explained that when she reads she tends to “take it for what it is.” We discussed how the other participants had all completed Master’s degrees and because Morgan is just starting her Master’s program she did agree that maybe continuing her studies will improve her critical thinking skills. Furthermore, Morgan also agreed and acknowledged that she had the least amount of teaching experience of all the participants and she recognized that maybe critical thinking would also be increased with more classroom experiences in which to relate the literature we had read and discussed during the small group meetings.

Based on our conversation during the last interview, Morgan still seems to be somewhat struggling with the theory and application of critical literacy in an elementary classroom. When I first asked if her understandings regarding critical literacy had changed as a result of the study she stated that she remembered going over it, but asked me to define it again. With a brief definition from me, Morgan was able to somewhat clarify her understanding of the theory but mostly she described critical thinking, which as mentioned in Ashley’s case study, is a common confusion of those just learning the concept of critical literacy.

Shortly after explaining her misunderstanding of critical literacy and critical thinking, Morgan shared that she is having a hard time meeting the needs of the individual learners in her classroom and is often feeling like she does not know what to do to help her students achieve success. In the area of reading in particular, Morgan shared that she struggles with comprehension strategies to help her students as well as with literacy strategies that meet the needs of the very diverse special education
population in her classroom. Morgan recognized that perhaps negotiating all of these frustrations has prevented her from making personal connections with her students like she had hoped for, but she is optimistic that maybe next year, with a little more experience under her belt, as well as not teaching in a full inclusion classroom, will allow her to make better connections with her students, which she in turn conceptualized as making space for critical literacy. It was during this conversation that Morgan began to realize that perhaps instituting critical literacy would have helped her better connect with her students. It was at this point during the interview when Morgan stated she thought her understanding of critical literacy had developed as a result of the study and further indicated she is able to understand how it might have worked for her class and how she could have tried to make it a part of her classroom.

Morgan expressed that being a participant in this study has made her think about race and Whiteness. As an example, Morgan explained that at a recent FLASH training she was listening to the presentation and thinking how the information being presented was not a good match for her students or the population of Pearson Elementary School. She justified this by stating, “They [our students] don’t come from the same backgrounds that the people who are creating the programs come from…That [the program] doesn’t work at our school because the students don’t come from White backgrounds.”

This surface level understanding of how Whiteness appears in the local school system was also expressed by Morgan when she stated that she has recently thought about how the school board and other decision making bodies are predominantly white, and Morgan has began to question if these authoritative figures understand what works in one school might not work in another.
Morgan was also able to express how this attention to race has been something that has developed as part of her teaching identity, which is something that was not evident before this study. In fact, Morgan shared that before this study she did not feel comfortable talking about race but she also shared that she didn’t consider the race of her students to be important. This is important to note because it may explain why Morgan was so hesitant to voice her ideas during our small group meetings. Morgan feels that her teacher identity has been impacted by this study and she feels she better understands the need to recognize her students’ races and use them as a tool in specializing education. These comments during our last time together indicate that perhaps Morgan is even moving beyond the Acceptance stage to the Redefinition stage because she is beginning to recognize intentional and unintentional structures that are preventing students of color from being successful.

When asked to identify herself on Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the second interview, Morgan stated she believes she is between the Redefinition and Internalization stages. When Morgan justified her identification in these stages she used examples of her family, in particular her daughter who is black. She explained that when she is in the grocery store with her daughter she hears little remarks to which Morgan answers with, “snippy little comebacks.” Later in the interview Morgan also explained that before having her daughter, she “never really had to deal with racism and racist comments…It was never an issue.” Now with her daughter, Morgan feels that she has experienced racism and that the comments she hears go straight to her heart and are offensive to her because according to Morgan, calling her daughter a name is worse than calling Morgan a name.
Unfortunately, but important to mention is that similar to Ben, there was a great amount of frustration and hopelessness expressed during Morgan’s second interview. On more than one occasion Morgan referred to one student of color in her classroom that she called her “special friend.” This is the same young man who was always at a table by himself when I would visit the classroom. Although my focus during observations was not on student activity, it was very obvious that this little boy did not have friends in the classroom and was frequently ignored by both the teacher and the students. During the second interview, Morgan referred to the Wood and Jocius (2013) article that discussed black males and critical literacy and shared that she was able to make connections between the text and this particular student. When I asked if she thought perhaps the text had made her more empathetic, at first she said yes and stated that she believed the text made her have empathy towards most of her students, but then shared that she has a number of tough students in her room and lately she is, “having a really hard time being with them at all.” She later continued this sentiment and stated, “I can’t be as empathetic as I want to because I’m completely, utterly, frustrated inside.”

As mentioned earlier, Morgan also shared she has had a hard time connecting with many of her students this year. In particular, she said that she feels like when she thinks she has determined a student’s interest she will try to cater to that interest, but the interests are quickly changing, and Morgan feels like she cannot establish the connection for which she was hoping. It appears as though these unsuccessful attempts at creating connections with her students, has prompted Morgan to stop trying.
Cara: Through Cara’s Eyes

Having four brothers and two sisters, who are much older than herself, Cara described her household and childhood memories as noisy, loud, fun times. Cara has fond memories of her older brother teaching her to read and other memories of doing many different outdoorsy activities with her family while she grew up on the east coast of the United States. Although Cara shared warmhearted memories of her childhood, she also mentioned that her parents drank quite often, as well as did drugs as she was growing up, so she spent part of her childhood with her parents and part of her childhood with her grandparents. Whether with her parents or her grandparents, Cara and her family lived in a small east coast town until Cara was a freshman in high school. Cara remembers her small community as being mostly middle to lower class and a mostly white population, which is why moving to a large urban city in the southwestern part of the United States was a big change for Cara.

When thinking back on her decision to become a teacher, Cara believes part of her influence was because there were so many children in her own home. “I played school a lot… Ever since I was little, I’ve always wanted to be a teacher.” Cara followed this passion of wanting to be a teacher by attending a magnet high school where the studies focused on education. She then attended a local, division one, state college and majored in elementary education. Being part of a cohort program, Cara was able to complete both of her practicum requirements and student teaching experience at the same school, the school where she has now been a teacher for eight years, Pearson Elementary School. Since beginning her teaching career, Cara has completed one Master’s degree and is close to finishing a second.
When asked to recall her teacher preparation program, particularly in the area of literacy, Cara could only recall few details. She did remember a focus on children’s literature, instruction on trade books and author studies, as well as how to integrate literacy into other content areas, but she was not able to remember many other details. When asked if she thought her literacy coursework prepared her to teach in an urban school she stated, “I don’t know if that was really an emphasis.” Cara also disclosed that she was not familiar with critical literacy and did not think it was a part of her undergraduate work or a part of either of her master’s programs.

Cara could remember taking a multicultural education course as part of her undergraduate work but could not precisely distinguish between what was taught in the multicultural education course and the multicultural literacy course. With a Teaching English as a Second Language Master’s degree, Cara recalled reading various articles and research but could not explain any details of what she had studied.

Cara took a few seconds to reflect upon whether she thought her multicultural education courses prepared her to teach in an urban school and then confessed, “I’m going to say no, because I don’t remember anything.” Cara further supported the notion of being underprepared to teach in an urban multicultural school when she shared that completing her student teaching in an urban school was a “shock to my system.” Communication with students and parents who were non-English speakers was particularly eye opening and challenging for Cara.

Continuing to think about her teacher preparation to teach diverse populations, Cara explained that the first time she remembers being aware of race was when she moved to an urban city when she was a freshman in high school.
I grew up in a farm town…[a] really small town. We didn’t have any stoplights or anything and there was mostly only white people in my town. And then when I moved …it was a complete shock to the system…You’re just surrounded by all different kinds of people. Cara did not further elaborate on any instances where she was particularly influenced by race.

When identifying herself on Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the first interview, Cara identified herself between the Resistance and Redefinition stages. She expressed that she does not feel guilty about being White and she does recognize the privileges she has received being White. In particular Cara explained that even though her family was not wealthy, she believes that her life may have been different if she grew up somewhere other than her small, mostly white town.

I can see like, growing up, neither one of my parents graduated school, my parents drank and did drugs and things like that when I was a kid… I can see that growing up in the town where I did, where it was all middle-class, White, whatever it was, they, they [my parents] were not the middle-class, they were the low end of the totem pole. But, lucky me, because if I grew up here [in an urban city], where it’s low-income, whatever else is going on here, my life probably would have been different.

This connection that Cara seems to have between race and economics or socioeconomic status is important to note because it was often part of her vernacular during our small group discussion time as well.
Cara in Action

**Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round One**

Currently Cara is a fifth grade teacher. The fifth grade team at Pearson Elementary School has been departmentalized this year and Cara is the writing teacher. As the fifth grade writing teacher at Pearson Elementary School Cara sees four classes of fifth grade students each day. The staff of Pearson agreed to keep the class size small in fifth grade so when each of the classes visit they have between nineteen and twenty-six students. Cara and all of the other fifth grade teachers at Pearson Elementary are in portable classrooms, which are located on the blacktop, in an area that used to be used as the students’ playground area.

When first walking into Cara’s portable classroom I often noted that the room seemed a bit dark. The lights were usually not on and the one source of light came from a large lamp in one corner of the room. Everything in Cara’s room was related to writing including all bulletin boards, group names, displays, and posters. There were metal wardrobes and file cabinets in the classroom as well as a few bookshelves with student books. There was a Smart Board of to one side of the classroom that was resting on crates, which made it accessible to the students. The cart holding the projector and laptop were somewhat in the middle of the room allowing the computer and Elmo to project onto the Smart Board. Having the Smart Board in this location and on crates allowed for Cara to have three large white boards hanging in the front of the classroom. Along another wall was a large rectangle table where students were often found writing when I would come in to observe. The back wall was lined with another long rectangle table that held three desktop computers. Next to that table was a teacher’s desk that was facing the wall. This
space was often used for a student when I was in the classroom and the teacher seemed to have her personal items in a corner, near the front of the room, behind the kidney table.

The student desks were in groups of four or five every time I observed in Cara’s classroom. While some students were seated in the desks, there were also students seated throughout the room in other locations during many visits. All of Cara’s observations were during her last teaching block and therefore I was able to see her interact with the same students.

During the first three observations there were nine utterances that could be categorized using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model. Table 22 highlights when utterances occurred as well as in which category they were coded.

Table 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cara Four Resources Examples – Round One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code Breaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Three</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text participant was evident in Cara’s writing class when she asked, “What was the opinion of the paper we read yesterday?” as well as when she asked students to underline three reasons in the article that support the author’s opinion. Text user was evident when Cara asked the students to move beyond making meaning of the opinion piece they had read and asked them, “Which facts do you agree with?” After this question Cara allowed the students to lead the conversation and Cara acted as a facilitator. When Cara began to question her students regarding the author’s purpose of writing the opinion
text they were reading, and asked her students what the author wanted to happen as a result of reading the article, she demonstrated questioning skills that are evidence of text analyst.

**Observations: Small Group Discussions**

For the next five weeks, after the first three observations had taken place, Cara and the other participants met to complete our small group discussions. During this time Cara was extremely talkative. While she did not dominate conversations, or talk over her peers, if there was a second of silence within the group, Cara was usually the first one to speak. She self-admitted that she liked to talk a lot and almost weekly reminded the group to tell her to stop talking if she was preventing someone else from speaking. Although it was never troublesome to the group dynamic, in retrospect, I wonder if sometimes her lack of allowing silence sometimes prevented other participants to fully collect their own thoughts when discussing sometimes sensitive subject matter.

The data from the small group discussions indicate Cara is in the Resistance stage of WID (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). While a great deal of her utterances indicated that Cara knew about systemic racism and that she felt a sense of ownership of the problem, there were also a significant amount of comments made by Cara that indicated that she often took Whiteness for granted and saw it as normal. Cara also expressed some dominant beliefs and shared an acceptance of white culture as classical and “Other” cultures as primitive. The latter are evidence of the Acceptance stage, however Cara made more comments during small group discussions three and four that match the description of someone in the Resistance stage. For example, Cara mentioned the controversy over a Cheerios commercial in the recent past that depicted an inter-racial set
of parents and expressed her disgust regarding the focus on the race of the parents.

Throughout our small group discussion time Cara’s questioning was usually more intense than questions asked during the Acceptance stage and she also expressed an awareness of how covert and overt racism affects members of particular racial groups. An example of this was when we were discussing whether the climate of a school promotes Whiteness.

When discussing acceptable hallway behavior and non-acceptable behavior Cara began to challenge the normalcy of silence in the hallway and questioned what it meant that, “In our [school] environment, it’s [being loud] is frowned upon.” Furthermore, Cara began to express an understanding of how racism is evident in schools and at the policy level.

Table 23 presents the number of coded utterances, in each of the five stages of WID, made by Cara during our small group discussions. Stated earlier, most of Cara’s statements, sixty-six of them, were coded as evidence of an individual in the Resistance stage of WID.

Table 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cara – Coded Utterances – White Identity Development Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Utterances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to Hannah and Ashley, Cara also stated many times that socioeconomic status was to blame for some systemic problems instead of race. While this belief was especially evident during our first two small group discussions together, there seemed to be a slight shift in this understanding throughout our time together.
Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round Two

Five weeks after observation three, and with the small group discussions completed, I returned to Cara’s classroom to complete observations four, five, and six. There were twenty-eight comments or questions during these three lessons that were coded using the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Samples of code breaking were found in observation five when Cara was individually conferencing with different students about their writing. Some of these questions and comments included: “Dress is not possessive. It is more than one. Fact or facts? Would it make more sense to say the reason or the reasons?” During observation four, when the students were watching a brief video about transition words, Cara frequently interjected with text participant questions and comments. “Raise your hand if you heard a transition. Who sees a transition word here? Which one [transition] do you see?”

Table 24 showcases the frequency of the four resources from observations four, five, and six.

Table 24

Cara Four Resources Examples – Round Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation Four</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Five</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Six</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total uses of code breaking, text participant, text user, and text analyst are displayed in table 25. Cara uses text participant most frequently.
Revisiting Cara: Through Cara’s Eyes

While reflecting upon being a participant in the study, Cara stated during the second interview that reading the assigned article and participating in our small group discussions enhanced her understanding of critical literacy. While Cara stated that she would have loved to have more opportunity to discuss and learn more about the theory, she did state that the article we read was helpful in developing her competence, because it provided practical examples rather than theoretical descriptions like Cara was used to from her graduate work. “I think it [the article] does a good job of making it [critical literacy] understandable to a teacher, which is important because if research is too lofty, then you don’t do the application.” Cara also mentioned that in the future she would like to create a classroom environment where critical literacy is more evident. Because Cara is going to a charter school next year, and teaching kindergarten, she is hoping for a less structured teaching arena where she is able to implement more of her own ideas.

When explaining how Cara’s understandings of Whiteness have been influenced as a result of this study she described how prior to this study she viewed privilege related to economics, and as a result of this study, she is beginning to look at privilege differently and see more white privilege.
I have definitely been seeing more, my eyes have been opened more to White privilege as opposed to I always thought [of it] as like an economic privilege. But really through our discussions and readings, mostly the discussions, my mind has kind of twisted a little bit. Like a whole paradigm shift.

Cara also explained that as a result of this study she is more aware of how being white has been an advantage in different situations, and before this study, that was not obvious to her. She also expressed that she is more open to seeing that advantage as possibly being connected to systematic and institutionalized racism.

Cara also mentioned that she has become more aware of the racial congruence of elementary teachers. While noticing that a large percentage of the teaching staff is white and female, Cara also addressed that a majority of the support staff are people of color. She further problematized this scenario when she described how it must feel to be a person of color, bringing their “sweet five year old baby” to school and you are bringing it to a place where “nobody looks like your little baby except for the helpers.”

When identifying herself on Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the second interview, Cara identified herself to be in the Redefinition stage. Cara shared that she recognizes privileges that she has received which is why she categorized herself within the Redefinition stage. While Cara believes she takes action against racism in her classroom, or her circle of peers, she does not identify herself within the Internalization stage because she is not, “marching or writing my senator.”

Cara shared that in the future she would like to be able to try to have her literacy discussions and text choices be more reflective of her classroom population. Cara confessed that since it is the end of the year there was not change in her practice this year,
but she is hoping to be able to make some changes in the next school year. She explained it as a seed has been planted. “I need it [what we are reading] to be relatable to all the kids and make sure that I’m just not showing it one way as in like this is the only way, the right way.” Cara also stated that more questions need to drive some of her decision making process of what to read. For example: Does every book I’m reading have only white children on the cover? Is this book reflective of a certain lifestyle or cultural group? By asking these questions Cara believes she is being more reflective in what she will be choosing to read and more willing to have more critical conversations as well.

**Jamie: Through Jamie’s Eyes**

Jamie has fond memories of growing up in the northeastern United States. Living with both parents and her brother, Jamie remembers her mother as a stay at home mom and she also remembers growing up near her dad’s extended family. Although Jamie’s family didn’t have a great deal of money, she has warmhearted memories of camping with her family and participating in outdoorsy activities with them. Jamie also mentioned during our first interview that she really liked the area where she was raised because it was between two military bases and she was able to meet a lot of people from “all kinds of places.” Jamie’s dad had been part of the military before she was born and Jamie’s grandfather, on her mom’s side of the family was military, which is why her mother’s family moved to this location. Jamie’s parents still live in the house where she grew up.

Jamie was greatly influenced by a teacher that she had from first through sixth grade. This teacher was someone Jamie would meet with once a week as part of the Gifted and Talented Program. “She was the coolest person ever and we did all kinds of cool stuff…In first grade, I decided I wanted to be a teacher like her…so that’s just what
I’ve always wanted to do.” In order to attend a teacher preparation school, Jamie moved to a different part of the state, which she described as different than the community where she grew up. “It’s [the college city] is not green, it’s really small towns, it’s very rural, and…just farming communities.” The college that Jamie attended was a teacher college and, in fact, used to be a normal school.

When reflecting upon the literacy courses Jamie completed during her teacher preparation program, she remembered a multicultural literacy course as well as teaching elementary school literature. She also remembered completing a language arts class and having the same professor for all three of those courses. Jamie recalled learning a great deal from that instructor and remembers enjoying the class because it was applicable to teaching. “It was not a whole lot of theory…she would teach like we were the kids [students] and [she helped us] prepare stuff and then keep it for when we started teaching.”

While Jamie was fond of her literacy courses and instructor she did not think the literacy courses prepared her to teach in an urban school and she thought part of the reason it did not prepare her was because of the geographical location of the college. She explained that the state college she attended was in a small town and there were only two elementary schools in this small town, and the schools were not very diverse. “The stuff I learned would work in a school where everybody’s on the same reading level and they don’t have issues at home.”

When I asked Jamie if she was familiar with critical literacy she said yes, but admitted she could not tell me what it was. After giving her a brief definition and example of critical literacy, Jamie affirmed that the theory had not been a part of her undergraduate or graduate studies. She did say though, that she thought she sometimes
naturally applied the ideas in her own fifth grade classroom, and even though Jamie stressed the curriculum where she teaches is very structured she thought maybe critical literacy was part of her class conversations.

While Jamie did not recall taking a multicultural education course as part of her teacher preparation coursework she did mention that she had a minor in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) and felt that multicultural education was infused as part of the studies in those classes. Jamie briefly mentioned that she thought some of what she learned in those courses prepared her to teach in an urban classroom but she felt the population of her hometown was more influential in preparing her to teach in a multicultural setting.

I think for the most part…growing up with people who were not white prepared me more, you know what I mean, because I think of the people I went to college with and I feel like, if they were people that came from that teeny, tiny small town, it [teacher preparation] didn’t really prepare them.

Jamie further explained the racial diversity that was part of her childhood when she explained that a majority of her friends’ moms were Korean and came from families with white military fathers and Korean mothers. Jamie also explained there was a large population of Islander and Samoan students in the schools she attended. Jamie also mentioned that although there was racial and ethnic diversity in her community, there was limited diversity in the variation of socioeconomic status.

As Jamie continued to reflect upon preparing to teach in an urban school and becoming aware of race, she told a story from when she was in kindergarten, and explained to me that she told her mom she was black. After some conversation regarding
Jamie’s mother’s fair skin and Jamie’s father dark complexion, Jamie’s mother convinced her that she was not black, and neither was her mother or father. Jamie recalled it as a “no big deal” type of conversation.

Jamie also remembered her developing racial awareness shortly after she had started college. Because the college was made up of a mostly white student population, Jamie and her peers who were from more diverse hometowns, would discuss how most of the students at the college were white. Jamie also stated that she befriended most of the college’s diverse population.

Another event that has had a lasting impact on Jamie was when she was introduced to an uncle of a good friend. She described him as a white supremacist that had Swastika tattoos and was,

talking to me [Jamie] like I agreed with him. It really made me aware, like just cause I’m white doesn’t mean I agree with you. And …he made that assumption because I look Aryan that I would totally agree with what he said.

Jamie said she realized she was in the wrong place and left the situation.

One experience that devastated Jamie was when she was called a racist her first year teaching. “It made me realize that people look at me as a white person; they don’t care about my background.” Jamie further explained that she notices sometimes her students think of her as unrelateable. She stated, “I know they [the students] just don’t feel like any of their teachers…can relate to them at all.” Jamie went on to say that she tries to discuss her similarities with the students but overall, she stated numerous times during our first interview that the students at Pearson Elementary School seem particularly angry. “I don’t know if it’s just this school but people have said…that have
worked in other places, whether they’re at risk schools or title one, whatever, this is a unique school and…I discovered it this year…it’s the anger.” Coming from a school where the population was mostly Hispanic students, Jamie confessed that she began to wonder if the anger she was noticing was due to a higher population of black students at Pearson Elementary.

I really thought when I first came here, is it [anger] because there’s more black people here and then I thought, oh my God, I’m so racist right now and I’m judging people. And then I just realized as time [passed], cause this is my fourth year at this school, I just really feel like it’s the poverty mentality…I don’t look at it like a racial thing, I feel like it’s a poverty mentality thing.

As mentioned earlier in the case study of Hannah, Ashley, Cara and now Jamie, economics appears to play a significant role in their understanding of Whiteness.

When shown Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during this first interview, Jamie identified herself as being in between the Redefinition and Internalization stages. She constituted this identification with a brief discussion of being aware of white privilege but not having distinct examples of taking action against racism other than teaching about it which she described as doing activities and having discussions with her students related to racism.

**Jamie in Action**

**Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round One**

Jamie is currently a fifth grade reading teacher at Pearson Elementary School. As mentioned in Cara’s case study, the fifth grade team is departmentalized, and Jamie teaches four sections of fifth grade literacy daily. Like all members of the fifth grade
teaching team, Jamie’s classroom is an outdoor portable classroom. Jamie’s classroom has two doors that lead to the outside; one door is specifically labeled and used as the entrance to the portable classroom and the other door is labeled and used as the exit.

My first impression of Jamie’s classroom was that it was extremely neat and organized. There is a teacher’s desk almost directly in the middle of the room facing the front of the classroom. On the teacher’s desk were a laptop computer, projector, and Elmo. The Smart Board in this classroom was on the front wall in between two large white boards and there was also a rectangle table directly in front of the teacher’s desk that held many teacher-like materials. The student desks were arranged in groups to the right and left of the teacher’s desk. There were a couple metal wardrobes and file cabinets in different parts of the room as well as two bookcases that held picture books and chapter books. Along the back wall were five desktop computers and pushed against a sidewall was a kidney table that was not used by the teacher during any of my observations.

The bulletin boards and posters in the Jamie’s classroom were mostly pre-made and a few of them were teacher made. Important to note was that most of the posters’ content was related to literacy. There were bulletin boards explaining informational text structures, context clues, genres, Greek and Latin roots, and syllables. There was a word wall containing a few words and student writing was displayed on another wall.

Jamie taught four sections of reading to fifth grade students throughout the day and I was able to see her teach six thirty-minute lessons. It was very obvious during my first observation and all subsequent observations that Jamie had excellent rapport with the fifth grade students. During my first three observations in Jamie’s fifth grade reading
classroom I noted nine utterances that were quantifiable using Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model. During observation three the students were reviewing a brief essay written by a peer. Asking the students to highlight the details of the passage was coded as text participant. Another example of text participant was when Jamie asked a student to tell her something about marsupials that he had learned during silent reading. Table 26 shares the information collected from the first three observations.

Table 26

*Jamie Four Resources Examples – Round One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation One</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Two</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Three</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observations: Small Group Discussions**

The small group discussions held after the first three observations occurred in Jamie’s portable classroom. She was more than willing to share her space with the participants and this space became our ritual meeting place to discuss the various texts.

Data from the small group discussions indicate Jamie is between the Acceptance and Resistance stages of WID. There were almost the same number of utterances made by Jamie in each of these stages to document her progress in understanding her WID and beliefs. Table 27 reveals the five stages of WID as well as the number of coded utterances that were made by Jamie in each of the five stages.
Supporting her placement in the Acceptance stage, Jamie made comments that shared her understanding that Whiteness was seen as normal and often taken for granted. When discussing the families of the school community where she teaches, Jamie’s comments regarding the “Other” as more primitive compared to the classical traditions and culture of white folks, provided evidence of an individual in the Acceptance stage. For example, Jamie shared that when taking her students to a baseball game she had to teach the students “how to cheer” implying there is a correct way to cheer at a baseball game.

It was during our last two small group discussions when Jamie began to make more comments describing how a number of events and experiences started to have a cumulative effect on her belief systems. Particularly in the last small group discussion, Jamie expressed a more deeply developed critical consciousness about racism and how it manifests in particular situations, and in particular, in schools and curriculum. This was particularly true when Jamie addressed that most of the support staff at Pearson were people of color. It also became apparent Jamie was beginning to think of racism differently when she stated, “I wouldn’t look at it [a situation where racism took place] the same [as a person of color] because I don’t have that same experience [as a person of color]. When Jamie made this statement it was a sense of realization, something she had not considered in the past.
Observations: Critical Literacy Practices Round Two

After completing the small group discussions I returned to Jamie’s class to complete three more observations. During this time three instances of text participant were evident. When reviewing a comic strip creation tool online with her whole class Jamie demonstrated text participant when she asked the students to use their digital literacy skills. By asking the student what she should do next after she had logged in, and nothing was on her screen, the students read the text on the screen as well as remembered the introduction from her lesson the previous day, and told Jamie to push “load.” Table 28 synthesizes the information gleaned from the last three observations.

Table 28

Jamie Four Resources Examples – Round Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation Four</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Five</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Six</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29 is a summary of the utterances that were coded from all six of Jamie’s observations. The data indicates Jamie most frequently uses text participant.

Table 29

Jamie Four Resources Examples – Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Code Breaking</th>
<th>Text Participant</th>
<th>Text User</th>
<th>Text Analyst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Round One</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Round Two</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Revisiting Jamie: Through Jamie’s Eyes

With the observations and small group discussions complete, Jamie and I met for our final interview, where Jamie shared that the most enjoyable part of being a participant of this study were the small group discussions. She indicated that although she had worked with some of the participants for a few years, she had never really gotten to know them, and she felt the small group discussions allowed her to hear some of her colleagues’ life stories as well as their experiences. Jamie also shared how being a participant in this study influenced her understanding of critical literacy, her awareness of Whiteness, and WID.

As a result of being a participant in this study, Jamie expressed that she gained an understanding of critical literacy. She further explained this understanding when she stated she did not know what critical literacy was before this study, and after reading the article about it, she felt like she was more aware of how critical literacy is a necessary part of a literacy curriculum. Furthermore, she stated that the reading also made her consider getting books written by black authors besides the very common ones many teachers have in their classroom such as “Bud, Not Buddy.” Along with this, Jamie has become more aware of the importance of choosing multicultural literature, and stated that it’s important to make sure the book is meaningful and just because the characters in a book represent different ethnicities, does not mean it is the best choice for facilitating a critical conversation.

While Jamie has grown to understand and begin to realize the importance of critical literacy, she also stated that she understands the need for the students at her school to have basic reading skills. “I feel like they [students] need basics so that they can
critically read and think about things and make better choices…in life. You need to be able to read to get a driver’s license [and] to get a job.”

As a result of this study Jamie indicated that she had a heightened awareness to institutionalized racism and prejudice. She further explained her new understanding and how it relates to the school where she teaches.

As far as institutionalized racism and prejudice, I’m more aware of that now. Especially looking at little things that we have to do at school, like as part of our structure and our routine and I just think, this is not good for these kids and it’s not letting them be themselves first of all, or have confidence in themselves.

At a later point in the interview Jamie again reflected upon what she has learned regarding Whiteness and the advantages she has had as a white person. She explained that when this study began she believed that “if you get an education, then you have an opportunity to make the decisions that you want in life. And I’ve never felt privileged or anything, but then I realized I am privileged being white.” Jamie further explains her understanding and relates it to poverty. “I have a better opportunity than a lot of people because I don’t come from a place of poverty.” Different than during our initial interview, when Jamie finishes her thoughts, she again brings race back into the conversation. “But I think that just being a part of this [study] and being more aware of because I’m white, I had more opportunities than people who are not white.”

Jamie was able to demonstrate her understanding of Whiteness and critical literacy when she discussed a summer program in which she will be teaching. Another initiative of the FLASH program is an extended school year. By agreeing to teach during this extended school year, the teachers also had to agree to implement the scripted
reading curriculum FLASH provided. The fifth grade reading curriculum was a thematic unit on Walt Disney. Jamie expressed her disgust with this theme and how it was ridiculous. For one of the activities you are “supposed to make a chart and do a table top blog about a favorite ride at Disneyland” and your favorite snack at Disneyland. “I guarantee you out of our eighty something kids, maybe three have been to Disneyland…It’s so stupid.”

When identifying herself on Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) during the second interview, at first Jamie identified herself to be in the Redefinition stage. Instead of providing examples or ideas that situated her in the Redefinition stage, Jamie discussed why she did not yet consider herself in the Internalization stage. Jamie stated that she does not go out into the community to combat racism yet she does have conversations about why racism is wrong in her classroom. Jamie also shared that she has asked people to stop when telling racist jokes, and then admitted that sometimes it is difficult when she speaks up, because it can cause tension or make people feel uncomfortable. After realizing that she does sometimes take small action steps against racism, Jamie re-identified herself between the Redefinition and Internalization stages.

**Cross Case Analysis**

After analyzing each case individually, I also studied the cases looking for commonalities and differences. The use of Hardiman’s WID Model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model provided a systematic structure for coding data which in turn led to the identification of themes. This examination across cases included addressing similarities and differences in the areas of teacher preparation: in particular preparation in multicultural education courses and it’s
effectiveness of preparing the individuals to teach in an urban school; racial identity; understanding of critical literacy practices and their classroom application; as well as connections between WID and critical literacy practices.

As is common with multiple case studies, other themes did arise as a result of the data analysis. One of these additional themes is a sense of helplessness among the teacher participants in their ability to choose and implement curriculum. This theme is interwoven throughout this cross case analysis, meaning that it is not addressed individually, but as a subtheme of the others discussed. The second additional theme relates to the participants’ understanding or perhaps misunderstanding of socioeconomics and race. This theme is addressed at the end of the cross case analysis.

A majority of the participants were required to take a multicultural education course as part of their undergraduate course work when completing their education degree; however, none of them indicated that the multicultural education course prepared them to teach in an urban school. As mentioned earlier, this focus on multicultural education coursework is situated in the understanding that WID and Whiteness are sometimes a part of multicultural education coursework (Dass-Brailsford, 2007). A few of the participants noted that the course was focused on theory that was not applicable to actual classroom life and the lack of connection between theory and practice left the participants feeling unprepared. When reflecting on their preparation to work in an urban school, some of the participants shared that they believe their experiences outside of the traditional university classroom were more influential in preparing them to teach and work with diverse populations. Table 30 synthesizes whether or not each participant was
required to complete a multicultural education course and if they believed it prepared them to teach in an urban school.

Table 30

*Teacher Preparation: Multicultural Coursework and Application to Urban Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Multicultural Course</th>
<th>Did the Course Prepare you to Teach in an Urban School?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cara</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During both the first and second interview the participants were asked to self-identify their racial identity stage using Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). While it is important to note how the individuals see themselves as they negotiate Whiteness, the small group discussions provided data that uncovered more specific details to reveal the participants’ WID stages. The participant reported stage, as well as the stage I determined by coding our small group discussions, are itemized below in Table 31.

Table 31

*Racial Identity Development: Self-Reported and Data Supported*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Self Identified Racial Identity One</th>
<th>Self Identified Racial Identity Two</th>
<th>Racial Identity as Interpreted by Researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Redefinition</td>
<td>Redefinition</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Resistance/Redefinition</td>
<td>Redefinition</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>Resistance/Redefinition</td>
<td>Redefinition/Internalization</td>
<td>Resistance/Redefinition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>Redefinition/Internalization</td>
<td>Redefinition/Internalization</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cara</td>
<td>Resistance/Redefinition</td>
<td>Redefinition</td>
<td>Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>Redefinition/Internalization</td>
<td>Redefinition/Internalization</td>
<td>Acceptance/Resistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When using Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) to identify their developmental stage during the initial and final interview all six of the participants placed themselves in a more advanced level than the data from the small group discussions indicated. It is important to keep in mind that while this WID model is not completely linear; it is developmental, meaning each stage represents a more complex understanding of being White and how Whiteness manifests. These manifestations vary based on context.

In particular, even though all of the participants placed themselves in a more advanced level, four of the participants, Ben, Hannah, Ashley, and Cara identified themselves similar to the stage determined from the small group discussions. In the first interview for example, Hannah stated that she believed she was in between the Resistance and Redefinition stages and in her final interview she identified herself in the Redefinition stage. The data from the small group discussions indicate Hannah is in the Resistance stage, which is near both of the stages Hannah identified for herself. Ben stated during both interviews that he thought of himself in the Redefinition stage, when in fact, the data show he is in the Resistance stage. Even though Ben did not self identify in the same category as the data indicated, what is important to note from Ben as well as Hannah, Ashley, and Cara, is that these four participants identified themselves only one stage away from where the data places them.

There were two participants, however, who identified themselves two stages away from where the data places them. Both Morgan and Jamie believed they were between the Redefinition and Internalization stages during the initial and final interview. Contrary to this, the data from the small group discussions indicate that Morgan is in the
Acceptance stage and Jamie is between the Acceptance and Resistance stages. This variation in self-identification and the data supported racial identity stage has implications and will be addressed in chapter five.

As determined by the data from the initial interview, most of the participants were not familiar with the term or theory critical literacy. Morgan and Cara both admitted that they were not familiar with the term and recognized that it was not a part of their teacher preparation. Ben, Ashley, and Jamie stated that they were familiar with the term but were not able to give an accurate description or explain how it was applicable in an elementary classroom and therefore I identified them as not having an understanding of critical literacy at the beginning of this study. It is important to mention that even though Ben indicated during interview two that he did not think his understanding of critical literacy changed as a result of the study, this conflicts with what he shared during interview one. In interview one, Ben related critical literacy to comprehension and after having an impromptu conversation during the initial interview regarding critical literacy and a few examples of what it “looks like” in an elementary classroom, Ben was able to relate critical literacy to the concept of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and compared critical literacy to the fourth tier in the DOK model which includes analyzing and synthesizing. This conversation demonstrates that during interview one and after our brief discussion, Ben still understood critical literacy as text user rather than text analyst. Different than the first interview, during the second interview Ben independently related critical literacy to Freire (1970), which is evidence that his understanding of critical literacy has actually been improved as a result of this study because there is an understanding that critical
literacy is asking who is being oppressed in the text. For this reason, Table 31 indicates Ben noted growth in the understanding of critical literacy.

Hannah was the only participant that showed an understanding of critical literacy as a result of her graduate work. Table 32 summarizes the participants’ understanding of critical literacy before and after the study as well as observed change in critical literacy practices.

Table 32

Critical Literacy: Understanding, Growth in Understanding, and Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Understanding of Critical Literacy Before the Study</th>
<th>Self Reported Growth in the understanding of critical literacy</th>
<th>Observed Change in Critical Literacy Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cara</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third column in Table 31 indicates that although all six participants expressed some kind of growth in understanding critical literacy, there was not a significant change in any of their teaching practices after being introduced to and discussing the theory. The data from observations do not support the notion that participants’ understanding of critical literacy influenced their practice. In fact, there were only seven instances of text analyst coded in all of the observations combined. Hannah had evidence of text analyst three times in lesson one, and the data from Morgan’s observations indicated one use of text analyst during observation six and during observation two. Cara had two instances of text analyst.
Because there was not a significant change in literacy practices after small group discussions there are no particular findings to report in that regard. Further examination of the data does indicate factors that may have impacted the teachers’ lack of motivation to change their literacy practices. For some of the participants, this lack of change in their instruction aligns with the frequent conversations during both interviews and the small group discussions that centered on a feeling of hopelessness when it came to owning their own lesson plans and curriculum. At some point throughout the study, every individual related in some fashion to feeling like a technician who is working in a factory, rather than an intellectual who is allowed to create culturally relevant pedagogy, and use the preparation they received during their education to foster the learning of their students. Expressing these beliefs brings meaning to what Freire (1970) critiques as banking, in which the teachers are the authority figures in the classroom, whose purpose is to “deposit” information into the minds of the learner, or the oppressed. Ben, Ashley, Morgan, Cara, and Jamie all shared that with common standards, scripted programs, and frequent standardized testing, their ability to make decisions regarding what takes place in their classroom, school, and district have been taken away from them. While these five participants are not content with this current situation there is little motivation or desire to push back.

Different from her peers, Hannah recognizes the scrutiny she is put under day-after-day and stated more than once she pushes back against “ridiculous” standardized pacing mandates, and also as her grade level chairperson, she refuses to, “dictate to the rest of her grade level on which weeks they are going to read informational texts.” During one small group discussion Hannah shared with her colleagues that she is not afraid to
push back, and while she is not making waves big enough to cause termination of her job, she is making small changes, such as manipulating the scripted level reading material to be about John Cena (the professional wrestler who her children love) instead of a pesky squirrel. She realizes that if she wants to increase her students’ motivation to read, she has to change the program that has been given to her.

In order to theorize the connections between WID and uses of the four resources model, I created a representation that combines these two models to help illustrate my conceptual framework. The four resources: code breaking, text participant, text user, and text analyst are represented along the x-axis; while the stages of WID: Naiveté, Acceptance, Resistance, Redefinition, and Internalization are placed along the y-axis. Using this representation, the participants “Zone of Potential Change: White Identity and Literacy Practices” (ZPC) can be highlighted in the upper right quadrant. As one’s WID becomes more sophisticated this zone decreases in size indicating a smaller ZPC. The same is true when a teacher understands the four resources model and uses more advanced questioning.

The following figures represent the WID stage of each participant as identified by the data from the small group discussions. The data from all six observations informed the intersecting point on the x-axis, specifically, the process used most frequently. Figure 2 shows that Ben is in the Resistance stage of WID and most frequently used code breaking the six times I observed his literacy lessons.
Figure 2. Ben’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Figure 3. Hannah’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Figure 4. Ashley’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process
Figure 5. Morgan’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Figure 6. Cara’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Figure 7. Jamie’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Evidenced by Hannah and Ashley and Cara’s long and slender ZPC, the data indicate these three participants are a bit more advanced in their WID. While Jamie’s
ZPC is the same length as Hannah’s and Ashley’s, there is more space for her to grow along the y-axis, indicating Jamie is slightly less developed in her WID.

While these representations are telling regarding the WID of the participants and their most frequent practice of the four resources model, they do not capture all of the data that was collected during classroom observations. What also began to emerge as salient to this study, is the total number of instances where the four resources model was implemented. Examining which of the four resources is most frequently used is important, however, when comparing these cases, it is also important to look at the model as a whole. Freebody and Luke (1999) make it clear in their presentation of the four resources model that while code breaking, text participant, text user, and text analyst are a hierarchy of teaching skills, once the teacher has the skills, all four levels become equally necessary in a research based literacy environment. Therefore, in order to answer the question how Whiteness influences critical literacy practices, I took a closer look at the number of instances where the four resources model was used in the literacy observations of all six participants. This discussion is continued when addressing implications of the main research question in chapter five.

A final theme that came across from interview and small group discussion data was conflation of socioeconomics and race. The transcriptions give numerous examples of the participants relating systemic injustices to poverty or low socioeconomic status instead of race. In fact, on many occasions the participants state they see the injustices we discussed as a “class thing rather than a race thing.” The inability to connect race and socioeconomic status was made transparent by every participant and the implications of this finding are further addressed in the following chapter.
Chapter Summary

This chapter shared the findings of a multiple case study of Whiteness and critical literacy practices in a systematic fashion. The findings for each case included a snapshot of the participant’s personal and professional background, a detailed account of their teacher preparation in the areas of multicultural education and critical literacy, a report on the literacy practices in each participant’s classroom, as well as an idea of the how the participant negotiates Whiteness as a white elementary school teacher. Finally, each individual case reported any personal or professional changes as stated by the participants in the areas of critical literacy, WID, and Whiteness.

In order to explain similarities and differences among and between the cases, as well as add to the robustness of the study, the findings from a cross case analysis were shared in this chapter. In chapter five I discuss these findings from the cross case analysis and provide implications of these findings for elementary education and teacher education as well as offer ideas for new lines of research in the field. Limitations are also addressed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

In chapter one the personal and professional rationale for a multiple case study of teachers’ perceptions of Whiteness and its possible influence on critical literacy practices is presented. The conceptual frameworks for this study are also detailed in chapter one. Chapter two shares empirical and theoretical research in the fields of Whiteness and critical literacy while addressing a current gap in this research, further promoting the necessity of this completed study. The case study methodology used to complete this study as well details regarding the participants and setting are outlined in chapter three. Data collection and data analysis procedures are also addressed in chapter three. The findings of this study are revealed in chapter four and this chapter discusses the implications for the findings.

As a result of the coding process and after completing the individual and cross case analysis of this multiple case study, various themes began to emerge from the data. In this chapter I discuss these findings by addressing how each of them directly answers the research questions that initiated this study.

Main Research Question:
How does Whiteness influence elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices?

Ancillary Questions:
a) How do elementary teachers negotiate racial identity in elementary classrooms?
b) How do white elementary teachers define and implement critical literacy practices?
I begin by addressing the ancillary questions first, in order to lead to the main research question. The ancillary questions provide a framework for understanding how Whiteness influences elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices, thus answering the ancillary questions first, will lead to a clearer understanding of the main research question.

Starting with ancillary question one: How do elementary teachers negotiate racial identity in elementary classrooms? Five themes emerged. These themes are: multicultural education coursework and teacher preparation, racial identity and interracial encounters, white identity development (WID) and self awareness, misconceptions regarding race and poverty, and elementary schools as structures that stifle racial identity development. I discuss the implications of these key findings in detail as well as provide evidence from the study and additional research that support these conclusions.

Continuing with ancillary question two: How do white teachers define and implement critical literacy practices? Three themes will be discussed. These three themes are: understanding critical literacy, practicing critical literacy, and elementary schools as structures that stifle implementation of critical literacy practices. The implications of these findings are discussed and evidence for each conclusion is made transparent.

Last, I address the main research question: How does Whiteness influence elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices? Because there was limited use of critical literacy practices demonstrated by the participants throughout this study, the conceptual model that I have developed to answer this question includes the total number of instances where the four resources model was evident from all six observations, in combination with participant’s WID stage. This framework allowed me to conclude WID
related to the use of research-based literacy practices.

Embedded throughout this chapter are connections between my findings and current research in this area of study. Finally, this chapter addresses the implications these findings may have on policy, practice, and future research, as well as the possible limitations of this study.

Discussion

How Do Elementary Teachers Negotiate Racial Identity In Elementary Classrooms?

Two data sources strongly influenced answering this first ancillary research question: interviews and small group discussions. By examining the interview data it was apparent the participants did not feel their multicultural education coursework prepared them to teach in urban schools. Furthermore, the participants reported their WID and awareness stemmed from encounters with people different than themselves, more than their multicultural education coursework. As is mentioned in chapter four, the focus on multicultural education is because researchers such as Dass-Brailsford, (2007) have pointed out that when the objectives of a multicultural education course address Whiteness, WID, or antiracist curriculum there is evidence that the WID of some students may be changed or advanced.

While the interview data also provided information as to how the individuals self-identify their WID, in examining the small group discussions data, participants’ actual stage of WID, which in all cases was different and less advanced than the participants’ self-identification, was determined. Interview data as well as small group discussions data also support the finding that most of the elementary teachers have misconceptions regarding socioeconomics and race, which prevented some of them from further
developing their white racial identity. Further problematizing the inability to grow one’s white racial identity, my last finding is elementary schools act as structures that stifle racial identity development.

**Multicultural education coursework and teacher preparation.** While a majority of the participants remembered a multicultural education course as part of their undergraduate work, they did not believe that it prepared them to teach in urban schools. Cara explained that after having completed her multicultural education course, her internship in an urban school was a “shock to her system.” She expanded on this idea by explaining that she did not anticipate a student population who did not speak English as a first language and the inability to communicate with parents was also difficult and somewhat surprising.

Hannah and Ben both expressed a disconnection between the theory taught in the coursework and it’s application to their teaching in an urban school. Because Hannah completed her multicultural education course early in her degree program, which is common in most teacher preparation programs, she did not feel she had any teaching experiences that related with the theory she was learning about. As mentioned in Hannah’s case, she believes the most effective way of teaching an education course is to read the book and know the research behind the ideas and then get into the classroom and, “do it in real life, because that’s a totally different thing.” Without this real life application, as Hannah calls it, the multicultural theories seemed to be taught in isolation and Hannah believes they did not prepare her to teach in an urban school.

Ben also expressed that the theory taught in his multicultural education courses were not helpful in his preparation to teach in an urban school. Ben was able to recall
reading Freire (1970) as part of his undergraduate work as well as *How to Be Black* by Baratunde Thurston (2012) and *Multiplication is for White People: Raising Expectations for Other People’s Children* by Lisa Delpit; however, these texts have not been sufficient in helping Ben negotiate Whiteness at Pearson Elementary School (supporting the theory vs. practice debate). While Ben was able to reflect on the multicultural education course as a positive experience, the theories and ideas seem estranged from the actual practices occurring in Pearson Elementary School. Even though Ben expressed value in what he learned as part of the multicultural education coursework, he stated that the balancing of mandates and the background knowledge from his multicultural education course is difficult to negotiate, supporting the argument that his multicultural education course did not prepare him to teach in an urban setting.

Similar to Hannah, Morgan also commented that her multicultural course took place early in her college career, but unlike Hannah, Morgan did not offer any specific reasoning as to why she did not believe it prepared her to teach in an urban school. She was quite vague when she stated, “Nothing stuck out to where I was like; I have to use that in the classroom.” In fact, this comment implies that Morgan believes multicultural education courses should provide *things to do* with multicultural children rather than a perspective from which *she* could teach her classes.

The one participant that was able to comment specifically on an assignment from her undergraduate multicultural education course was Ashley, the only participant that is nearing the Redefinition stage. As explained earlier in Ashley’s case study report, the assignment in Ashley’s undergraduate multicultural education course required Ashley to spend time in a community that Ashley did not consider her own. Being Catholic, Ashley
decided to immerse herself in the Mormon culture, and reported that although the course and the assignment didn’t prepare her to teach in an urban school, this assignment, “was an interesting perspective and I thought a lot about who I was and then how I projected my culture onto other people.” It is obvious that this experience provided a chance for Ashley to “see” Whiteness in that what she considers “normal” (Catholic) was not “normal” for other populations (Mormon). It seems inherent that this realization should be an intended outcome for all future educators who complete a multicultural education course, further supporting the work of Dass-Brailsford, (2007) who encourages multicultural education courses to include outcomes that address WID, Whiteness, and antiracist pedagogy.

Racial identity and interracial encounters. Jamie and Ashley both expressed that they believe interracial encounters are what better prepared them to teach in an urban school instead of their multicultural education course. This idea supports Zancanella (1991) who determined the identities teachers bring to their pedagogy are based on their unique histories. While Jamie first indicated that she had taken an undergraduate multicultural education course, I was able to determine the course Jamie completed was a multicultural literacy course rather than a multicultural education course. For this reason, I did not indicate earlier that Jamie completed a multicultural education course; however, throughout our discussion during the first interview, Jamie stated that she believes interracial encounters prepared her to teach in an urban school. “I think for the most part growing up with people who were not all white prepared me more [to teach in an urban school].” As mentioned in Jamie’s case study, the nonwhite people she is referring to are
her friends and community members from the military city where she grew up. Realizing that some of her college peers did not come from the same diverse upbringing she stated,

I think of the people I went to college with and…if they were people that came from that teeny, tiny, small town [where the college was located] it [the multicultural literacy course] didn’t really prepare them [to teach in an urban setting].

Jamie’s example supports what Gee (2001) calls affinity-identity, which is determined by one’s practices in relation to external groups. Jamie then agreed, when I clarified my understanding by asking her if she believed she was better prepared to teach in an urban school because of the experiences she had prior to college.

Similar to Jamie, Ashley also stated that she believes her experiences living in Mexico as an exchange student during high school were influential in helping her understand diversity and teaching in urban schools. Ashley also shared that being married to her husband who is Hispanic and having in-laws who do not speak English also prepared her to teach in an urban school. Even though Ashley gave credit to the culture immersion project, where she went to the Mormon temple, that was part of her multicultural education class, she stated, “I kind of had already gone through that [experiencing Whiteness] in a way.”

These participants’ acknowledgements of their identity changes that have impacted their teacher identity further support the claims made by numerous researchers in the field who have stated that teachers’ identities are frequently renegotiated and shift over time due to a variety of factors (Agee, 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Bejjard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004).
Racial identity development and self-awareness. During interview one when the participants were asked to choose a stage they believed was a reflection of their WID, all of the participants choose a stage that was more advanced than where the data from the small group discussions placed them. Most of the participants placed themselves one stage more advanced than was evidenced by the data, but two of the participants, Morgan and Jamie, identified themselves as in the Redefinition or Internalization stage which is two stages ahead of the Acceptance stage, where they were situated according to the small group discussions data.

In other words, according to this study, individuals who are actually in a beginning stage of the WID model may have a tendency to overestimate their racial awareness. This finding does coincide with the characteristics of someone in the Acceptance stage. Individuals in this stage have often taken Whiteness for granted, supporting the conclusion the individual would believe they are more advanced because they do not recognize unconscious and unintentional racism, therefore they are a bit naïve to their own understanding of the “Other” culture as primitive (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). As West (1993) advocates, teachers like Morgan and Jamie can not work for liberation on behalf of others if they themselves are not emancipated.

The participants who identified themselves more closely to their actual stage as determined by the small group discussions, provide support to an additional conclusion as well. Ben, Hannah, Ashley, and Cara were all identified, by small group discussions data, as being in the Resistance stage. An individual in this stage is more critically conscious of the existence of racism and white people’s relationship to it (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). Individuals in the Resistance stage are also aware of individuals’ attitudinal and
behavioral racism and may even be aware that they themselves are racist (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). With these realizations then comes an understanding of the complex nature of racial identity and Whiteness, and as was the case with the participants in this study, they did not drastically overestimate their understanding of Whiteness and their WID. This finding is in accordance with Chubbuck (2004) who argues when individuals recognize White privilege they are better understand how institutionalized privilege produce racist outcomes in schools and societies.

**Misconceptions regarding race and poverty.** Throughout the initial interviews and particularly during small group discussion sessions, the idea of race and poverty were repeatedly brought up and discussed by the participants. Specifically, when the participants or I would mention an example that some would define as racism, some of the participants would say that the discrimination being discussed was more due to poverty instead of due to race. In other words, the participants were sometimes able to express an awareness of institutional discrimination, but instead of seeing the discrimination based on the color of one’s skin, they instead explained the biases as towards people living in poverty. The participants are not aware of the connection between poverty and race. The component that was missing from our discussions was the idea that “institutions such as schools decide that a portion of our population will end up poor” (Gans, 1995, p. 127).

During the initial interviews both Ashley and Jamie mentioned the role of socioeconomic in their own understanding of their WID and in the understanding of the racial identities of those around them. They followed up these ideas in a few of the small group discussion sessions. Ashley alluded to socioeconomic status when she was shown
Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012). When I asked for her to identify herself on the model and explain any examples that she had to explain her choice she answered by stating, “Hmmm, See, what’s hard, I think for me, it’s more of a umm class than a race.” In order to clarify her statement regarding class, she told the story that was mentioned in her individual case study where she compared her husband’s family, that is Hispanic, to her own family, that is white. Ashley believes that poverty is generational and that if an individual works hard to increase their economic standing, then the generation after them will be in a better economic situation. Ashley believes that her father worked hard to create a better economic situation for her family; better than the economic situation her father grew up in, and she also believes that her husband’s family worked hard to improve the economic situation of their son, Ashley’s husband.

According to Ashley, this advancement in socioeconomic status was a result of hard work of which anyone is capable. During the third small group discussion Ashley further supported this idea when she shared a story about Sonia Sotomayer, who was the first Latina to be appointed to the Supreme Court. Ashley explained that she was teaching at a charter school where all of the children were Hispanic.

We spent quite a bit of time talking about who she [Sonia Sotomayer] was and why this was groundbreaking that she was selected to be on the supreme court and her background and you know, speaking Spanish at home, and parents were immigrants, and all of those kinds of things to give my kids the idea that you can go further and you can do more. And here’s an example of somebody that did that.

Similar to Ashley, Jamie rested some of her beliefs in socioeconomics as well. During my first interview with Jamie, she shared that she thought her fifth grade students
were very angry. While I asked follow up questions to try and clarify why Jamie felt this way or if she had any examples of student anger, she stated that before working at Pearson Elementary School she worked at a school down the street where the student population was mostly Hispanic. Moving to Pearson she thought the student population would be fairly similar, but in fact, she stated there is a higher percentage of African American students at Pearson than at her previous school. Jamie admitted that her first year teaching at Pearson she questioned whether the students’ anger was because they were black. “I really thought about it when I first came here: Is it because there’s more black people here? And then I thought, oh my God, I’m so racist right now and I’m judging people.” Jamie then continued to explain that she has now been at Pearson for four years and she does not see the anger as a “racial thing” but more as a “poverty mentality thing.”

During our first small group discussion Jamie returned to this idea and restated her beliefs regarding the connections between race and socioeconomic status of the people in the community where she teaches which is similar to the work of Harris (1993). Well, coming from the school that I came from, it was more Hispanic and less black kids and here there are more black kids but I felt like…my last school was situational poverty because people would come, they would be brand new to the country, they would establish something, and then move away. And here it is more like generational. It’s like this is the mindset we have now. This is our life, we are not really trying to get up and out…So maybe it is just the population that we have. There are more African American people in this neighborhood than
there were in my last one but it seems like it is the poverty thing not the color thing.

In the same conversation during our first small group discussion Cara shared these sentiments with Jamie and affirmed the statement Jamie made by stating,

There’s been like a shift in the population, in the community here, and I see problems arising more from economics than race. Because your this socioeconomic status or you’re working these paying jobs than this is what happens in education, this is what happens in your family, this is what happens in your home life as opposed to because you are a certain race.

Hannah also agreed with these feeling and contributed briefly to this conversation by mentioning that she sees situational and generational poverty in the neighborhood of Pearson Elementary but she did not expand on this notion. The interpretations of socioeconomic status displayed by the participants espouse McVee’s (2004) ideas related to the “us” vs. “them” dichotomy. In this educational setting the students and their families are being identified with one group and then intentionally or unintentionally being assigned characteristics of the group.

It is clear from these statements that there is an underlying belief regarding African Americans and poverty, especially generational and situational poverty, which some of the participants believe has become an accepted way of life for the population where they teach. This understanding contributes to the participants’ sense of hopelessness because these ideas of generational and situational poverty create a deficit perspective of the students and their families and support the notion white teachers have low expectations of students who belong to socioeconomic or racial groups different than
their own (Goodwin, 1994; Irvine, 1990). This finding supports the idea that some individuals and even teachers fail to recognize and understand that the U.S. education system is designed to benefit the middle class and wealthy at the expense of those in poverty (Darling Hammond & Post, 2000; Kozol, 1992).

**Elementary schools as structures that stifle racial identity development.** The data indicate the school setting itself is an environment that does not allow room to discuss Whiteness and its effect on the staff and students. First, all of the participants mentioned in the final interview that the small group discussions were the most enjoyable component of the study. They shared that having critical conversations regarding personal philosophies of teaching, as well as how these philosophies are sometimes in conflict while teaching in an urban school, made them feel they had made connections with colleagues on a more personal and intellectual level. The participants mentioned faculty meetings are frequent at Pearson Elementary School; however the meetings are not for reflective discussion, but rather to be told what to do and when to do it. I sensed a plea for intellectual conversation among all of the participants.

The participants also shared that they did not feel as though there was any attention paid to hiring a staff that represented the student population (Sleeter, 1993). Furthermore, some of them mentioned that while hiring for the new school year, they believe there is a sense of urgency to fill the vacancies rather than valuing applicants’ ideas around multicultural education or teaching in an urban school.

It became evident from interviews and small group discussions that some of the teachers at Pearson Elementary have been greatly influenced by researchers such as Ruby Payne. While Payne’s text was not a required book study at Pearson Elementary School,
some of the participants in the study were familiar with Payne’s work and were vocal about how it helped them understand “people of poverty.” As Gorski’s (2005) points out, Payne and Krabill’s (2001) work promotes stereotypes of non-white people and fails to address the systemic structures that perpetuate Whiteness. Tracking, inequitable expectations, and high-stakes testing are all examples of ways in which schools contribute to cycles of poverty and instead of confronting these injustices, Payne and Krabill (2001) suggest the need to teach students in poverty the “hidden rules” of the middle class in order to help them navigate the system. Payne and Krabill’s (2001) work has been issued to teachers nationwide and is part of the system that promotes ideas preventing individual teachers from advancing in their understanding of Whiteness and their own WID.

Last, this study supports the claim that when a majority of people in power are white, Whiteness becomes harder to confront. The majority of authority figures at Pearson Elementary School are white, including the principal, assistant principal, as well as a majority of the teaching staff. The participants in this study were aware that there was a racial difference between the people of power and the “help” in the school building. Jamie mentioned during a small group discussion that when she first moved to Pearson from a different elementary school she noticed that secretaries and custodians were all people of color while the teaching staff and administration were predominantly white.

To further justify the claim elementary schools serve as structures that stifle racial identity development and that Whiteness becomes more difficult to confront when a majority of people in power are white, it was important to examine the conversations had during one-on-one interviews compared to conversations that were had during small
group discussions. Specifically looking at deficit language, which can be described as associated with someone transitioning to the Acceptance stage, during one-on-one interviews, the participants used a fair amount of deficit language when describing the school and students in the school. The amount of deficit language increased substantially when we met in small groups to discuss the readings, which was interpreted as comfort and normalcy. One example of the negative assumptions expressed by the participants regarding the aspirations of the marginalized neighborhood community members became evident during our first small group discussion when a majority of the participants took part in a conversation regarding the lack of interest in the students and their families to travel a few blocks outside of their neighborhood radius. When discussing being on a fieldtrip and passing a university just a few blocks from the school one participant mentioned, “If you don’t have a car and you can’t get out of the neighborhood…you don’t see the college or anything like that.”

Important in relating the use of deficit language to Whiteness, it is important to know there was only one instance of minor conflict during our small group discussion sessions. Because there were not individuals pointing out the use of deficit language and instances of describing the “Other” as primitive, one can assume there was a sense of agreement among participants when these sentiments were expressed (Anderson and Jack, 1991). For example, there were a few instances where Morgan stated that her students’ parents poor work ethic were part of the reason her students are not successful. She stated, I’ve noticed that their work ethic comes a lot from their parents. I remember last year when we were talking about college…and I had a lot of students that were like, I’m not going to college, college is stupid…talking to them further and
trying to figure out a little deeper, they are like, my mom hated school and she
didn’t graduate so she doesn’t think I need to.

While these comments did not spur a great deal of continued conversation, none of the
participants challenged Morgan’s ideas regarding her students’ parents. Also supporting
this sense of agreement is that every participant made at least one utterance that was
coded as taking Whiteness for granted or seeing Whiteness as normal. While five of the
six participants showed competence of individual and institutional discrimination during
small group discussions, there were also a significant number of comments made that
voiced dominate beliefs. These type of comments were not made during our one-on-one
interviews which support the notion that when in power and when surrounded by other
white people in power, Whiteness becomes harder to confront.

If we apply this understanding to the structure of a majority of elementary schools
today where the administration and teaching force is predominantly white (Johnson,
2002), Whiteness will most likely not be addressed until individuals move into the
Redefinition stage of WID and are willing to move towards sophisticated discussion
regarding White privilege without simply thinking differently about people of color or
socioeconomic background (Hyatt & Adkins, 2001). And even with this advancement in
WID it is still becomes challenging to confront Whiteness (Howard, 2006). Ashley, the
only participant progressing towards Resistance, stated during her final interview that
being fairly new to the teaching staff at Pearson Elementary School, she doesn’t yet feel
comfortable speaking out, and she is still trying to figure out who she can and can not
share her opinions with. Ashley’s statement supports the argument that the elementary
school setting is stifling WID.
How Do White Elementary Teachers Define and Implement Critical Literacy Practices?

Interviews, small group discussions, and classroom observations were the data sources that allowed this research question to be answered, and led to the generation of three major themes. These include understanding critical literacy, implementing critical literacy, and elementary schools as structures that stifle implementation of critical literacy practices. Each theme is discussed in detail below with evidence from the study as well as current research that supports these understandings.

Understanding critical literacy. The data from this study support the conclusion that a majority of teachers are not familiar with critical literacy practices from their undergraduate and continued education, and therefore are not using them in their elementary classrooms. Interviews confirmed that a majority of participants were not familiar with the theory of critical literacy prior to this study. Even Hannah, who was familiar with the theory, admitted during our initial interview that she was not sure how to infuse the theory with young first grade students. While Ashley and Ben somewhat understood critical literacy at the beginning of the study, their misunderstanding of critical literacy associated the theory closely with critical thinking.

Observations acted as an informal triangulation of this finding and exemplified the notion that teachers were not familiar with critical literacy, as there were just a few examples of text analyst, which is associated with critical literacy, in all thirty-six of the observations completed. This theme further justifies the work of Cooper and White (2012) that states critical literacy needs to be clearly defined in terms of elementary
school application and continued professional development is necessary to foster a connection between the theory and elementary classroom application.

**Implementing critical literacy.** After reading about critical literacy for our last small group discussion, participants stated more than once that they understood the need for critical literacy, “especially with a student population like ours [Pearson Elementary],” yet this realization did not influence the literacy observations that happened after this discussion (Cooper & White, 2012). While some participants mentioned during the final interview they had intentions of using critical literacy practices in their future classrooms, it is hard to say if these aspirations will come to light.

While there was not strong evidence of critical literacy practices, there were instances in every classroom that could be coded using the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Further supporting the ideas of van Sluys, Lewison, & Flynt (2006), although the teachers from this study have not yet mastered how to make critical literacy a part of their daily instruction, they are using research based questioning and teaching in their classroom, some of them, more than others. Every classroom had evidence of code breaking and text participant, Hannah, Ashley, and Cara had evidence of text user, and Hannah, Morgan, and Cara all had at least one example of text analyst in all of the observations completed.

**Elementary schools as structures stifle the implementation of critical literacy practices.** The data from interviews and small group discussions support the conclusion that elementary schools as structures stifle the ability for teachers to implement critical literacy practices. In fact, the participants of this study voiced on more than one occasion they feel that decision making power has been taken from them, supporting other
research in this field (Luke, 2012; Morrell, 2010). During small group discussion four Cara stated,

what I hate about teaching…that we’re almost in like a factory kind of job now where if you just buy this program, magically you can do this…and it works for everyone. We have children that we’re dealing with, not machine made cars.

As was the case in the research completed by Jewett and Smith (2003), the participants in this study stated that whether it is a mandate based on curriculum, testing, or a process, teachers are forced to spend time dedicated to these items that are required. Loosing academic time to nonnegotiable constraints have left teachers feeling like they are unable to implement theories such as critical literacy into their own classroom. How can students drive the curriculum, as is one of the functions of critical literacy, if the curriculum along with its implementation strategies have already been planned by an outside source?

With programs such as FLASH, scripted lessons and mandates regarding small group instruction have left the participants feeling as though their teacher preparation coursework is not valued, and in fact, is unnecessary. Supporting this claim, during our last small group discussion Ashley stated, “I feel like what was the point of my college education? What was the point of taking all of those classes if I’m just going to come in here and get handed a script?” What seems to be even more frustrating to the teachers is an awareness that if their students show great gains, the district will interpret it as “look at what FLASH did for this school and these teachers and this staff” while if the students do not show success, it will somehow be the fault of the teachers. The data from this study indicate that while FLASH may take the credit for the advancement of Ashley’s students, it was Ashley’s natural teaching and questioning that were the majority of
examples using the four resources model. Without her natural interjections, the FLASH lessons would have been mostly at the code breaking level, supporting the notion of the back to basics approach of scripted reading material that we know does not work for struggling readers (Giroux, 2010).

The current education system has the teachers in this study feeling helpless in the area of creativity and use of intellect. After reading Combating, “I hate this stupid book!” Black males and critical literacy (Wood & Jocius, 2013) Jamie acknowledged during our last small group discussion that she knew the information presented in the text was, “just basic good teaching,” yet she followed this statement by expressing her fear in not being able to cover the mandated Common Core State Standards if she stopped to have the critical conversations the text was suggesting. This statement coincides with the teacher participants in the Jewett and Smith (2003) case study who also voiced their concern to implement critical literacy practices due to their apprehensiveness to move away from pre-determined curricula and ways of teaching. Jamie further explained her confusion and inability to justify research based pedagogical practices when she stated, “It’s so frustrating because we know that it’s [critical literacy] good stuff and the kids need it so they can relate and so they don’t hate reading.”

During my last interview with Ben he also demonstrated this sense of hopelessness in doing what is right for students when he was reflecting on his understanding of critical literacy. Coming from a sociology background Ben shared that he knows, “we need more stuff [critical literacy] like that” and then similar to Jamie, he sounds hopeless in his ability to make any change when he stated, “But again, we’re
[teachers] only allowed to do what we’re allowed to do. And unless we all take the step and we all say we’re going to go against it, you’re going to be on your own.”

**How Does Whiteness Influence Elementary Teachers’ Use of Critical Literacy Practices?**

All three data sources were pertinent in determining whether Whiteness influences elementary teachers’ use of critical literacy practices. While the data from this study indicate that critical literacy is not happening in the classrooms observed, there is still evidence of research based literacy practices that could be coded using the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). After looking closely at the relationship between WID and strong literacy practices, it can be concluded that the closer a teacher gets to Internalization, the more frequently they use the processes of the four resources model as part of their daily literacy instruction.

**Racial identity and its impact on research based literacy practices.** Using the conceptual model that I have created and revealed in chapter four by combining Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) and Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model, I was able to display the WID stage of the participant along the y-axis and the four resources process the participant used most frequently along the x-axis. These figures can be found and compared in Appendix G.

While that information represented by these figures helps to simplify the great deal of data and is extremely relevant when answering the main research question of this study, I realized when comparing the figures that they were not completely representative of the practice that occurred during my observations.
As noted earlier, because this study found that critical literacy practices are not occurring on a daily basis in the elementary classrooms observed, the focus of this study was slightly shifted to evaluate the types of literacy practices that are happening in elementary classrooms. The figures shown in chapter four represent the most frequent process used by each participant, but in the case of Jamie for example, Figure 7 shows that Jamie is between the Acceptance and Resistance stages and that her most frequent process used is text participant. Missing from this illustration however is that Jamie only had twelve total instances that were coded using the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Jamie’s ZPD appears similar to Hannah’s ZPD, as a teacher in the Resistance stage of WID who also uses text participant most frequently, however, Hannah had one hundred fifteen total instances that were coded using the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). This comparison means there were one hundred and three more instances of research-based practices that occurred in Hannah’s literacy lessons compared to Jamie’s and these differences need to be addressed.

Freebody and Luke (1999) state that each process is necessary and inclusive, with each being necessary but not sufficient for the achievement of the others. With this understanding, the I created an additional conceptual framework, which displays how more advanced WID is related to more instances of the four resources processes. In this case, Hardiman’s stages of WID (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) are still along the y-axis, but different in this model, the x-axis represents the total number of instances where one of the four resources processes was evident.
**Figure 8.** Ben’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples

**Figure 9.** Hannah’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples

**Figure 10.** Ashley’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples
With this slightly more indicative framework, the ZPC of Jamie and Hannah are much more representative of the literacy practices happening in each of their respected classrooms. In congruence with the findings of van Sluys, Lewison and Flint (2006) and Cooper and White (2012) Hannah needs continued professional development to increase her understanding and comfort level using critical literacy practices and Figure 9 provides
a point of entry for her continued professional development. Knowing Hannah is working in the Resistance stage of WID and being aware that she is frequently using various processes of the four resources model provides a facilitator a snapshot into the literacy practices happening in Hannah’s classroom. Similar to Hannah’s fairly advanced ZPC, Figure J shows that while Ashley’s racial identity is slightly more advanced than Hannah, Ashley uses processes of the four resources model less frequently than Hannah, thus providing a different point of entry for her individual professional development. Less advanced in either WID or use of the four resources model, the other participants have a greater ZPC. In order to more easily compare the figures presented in both chapters four and five, the figures 2-7 from chapter four are located in Appendix G and figures 8-13 from chapter five are located in Appendix H.

**Implications**

**Policy**

The comparative and competitive testing era that is evident in today’s school systems has left schools and districts competing to be a “five star” or “high achieving” school. The arbitrary systems in place to evaluate schools, the teachers, their students, and even now teacher education programs, often result in placing high values on the academic achievement of individual students, as well as classes of students which are determined by the results of one high stakes test throughout the year. When districts, principals, and even teachers are duped into believing it is curriculum or teaching that is preventing students from being successful rather than the systemic injustices of the education system itself, there becomes a frenzy to find the next fix to help our struggling
teachers, while the bureaucratic systems make money and the students suffer (Giroux, 2010).

Not shortly after schools have been told they are not meeting national norms or goals, the implementation of strict standards and scripted programs begin to infiltrate. Furthermore, with common standards to cover in a certain amount of time, mandates begin to require that all teachers follow the same pacing schedule in all content areas, which is unrealistic and does not allow teachers to be diagnostic in their teaching practice. When all of this is evident teachers express frustration because they are not able to use what they have learned during the teacher preparation program, and as the one of the participants mentioned, this phenomena begins to make teachers feel they are working in a factory where their intellect and expertise have been ignored while they are required to read from lesson plans prepared by individuals who do not know and recognize the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) young students bring to the lessons, much less the students interests, strengths, and weaknesses.

Additionally, programs such as FLASH that require students to participate in guided reading lessons where the content is only delivered at grade level, instead of at the students’ instructional level, call themselves research based when the researchers in this field have agreed that guided reading needs to be completed at the students’ instructional levels (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). These types of policies that are continuing to take away from a teacher’s ability to use their own pedagogical knowledge and hone their expertise need to be discontinued.
Practice

**Elementary schools.** In order for elementary teachers to improve their practice, professional development of teachers needs to be addressed. It is evident from the findings in this study that all participants enjoyed having an opportunity to get together for an hour each week to discuss intellectual rather than technical issues in teaching. Further staff development needs to consider this input. Teachers need time to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as well as the goals of the school and determine the professional development that will support their own individual growth.

Findings from this study indicate the need for teachers to have multiple opportunities to reflect upon their WID and how it influences their teaching practices. Like Gannon (1999) suggested, in order to make significant changes in the classroom, teachers need to get comfortable with being White and create a space for open dialogue.

As is also evident from this study, teachers need to continue to develop their literacy strategies while in the classroom. Whether this is further understanding of the four resources model (Freebody & Luke, 1990) or other research-based strategies, the development of a teacher needs to continue to be fostered. Instead of top-down professional development, this is what you need to do and this is how you need to do it, teachers need to have an opportunity to develop critical peers (Pine, 2009) and progress at their own rate to strengthen their own understanding of what it means to be a teacher and in the case of this study, what it means to be a white teacher in an urban school.

**Teacher education.** While the majority of teachers experienced a multicultural education course as part of their teacher preparation program, they did not feel it prepared them to teach in an urban setting. This finding implies that some multicultural education
coursework may need to be evaluated, and the first place to start may be the intended outcomes (Dass-Brailsford, 2007) for the course. While the intention of the course may be for students to understand various theories in multicultural education, it is essential for teachers to make a connection between theories and how they may or may not influence their future practice. One suggestion for pre-service teachers to be able to make this connection is to have a field placement as part of the course requirements. As Dass-Brailsford (2007) pointed out, simply “being” in an urban classroom will certainly not equate to a natural connection between theory and practice but with the facilitation of a professor who is current on both multicultural education theory as well as the current teaching conditions of local elementary schools, the professor can guide the pre-service teachers into connecting how multicultural education theory is relevant to the students’ future teaching practice.

Supporting the necessity of multicultural education courses, but calling for a second look at their intended outcomes, it has become evident from the findings in this study, that it is important for teachers to continue to foster their WID. Teacher education programs may want to reconsider how WID can be made into a possible outcome of multicultural education courses, or if it is already an outcome, sharing how it is addressed with others who do not currently make it a priority.

The understanding of critical literacy was also lacking in the six participants in this study and needs to be addressed by teacher preparation programs. Literacy courses for pre-service teachers need to have a balance of teaching how to read and comprehend the text, as well as how to read and comprehend the world (Cherland & Harper, 2007). Similar to the suggestions made in the area of multicultural education coursework, the
first place to look is the intended outcomes for the literacy courses. Once the student learning outcomes address critical literacy it is then up to the instructors to be sure it is becoming an integral dynamic part of the instruction.

While teachers need to be better prepared to make critical literacy and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) a part of their teaching repertoire, the findings from this study also indicate pre-service teachers need to be trained in how to use research to defend their teaching strategies. This study indicates that teachers are being pushed around and told how to do their jobs by outside “authorities.” Because local and national news ridicules teachers as being ineffective, and continued policy mandates provide teachers with materials that are supposed to do a better job teaching than the teacher, it is no wonder that teachers feel helpless in their efforts to teach. I suggest schools of education continue to mentor their new teachers as they navigate the political arena that now stalks the field of education. Through this mentorship new teachers will have to opportunity to develop critical peers (Pine, 2009) who do not allow themselves to fall victim to the educational system that is trying to keep teachers and students unsuccessful.

Like Dass-Brailsford (2007) concluded, white teachers need a space to converse about institutionalized racism that is happening in our schools and perhaps more important, they need to realize their role in pushing back against it. Like Ben shared during our last interview, many teachers come into teaching “young and idealistic” and thinking they are going to change every life. As teacher education programs we need to support our new teachers into continuing to develop this positive characteristic and foster their motivation to continue to believe they can make their classroom, their school, their
district, and maybe the educational system a place where all teachers and students can be successful.

I believe schools of education must teach their pre-service teachers how to advocate for themselves and their future students by providing them with the knowledge to defend their teaching; providing research that supports particular methodologies does this. By being aware of the systemic structures that promote Whiteness as well as the literacy strategies to aid students in questioning dominant voices, teachers will be able to unify; and together, they can justify research-based strategies instead top down directives.

**Future Research**

Further research needs to be conducted to further analyze the conclusions drawn between WID and literacy practices used in elementary classrooms. This is the first time Hardiman’s WID model (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012) has been examined as connected with literacy practices and therefore more research is necessary to strengthen the conclusions of this study.

This study should be replicated with a number of variations to improve its reliability and validity. First, the study should be replicated with individuals of different races. Using various identity frameworks to document racial identity, I believe this more diverse participant pool would allow for more critical conversations during small group meetings. A second variation that could be made in future studies is to provide a longer time frame to conduct the study. This increased amount of time would possibly allow for the researcher to document changes in racial identity or literacy practices further validating the work of van Sluys, Lewison, and Flynt (2006).
Also, continued research needs to be completed on teacher preparation programs, particularly in the areas of multicultural education, literacy, and mentorship. Schools of education need to be continually revisiting and revising student outcomes of their coursework in order to best prepare preservice teachers for current situations in elementary schools.

**Limitations**

One possible limitation of the study was my “insider” perspective as researcher and teacher in the same school district where the study was completed. In case study research the “insider” position can sometimes be viewed negatively; however, for this study the “insider” perspective helped to foster a bond with the participants. Being a teacher I was able to understand the terminology and frequent acronyms used by the participants as well as contribute tiny anecdotes that allowed the participants to know I could relate to some of their ideas and frustrations.

The use of the WID model and four resources model helped to reduce the biases that are sometimes associated with case studies. Specifically, both models were able to assist in the coding of data, which allowed me as the researcher to view the data though the objective lens of the models first, rather than my own biases.

While the sample size does not allow for this study to be generalizable, there are numerous outcomes from this study that can be further investigated and can translate to individuals’ context (Yin, 2009). The findings may be transferable to numerous educational settings, and perhaps most importantly, the participants in this study expressed an understanding of Whiteness and critical literacy that were not evident before the study took place.
Chapter Summary

Using the research questions as a guide, this chapter discussed the findings and themes determined by the data. In particular, this chapter discussed how elementary teachers do and do not negotiate Whiteness through multicultural education coursework and interactions with people of different racial backgrounds. In addressing the first ancillary question this chapter also discusses misconceptions regarding race and poverty and last suggests that elementary schools act as structures that stifle WID. In addressing critical literacy, the themes of understanding critical literacy, practicing critical literacy and elementary schools as structures that stifle implementation of critical literacy practices is reviewed. A conceptual model is also presented in this chapter to clarify the relationship between WID and the frequency of the four resources processes used in elementary literacy classrooms.

While this chapter also addresses the implications for the findings of this study in policy, practice and future research, it also attends to the study’s limitations.
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW ONE STRUCTURE AND QUESTIONS

Face-to-Face Interviews: Face-to-face interviews will be completed on the UNLV campus or the participants’ work place. Participants will be asked to choose safe area at either of these two locations. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Interviews will be scheduled for one hour.

Online Interviews: If a face-to-face interview cannot be scheduled an online interview system will be used. Interviews will be conducted using Skype or Apple FaceTime and will be recorded digitally. Participants will be asked to locate a setting that has Internet connection. Interviews will be scheduled for one hour.

Interview Protocol: This purpose of the first interview is to gather background and personal development of the participants prior to becoming a teacher, their training in becoming a teacher, as well as their experiences as a teacher. This interview protocol will be semi-structured; a series of guiding, open-ended questions will be used as prompts, but interview exchanges will be flexible to put participants at ease and allow them to focus on what is most important to them relative to the study focus. Below are initial guiding questions to be used in this interview:

1. Describe your childhood. Where did you grow up? How was your family?
2. When did you become aware of race?
3. What made you want to become a teacher?
4. What kind of teacher preparation program did you complete?
5. Did your teacher preparation program require you to complete a multicultural course? How would you explain the course?
6. Explain whether or not you feel the course prepared you to teach in a multicultural school.

7. This is a model of identity development. Where would you identify yourself on this model? Do you have any examples that can explain your choice?

8. Explain the literacy courses you took in your teaching preparation program?

9. Do you feel the literacy courses prepared you to teach in a multicultural classroom?

10. Was critical literacy a focus of your literacy preparation?

11. How would you define critical literacy practices?

12. How do you use critical literacy practices in your own classroom?

During both interviews the participants were asked to identify their white identity development stage. This was the handout that was provided when the question was asked so they had some understanding of the model as well as the characteristics of individuals in each of the different stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Identity Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Naïveté</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t believe racism exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not see race</td>
</tr>
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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW TWO STRUCTURE AND QUESTIONS

Face-to-Face Interviews: Face-to-face interviews will be completed on the UNLV campus or the participants’ work place. Participants will be asked to choose safe area at either of these two locations. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Interviews will be scheduled for one hour.

Online Interviews: If a face-to-face interview cannot be scheduled an online interview system will be used. Interviews will be conducted using Skype or Apple FaceTime and will be recorded digitally. Participants will be asked to locate a setting that has Internet connection. Interviews will be scheduled for one hour.

Interview Protocol: This purpose of the first interview is to gather background and personal development of the participants prior to becoming a teacher, their training in becoming a teacher, as well as their experiences as a teacher. This interview protocol will be semi-structured; a series of guiding, open-ended questions will be used as prompts, but interview exchanges will be flexible to put participants at ease and allow them to focus on what is most important to them relative to the study focus. Below are initial guiding questions to be used in this interview:

1. This is the same model of identity development you saw in the first interview. Where would you identify yourself on this model today? Explain why you think there has been a change or not.

2. How does your identification with this particular stage relate to your notions of Whiteness?

3. How does your notion of Whiteness influence your literacy practices?

4. Has your definition of critical literacy changed? Why or why not?
APPENDIX C: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Small Group Discussion Structure: Small group discussions will occur in a school setting. Small group discussions will last for one and a half hours and happen four times throughout the duration of the study. Small group discussions will be recorded and transcribed. All participants will take part in the small group discussions. The researcher will announce to the participants that the privacy and confidentiality of other participants is important and should be honored and protected.

Question Protocol: The purpose of the small group discussion is to gather data regarding what the participants are learning regarding Whiteness and critical literacy. The small group discussions will be semi-structured; a series of guiding, open-ended questions will be used as prompts, but the small group exchanges will be flexible to put participants at ease and allow them to focus on what is most important to them relative to the study focus. Below are initial guiding questions to be used during the small group discussions.


1. What were your reactions to the text?
2. What connections could you make with the text?
3. Were there any parts of the text that you could not identify with?
4. Do you think there is a reason you were not able to identify with certain parts of the text?
5. How has this text influenced your literacy teaching philosophy?
6. How has this text influenced your beliefs about race/racism?
7. Would you recommend this book to other teachers?

8. How would you explain this book to a teaching colleague?
APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION STRUCTURE

Observation Structure: Observations will occur in the participating elementary teachers’ classrooms. Observations will take place during the school day, particularly during the literacy block of instruction. Because the number of minutes of literacy instruction differs from school to school and teacher-to-teacher, the researcher will confirm the duration with each participating teacher before the observation occurs. Field notes will be gathered during the observation. The purpose of the observations is to document the literacy instruction and strategies used. In particular, the researcher is looking for examples and non-examples of literacy strategies and practices that align with Freebody and Luke’s (1990) four resources model.
APPENDIX E: HARDIMAN’S WHITE IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT CODING

Naïveté Stage of White Identity Development

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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>little or no social awareness of race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>vulnerable to worldview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3</td>
<td>may not feel comfortable with people who are different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>do not feel hostile or fearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5</td>
<td>may be curious about differences in people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N6</td>
<td>do not see some differences as more normal than others</td>
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Transition to Acceptance

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TA1</td>
<td>begin to learn and ideology about their own racial group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA2</td>
<td>begin to learn an ideology about other racial groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA3</td>
<td>internalize messages that Black means being less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA4</td>
<td>internalize messages equating White with power, normal, beauty, or authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA5</td>
<td>begin to learn that there are formal and informal rules – institutions, authority figures – that permit some behavior and prohibit others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA6</td>
<td>negative consequences for stepping out of these rules</td>
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### Acceptance Stage of White Identity Development

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>absorption, conscious or not of an ideology of racial dominance and subordination – touches personal and public life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>accepted messages about – racial group membership, dominant groups members, dominant culture, and inferiority of target group members</td>
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</table>

#### Passive Acceptance

| PA1 | may not be conscious identification with being White                                           |
| PA2 | Whiteness is taken for granted                                                                |
| PA3 | subtly racist – dominant beliefs                                                              |
| PA4 | do not view themselves as racist because they are not active or vocal against targeted groups |
| PA5 | “Others” are culturally deprived and need to assimilate                                       |
| PA6 | affirmative action is reverse discrimination – opportunities Whites never had                 |
| PA7 | white culture is classical – “Other” culture is primitive                                     |
| PA8 | stereotypes – black athlete, violet Hispanic, math and Asian                                  |
| PA9 | ignore people of color or patronizing behavior – extra friendly                                |

#### Active Acceptance

| AA1 | more vocal in expressing White superiority                                                    |
| AA2 | pride in being White                                                                           |
| AA3 | white supremacist organizations                                                               |

#### Transition to Resistance

| TR1 | painful and confusing                                                                         |
| TR2 | result of a number of events that have a cumulative effect                                    |
| TR3 | become aware of experiences that contradict the acceptance worldview                          |
| TR4 | isolated incidents begin to for a pattern                                                     |
| TR5 | contradictions that arise are from interactions with people, social events, classes, media, or racial incidents |
| TR6 | guilt or embarrassment                                                                        |
| TR7 | afraid and uncertain what the implications of this new awareness will be                      |
### Resistance Stage of White Identity Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Questioning is much more intense than in acceptance stage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>begin to understand and recognize racism in complex and multiple manifestations – individual, institutional, conscious, unconscious, intentional, unintentional, attitudinal, behavior and policy levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>aware of how covert and overt racism affects them daily as members of racial identity groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>powerful emotions – anger, disbelief, shame, guilt, or despair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#### Passive Resistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>critical consciousness of existence of racism and white people’s relationship to it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR1</td>
<td>awareness accompanied by little action or behavioral change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR2</td>
<td>see the problem but feel personally impotent to fix it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR3</td>
<td>prevailing feeling that the problem is too big and nothing can be done to fix it – especially with just one person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR4</td>
<td>may hold similar beliefs to active resistance by not behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR5</td>
<td>attempts to “drop out”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Active Resistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>more deeply developed critical consciousness about racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AR1</td>
<td>sense of personal ownership of the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR2</td>
<td>aware that they too are racist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR3</td>
<td>aware that whatever they do or fail to do is art of the problem or part of the solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR4</td>
<td>understand they have internalized racial prejudice, misinformation, and lies about themselves as Whites and about people of color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR5</td>
<td>realize their behavior has been racist in at least a passive sense and sometimes in active, conscious ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR6</td>
<td>gravitation toward communities of people of color to try to develop a new identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR7</td>
<td>realization that confronting and changing the white community is the responsibility of Whites who are antiracist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR8</td>
<td>focus shift from liberal to people of color to change agent with one’s white peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Resistance Stage of White Identity Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AR10</th>
<th>understand racism is white racism and have been affected by it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AR11</td>
<td>understand cultures of “Other” have been misrepresented by racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR12</td>
<td>racism is systemic and not simply prejudice or discrimination in one facet of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR13</td>
<td>indiscriminately challenging racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR14</td>
<td>expressing solidarity with people of color through buttons etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR15</td>
<td>distancing from white culture and people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Transition to Redefinition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRED1</th>
<th>realize they do not know who they really are</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRED2</td>
<td>do not know what their racial group membership means to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRED3</td>
<td>no longer consumed by rejection, but the loss of self-definition of Whiteness leaves them with a void</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRED4</td>
<td>attempt to grapple with what it means to be White and antiracist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Redefinition Stage of White Identity Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RED1</th>
<th>move beyond conflict toward a resolution and new racial identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RED2</td>
<td>refocus and redirect energy to define Whiteness in a way that is not dependent on racism or perceived deficiencies in other groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED3</td>
<td>develop deeper understanding of meaning of Whiteness and its connection to racism together with those aspects of White European American culture that affirms their own need as members of that social group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED4</td>
<td>instead of negative feelings towards being White, new sense of comfort and identification with cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED5</td>
<td>without superiority and with disclaiming system of social dominance - feeling of pride in group membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED6</td>
<td>recognition that all cultures and racial groups have unique and different traits that enrich human experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED7</td>
<td>no race or culture is superior to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED8</td>
<td>all races and cultures are unique, different, and adaptive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Internalization Stage of White Identity Development

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>begin to integrate some of newly defined values, beliefs, and behaviors into other aspects of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>take time and opportunities for new identity to integrate with the rest of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>new values or beliefs occur naturally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4</td>
<td>clear sense of their own self-interests in ending racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5</td>
<td>act on self-interest to confront racial oppression proactively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I6</td>
<td>understand uniqueness of cultural background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I7</td>
<td>do not see “Others” as culturally different and Whites as normal, but understand how White European American culture is different as well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Code Breaking Four Resource Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CB1</th>
<th>relationship between spoken sounds and written symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CB2</td>
<td>contents of the relationship between sounds and symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB3</td>
<td>alphabetic awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB4</td>
<td>punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB5</td>
<td>capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB6</td>
<td>sentence creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB7</td>
<td>other – helping students “crack the code” of literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP1</td>
<td>incorporation of background knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP2</td>
<td>topic of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP3</td>
<td>generic structures in written texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP4</td>
<td>characterization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP5</td>
<td>prediction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP6</td>
<td>not only how to read, but what counts as comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP7</td>
<td>other – engaging the meaning-systems of the discourse itself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Text User Four Resource Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TU1</th>
<th>what is the text for, here and now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TU2</td>
<td>relation to text outside of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU3</td>
<td>position as reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU4</td>
<td>characterization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU5</td>
<td>teacher demonstrates desired form of study while allowing student discussion – teacher is not seeking “correct” answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU6</td>
<td>‘communicative’ participation in literacy event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU7</td>
<td>other – social activities in which written text plays a central part</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text Analyst Four Resource Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TA1</th>
<th>acknowledge texts are written by persons with particular dispositions or orientations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TA2</td>
<td>text is not neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA3</td>
<td>awareness of language and idea systems in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA4</td>
<td>reader ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA5</td>
<td>writer ideology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G: RACIAL IDENTITY AND
MOST COMMON FOUR RESOURCES PROCESS

Figure 2. Ben’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Figure 3. Hannah’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Figure 4. Ashley’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process
Figure 5. Morgan’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Figure 6. Cara’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process

Figure 7. Jamie’s Racial Identity and Most Common Four Resources Process
APPENDIX H: RACIAL IDENTITY AND TOTAL NUMBER OF FOUR RESOURCES EXAMPLES

Figure 8. Ben’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples

Figure 9. Hannah’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples

Figure 10. Ashley’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples
Figure 11. Morgan’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples

Figure 12. Cara’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples

Figure 13. Jamie’s Racial Identity and Total Number of Four Resources Examples
APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT
Department of Teaching and Learning

TITLE OF STUDY: A Multiple Case Study of Whiteness and Critical Literacy Practices Among White Elementary Teachers in Urban Public Schools

INVESTIGATOR(S): Christine Clark & Amanda VandeHei

For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Amanda VandeHei at 702-528-1305 or vendhe@unlv.nevada.edu.

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted, contact the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794, toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.

Purpose of the Study
You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether white elementary teachers’ perception of Whiteness influences their critical literacy practices in elementary classrooms in an urban school district in Southern Nevada. For the purpose of this study, Whiteness is connected to institutionalized power and privileges that benefit White Americans (Winant, 1997). An assumed understanding for this study is that American legal, economic, and educational institutions are based on White cultural norms, hence privileging and serving the self-interest of the dominant White race. Based on the notion that race is a social construction rather than a biological reality, Whiteness is seen as one more constructed racial category (Chubbuck, 2004).

Participants
You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit these criteria: you are a white, elementary public school teacher.

Procedures
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: answer interview questions, allow the researcher into your classroom for observations during your literacy teaching timeframe, and participate in small group discussions regarding assigned and group-selected readings.

Specifically, you will be asked to complete the following:

1. Take part in two one-hour interviews at the beginning and end of the research process.
2. Allow the researcher into your classroom for classroom observations during your literacy teaching timeframe. These observations will happen six times throughout the research process and each observation will last for approximately 45 minutes. The purpose of the observations is to document critical literacy practices used in the classroom.

Approved by the UNLV IRB. Protocol #1308-4528
Received: 11-15-13 Approved: 11-25-13 Expiration: 11-24-14
3. Participate in four one-hour small group discussions regarding assigned and group-selected readings.

The researcher may take notes and/or record this interview. The researcher’s notes will be transcribed for research purposes only.

Participation in the research project means that all of your contributions (oral and, if necessary, written or otherwise constructed) may be included as data in the study. This data will be de-identified and reported under a pseudonym to protect your identity.

**Benefits of Participation**

While you may not see direct benefits as a participant in this study, the perspectives you share during the research process may enable the researcher to identify ways to interrupt Whiteness or white cultural norms. Historically, these norms have benefitted whites while at the same time disadvantaging those who are not white. Your perspectives may also assist the researcher in developing strategies for implementing critical literacy in numerous educational arenas. The information collected in this study, in sum, may be useful for public school teachers and administrators, educational associations, as well as faculty in schools of education to consider in improving educational praxis.

**Risks of Participation**

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study involves only minimal risks; you may feel uncomfortable while being interviewed or during small group discussions regarding Whiteness and critical literacy. There is a risk of a breach in privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in the group discussion activities. Social stigma is also a possible risk of this study because of the potential to express views contrary to social norms or practices. Every effort will be made to create a safe environment for individuals to express their opinions and ideas. During the initial small group discussion the participants and researcher will create an agreement that states the necessary conditions for all members of the group to feel safe and free to express their ideas. All participants will be reminded that the privacy and confidentiality of other participants is important and should be honored and respected. Furthermore, during the first meeting the group will decide how to handle any possible breach in confidentiality in case one occurs. This agreement will be reviewed before every small group discussion to remind all participants of the safe and inclusive environment necessary to complete the study.

**Cost/Compensation**

There will not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will be completed over a five-month period of time and will take approximately three hours per month of your time. You will not be compensated for your time.

**Confidentiality**

It may sometimes be difficult to maintain privacy and confidentiality outside of the research team when participating in group activities. Every effort will be made to create a safe environment for individuals to express their ideas and opinions and all participants will be reminded that the privacy and confidentiality of other participants is important and should be honored and respected.

*Approved by the UNLV IRB. Protocol #1308-4528*
*Received: 11-15-13 Approved: 11-25-13 Expiration: 11-24-14*
A Multiple Case Study of Whiteness and Critical Literacy Practices Among White Elementary Teachers in Urban Public Schools

Initial small group discussion the participants and researcher will create an agreement that states the necessary conditions for all members of the group to feel safe and free to express their ideas. All participants will be reminded that the privacy and confidentiality of other participants is important and should be honored and respected. Furthermore, during the first meeting the group will decide how to handle any possible breach in confidentiality in case one occurs. All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for three years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

**Voluntary Participation**
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with UNLV. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

**Participant Consent:**
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have been able to ask questions about the research study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

_________________________  ___________________________
Signature of Participant     Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

Audio/Video Taping:

I agree to be audio for the purpose of this research study.

_________________________  ___________________________
Signature of Participant     Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

Approved by the UNLV IRB. Protocol #1308-4528
Received:11-15-13 Approved: 11-25-13 Expiration: 11-24-14
February 28, 2014

Amanda R. VandeHei
5362 Encino Springs
Las Vegas, NV 89139

Dear Amanda:

The Research Review Committee of the Clark County School District has reviewed your request entitled: *A Multiple Case Study of Whiteness and Critical Literacy Practices Among White Elementary Teachers*. The committee is pleased to inform you that your proposal has been approved with the following provisos:

1. Participation is strictly and solely on a voluntary basis,
2. Provide letter of acceptance from any additional principals who may agree to be involved with the study.

This research protocol is approved for a period of one year from the approval date. The expiration of this protocol is February 27, 2015. If the use of human subjects described in the referenced protocol will continue beyond the expiration date, you must provide a letter requesting an extension one month prior to the expiration date. The letter must indicate whether there will be any modifications to the original protocol. If there is any change to the protocol it will be necessary to request additional approval for such change(s) in writing through the Research Review Committee.

**Please provide a copy of your research findings to this office upon completion.** We look forward to the results. If you have any questions or require assistance please do not hesitate to contact Brett Campbell at (702) 799-5195 or e-mail at bcampbell@interact.ccsd.net.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Pitch
Coordinator III
Department of Accountability & Research
Chair, Research Review Committee

cc: Brett Campbell
Research Review Committee

RRC-032-2014
REFERENCES


community, and the workplace (pp.1-21). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.


VITA

Amanda VandeHei
Curriculum Vitae

(702) 528-1305
vandehar@gmail.com

5362 Encino Springs
Las Vegas, Nevada, 89139

EDUCATION

2012  Candidate for Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction—University of Nevada, Las Vegas (chair: Dr. Christine Clark)

2005  M.Ed. in Literacy Education—Lesley University

2002  B.A. in Elementary Education, minor Teaching Spanish—University of Wisconsin Eau-Claire

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Teacher Education and Pedagogy  Critical Literacy
Multicultural Education  Teacher Identity
Second Language Acquisition  Whiteness

PROFESSIONAL WORK HISTORY

2013-2014  Nevada State College; Visiting Lecturer – Elementary Literacy

2010-2013  Nevada State College; Part – Time Elementary Education Literacy Lecturer

2007-2013  County School District; Robert L. Forbuss Elementary School – Grades 1, 2, 4, and 5

2005-2007  County School District; Walter Long Elementary School – Literacy Specialist

2002-2005  County School District; Walter Long Elementary School – Grade 2

TEACHING LEADERSHIP

- Response to Intervention Coordinator and Facilitator
- School Improvement Team Member and Facilitator
- Home Visitation Program Creator and Facilitator
- New Teacher Mentor
- Grade Level Chairperson
ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

- Local Planning Committee Team for National Council for the Teachers of English Annual National Conference
- Southern Nevada Writing Project Summer Institute Planning Committee
- Southern Nevada Writing Project Summer Retreat Planning Committee
- Southern Nevada Writing Project National Scoring Conference
- School of Education Curriculum Transformation

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Study Abroad Cuernavaca, Mexico – Summer 2000
- People to People Teaching Puntarenas, Costa Rica – Summer 2005

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- American Educational Research Association
- Association of Teacher Educators
- National Council for the Teachers of English
- National Writing Project
- Southern Nevada Writing Project
- National Association of Multicultural Education

COURSES TAUGHT

Nevada State College
- EDEL 442: Teaching Elementary School Science, Nevada State College
- EDRL 461: Diagnostic Assessment and Instruction Literacy, Undergraduate,
- EDRL 407: Teaching Literature
- EDRL 442: Literacy Instruction I
- EDRL 451A: Content Area Literacy

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Peer-Reviewed International & National Conference Presentations:

- VandeHei, A., & Haddad, Z. (2013, November) Bridging Dialogic Instruction and Teacher Self-Disclosure: A Case Study of a University Multicultural Education Course. Paper presentation and interactive workshop accepted for presentation at the National Association for Multicultural Education Annual Conference, Oakland, California

- Villanueva, N., VandeHei, A., & Kaalberg, K. (2013, September) Students’ Perception of Grading Contracts in an Advanced Composition Classroom: A Case Study. Single paper presentation at the summer meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators in Washington, D.C.


Villanueva, N., VandeHei, A., & Kaalberg, K. (2012, August) *Exploring field experience models and the impact on preservice teacher literacy education.* Single paper presentation as part of the Emerging Scholars Series accepted for presentation at the summer meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators in Boston, MA.