# BEYOND "TALKING DIFFERENT": WHITE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' CRITICAL RACE TALK ABOUT TEACHING DIALECT DIVERSITY

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**CRITICAL RACE TALK ABOUT TEACHING DIALECT DIVERSITY**

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This dissertation documents 214 White pre-service English Language Arts teachers' engagement in explicit discussions of race and racism in online class discussions about teaching about dialect diversity. Participants were recruited from eight geographically distinct teacher education programs in the United States that implemented Godley and Reaser's (2018) dialect diversity mini-course. Informed by scholarship on White teachers' talk about racism, I analyzed participants' engagement in what I call "critical race talk" – talk about race that acknowledges systemic racism and White privilege. I used qualitative research methods to identify themes within the subset of White teachers' comments that included critical race talk. Even when prompted to discuss race and dialects in critical ways, only 3% of the 2,900 discussion board posts authored by White teachers included critical race talk. Twenty-nine percent of White teachers voiced critical race talk at least once. Teachers avoided critical race talk through implementing discourse strategies like silence, changing the topic, denial of White privilege, color-blindness, and abstract liberal discourse strategies. Four themes emerged within the discussion board posts that included critical race talk: descriptions of how systemic racism operates, explicit discussions of Whiteness, admissions of the prevalence of deficit thinking

about people of color, and genuine questions about teaching about racism and linguistic profiling. Additionally, more diverse teacher education classes and discussion prompts that directly addressed issues of racism and discrimination elicited more critical race talk. When teachers responded to each other's critical race talk, 83% of their responses challenged their classmates to be even more critical. Finally, White teachers who voiced critical race talk identified a three-step approach to teaching about linguistic discrimination: knowing your individual students' linguistic and racial identities, choosing classroom resources and materials to suit their needs, and creating a dialogue about linguistic profiling and racism focused on social justice. Implications of this study include the need for future studies to frame White teachers as capable of critical race talk and to include larger and more diverse groups of teachers, and the need for more a more diverse teaching force and teacher education curricula that explicitly engages White teachers in critical race talk.

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# 1.0 PURPOSE

In a 1980 survey of United States K-12 public school student demographics, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that 75% of students identified as White, 15% as Black, 9% as Latinx, and 2% as Asian (NCES, 2017b). By 2016, NCES reported that White K-12 students made up only 52% of the population and Black students another 14%. Conversely, the number of students who identified as Latinx and Asian jumped to 25% and 5%, respectively. Moreover, NCES has projected that by 2026, enrollment of K-12 students will fall to 45% White, while Black, Latinx and Asian populations will grow to 15%, 29%, and 6%, respectively (NCES, 2017a).

**Table 1.** Changing U.S. K-12 Student School Racial Demographics (1980-2026)

| Year | White | Black | Latinx | Asian |
|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| 1980 | 75% | 15% | 9% | 2% |
| 2016 | 52% | 14% | 25% | 5% |
| 2026 (anticipated) | 45% | 15% | 29% | 6% |

During this same time period, NCES has documented and predicted little change in K-12 public school teacher racial diversity. In the 1987-1988 school year, 87% of teachers identified as White, whereas in 2011-2012, White teachers still represented 82% of the teaching workforce (NCES, 2016). Additionally, most students enrolled in teacher preparation programs are White

(NCES, 2013). Thus, as U.S. K-12 classrooms are becoming increasingly racially diverse, teachers and those preparing to become teachers have remained mostly White (NCES, 2013, 2017a, 2017b). Furthermore, despite research and pedagogies aimed at increasing awareness of racism and the need for equity in education, such as the empirical studies on racialized achievement and discipline gaps and the promotion of asset-based pedagogies in both teacher preparation programs and in service teacher training, (e.g., Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching and Funds of Knowledge) (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), studies have shown that many White pre-service teachers (PSTs) and in-service teachers continue to demonstrate problematic understandings of racism and its consequences, including but not limited to, avoidance of talking about race, denial of White privilege, and minimization of the impact of racism on the daily lived experiences of their students of color (Haviland, 2008; Pollock, 2004; Yoon, 2012). As a result of these problematic understandings of racism, research has shown that some White teachers may perpetuate racialized discrimination against their students who are not White by sustaining deficit views about students of color and their families (Garza & Garza, 2010; Milner, 2010; Valencia, 2010).

Race in this project is defined socially through phenotype (e.g., physical characteristics such as skin color and facial features). This study draws upon theory that addresses the ways in which race has been historically, socially, and economically defined, performed, and maintained as a result of the enslavement of Africans in the transcontinental slave trade which laid the economic foundation of capitalism in the United States (Bell, 1992; Harris, 1993). Specifically, I draw on theories of how race is performed in social settings, such as schools, which privileges those who appear as White and discriminates against those who are Black or Brown (Crenshaw, 1997; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

In the face of continued racialized discrimination, education scholars have documented ways in which White teachers have passively and actively avoided discussions of racism and its consequences. Avoidance of discussions of race, racism, and their consequences by White teachers through silence, changing the topic, or commitment to a color-blind (e.g., "I don't see race") approach have been thoroughly theorized and well-documented (Lewis, 2001; Milner, 2012; Pollock, 2004). Additionally, scholars have linked avoidance of acknowledging racism to White teachers' denial of systemic racism (Amos, 2011; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2006), the continued marginalization of students of color (Noguera, 2003), and the maintenance of racial injustice in U.S. classrooms (Godley, Carpenter, & Werner, 2007; Stoll, 2014). Thus, it is imperative for scholars to investigate the ways in which White teachers understand race and racism in order for teacher educators to design curriculum and instructional strategies that prepare teachers to mitigate, as opposed to perpetuate, racism in their classrooms. One way in which scholars can examine White teachers' understandings of racism is by examining White teacher talk about race and racism. How do White teachers' discuss race, racism, and discrimination? What prompts talk of racism? And how do their peers and colleagues react to these discussions?

In this study, I analyzed discussion board posts in which pre-service White teachers' engaged in at least one example of *critical race talk*. In this project, critical race talk is used to refer to discussions of race and racism that acknowledge how racism operates to systematically deny people of color access to resources and opportunities and provides privileges to Whites. My definition of critical race talk drew from Howard's (2004) call for "racial discourse" amongst teachers and students. Howard's "racial discourse" involved discussions of "racial realities" such as "racism, prejudice, and discrimination" which Howard argued are "central features of the

nation's social, economic, and political fabric, and manifest themselves in a myriad of ways" (p. 486). In my analysis, critical race talk emerged as a phenomenon similar to Howard's notion of "racial discourse' as White teacher critical race talk included explicit examples of racism, prejudice, and discrimination as everyday, historical, and permanent features of U.S. society.

My study examined the characteristics of White teacher critical race talk, the context of this talk, and the connection between teacher critical race talk and pedagogical decisions, specifically with regards to teaching about dialect diversity. Data for the study were drawn from teachers' discussions during an online course on dialect diversity offered across the United States (Godley & Reaser, 2018).

The following research questions guided this dissertation project:

1. What are the characteristics of White teachers' critical race talk about dialect diversity?
2. What prompts White teacher critical race talk?
3. How do White teachers respond to each other's critical race talk?
4. How does critical race talk shape White teachers' talk about pedagogy aimed at teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies?

The major analysis of this project focused on research question one: examining the characteristics of White teachers' critical race talk about dialect diversity. My subsequent research questions were answered by drawing upon the findings of research question one. These research questions provided context for understanding the characteristics of critical race talk about dialect diversity. The findings and implications of this study address at least three interrelated problem spaces in equity-focused education research: racism, dialect diversity, and critical pedagogies. The findings of this project contribute to current research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism (Castro, 2010; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Laughter, 2011). In

addition, the findings contribute to literature on English language arts (ELA) teacher preparation, specifically regarding studies on teaching about dialect diversity from a critical stance (Alim, 2007; Godley, Reaser, & Moore, 2015). Finally, building upon the work of education scholars who have repeatedly pointed to the pernicious impact of racism in schools and have proposed pedagogies to mitigate its effects, the findings of this proposed dissertation project contribute to scholarship on the productive integration of critical awareness and critical pedagogies in teacher preparation coursework and practicum experiences (Gay, 2013).

## 1.1    SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

### 1.1.1    The impact of White teachers' (mis)understandings of race and racism.

Racial mismatch between an 87% White teacher population and classrooms that are increasingly comprised of students of color has been linked to unequal racialized academic outcomes (Amos, 2011; Clark & Zygmunt, 2014; Garza & Garza, 2010), the overrepresentation of students of color in school discipline reports (including the "school to prison pipeline") (Boucher, 2016; Noguera, 2003), and the over-identification of students of color as learning disabled (Pollack, 2012). Furthermore, White teachers have demonstrated implicit bias against darker skinned students (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014) and deficit thinking alongside lowered expectations for students of color (Castro, 2010; Crowley, 2016; Garza & Garza, 2010). White teachers need to better understand race, racism, and its impact on their professional work. In order to reach this understanding, teachers need to talk about race and racism and to learn about its consequences. Furthermore, education scholars have stressed the need for explicit talk about

race and racism (including Whiteness and White privilege), a critique of color-blind talk and practices, and teacher preparation programs that address social justice and equity pedagogies.

### 1.1.2   Race talk avoidance among White teachers.

Drawing from research that called attention to the need for racial discourse in U.S. K-12 schools, in this project I propose an analysis of White teacher engagement in explicit critical discussions of race and racism. I define critical race talk as talk about race and racism that mentions examples of structural and/or systemic racial discrimination, e.g., discussions of unequal graduation rates between White students and their Black and Latinx peers or the overrepresentation of Black students in school discipline incidents (Castro, 2010; Howard, 2004; Pollock, 2004; Sue, 2015). However, despite calls from education scholars for teacher engagement in talk of racism in schools, studies have continued to document discourse strategies used by some White teachers to passively and actively avoid engaging in explicit discussions of race and racism (Amos, 2011; Bailey & Katradis, 2016; Buehler, 2013; Howard, 2004; Sue, 2015).

One way that White teachers have been shown to avoid discussions of racism is through abstract liberal narratives. These narratives include professed color-blindness or an "I-don't-see-race" standpoint (Bailey & Katradis, 2016; Stoll, 2014), reliance on the myth of meritocracy or the notion of the level playing field to describe student achievement (Picower, 2009), and/or explanations, often called "bootstrap theory" or "individualism," that rely on problematizing the individual students instead of discriminatory schools or schooling (Peters, Margolin, & Fragnoli, 2016; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Wade, Fauske, & Thompson, 2008). Critical scholars have warned that reliance on abstract liberal ideals, like the ones described above, minimizes the very real

impact of systemic racial discrimination on the everyday lived experiences of those who are not White (Milner, 2012). From this abstract liberal standpoint, discussions of the impact of racialized inequalities may be repositioned as discussions of deficits in student's abilities and work ethic, such as "grit" (Goodkind, 2009; Welton, Diem, & Holme, 2015).

The avoidance of acknowledging racism and White privilege among White teachers has been well-documented (Haviland, 2008; Levine-Rasky, 2000; McIntyre, 1997; Solomona et al., 2006; Yoon, 2012). Haviland and Yoon documented how White teachers in their studies utilized specific discourse strategies to avoid critiquing White supremacy (or racism and White privilege). McIntyre documented ways in which White teachers distanced themselves from being viewed as complicit in racism. Levine-Rasky and Solomona et al. both documented White teachers rejecting discussions of White privilege and asserting the negative effects of reverse racism on their own lives. Furthermore, education scholars have theorized that unchecked racism in White teachers allows White supremacy to be normalized, legitimated, and reproduced in classrooms (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Laughter, 2011; Mason, 2016). Therefore, it is imperative for scholars to further investigate White teachers' engagement and avoidance of race talk.

Although avoidance of discussions of racism by White PSTs and in-service teachers has been thoroughly documented, there is only a small set of research studies that have documented how predominantly White PSTs and in-service teachers engaged in explicit and productive discussions of race and racism (Berchini, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Crowley, 2016; Laughter, 2011). Berchini, Castro (2010), and Laughter each disputed the portrayal of White pre-service teachers (PSTs) in education literature as unaware of the impact of racism on their own lives and the lives of their students. Berchini analyzed one White teacher in a case study and argued the importance of context in structuring White teacher discussions of race. Laughter investigated racial

awareness among predominantly White PST candidates and found that their experiences and knowledge about race, racism, and their consequences were overlooked, or these topics were not engaged with by the faculty in their teacher preparation courses. Both Berchini and Laughter warned that an essentialized view of White teachers by their teacher educators could preclude the adequate preparation of White PSTs. In Crowley's study, the researcher specifically engaged White PSTs in talk about racism, noting that they transgressed past typical avoidance of discussions of racism. Laughter documented that some White PSTs were able to articulate how racism operated but their professors assumed they were not able to discuss race or racism. Castro argued that PSTs of today are mostly millennials who have had life experiences with race, language, and cultural diversity. In sum, recent scholarship has suggested that the notion that all White PSTs are unknowing or unwilling to engage in explicit talk about race and racism is not a useful assumption in the design of anti-racist teacher education programs in the United States today.

### 1.1.3        Standard language ideology, dialect diversity and racism.

Sociolinguists have examined the ways in which language ideologies, or widespread assumptions and beliefs about how people speak English, impact educational outcomes in U.S. K-12 schools. In addition, scholars have researched the impact of White teacher beliefs about language and deficit beliefs about the language used by their students of color on teachers' views of students and their academic potential.

### 1.1.4 Standard language ideology.

Lippi-Green (1994) described how linguistic discrimination is closely related to beliefs that privilege certain "standardized" ways of speaking English. Lippi-Green further wrote about discrimination stating:

[It] stems primarily from the acceptance of a standard language ideology (a term coined by Milroy & Milroy, 1985). The definition used here is: a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogeneous spoken language which is imposed from above, and which takes as its model the written language. The most salient feature is the goal of suppression of variation of all kinds (p. 166).

Milroy and Milroy (1985) created the term *standard language ideology* to refer to a dominant notion about how English should be spoken. As a concept, standard language ideology directly connects beliefs about language and social status (or privilege). Milroy (2007) further wrote about the connection between language attitudes and beliefs about how language is used correctly or incorrectly by stating:

Language attitudes are dominated by powerful ideological positions that are largely based on the supposed existence of this standard form, and these, taken together, can be said to constitute the standard language ideology or 'ideology of the standard language'. Speakers are not usually conscious that they are conditioned by these ideological positions: they usually believe their attitudes to language to be common sense and assume that virtually everyone agrees with them (p. 133).

In other words, standard language ideology is a dominant and normalized way of thinking about language. Those who subscribe to standard language ideology may not do so consciously.

Lippi-Green (1997) further described ways in which standard language ideology may impose bias against non-Standardized English speakers by writing:

Bias towards an abstracted, idealized homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper class (p. 64).

Guided by Milroy and Milroy's (1985) work, I use the term standard language ideology throughout this dissertation to refer to the dominant belief that there is one correct version of spoken English.

### 1.1.5 Dialect diversity.

Although standard language ideology erroneously asserts that there is one correct version of English, sociolinguistic scholars have documented widespread usage of nonstandard and vernacular dialects throughout the United States, both inside and outside of schools. The most privileged forms of English (sometimes called broadcast English, mainstream American English, or standard English) will be referred to in this dissertation as *standardized English* (SE). I use the term standardized because it refers to the form of English that has been socially constructed as the preferred standard of communication in the United States today (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011). In fact, sociolinguistic research has shown that SE varies geographically, between people of various age groups, and within other contexts, meaning that SE is itself an ideology, or set of beliefs, and not a formal static version of written or spoken English (Reaser, Adger, Wolfram, and Christian, 2017). In other words, every speaker of English is in fact speaking a dialect influenced by their age, location, and other personal factors. Furthermore, sociolinguistic research demonstrated that people speak multiple dialects or varieties of English

in the United States today (Reaser et al., 2017). Standardized English is not more grammatical, communicative, or correct. The term "standardized" refers to the version of English preferred by dominant groups. Drawing directly upon the work of Reaser et al., I use the term *nonstandard* to describe dialects labeled as different than SE and *vernacular* to describe dialects that are not only labeled as different than SE but also carry "a substantial social stigma," such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or Appalachian English (p. 9).

Furthermore, even though sociolinguistic research has asserted that language variation and dialect diversity is the norm in the United States today and that all varieties of language (SE, non-standard, and vernacular dialects) are equally logical, grammatical, and communicative, the myth of the superiority of SE (or standard language ideology) still impacts non-SE speakers in negative ways. In fact, one way in which scholars have documented sustained racial discrimination in classrooms is through White teachers' negative perceptions of the vernacular language usage by their students of color (Blake & Cutler, 2003; Cross, DeVaney, & Jones, 2001; Godley et al., 2007). Studies have shown that many White teachers uphold the standard language ideology, or belief that SE is more grammatical, correct, and communicative than vernacular dialects (Blake & Cutler, 2003; Cross et al., 2001). Therefore, both inside and outside of schools, speakers of SE often receive privileges, whereas speakers of vernacular dialects are too often viewed by SE speakers as uninformed, uneducated, or unknowing (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014).

### 1.1.6 Racism.

Scholars have theorized about the close connection between beliefs about language and beliefs about racism (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Heath, 1983; Smitherman, 1977). Furthermore,

empirical studies have documented overlap between language ideologies and racial ideologies in schools (Bacon, 2017; Blake & Cutler, 2003; Cross et al., 2001). Blake and Cutler linked White teacher negative perceptions about non-SE dialect speakers to lowered expectations and unequal outcomes for vernacular dialect speakers. Cross et al. studied Black and White PSTs' attitudes about dialect and found that:

> [PSTs] do seem to form conclusions about intellectual and personal traits based solely on perceptions of dialect. Further, the ethnicity of the speaker plays a part in these judgments, as raters reflect their ethnocentricity in concluding that members of other ethnic groups are not as "intelligent" or "trustworthy" as members of their own group. (p. 223)

In other words, when evaluating dialects, both Black and White PSTs made judgments about the intellectual assets or deficits of a speaker based not only on the speakers' perceived dialect but also their perceived racial background.

Recently, Godley et al. (2015) studied changes in language ideologies and pedagogical content knowledge of PSTs enrolled in an online mini-course on teaching about language variation and dialect diversity. They found that even though PSTs who completed the course demonstrated greater awareness of linguistic variation and language ideologies that privilege SE, they were still unlikely to critique dominant systemic racial ideologies, such as White privilege or White supremacy. In other words, even though PSTs demonstrated knowledge of the interrelated nature of language variation and racialized discrimination, they were still unlikely to engage in discussions about racism and linguistic discrimination. In a related study, Bacon (2017) studied changes in 127 pre-service and novice teachers' understandings of language variation and racism after participating in a course on debunking dominant language ideologies.

Bacon found that after participating in the course, participants changed some features of their talk about language but maintained their underlying racialized deficit views about non-SE speakers.

In summary, education research and theory have established connections between language and racial ideologies (Bacon, 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2015). Therefore, it is imperative that education researchers further analyze the power that racialized language ideologies, or beliefs about language and race, have over White teachers' perceptions of their students of color and/or nonstandard and vernacular speaking students.

## 1.2    DEFINING CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS

Throughout this project, I refer to people who are not White through commonly known racial categories, such as Black or Asian, through the phrases people or students of color. My intention is not to group together all people who are not White into one category, to promote the myth of the racial binary, or to endorse the notion that all people of color experience racism in the United States today in the same way. Instead, I position people of color in the United States today in relation to Whiteness and the maintenance of White supremacy. This project draws from theory that directly ties racism in the United States today to the same system of White supremacy developed at the advent of chattel slavery during the rise of capitalism in the United States. In other words, since the founding of the United States, Whites have systemically and intentionally denied the active protection of capital, freedoms, and justice to people of color (Bell, 1992; Harris, 1993). As a result, racism in the United States today continues to actively provide opportunities, wealth, and esteem to Whites, at the same time denying these benefits to people of

color. Specifically, I designed this project with the intention of collecting data on how White teachers think about race and racism and whether they consider their practice as teachers to be impacted by their race or the race of their students. In the end, this project contributes empirical research and implications for teacher educators and education researchers working to disrupt White supremacy in schools.

Moreover, in this study, White teachers' understandings of race and racism are isolated from research on teachers of color for two related reasons. First, scholars must consider that pedagogy, curriculum, and research should be color-conscious (Milner, 2007, 2012). Consequently, this project examined race, racism, and racialized discrimination as central units of analysis. In this project, I sought to identify and analyze emergent themes within White teacher critical race talk. By contrast, if I were to have focused on teachers of all racial backgrounds into one broad category of analysis, I risked perpetuating the color-blind myth that "race doesn't matter" or that teachers of all races experience and understand racism in the same way. However, this project is grounded in theory that has thoroughly critiqued and rejected color-blindness both inside and outside of the field of education (Crenshaw, 1997; Ullucci & Battey, 2011). Secondly, even though people of all racial categories can internalize racism (Harris, 2008), research has shown that since teachers of color experience daily and persistent racism, their understandings and experiences with racism will be distinct from that of White teachers (Pabon, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In summary, since this project aimed to contribute scholarship on White teachers' understandings of race and racism, separating White teachers from teachers of color is not only an appropriate step, but necessary in this case as the proposed participants predominantly self-identify as White.

## 1.3     THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE STUDY

This study was grounded in critical theories of race and racism, sociolinguistic theory on dialect diversity, and critical pedagogies that promote social justice.

### 1.3.1   Theories of race and racism.

The major theory used in this dissertation to analyze White teachers' talk about race and racism was critical Whiteness studies (CWS). Additional germinal theories of race and racism such as King's (1991) theory of dysconscious racism and Bonilla-Silva's (2010) work on color-blind racism were drawn upon to explain how racism is perpetuated unintentionally or covertly. Critical Whiteness scholars have asserted that Whiteness is not a neutral racial identity but rather a dominant racial and social category closely linked to racialized discrimination of people of color. Critical Whiteness theory in education research has been used to problematize, investigate, and possibly disrupt dominant Whiteness in schools, teacher preparation programs, and curriculum (Crowley, 2016; Lewis, 2001; Johnson, 2002). By prioritizing the study of Whiteness, these studies unveiled ways in which Whiteness has dominated cultural norms and carried with it privileges both inside and outside of schools (Chubbuck, 2004; McIntosh, 1990).

### 1.3.2   Sociolinguistic theory on dialect diversity.

Within the field of sociolinguistics, language is by definition both variable and performative. Sociolinguistics theorize that language usage and beliefs about language are

closely tied to other systems that dictate who has and who lacks social power, including but not limited to racism (e.g., White supremacy), sexism (e.g., patriarchy), and capitalism (e.g., power and wealth) (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Freire, 1970; Godley & Minnici, 2008; Heath, 1983). As opposed to being standard and fixed, language is enacted by people and evolves over time (Reaser et al., 2017; Smitherman, 1977). Furthermore, language varies geographically, culturally, and across specific contexts (e.g., family, friends, school, and work situations). The notion that there is only one standard and correct version or dialect of English (e.g., SE), is not a linguistic fact but instead is an example of an erroneous and widely held language ideology (Godley et al., 2007). Instead, the terms language variation or dialect diversity more accurately represent the ways in which English is spoken and performed throughout the United States today.

Lastly, this project was grounded in theories of critical pedagogies that promote equity and social justice. These theories include, but are not limited to, Freire's (1970) work on literacy and oppression, Ladson-Billings' (1995a) and Gay's (2010) work on Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogies, respectively, Milner's (2010) frames for understanding opportunity gaps, Paris' (2012) work on Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, and Godley and Minnici's (2008) work on Critical Language Pedagogy. To mitigate the negative impact of racial and linguistic mismatch between students and teachers, teacher educators must not only expose pre-service and in-service teachers to social justice pedagogies but must convince teachers that social justice should be at the center of their practice. Mitigating systemic and persistent racism in schools and schooling can only happen when teacher education programs include meaningful coursework based on theories that critique social power (e.g., theories of race and racism, sociolinguistics, and critical pedagogies). These theories must undergird both the curriculum and

practicum experiences of pre-service teachers. In addition, in-service teachers would benefit from ongoing professional support centered on discussions of equity and social justice.

## 1.4   METHODS

The dataset for this project included nine sets of discussion board posts produced by 214 English Language Arts (ELA) teachers from eight teacher education programs across the United States who enrolled in an online mini-course on dialect diversity. These teachers were predominantly White pre-service teachers (PSTs) and are referred to as White PSTs throughout the project. The goals of the four-week mini-course were to introduce PSTs to pedagogical content knowledge regarding language variation and to elicit PST discussions about how they might respond to, and teach about, language variation, language ideologies, and linguistic discrimination in secondary ELA classrooms. The curriculum of the mini-course consisted of four modules. Each module began with a realistic teaching scenario and included access to online readings and videos regarding related content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (see Appendix B for a description of the modules). PSTs were then asked to engage in online discussion board posts proposing lesson plan ideas for accomplishing the hypothetical teaching scenarios. This dataset of discussion board posts included over 2,900 discussion board posts by the 214 PST participants.

Drawing upon a grounded theory approach, I analyzed the discussion board posts for engagement in critical race talk. Informed by my research questions and guided by detailed a priori and emergent coding categories derived from relevant and current literature on both White

teachers' understandings of racism and dialect diversity in U.S. schools, I completed three rounds of coding to identify and describe the nature, context, and the pedagogies that emerge in relation to White PST critical race talk.

### 1.4.1 Researcher Positionality

I approach this project as a White middle-to-upper class woman who was raised and currently lives in a rust belt city. My own K-12 and university experiences have all been marked by White dominance notwithstanding racial diversity represented among my classmates. Despite representation of Black students in my school experiences, the schools were located in White spaces and my teachers and colleagues were predominantly White. While working at an urban charter school teaching Social Studies to racially diverse high school students, I felt unprepared to address topics like racism in my classroom. Moreover, my White racial identity and life experiences as a student, teacher, and education researcher have shaped my approach of this study.

## 1.5    SIGNIFICANCE

Findings and implications from this study contribute to scholarship on developing critical race talk among White teachers and examining the relationship between White PSTs' awareness of dominant language ideologies and their close relationship to racial ideologies. This study contributes to scholarship on critical pedagogies by investigating how teachers' critical race talk

shaped their ideas for instruction. In addition, the implications of this study inform teacher educators on specific strategies that encourage White PSTs to consider power, privilege, and equity when teaching about language variation and literacy. Lastly, the implications of this study help teacher educators create and support teacher preparation programs that center on critical examinations of power and privilege.

# 2.0    LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of the literature is organized into two sections: White teachers' understandings of race and racism and their understandings of language variation and dialect diversity in schools. In the first section of this chapter, I introduce the theoretical frameworks that have informed much of the research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism as well as my own study. Next, I analyze related empirical research categorizing the body of research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism into first and second-generation studies. In the second section, dialect diversity, I provide a brief overview of theory and summarize recent research on critical approaches to teaching about dialect diversity in schools.

## 2.1    WHITE TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF RACE AND RACISM

To complete a comprehensive review of literature on White teachers' understandings of race and racism, I gathered resources in three ways. I looked at the syllabi from relevant coursework and projects, I searched three separate academic databases (JSTOR, SCOPUS, and Google Scholar), and I examined relevant literature to identify germinal, or frequently cited articles, within the body of literature I compiled.

Although racism is a global issue, the theory that informed this study specifically addressed the ways in which race has been historically, socially, and economically defined,

performed, and situated in the United States as a result of Black chattel slavery that laid the economic foundation of life in the United States. Additionally, race in this project is defined socially through phenotype (or skin color), specifically through the recognition and performance of race in social settings.

For this literature review, I searched research publication databases for articles on "White teachers" and the term/construct, "deficit thinking," because racial mismatch has been demonstrated as problematic when White teachers' deficit perspectives about their students of color are linked to lowered expectations and unequal outcomes (Garza & Garza, 2010). With over 500 potential peer-reviewed articles identified, I examined titles and abstracts to identify empirical studies on White teachers that would answer the research question, "What are White teachers' understandings of race and racism?"

## 2.1.1   Theoretical frameworks.

Scholars studying White teachers' understandings of race and racism have framed their studies in various theoretical frameworks from both inside and outside of the interdisciplinary field of education in order to problematize Whiteness, to discuss how racism operates in society and in schools, and to explain how Whites think about people of color. The studies included in this review draw from theoretical frameworks across a variety of disciplines.

## 2.1.2   Theories that problematize Whiteness.

The following theories problematize the reported neutrality of Whiteness, a phenomenon which has been documented in studies of White teachers' understandings of race and racism

(Levine-Rasky, 2001; Lewis, 2001). These theories were developed and utilized by scholars both inside and outside of the field of education to capture and/or explain how White teachers may avoid critiquing their own participation in perpetuating White supremacy, or systemic discrimination against people of color. In this analysis of White teacher talk about race and racism in the context of teaching about dialect diversity, I used theories which problematize Whiteness to frame my analysis of White teachers' explicit talk about White privilege and White supremacy.

### 2.1.3   Critical Whiteness studies.

Critical Whiteness scholars have asserted that problematizing, investigating, and possibly disrupting Whiteness could be a necessary first step to achieving racial equity in schools (Crowley, 2016; Johnson, 2002; Lewis, 2001). In many ways, critical Whiteness theory was a response to empirical research that demonstrated how some White teachers avoided engaging in talk about race. Critical Whiteness theory asserts that Whiteness is not a neutral racial identity but rather a dominant racial and social category closely linked to racialized discrimination of people of color. As a result, many studies on White teachers' understandings of race and racism have utilized critical Whiteness theory to interrogate the perceived neutrality of Whiteness (Buehler, 2013; Chubbuck, 2004; Crowley, 2016; Gere et al., 2009; Haviland, 2008; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Johnson, 2002; Laughter, 2011; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Lewis, 2001; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Mazzei, 2011; Solomona et al., 2006). Scholars who have studied White teachers from a critical Whiteness perspective gave primacy to naming and identifying Whiteness as both an ideology and a performance (Chubbuck, 2004; Crowley, 2016; Hytten & Warren, 2003). By prioritizing a study of Whiteness, these studies have unveiled ways in which

Whiteness has dominated cultural norms and carried with it privileges both inside and outside of schools (Chubbuck, 2004). By framing a study in critical Whiteness theory, scholars gave primacy to studying Whiteness as a meaningful racial, cultural, and political identity (Johnson, 2002; Solomona et al., 2006). As a result, studies informed by this theory have the potential to frame research on White PSTs and in-service teachers that might possibly disrupt Whiteness in their teaching (Chubbuck, 2004; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Marx & Pennington, 2003).

### 2.1.4 White Talk.

McIntyre (1997) studied the ways in which Whiteness impacted teaching and proposed her theory of White Talk. McIntyre analyzed 13 White female PSTs' experiences with White privilege by documenting the race-avoidant discourse strategies used by White teachers to distance themselves from their role in racism (Haviland, 2008; Levine-Rasky, 2000). McIntyre called this unique strategy of avoiding talk about race, racism, and its consequences, White Talk. White Talk can be a useful theory for analyzing White teacher talk about race because it points to self-preservation and avoidance of White guilt as underlying reasons for White teachers to avoid talk about racism. White Talk theory has been used by scholars who problematized White teachers' willingness to acknowledge their own participation in racism (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Gere, Buehler, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Pennington, Brock, & Ndura, 2012; Yoon, 2012). By considering McIntyre's germinal study on White teacher race-evasiveness as a theoretical frame, scholars investigating White teacher talk about race and racism can problematize the causes of White teacher race-evasiveness, as opposed to simply highlighting

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avoidance of discussions of racism (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Pennington et al., 2008).

**2.1.5  White privilege.**

McIntosh's (1990) salient work on White privilege further framed investigations into the reported neutrality of Whiteness by Whites. McIntosh problematized the abstract liberal notions of color-blindness (the assertion that race and/or racism is no longer a problem in the United States today), and merit, of the belief that capital and social power are earned in the United States through merit or hard work. Instead, McIntosh provided theory that detailed 26 examples of how Whites experience privileges over people of color in everyday life. This work is significant because McIntosh articulated the connection between White privilege and systemic discrimination against people of color. Although McIntosh did not write her theory for the study of White teachers, it has been utilized as a theoretical tool by teacher educators to engage PSTs and teachers in explicit discussions of the daily advantages of being White in the United States (Hytten & Warren, 2003; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Page, 2009; Solomona et al., 2006).

**2.1.6  White racial identity development model.**

Much like scholars in critical Whiteness studies and those who employ theory from McIntyre (1997) and McIntosh (1990), Helms (1990) considered how Whites can move from racially unaware to racially aware. Helms studied White racial development from a psychological standpoint. Helms identified two stages necessary for Whites to achieve post-racial outlooks, specifically: "abandonment of racism" and "defining a nonracist White identity"

(Pennington et al., 2012, p. 745). Helms' work is important, because she framed White identity as behavioral and contextualized by interactions with people of color. Also, Helms theorized that Whites can move in a linear nature from race-evasive to behaviors that demonstrated awareness of racism and its consequences through clearly demarcated stages of development. Helms' work provided a detailed framework for thinking through how to mitigate racism in Whites (Marx & Pennington, 2003). Although Helms did not study White teachers, many studies have considered Helms' work on White identity formation when studying White teachers' understandings of race and racism (Boucher, 2016; Chubbuck 2004; Clark & Zygmunt, 2014; Levine-Rasky 2000, Marx & Pennington, 2003; Pennington et al., 2012; Peters et al., 2016). In addition, many scholars have utilized Helms' framework to measure changes in White teacher thinking about race and racism (Chubbuck, 2004; Pennington, 2012; Peters et al., 2016). For example, Helms' stages of White racial awareness informed the WRCDS-R, "a 40-item instrument aligned with four of Helms's White racial identity statuses" (Peters et al., 2016, p. 8). This survey tool measured color-blindness based on Helms' stages of awareness. Much like critical Whiteness scholars, Helms' theory aimed to disrupt perceived neutrality of Whiteness and called for a focus on progress towards awareness of racism and social justice. Like McIntyre, Helms detailed how Whites struggled to deal with self-realization of their own guilt and participation in racism. Unlike McIntyre's work, Helms' theory assumed that teachers can become non-racist or post-racial. In addition, since Helms' theory is rooted in the biologically-aligned field of psychology, it is open to critique by critical scholars, such as feminists, who might problematize biological essentialist notions (i.e., development). Likewise, critical race scholars may assert the impossibility of "non-racist" identities or a "post-racial" society.

### 2.1.7 White teacher talk about race and racism.

Several scholars have called attention to the need for racial discourse in U.S. K-12 schools (Castro, 2010; Howard, 2004; Pollock, 2004), White teacher avoidance of talk of racism, and White teachers' superficial mentions of race and racial categories (Haviland, 2008; Pollock, 2004). Pollock documented superficial references to race in her work on Colormuteness in schools and a lack of teacher engagement in talk about systemic racism and its impact on student outcomes, such as racially disparate graduation rates. Previous research has also documented teacher discussions about race and racism that affirmed or maintained White supremacy (Lewis, 2001; Garmon, 2004; Yoon, 2012). In this study, I define critical race talk as discussions of race and racism which specifically include examples of how racism operates systemically to deny people of color access to resources and opportunities (Berchini, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Crowley, 2016; Laughter, 2011; Howard, 2004; Sue, 2015.) Howard called for this type of explicit talk about racism amongst teachers and students in Social Studies classrooms in order for teachers to address racial inequalities and ultimately to challenge the status quo in their teaching. Boucher, Berchini, Crowley, and Laughter all recently studied the potential obstacles (such as professors and teacher educators who assume pre-service teachers are unwilling or unknowing about race or social norms that prevent talk about race) which precluded critical race talk discussions in pre-service teacher education programs and within U.S. K-12 schools. Additionally, Sue studied explicit "race talk" discussions of racism outside of U.S. K-12 classrooms and found that talk about racism and its impact left participants feeling frustrated and prone to avoiding discussions of race, racism, and their consequences. Sue's characterization of race talk included threatening discussions (especially when participants represented various racial groups) in which "major differences in world views" are revealed and found to be

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"offensive" by discussion participants (p. 23). Sue documented how explicit discussions of racism made White people "anxious" and incited "frustration and anger" in people of color.

### 2.1.8    Theories about how racism operates in the United States.

The following theories have been used to detail, explain, and capture examples of how racism operates in the United States today. These theories inform this study by providing theory on how racism operates in both effective and nuanced ways in U.S. society. King's (1991) theory of dysconscious racism, Bonilla-Silva's (2010) work on color-blind racism, and theory on implicit bias provided insight into how racism may be perpetuated unintentionally by Whites who might otherwise report that they are anti-racist. Critical race theory as an analytical and theoretical frame offered both methodologies for studying racism and also theory for analyzing and discussing the extent of the harm caused by racism in the United States today. CRT informed this study with theory, conceptual and operationalized definitions, and specific examples of how racism operates in the United States, historically and today.

### 2.1.9    Dysconscious racism.

King (1991) described how racism works in covert or "dys-conscious" ways. King studied mostly White undergraduate education students' written reactions to statistics regarding racial inequality between White and Black children. King found that although her students were vocal about their disapproval of racism, their explanations of racialized inequalities systemically "devalued" Black experiences with racism and simultaneously upheld White privilege. King

called this "impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race" that justified racialized inequality as, "dysconscious racism" (p. 135). She described it as "a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges" (King, 1991, p. 135). King's contribution to theory on race and racism is significant because she captured the phenomena of the "uncritical habit of mind" that can help explain why otherwise well-intentioned Whites may not challenge racism. Many studies on White teachers' understandings of race and racism utilized King's theory on dysconscious racism (Garmon, 2004; Garza & Garza, 2010; Laughter, 2011; Levine-Rasky, 2001; Watson, 2012). King's theory has been used to describe White teachers' and PSTs' "uncritical" thinking about racism (Garmon, 2004; Gere et al., 2009; Watson, 2012). Recently, scholars have challenged the notion that most White teachers are "dysconscious" in their thinking about race or racism. Some studies have shown ways in which White teachers demonstrate dynamic understanding of systemic racism (Berchini, 2016; Laughter, 2011). Relatedly, other scholars have argued that some Whites are not unintentionally racist but rather that they use certain discourse strategies to actively maintain and protect White supremacy (Haviland, 2008; Picower, 2009).

### 2.1.10  Implicit bias.

Implicit bias theory was developed by psychologists Greenwald and Banaji (1995) to inform studies of unconscious positive and negative associations, or patterns of thinking (Carter, Skiba, Arrendondo, & Pollock, 2017). Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998) applied the study of implicit bias to race relations in the United States using the IAT (implicit association test) to document participant's negative associations to people with Black skin and positive associations to those with White skin. Research informed by implicit bias theory has shown that

Whiteness was a preferred and dominant racial phenotype (Carter et al., 2017; Clark & Zygmunt, 2014). Implicit bias theory has also been used recently by scholars to inform work on teacher preparation to intervene or change teacher racial bias with the goal of mitigating racialized discrimination in classrooms (Lai et al., 2014).

**2.1.11  Critical race theory.**

Critical race scholars have asserted that racism operates as daily and persistent discrimination against people of color for the benefit of Whites. Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical and analytical framework that sprung from legal scholarship that gave primacy to the study of racial inequalities or realities (Bell 1990; Crenshaw, 1991; Harris 1993). Several investigations of White teachers' understandings of race and racism drew upon theory, tools, and tenets of CRT (Blaisdell, 2005; Boucher, 2016; Buehler; 2013; Marx, 2008; Marx et al., 2003; Matias, 2013; Young, 2011). CRT scholars have often utilized methodologies of counter-narratives to give a voice to those whose life experiences speak against dominant norms (Boucher, 2016; Matias, 2013; Settlage, 2011). CRT scholars have critiqued abstract liberal norms and rhetoric of meritocracy, individualism, and color-blindness that have minimized the lived experiences of people of color. Along with counter-story and an overarching critique of liberalism, additional tenets of CRT have often included: Whiteness as property (i.e., White dominance of capital) (Harris, 1993), an intersectional approach to considering the impact of systemic of oppression (i.e., oppression due to gender, race, economic status, sexuality, etc.) (Crenshaw, 1991), the permanent and pervasive nature of racism in the United States, and the notion of interest convergence. Bell's (1980) germinal work on interest convergence in the United States detailed examples of how Whites in the United States work for the benefit of

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Blacks/people of color only when Whites also gain. CRT theory, tenets, and scholarship informed my understanding of how and why racism operates in the United States. Some of the a priori codes in my analysis drew upon both theoretical discourse on CRT and empirical studies framed in CRT (Crenshaw, 1997; Harris, 1993; Marx & Pennington, 2003).

**2.1.12  Color-blind racism.**

Bonilla-Silva (2010) theorized that dominant abstract liberal narratives and discourse strategies supported a modern-day form of nuanced racism called color-blind racism. Bonilla-Silva analyzed 120 interviews with self-identified White and Black college students for talk about race and racism. From this data, four themes emerged. Bonilla-Silva named these themes, frames, and suggested that researchers use these frames to decode covert or color-blind racism against people of color. The frame of abstract liberalism asserted the importance of the individual and the notion of the level playing field. Specifically, abstract liberalism maintained the myth of meritocracy and preached the importance of bootstrap theory. At the same time, meritocracy discredited the life experiences of people of color who experience systemic racial discrimination. The frame of naturalization highlighted discourse strategies that relied on explanations connected to human nature. For example, through the naturalization frame, one might explain the racial segregation of neighborhoods with the notion that people are simply drawn to people of similar racial backgrounds due to comfort (instead of racist zoning laws and discriminatory home loan practices by banks). The frame of minimization maintained the myth of progress, the success of the Civil Rights Movement, and the notion that all people have been discriminated against at some point. In a nutshell, Bonilla-Silva argued that minimization was applied to statements towards people of color that tell them to stop complaining because

historically racialized discrimination was much worse. The fourth frame, cultural racism, described the discourse strategies used by Whites to change a conversation about race to a conversation about cultural differences. An example of cultural racism would include applying deficits to people of color such as: "Mexican-Americans do not value education as much as Whites." Bonilla-Silva's work is important because his frames can be used to critically analyze seemingly well-intentioned or neutral talk about difference to reveal underlying deficit thinking and discrimination against people of color. In education research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism, Bonilla-Silva's frames can be utilized as analytical tools to show that even color-blind talk about race and racism can maintain White supremacy (Stoll, 2014; Welton et al., 2015; Yoon, 2012). Bonilla-Silva's scholarship on color-blind racism is unique in that it ties together theory about racism, deficit thinking, abstract liberalism, and discourse analysis to present a detailed analysis of how Whites in the United States today can discriminate against people of color in both overt and covert ways.

## 2.2 HOW WHITES VIEW PEOPLE OF COLOR (THEORIES)

### 2.2.1 Deficit thinking.

Deficit thinking (about those who are not White or relatedly those who are not SE speakers) has been documented and problematized throughout education and sociolinguistic research (Bernstein, 1961; Valencia, 2010). Bonilla-Silva's (2010) frame of cultural racism highlighted ways in which Whites may demonstrate beliefs that students of color and their families do not achieve academic success due to intrinsic flaws in their culture, abilities, or work

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ethic (Garza & Garza, 2010; Welton et al., 2015). These beliefs about students of color and their families has been referred to as deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010). Deficit thinking described the pervasive way in which White teachers consider students and families of color as lacking the skills, behaviors, and resources to succeed (Garza & Garza, 2010). Deficit thinking about students of color and their families is combined with abstract liberal mindsets like meritocracy and color-blindness can become a form of victim blaming (Pollack, 2012). Like Bonilla-Silva's work on color-blind racism, deficit thinking operated within abstract liberal narratives of meritocracy and progress that problematize students of color and their families as lacking instead of discriminatory systems and institutions. Because it called attention to systemic and pervasive discriminatory thinking about students of color and their families, deficit thinking or deficit theory, as it is referred to by Valencia, is an imperative theory for informing education research. Moreover, by considering deficit theory, scholars can make ties between teacher thinking about students and unequal educational outcomes, such as academic and behavioral achievement gaps between White students and students of color (Crowley, 2016; Welton et al., 2015). Specifically, when otherwise well-intentioned White teachers impart deficit views onto their students of color, they are reproducing racism and upholding White supremacy by racially discriminating against these students. Specifically, some White teachers hold low academic expectations for students of color by problematizing their behavior as inappropriate and ignoring cultural resources and assets that these students could bring to the classroom (Crowley, 2016; Garza & Garza, 2010; Welton et al., 2015). These are well documented problematic practices tied to racial achievement gaps, discipline gaps, and systemic discrimination against people of color in schools. Therefore, it is important for this investigation of White teacher talk about race and racism to consider

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theory on deficit thinking because of its negative impact on academic outcomes for students of color.

### 2.2.2 Colormuteness.

Pollock (2004) named teacher avoidance of talk about race or racism in high stakes situations (i.e., discussing the achievement gap) Colormuteness. Unlike color-blindness, in which teachers proclaimed to "not see race," a Colormute strategy acknowledged race in low stakes situations, for example when talking about how students racially segregate themselves in the lunch room. However, when discussing racial achievement gaps or systemic discrimination against students of color in discipline policies, Colormute teachers avoided engaging in talk about race. Pollock's work is also distinct from Bonilla-Silva's (2010) work on color-blind racism because she specifically studied race-evasive talk in schools.

### 2.2.3 Asset pedagogies.

In the face of pervasive deficit thinking about students of color and their families, a number of theoretical frameworks stress the idea that individuals from all racial backgrounds bring valuable life experiences and cultural assets to the table. Asset theories can be used to understand White teachers' perspectives on racism and set goals for the preparation of PSTs or continuing education of in-service teachers. Multiculturalism as a theoretical framework emphasized the importance of inclusion of multiple diverse racial and ethnic perspectives to achieve equity in education, social justice, and to reduce prejudice (Banks, 1996). Several studies on White teachers have problematized White teachers' understandings of race and racism using

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multicultural theory (Garmon, 2004; Haviland, 2008; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Stoll, 2014; Young, 2011). Framing a study in Multiculturalism, or multicultural education, means not only celebrating diversity but also focusing on social justice or equity (Garmon, 2004; Haviland, 2008).

Asset pedagogies reframe students of color and their families as holders of valuable knowledge about the world. From a Funds of Knowledge epistemological stance, each person's life experiences are framed as equipping them with the skills they need to succeed in life (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). This theory has been used to intervene in White teachers' deficit thinking about students of color (Amos, 2011). Specifically, by engaging PSTs and in-service teachers in discussions about the assets and life experiences that make students from all backgrounds valuable cultural assets in the classroom, PSTs might let go of deficit beliefs about students and their families.

Another set of closely related concepts used to engage White teachers in asset-based discussions of students of color and their families is Culturally Responsive Pedagogies. Culturally Responsive/Relevant/Sustaining Pedagogies focus on teacher development of cultural competence and stress the development of critical consciousness in students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Paris, 2012). Chubbuck (2004), Levine-Rasky (2000), and Watson (2012) grounded their work on White teachers in a body of education research critical of racialized inequities in schools and schooling (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Howard, 2010; King, 1991; Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995). Peters et al. (2016) and Young (2011) framed their work in Culturally Responsive/Relevant Pedagogies (CRP).

Overall, in addition to employing frameworks that help to problematize Whiteness, describe how racism operates, and explain White thinking about people of color, White teacher

studies have utilized asset-based theoretical frameworks and pedagogies to push White teachers'

past deficit thinking about students of color and, instead, frame their students of color as holders

of valuable knowledge and skills.

## 2.3    METHODS

In the following section, I detail the overarching methodologies and specific methods

used to collect and analyze data on White teachers' understandings of race and racism, including

participant selection, data sources, and methods of analysis used to code data for White teachers'

understandings of race and racism. This scholarship informed the underlying methodology and

methods of my study of White teachers' critical race talk about dialect diversity.

### 2.3.1   Methodology.

Qualitative methodologies including case studies, ethnographies, and life histories have

been used most often in studies of White teachers' understandings of race and racism. This

dissertation builds on this body of scholarship by relying on similar qualitative and discourse

analysis methods to analyze White PSTs' talk about racism but also aimed to produce more

generalizable findings by studying over 200 White PSTs' talk across eight universities and

quantifying the frequency of particular instances of critical race talk.

### 2.3.2   Case study.

Case studies are bound examples of an observed phenomena. Case studies can be large scale (a school or school district) or small scale (one teacher or student). They can be either representative of the general population, comparative (two bound examples presented in tandem), or stand-alone descriptions of one phenomena (Stake, 1995). Case study participants are purposefully selected because of the characteristics they demonstrate. Case studies have been used to collect data on White teachers' understandings of race and racism (Berchini, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Chubbuck, 2004; Garmon, 2004). Berchini completed a case study on one White female teacher whose teaching about the Holocaust demonstrated the ways in which the context of teaching (i.e., curriculum), as opposed to teachers themselves, limited talk about racism and teaching. Boucher presented a case study of one White male teacher who was successful with connecting to his Black students. By focusing on one teacher, both Berchini and Boucher more deeply explored one individuals' understandings of race and racism. Garmon presented the case of one White female teacher candidate who demonstrated awareness of systemic racism and engaged in discussions of racism. The authors called this awareness of systemic racism "positive multicultural development" (p. 201). Other scholars contributed research on "critical case studies" of race (Crowley, 2016; Yoon, 2012). Yoon documented teacher discussions about racism which maintained White supremacy among ten White teachers at a racially diverse school who were interested in learning more about racial equity. Crowley engaged in a "critical case study" of six White PSTs placed in racially diverse schools who engaged in more explicit discussions of race and racism. Welton et al. (2015) completed a case study of a suburban high school district that was changing demographically from majority White, to Black and White. This larger scale case study of a school district involved data collection from 54 teachers and

community stakeholders such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. As a research methodology, case studies allow researchers to explore purposefully selected and bounded participant/participants who demonstrate an observed phenomenon.

### 2.3.3   Ethnography.

Ethnography is a qualitative research method that documents behavior and culture from the point of view of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2010, p. 37). Ethnographic data sources included interviews, observations, participant observation, and research notes with rich or "thick" descriptions of observed phenomena (Bogdan & Biklen, 2010, p. 38).  Scholars have used ethnography to gather research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism in schools and often combine ethnography with case study methodology (Buehler, 2013; Lewis, 2001; Pennington et al., 2012). Lewis engaged in a yearlong ethnographic study of how teachers, administrators, and students addressed race at an almost all-White school. Castagno (2008) engaged in a yearlong ethnographic study at a school with mostly White teachers and racially, linguistically, and economically diverse students. Castagno collected 24 interviews and routinely observed 12 White teachers who, he argued, engaged in silence regarding discussions about race and racism.

One branch of ethnography, critical ethnography, focused specifically on documenting and making progress against injustice. Pennington et al. (2012) completed a critical ethnography of two White teachers to address dismantling Whiteness in teaching. Pennington et al. framed their study of teachers in Helms' (1990) theory of White racial identity development and Nodding's notion of "inauthentic caring bound by racial privilege" (Pennington et. al., 2012, p. 769). Buehler (2013) completed a three year long critical ethnographic study of a racially diverse

high school with White teachers who struggled to acknowledge racialized achievement and discipline gaps. This study included the participation of 58 teachers and staff members who struggled with public and private "racial tension" (Buehler, 2013, p. 629). Ethnographic studies of White teachers' understandings of race and racism has provided both depth and breadth of research on this topic through the longitudinal nature of the studies and the richness of the data sources.

### 2.3.4   Life history.

Some researchers have analyzed how White teachers' life experiences have shaped their current understandings about race and racism. Marx (2008) engaged in "mini" life history interviews with four White teachers to examine how their life experiences made them successful teachers of Latinx students. Like Blaisdell (2005), Laughter (2011) also engaged in dialogical interviews with White PSTs. In addition, Laughter prompted participants to talk about experiences in their life histories that contributed to their views about race and racism. These interviews were co-constructed by the author and participants into "racial development biographies." More scholars have used in depth interview techniques to specifically collect life history data on White teachers' understandings of race and racism (Chubbuck, 2004; Johnson, 2002; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Laughter, 2011). Johnson (2002) studied six successful White teachers of racially diverse students through semi-structured life history interviews supplemented by teaching observations, a drawing of their "racial identity," and classroom artifact analysis. Johnson examined "life incidents and key individuals' White teachers deemed critical in their development of racial awareness, how they characterized the role of race in their classrooms, and how they represented their own racial identities" (2002, p. 157). Picower (2009) also utilized

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interview protocols to elicit eight White teachers to talk about their life experiences, from childhood to the present that shaped how they think about power, privilege, and racism. Similarly, Jupp and Slattery engaged eight male White teachers in interviews about how their life experiences impacted how they teach to students of color. Like Laughter, Jupp and Slattery engaged in innovative coding and member checking techniques (they called this "recoding.") by allowing participants to revisit data and explain through creative means, such as through music or pop culture references. Coding through creative means, like Laughter's racial development biographies and Jupp and Slattery's "recoding" was not limited to life history studies.

### 2.3.5   Participants and settings.

*"White teachers" defined.* This review of literature focuses on studies in which majority (at least 60%) or all the participants were identified as White teachers or White PSTs. All the studies reviewed reported on White or mostly White teachers who worked with majority Black students, except for Garza & Garza (2010), Marx (2008), Marx and Pennington (2003), and Stoll (2014) who completed research on White teachers working with mostly Hispanic, Latinx, or Mexican-American students.

### 2.3.6   Pre-service teachers.

In the literature on White teachers' understandings of race and racism, approximately half of the studies focus on PSTs from various content areas (Crowley, 2016; Godley et al., 2015; Marx & Pennington, 2003). In 1995, Ladson-Billings reported that:

[t]eacher education programs throughout the nation have coupled their efforts at reform with revised programs committed to social justice and equity. Thus, their focus has become the preparation of prospective teachers in ways that support equitable and just educational experiences for all students. (p. 466)

When writing about Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as a "reformation" of teacher education, Ladson-Billings (1995b) wrote about teacher education and specifically PSTs being "re-educated" in order to be prepared to approach teaching as social justice work. In other words, PSTs are expected to be impacted by their preparation programs. The outcomes of their preparation coursework and practicum experiences have been thoroughly documented by education scholars in empirical studies on White PSTs' understandings of race and racism (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Laughter, 2011; Marx, 2006). Over twenty years after Ladson-Billings called for teacher education programs to orient PSTs to mitigate racism in their practice, Sleeter (2016) again called attention to the overwhelming Whiteness of teacher education programs. As a result of these continued calls to examine PSTs' understandings of, and/or participation in racism, education researchers continue to engage in empirical studies with PSTs as participants.

### 2.3.7 In-service teachers.

Research on in-service teachers represented the other half of the empirical studies reviewed as part of the corpus of White teachers' understandings of race and racism. In-service teachers' understandings of race and racism have been studied using various methodologies including, but not limited to, case studies (Boucher, 2016; Crowley, 2016; Yoon, 2012), interviews (Blaisdell, 2005; Stoll, 2014), ethnography (Buehler, 2013), and life histories (Johnson, 2002). Studies of White teachers' understandings of racism explored various aspects of

the continued racial discrimination of students of color in schools by their White teachers. For example, Stoll examined color-blind attitudes of White teachers, Buehler examined race-avoidance among teachers in one school, and Yoon analyzed maintenance of White supremacy through documenting paradoxes in White teachers' stated beliefs, intentions, and actions regarding racism and its impact on schooling.

### 2.3.8   Settings.

All the studies reviewed were set in the United States except Levine-Rasky (2001) and Solomona et al. (2006) who studied teachers in Canada and Mazzei (2011) who studied White teachers in the United Kingdom. These studies were included because of their prominence in the corpus of this review. Almost all of the studies reviewed were situated in racially diverse schools in urban areas or in universities in which PSTs participated in practicum experiences in racially diverse (sometimes noted by authors as "urban") schools. Notable exclusions included Lewis (2001) who studied Whiteness and racism in a racially homogenous White school and Welton et al. (2015) who studied color-blind ideals by White teachers in a suburban school district that recently shifted demographically from majority White to majority students of color.

### 2.3.9   Data Sources.

Scholars have collected data through various means to measure White teachers' understandings of race and racism. Relating back to the section on the various methodologies utilized to collect data, researchers have analyzed transcripts of observations, interviews, and class discussions as well as field notes, data collected from teachers' engagement in coursework,

including but not limited to reflective written assignments, online discussion boards, and teacher talk.

### 2.3.10 Interviews.

Rubin and Rubin stated that in-depth interviewing allows researchers to "explore in detail the experiences, motives, and opinions of others and learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own" (2012, p. 3). Many studies on White teachers' understandings of race and racism collected data through semi-structured interviews with White teachers or PSTs (Bauml & Castro, 2016; Blaisdell, 2005; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Laughter, 2011; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Marx, 2008; Stoll, 2014; Watson, 2012). Levine-Rasky conducted group interviews with 35 White PSTs about how Whiteness impacts teaching. Levine-Rasky triangulated this data through additional individual interviews and classroom observations of four White PSTs. Blaisdell also utilized interviews to dialogue with four White teachers about Whiteness, color-blindness, race, and racism. However, Blaisdell reported that his interviews included interventions in thinking when he introduced theory from critical race theory to challenge White teachers' beliefs about racism. Watson also examined teacher silence on race and racism by interviewing 16 White teachers about teaching racially diverse students. Watson examined the interview data for coded language about race and racism. Stoll (2014) studied how White teacher color-blindness operates in White teachers' classrooms. Stoll conducted a qualitative study of 18 White teachers of Black, White, and Latinx students through interviews and classroom observations. Similarly, Bauml and Castro interviewed 16 White PSTs about their experiences with racial diversity and promoted them to respond to scenarios about working in racially diverse (urban) schools. As shown above,

interview as a research method allows researchers to probe and dialogue with White teachers regarding their beliefs about race and racism.

**2.3.11 White teachers' engagement in coursework.**

Teacher candidate or continuing teacher education coursework is a frequent source of data for research on teacher talk or thinking about race and racism (Amos, 2011; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Gere et al., 2009; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Mason, 2016; Page, 2009; Pollack, 2012; Solomona et al., 2006). Specifically, in this section, I reviewed studies in which researchers used the written responses or transcripts of spoken discussions of teachers and/or PSTs' participation in coursework.

Hytten and Warren (2003) specifically problematized the way in which Whiteness is reified in schools through studying 16 mostly White PSTs' coursework from a class on racism and diversity. Likewise, Gere et al. (2009) studied the relationship between awareness of the consequences of racism and culturally responsive teaching amongst 12 White PSTs by analyzing teacher candidate reflective coursework. Similarly, but on a broader scale, Amos (2011) analyzed 54 White PSTs' reflective coursework on multicultural education to gather more information about how White teachers thought about Whiteness and racism. Picower (2009) studied White resistance to explicit discussions of race and racism through analyzing interviews and reflective coursework from eight White female PSTs. Similarly, Mazzei (2011) collected data from 24 mostly White PSTs' written coursework on diversity to specifically study White silence about race. White teachers' reflective coursework from diversity and multicultural education classes has been regularly utilized by scholars interrogating White teachers' understandings of race and racism.

**2.3.12 Teacher talk.**

Several scholars have collected and analyzed data on teacher talk about students of color and their families. Pollack (2012) collected data on teacher candidate deficit talk about students of color through interviews, reflective coursework, and transcribed class discussions regarding student teaching. Solomona et al. (2006) completed comparable research on an even larger scale by prompting 200 mostly White PSTs in discussions of White privilege by using McIntosh's (1990) work on White privilege. Page (2009) also used McIntosh's work on White privilege to elicit teacher candidate talk about race. Some scholars collected data on White teachers and White PSTs that probed White silence or race-evasiveness (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Haviland, 2008; Picower, 2009; Mazzei, 2011). Case and Hemmings (2005) were interested in documenting race avoidance strategies used by 53 mostly White female PSTs enrolled in a course on anti-racism. Case and Hemmings called these distancing strategies. They included silence or McInytre's (1997) White Talk. Haviland also completed research on White teacher avoidance of race-talk. However, Haviland then added another dimension to the data by collecting data on talk about race and racism not only from university level student teaching seminars but also student discourse and teacher interviews in an eighth-grade language arts classroom.

**2.3.13 Online discussion boards.**

Research on discussion board data has increased as teacher preparation and continuing education programs have moved from the brick and mortar classroom to the internet. Studies that have utilized computer technology through digital storytelling, implicit bias testing, and online

discussion boards have demonstrated innovation in the field of research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism. In analyses similar to this dissertation project, Godley et al. (2015) and Bissonnette et al. (2016) both studied predominantly White PSTs' discussion board posts addressing teaching about and across language variation in secondary schools. Baily and Katradis (2016) studied 58 mostly White teachers' online discussion board post responses to current events articles documenting social injustice, such as racism. In a similar study of nine PSTs' engagement in online discussions of social justice, Wade et al. (2016) explored how teachers used discussion board posts to express themselves. Drawing on this line of research, the primary data source for this dissertation project included the analysis of over 2,900 discussion board posts written by 214 predominantly White pre-service English language arts teachers who engaged in an online mini-course on teaching about dialect diversity. The discussion board posts analyzed were written as responses to prompts asking PSTs to propose instructional strategies for teaching about dialect diversity in U.S. K-12 classrooms.

**2.3.14  Data Analysis.**

Throughout the research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism, scholars have used open coding strategies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Merriam, 2009), grounded theory-based coding (Charmaz, 2006, 2010) (i.e., axial coding, focused coding, and/or constant comparative analysis), and critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2001) for their data analysis. Researchers have relied on the theory and findings of leading scholars in the field of education to code their data or developed their own codes based on emergent themes, or in some cases, used both. For example, Case & Hemmings (2005) analyzed White PSTs' distancing

strategies by referencing McIntyre's (1997) work while also developing their own codes related to themes that emerged from their data.

### 2.3.15  Coding strategies.

An open coding approach to data analysis allows researchers to cast a broad theoretical net over their dataset by highlighting, setting aside, or making note of any data that appears useful in answering the research question (Merriam, 2009). Researchers have used open coding as a first pass or preliminary attempt to make sense of data sources. Researchers may move to a second and third round of coding in which they focus on coding for emergent themes, collapsing existing codes and creating more refined categories that reflect characteristics or processes being captured in their dataset (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Additionally, some researchers may begin developing theory based on axial coding, which "is aimed at making connections between categories and its subcategories" (Charmaz, 2010, p. 188). Axial coding is a manner of inductive data analysis from the tradition of grounded theory. As a coding strategy, grounded theory allows researchers to complete iterative rounds of coding while developing theory based on their ongoing analysis of data. In other words, instead of applying external theory to explain an observed phenomenon, by framing a project in grounded theory, researchers use phenomena found in the data itself to build theory (Charmaz, 2006). In addition to open coding and axial coding, in the tradition of grounded theory, researchers use repetitive rounds of comparing coding decisions and examples of coded text to each other in a process of coding and data analysis called constant comparative analysis. In addition, focused coding is used in grounded theory to refine codes to best capture emergent phenomena and significant themes found across a dataset (Charmaz, 2006). Open coding is a

feature of both grounded theory and other traditions of coding and data analysis. However, the use of open coding, axial coding, and constant comparative analysis in order to form new theory based on observed phenomena are all unique to a data analysis informed by grounded theory.

**2.3.16 Grounded theory.**

Many scholars of White teachers' understanding of race and racism have used grounded theory to analyze their data. Haviland (2008) utilized grounded theory to develop codes and name new theory that not only captured White teacher avoidance of discussions of racism but also explained strategies used by Whites to maintain White supremacy. Haviland used constant comparative analysis to analyze transcripts of classroom teaching, interviews, course materials by forming open and axial codes (2008, p. 43). Haviland's codes and subsequent theory explained ways in which White teachers might be unconsciously protecting White supremacy and provided examples of when their words or actions actively protected White supremacy by avoiding critiquing White supremacy and/or avoiding engaging in race-talk. Picower (2009) also used grounded theory methods to develop unique codes and subsequent theory for explaining White PSTs' avoidance of discussions of racism and maintenance of White supremacy. For example, Picower called her theory "tools of Whiteness" (2009, p. 197). With regards to my analysis, I engaged in open and focused coding, which are both borrowed from the tradition of grounded theory. In addition, I coded based on a priori coding categories derived from relevant literature. I utilized these coding strategies from grounded theory because they are highly inductive, meaning that they document themes emerging from the data itself. However, contrary to the goals of a grounded theory analysis, I did not aim to develop new theory based on my coding and data analysis.

### 2.3.17 Discourse analysis.

Many studies on White teachers' understandings of race and racism have relied on Gee (1999) and Fairclough's (2001) theories of Discourses and critical discourse analysis (CDA), respectively, to make sense of the ways in which predominantly White teachers express their views about racism through talk or text (Haviland, 2008; Mason, 2016; Settlage, 2011). Discourse analysis and CDA are both rooted in critical theory that explain how language reflects and constructs political and social systems such as capitalism, sexism, and racism (specifically White supremacy). Solomona et al. (2006) stated that by "[e]mploying discourse analysis, the candidates' responses to the article were analyzed for the ideas, messages, values, beliefs and worldviews (ideological system) they reflect" (p. 152). Drawing on Gee's theories, Haviland used discourse analysis to document White teachers' White Educational Discourse or WED. Yoon (2012) framed her coding and analysis of transcripts of interviews, memos, notes, and classroom observations of White PSTs in Gee's theory of Discourse and Fairclough's theory of CDA. Gee's theory of Discourse refers to language as a reflection of worldviews. More specifically, Gee wrote that Discourses involve "saying-writing-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations" (p. 6) and "integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body position, and clothes" (1989). Gee argued that Discourses are deeply ingrained in our performance, actions, and understandings of how the world operates. Fairclough's CDA suggested "looking closely at language to understand the reproduction of social structures and power" (Yoon, 2012, p. 596). Drawing on Fairclough, Yoon analyzed White teacher talk through the lens of CDA, which "looks at the functions and meanings of [language] and connects it to the sources of meaning and power in society" (p. 596). From this analysis, Yoon developed the theory of "White-ness at work," which details examples of how

White teachers maintained White supremacy through avoiding discussions of systemic racism or its effects (p. 587). This proposed dissertation study is informed by Gee's notion of Discourses and Fairclough's theory of CDA. My analysis of White teacher critical race talk as reflections of White teacher world views about race draws upon both Fairclough and Gee's theories of CDA and Discourses. This study approached the PSTs' discussion board postings as reflective of the participants' understandings of how social power operates and as a valid, rich, and useful source of data. Furthermore, by examining over 200 predominantly White PSTs' understandings of race and racism from eight geographically distinct universities from across the United States, this project contributes a large-scale study to the line of research that examines White teachers' understandings of race and racism.

## 2.4    FINDINGS

### 2.4.1    First vs. second-generation studies of White teachers.

In 2010, Jupp and Slattery called for scholars investigating White teachers' understandings of race and racism to distinguish between first-generation and second-generation White teacher studies. First-generation studies reaffirmed essentialized notions of White teachers as race-avoidant and unknowing about racism. Second-generation studies presented a more complicated narrative of White teachers' understandings of racism (i.e., as evolving) complicated by external obstacles, (i.e., unsupportive faculty in their teacher education program or even racist school administrators) (Berchini, 2016; Jupp & Lensmire, 2016). Even though first and second-generation studies drew upon many of the same theories and utilize similar methods, the

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important distinction between first and second-generation White teacher studies emerged in a review of their findings and implications. Specifically, the findings and subsequent implications of first-generation teacher studies emphasized areas of research that have been thoroughly documented, studied, and theorized, such as White teacher avoidance of discussions of racism and the problematic nature of color-blind commitments, whereas the findings and implications of second-generation White teacher studies center upon more generative research areas, such as prompting researchers to answer complex questions, such as, "How do White teachers engage in race talk?" or "How can researchers and teacher educators push back against essentialized notions of White teachers?"

In summary, first-generation studies described or problematized racism among White teachers and second-generation studies suggested that researchers should further question why or how White teachers might reinforce or challenge racism in schools (Berchini, 2016; Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010). The research questions for this dissertation focused on examining the elements and context of White teacher critical race talk regarding teaching about dialect diversity. These questions positioned this study as a generative second-generation White teacher study because the purpose of this study was to move beyond describing or problematizing racism among White teachers and PSTs. Instead, I aimed to analyze how PSTs expressed critical perspectives on race and racism. See Table 2 for lists of first- and second-generation studies of White teachers.

**Table 2. First-Generation vs. Second-Generation Teacher Studies**

| First-Generation White Teacher Studies | Second-Generation White Teacher Studies |
| --- | --- |
| Blaisdell (2005) | Amos (2011) |
| Chubbuck (2004) | Baily & Katradis (2016) |
| Castagno (2008) | Bauml & Castro (2016) |
| Gere et al. (2009) | Berchini (2016) |
| Haviland (2008) | Boucher (2016) |
| Hytten & Warren (2003) | Buehler (2013) |
| Johnson (2002) | Case & Hemmings (2005) |
| Levine-Rasky (2000) | Clark & Zygmunt (2014) |
| Lewis (2001) | Crowley (2016) |
| Marx & Pennington (2003) | Garmon (2004) |
| Page (2009) | Garza and Garza (2010) |
| Picower (2009) | Laughter (2011) |
| Peters et al. (2016) | Lowenstein (2009) |
| Pollack (2012) | Jupp & Slattery (2010) |
| Pollock (2004) | Marx (2008) |
| Solomona et al. (2006) | Mason (2016) |
| Stoll (2014) | Mazzei (2011) |
| Watson (2012) | Matias (2013) |
| Welton et al. (2012) | Page (2009) |
| Yoon (2012) | Pennington et al. (2012) |
| Young (2011) | Picower (2009) |
| | Segall & Garrett (2013) |
| | Settlage (2011) |
| | Wade et al. (2016) |
| | Young (2016) |

### 2.4.2   First-generation findings.

Many first-generation studies on White teachers' understandings of race and racism identified discourse strategies used to avoid or silence discussions about race or racism

(Castagno, 2008; Haviland, 2008; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Picower, 2009; Yoon, 2012; Watson, 2012) and patterns of deficit thinking held by White teachers regarding their students of color (Chubbuck, 2004; Picower, 2009; Pollack, 2012; Watson; 2012). White teachers also relied on color-blind language (Lewis, 2001; Pollock, 2004; Stoll, 2014; Welton et al., 2015) or other abstract liberal narratives, for example, individualism or meritocracy, to avoid talking about racialized discrimination (Solomona et al., 2006; Peters et al., 2016; Welton et al., 2015). Some studies detailed outright refusal to critique Whiteness or PSTs who struggled to understand their participation in racism (Levine-Rasky, 2001; Solomona et al., 2006). Lastly, certain first-generation White teacher studies reported on teachers who engaged in meaningful conversations about race and racism (Haviland, 2008; Marx & Pennington, 2003).

### 2.4.3    Race-avoidance discourse strategies.

Scholars identified a variety of discourse strategies used by White teachers to avoid explicit talk about racism and its consequences (Castagno, 2008; Haviland, 2008; Hytten & Warren, 2003). Hytten and Warren stated that PSTs resisted engaging in discussions critical of Whiteness to, "serve to protect and secure Whiteness's dominant position" (p. 65). Castagno asserted that discussions about race or racism were silenced through coded language, teacher silence, and the "silencing of students' inquiries about race" (p. 315). Haviland also identified discourse strategies, White Educational Discourse or WED, used by Whites to not only avoid critical race talk but to maintain and protect Whiteness (such as false starts, safe self-critique, affirming sameness or joking) (p. 44, 47).

Like Castagno (2008), Picower (2009) identified discourse strategies utilized by White teachers to silence discussions of White supremacy. Picower noted emotional, ideological, and

performative "tools of Whiteness" (p. 197). Yoon (2012) then identified "Whiteness-at-work" (p. 587) or race avoidance techniques in which teachers used coded language and a focus on politeness. Yoon asserted that even though White teachers might profess intentions for social justice/racial equity, their behavior and performances might not match. This disconnect between intentions and performance makes Whiteness at work distinct from White Talk, Colormuteness, WED, and tools of Whiteness. Yoon not only documented White teacher avoidance of critiquing racism but pointed to "discursive strategies that create paradoxes among teachers' beliefs, intentions, and actions" (2012, p. 587). Specifically, in my study, I examined not only White teachers' professed beliefs about race and racism but also their hypothetical or professed behavior/proposed lesson plan designs. Unlike Haviland (2008) and Yoon, who detailed how discourse strategies passively protected White supremacy, Picower asserted that White teachers actively protected White supremacy by rejecting talk of racism and, instead, asserting statements that minimized racism (2009, p. 197). Watson (2012) described how teachers used coded language, specifically that teachers "rarely used race words and instead replaced them with urban and suburban" (p. 998). Racially coded language, along with color-blind commitments (or the idea that "I don't discriminate by seeing color"), further demonstrated race-avoidance of White teachers in first-generation White teacher studies.

### 2.4.4    Color-blind commitments.

Milner (2012) recommended that teachers, teacher educators, and education researchers give up the "color-blind" mindset. Milner warned "teachers cannot afford to embrace color-blindness in their practices with students because teachers and their students' identities, experiences, worldviews, and consequently behaviors are intricately shaped by race" (2012, p.

868). Teachers who failed to recognize their own participation in racism or embrace a color-conscious mindset, risk reproducing racism in their classrooms.  Despite calls to end color-blind mindsets, scholars have continued to uncover White teacher color-blind commitments in first-generation White teacher studies. Specifically, Lewis (2001) recounted how "all community members denied the local salience of race" (p. 781), and instead they dealt with racialized inequalities through color-blind methods. Teachers in Lewis' study stated that Black students who reported racialized discrimination were "misreading" their experiences with racism, because racism was not a problem at their school (2001, p. 786).

Like Lewis (2001), Pollock (2004) problematized race avoidance in schools but also identified *Colormuteness*, as opposed to color-blindness (the idea that a person does not see). Colormute teachers avoided discussions of racialized inequalities with regards to high stake situations like the achievement gap but mentioned race in low-stake situations (i.e., racially identifying how students self-segregated at lunch tables). Similarly, teachers in Stoll's (2014) study used problematic color-blind talk to address racialized inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Welton et al. (2015) also identified color-blind mindsets in teachers and administration of a suburban White school experiencing rapid racial demographic changes. When statewide exams revealed racial achievement gaps, administration responded with problematic "race neutral" interventions (Welton et al., 2015, p. 709). Without a focus on race or racism, race neutral policies problematized students of color instead of a Colormute or color-blind school system that was not serving all students.  In summary, color-blind commitments and practices by White teachers can harm children of color by maintaining the reproduction of racialized discrimination against people of color in schools.

### 2.4.5   Abstract liberalism.

When teachers rely on abstract liberal narratives, for example, progress, color-blindness, individualism, or meritocracy, they may not be fully aware or open to listening to the voices of those who experience the world from a non-dominant stance (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Lewis stated, "When people deploy ideological narratives, they are most often not being duplicitous," but rather are replicating the "social reality" that is "consistent with the dominant group's experience" (2001, p. 800). Teachers in Hytten and Warren's (2003) study expressed appeals to progress or the narrative of "look how far we have come" with regards to racialized equity. Similarly, Solomona et al. (2006) described White teacher responses to McIntosh's (1990) piece on White privilege as "ideological incongruence" which did not jibe with their perceptions of "liberalist notions of individualism and meritocracy" (p. 153). Furthermore, Peters et al. (2016) related that student teachers became "less aware of institutional discrimination" after spending a semester teaching in racially diverse schools (p. 9). Instead of addressing systemic racial discrimination, PSTs utilized abstract liberal discourse strategies (i.e. meritocracy and individualism) to reposition discussions about systemic discrimination to problematize students and families of color. Lastly, Welton et al. (2015) reported that the school was working to change "the student instead of changing the system" (p. 713). By focusing on changing individual students instead of problematic systems, the educators in these studies were assuming a level playing field in which merit or hard work of individual students was problematized instead of racially discriminatory systems. Abstract liberal explanations of inequality often problematized students as inherently lacking instead of problematizing racism and its consequences.

### 2.4.6   Deficit thinking.

Deficit thinking about students of color by White teachers is a pervasive problem in education (Chubbuck, 2004; Picower, 2009; Pollack, 2012). Chubbuck found that PSTs had a complex understanding of racial identity and understood deficit perspectives, yet still practiced "lowered expectations" for students of color (p. 323, 325). Teachers in Picower's study also expressed fear of people of color and deficit views about people of color. Likewise, Pollack's study also revealed deficit discourses about students of color. Lastly, Watson (2012) identified deficit mindsets in White teachers about their Black students. Overall, deficit thinking about students of color was a prominent theme in first-generation White teacher studies.

### 2.4.7   Rejecting discussions of White privilege.

Studies of White teachers' and their understandings of race and racism often documented rejection of White privilege (Levine-Rasky, 2000; Picower, 2009; Solomona et al., 2006). By rejecting White privilege, White teachers may be unable to take the first steps to critique their own participation in perpetuating racism in their classrooms. The mostly White PSTs in Levine-Rasky's study rejected the notion of White privilege, asserted that Whiteness is stereotyped like other types of races, and reported experiences with reverse discrimination (p. 270). Levine-Rasky described how White PSTs reported experiencing Whiteness as neutral. Similarly, Solomona et al. detailed how White teachers rejected discussions of White privilege and "negated White capital" or the monetary benefits that come from Whiteness (p. 157). Teachers in Picower's study also asserted experiences with reverse racism and another teacher maintained the notion of the post-racial level playing field by stating, "now that things are equal" (p. 205). In

summary, by rejecting a discussion of White privilege, White teachers may be knowingly or unknowingly reproducing racism in their classrooms.

**2.4.8   "Good person."**

At least two studies reported White PSTs and in-service teachers who struggled to reconcile their own participation in upholding racism with the notion that they are a "good person" or a "good White" (Haviland, 2008; Marx & Pennington, 2003). It is important for White PSTs and in-service teachers to recognize that they can consciously or unconsciously participate in effective racial discrimination against their students of color. Haviland documented that one White teacher remarked that she was not the kind of White who would discriminate or racially profile others (p. 45). Marx and Pennington reported that, "it seemed that, in coming to terms with their own racism, our students/participants necessarily had to make the connection that they could be good people and still be racist" (p. 105). White teachers struggled to rectify their participation in everyday racism and their perceptions of themselves as well-intentioned people.

**2.4.9   Critical race talk.**

In my analysis, I propose the concept of critical race talk as a type of talk characterized by explicit mentions of race, racism and their consequences. Several scholars have described how White PSTs have engaged in meaningful conversations about race and racism which also involved specific discussions of racism and its consequences (Gere et al., 2009; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Young, 2011). White teachers are capable of critical race talk. Critical race

talk promotes a critique of how Whiteness might impact the teaching of White PSTs. Gere et al. reported that the White PSTs in their study were capable of discussions of racism and its consequences. Marx and Pennington conveyed how, after White PSTs spent time in their racially diverse school placements, they were motivated to discuss their Whiteness. The authors engaged students with critical race scholarship to elicit connections between the deficit thinking regarding their students of color and White supremacy. When teachers in Young's study talked about race and racism, they "revealed conflicting views of racism as an individual pathology vs. a systemic problem" (p. 1433). Solomona et al. (2006) labeled the resistance White teachers expressed when confronted with racial realities that opposed the dominant narrative, "ideological incongruence" (p. 153). When participating in discussion of racism, White PSTs and in-service teachers struggled to articulate how racism functioned on both the individual and systemic level. Previous research on White teachers' engagement in race talk has demonstrated that they are able to engage in discussions about racism as a systemic problem which is related to deficit thinking about people of color (Young, 2011; Gere et al., 2009). In addition, previous research, like the work of Solomona et al., has demonstrated that White teachers are perhaps hesitant or resistant to these explicit discussions of race and racism.

**2.4.10  Second-generation findings.**

Many second-generation White teacher studies presented similar findings to first-generation studies, including race-evasiveness (Amos, 2011; Baily & Katradis, 2016; Case and Hemmings, 2005), abstract liberal commitments (Amos, 2011; Baily & Katradis, 2016; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Wade et al., 2008; Young, 2016), problematic deficit

thinking about students of color (Garza & Garza, 2010), and, conversely, critical discussion of racism (Crowley, 2016; Johnson, 2002; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Settlage, 2011).

### 2.4.11 Second-generation

White teacher studies earned their distinction from first-generation studies for analyzing the causes of teacher silence about race and racism rather than simply describing the silence or avoidance (Berchini, 2016; Clark & Zygmunt, 2014; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Mazzei, 2011). By further problematizing White teacher silence about race, second-generation studies contributed knowledge about why White PSTs and in-service teachers avoid critical race talk. Other second-generation studies detailed ways in which successful White teachers of students of color forged relationships across racial difference (Bauml & Castro, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Garmon, 2004; Marx, 2006; Mason, 2016; Pennington, 2012). Lastly, some studies problematized contextual barriers (i.e., obstacles outside of teachers themselves) to teaching that addresses racism, including deficit views of PSTs by teacher educators (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Laughter, 2011; Lowenstein, 2009; Settlage, 2011).

### 2.4.12 Race-evasiveness.

Several studies reported on teacher and teacher candidate silence regarding race and racism (Amos, 2011; Buehler, 2013; Case & Hemmings, 2005). Case and Hemmings' study reported strategies White female teachers used to distance themselves from racism. For example, teachers shared how family or friends engaged in racist talk but never mentioned or admitted their own participation in racist talk. The authors reported that some PSTs separated themselves

from racism, directly claiming, "I'm not a racist" or they changed the topic from race to culture (Case & Hemmings, 2005, p. 67). Case and Hemmings explained that White teachers changed the topic of conversation from race to culture and that "a focus on culture instead of race also frees [PSTs] from being positioned as beneficiaries of racial oppression" (Case & Hemmings, 2005; p. 617). Similarly, White PSTs in Amos' study used McInytre's (1997) White Talk strategies to insulate themselves from being viewed as complicit or participants in racism. In addition, Baily and Katradis (2016) questioned White teachers about why they avoided race talk. They explained that they avoided it for three separate reasons: to "protect children," lack of preparation to address the topic, and for "fear about backlash" (Baily & Katradis, 2016, p. 219). All three reasons for avoiding explicit discussions of racism addressed teacher fear. As seen above, race-evasiveness is practiced in many ways for many reasons.

### 2.4.13 Color-blind commitments.

Throughout second-generation teacher studies, scholars pointed to abstract liberal commitments of White teachers and PSTs. These include, but are not limited to, the myth of meritocracy, individualism (Segall & Garrett, 2013; Wade et. al., 2008), appeals to progress (Amos, 2011), and color-blindness (Amos, 2011; Baily & Katradis, 2016; Case and Hemmings, 2005). For example, when Wade et al. analyzed teacher discussion boards, they found that teachers relied on the idea of bootstrap theory, or individualism, by problematizing students and their families as deficit instead of discriminatory systems that reproduce inequality. Amos even described White PSTs' denial of racism, both on the individual and institutional levels, and some White PSTs asserted that "minorities should be past that instead of clinging to the reality of racism in the past" (p. 485). Amos then documented how White PSTs recounted their

experiences with reverse discrimination (White victimization) and blamed racial minorities for "perpetuating racism themselves" (2011, p. 484). Abstract liberal commitments, such as color-blindness, can prevent White PSTs and in-service teachers from understanding racism and how it can be perpetuated in their teaching.

Several more studies reported color-blind commitments of White PSTs and in-service teachers (Amos, 2011; Baily & Katradis, 2016; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Marx, 2008; Young, 2016). DeCuir and Dixson (2004) cautioned against color-blindness: "color-blind[ness] ignores the fact that inequity, inopportunity, and oppression are historical artifacts that will not easily be remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society" (p. 29). A teacher in Amos' study said, "despite all our differences in appearance and experiences we are all the same people" (p. 487). Another teacher in Case and Hemmings' article stated, "I have Black friends. I have friends who are from other cultures. I treat them all the same way. I don't see any difference" (p. 486). Another teacher in this same study shared, "I am sure that if I wore extra baggy clothing and kept looking around nervously while I was shopping, then I would be followed around by a clerk or security person. It has nothing to do with race." (Case & Hemmings, 2005, p. 486). These examples further demonstrated how White teachers have used explanations of inherent deficits in students to account for unequal outcomes. A teacher in Baily and Katradis' study asserted that even her students were color-blind (p. 221). White teachers in Marx's study not only engaged in color-blind talk but also expressed deficit views about Latinx students, families, and homes, demonstrating that color-blind deficit talk is possible. Bonilla-Silva (2010) called these color-blind assertions of deficit views about people of color a form of "cultural racism."

**2.4.14  Deficit thinking about students of color.**

Deficit views about students of color are pervasive in the literature on race and racism in schools (Amos, 2011; Garza & Garza, 2010; Marx, 2008). The teachers in Garza and Garza's study held lowered expectations for their students' overall academic success and held deficit beliefs about their students and their families. "They blamed the parents, families, students, and community for the disconnect between the school and the home. They suggested that the students would be able to overcome obstacles if only they worked harder" (Garza & Garza, 2010, p. 203). Garza and Garza reported that these teachers were more focused on assimilating these students to American culture than helping them to succeed in the long term. White PSTs in Amos' study revealed negative dispositions towards racially diverse students. For example, they considered African Americans to be "ignorant and lazy," "not highly educated," "committing crime more often than Whites," and "the least tolerant of others and crying racism" (Amos, 2011, p. 484). Latinos were seen as "violent," "working illegally for less than 50 cents an hour picking strawberries," and "sitting around and doing nothing, expecting the government to provide for them" (Amos, 2011, p. 484).  Native Americans were depicted as "a downtrodden, low SES group of people" and "having lost hope and living in poverty, alcoholism and drug addiction" (Amos, 2011, p. 484). Deficit views and lowered expectations for students of color and their families were pervasive across these studies.

**2.4.15  Critical race talk.**

Several studies reported on White teachers engaging in critical race talk about racism, or explicit talk about how systemic racism impacts people of color in the United States today

(Crowley, 2016; Johnson; 2002; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Laugher, 2011; Settlage, 2011). Johnson gathered life histories of successful White teachers of students of color and found that these teachers all had close personal relationships with people of color (e.g., interracial marriage), experiences working for social justice-oriented organizations, and reported being marginalized themselves (e.g., growing up poor). Similarly, Jupp and Slattery found race and gender-conscious talk in life histories of committed male teachers. This critical race talk critiqued everyday racism, racism in the curriculum, and demonstrated examples of taking racial minority student perspectives. White teachers in Laughter and Jupp and Slattery's studies did not receive any specific interventions to promote critical race talk. Instead, the authors asserted White teachers are already knowledgeable about race and racism before their teacher education programs. When PSTs in Crowley's (2016) study participated in critical race talk, the author warned teacher educators that critical race talk was messy, progress within students was non-linear, and hesitations and confusions regarding thinking of themselves as being "complicit" in racism were to be expected. Settlage found that teacher's in his study who engaged in critical race talk expressed common ideas about what it meant to be a teacher. Settlage wrote that these teachers shared the importance of:

(1) being a teacher that included the development of instructional skills appropriate for culturally and linguistically diverse students, (2) becoming a teacher who embraces the significance of cultural backgrounds… (3) belonging dominant themes to a larger network of educators with shared commitments to educating all students. (2011, p. 827)

Settlage called the talk about race and racism of these PSTs "counter-narratives" because they spoke against the dominant notion of the racially unaware White teacher.

In summary, White teachers may have life experiences that help them engage in critical race talk. They might know a lot about race and racism before they begin teaching. It may be necessary for White teachers to be challenged by teacher educators to connect what they know about race and racism to their work as teachers.

**2.4.16  Forging relationships across difference.**

In relation to findings that examined White teacher critical race talk, several studies reported ways in which White teachers forged relationships across racial difference (Bauml & Castro, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Garmon, 2004; Marx, 2008; Mason, 2016). Garmon reported that PSTs who expressed "openness to diversity, self-awareness/self-reflectiveness, and commitment to social justice, experience intercultural experiences, support group experiences, and educational experiences" were more likely to experience positive multicultural development (p. 202). Marx noted that PSTs made connections to students through personal relationships and life experiences. Bauml and Castro reported that teachers who wanted to teach at urban schools were often urban high school graduates themselves. Boucher investigated how a White teacher became a successful teacher to his Black students by interrogating and framing his Whiteness as a part of his identity and then building relationships with students from a standpoint of solidarity instead of authority. The teacher in his study:

> Interrogated his own Whiteness and made the choice to see the world through the lens of race and privilege. Mark explained that any lack of connection with his students' due to being racially different was overcome by his work at creating relationships of solidarity. (Boucher, 2016 p. 97)

Mason found that when PSTs were given time and resources to "deeply engage with their racialized selves in relationship with schools and society," they were able to engage in instruction that addressed racism and its consequences (p. 1055). Baily and Katradis (2016) reported that teachers who experienced "othering" themselves "were able to discuss concepts of injustice more critically" (p. 225). When White teachers shared life experiences, such as marginalization, with their students, they were able to more effectively teach across racial difference.

### 2.4.17 Interrogating silence on race.

In response to first-generation White teacher studies which too often concluded their analysis by identifying White teacher race-avoidance or silence about race, second-generation studies instead investigated the internal or external obstacles that might shape or cause White teachers to avoid critical race talk or explicit discussions of racism (Berchini, 2016; Buehler, 2013; Clark & Zygmunt, 2014). For example, Berchini problematized teacher race evasiveness from the standpoint that researchers must look past teachers to problematize other "contextual obstructions," such as the failure of curriculum to address race and racism. Buehler problematized racial silence because, "beneath public silences, individual staff members often wrestled with complex racial tensions, conflicts, and dilemmas" (p. 650). Second-generation White teacher studies continued to interrogate racial silence.

### 2.4.18 Barriers to talking about race and racism.

Many scholars highlighted the ways in which White teachers faced barriers outside of themselves with regards to talking explicitly about racism and their consequences. Research has documented the notion that White PSTs are often viewed as deficit learners about race and racism by their teacher educators (Berchini, 2016; Castro, 2010; Laughter, 2011; Lowenstein, 2009). White PSTs in Laughter's study reported that instructors assumed they did not know about race or racism. Lowenstein also reported the assumption that White PSTs are often problematized as unknowing and deficit learners about race and racism. Berchini problematized the notion that White PSTs are alone responsible for avoiding discussions of race and racism in classrooms and pointed to contextual obstructions like curriculum and/or administrators as precluding discussions about racism. Baily and Katradis (2016) noted a lack of acknowledgment of racism might reveal that White teachers feel unprepared to teach their students about the topic. Baily and Katradis stated, "teachers think and are often willing to talk about inequity" but that they fail to address it because they "often found themselves lacking an awareness of how to handle themselves and provide knowledge, support, and guidance to their students" (2016, p. 224).

## 2.5   IMPLICATIONS

### 2.5.1   First-generation implications.

The implications of first-generation studies of White teachers informed this dissertation in at least four ways. To begin, these studies suggested that White PSTs can leave teacher education programs with skills to critique Whiteness (Lewis, 2001; Marx & Pennington, 2003), describe racism (King, 1991; Pincus, 1996) and reject deficit discourses (Pollack, 2012; Welton et al., 2015). In addition, they demonstrated that teacher education programs can prepare PSTs to critique race-neutral discussions and label them as pernicious (Stoll, 2014; Yoon, 2012). Third, the studies demonstrated that White PSTs needed support, such as dedicated time, coursework, and instructors to engage in discussions of racism (Gere, 2009; Peters et al., 2016; Solomona et al., 2006). And lastly, these studies suggested that teaching should be framed as social justice work not only in coursework but across each aspect of teacher preparation programs in order to more effectively prepare White teachers to not only engage in critical race talk but to frame their own teaching as social justice work (Lewis, 2001; Young, 2011).

### 2.5.2   Recognize and critique Whiteness.

Teacher educators should encourage White teachers to recognize Whiteness as a privileged racial identity (Lewis, 2001; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Page, 2009) and then problematize and challenge perceived neutrality of Whiteness in classrooms and schools (Chubbuck, 2004; Hytten & Warren, 2003). Teacher educators and researchers should recognize both discourses that maintain and evade discussions of Whiteness (Haviland, 2008; McInytre,

1997; Yoon, 2012) and the performative elements of Whiteness that maintain social inequities (Levine-Rasky, 2000; Pollock, 2004).

### 2.5.3   Awareness of, and language to, describe systemic racism.

Teacher educators can guide PSTs through coursework, readings, and discussions to learn to engage in discussions about systemic racialized inequities (Marx & Pennington, 2003; Young, 2011). PSTs need the skills to problematize Colormute (Pollock, 2004), color-blind, or e-raced language (Crenshaw, 1997), especially in conversations about racialized inequalities. Crenshaw provided a detailed theoretical analysis of the failure of color-blindness. Using O. J. Simpson as a vivid example of a Black man who was embraced and "e-raced" or temporarily held up as an example of post-racial America during his time as a celebrity, only to be re-raced in by White America during his infamous murder trial. Castagno (2008) detailed how PSTs often avoided discussions of race and racism "through the conflating of culture and race, equality and equity, and difference and deficit" (p. 315). White PSTs can learn to distinguish between articulating racial differences and practicing racial discrimination. Lastly, PSTs ought to leave preparation programs with awareness of the dysconscious nature of racism and the language to describe how racism functions at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels of society (King, 1991; Pincus, 1996).

### 2.5.4   Rejection of deficit discourses.

Teacher educators are urged to include coursework and classroom activities that call attention to and reject dominant deficit discourses about students of color and their families.

Pollack (2012) reaffirmed the notion that teacher talk needs to be critically analyzed, writing, "I argue that deficit-based teacher talk about students and families of color reflects and may reinforce teachers' low expectations and negative assumptions about students of color" (p. 26). Pollack tied deficit teacher talk about students of color to the racialized achievement gap. Teacher educators can teach their students about problematic abstract liberal discourses such as color-blindness, individualism, and meritocracy that may hide deficit thinking about students of color (Welton et al., 2015). Marx and Pennington (2003) and Blaisdell (2005) suggested using theory from critical scholars to push back against this type of problematic talk about students.

### 2.5.5   Label race neutral discussions as pernicious.

Yoon asserted that "Whiteness exists at every level of conversation, even conversations about racial inequalities and this is problematic" (2012, p. 609). Teacher educators can call attention to White discursive strategies that erase racial difference, normalize Whiteness as a neutral ideology and performance in schools, and perpetuate racialized inequalities (Haviland, 2008; Yoon, 2012). Teacher educators need to be aware that White-dominated discourses, both between individuals and meta-dialogues, are both prevalent and "pernicious," not neutral (Haviland, 2008, p. 51; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Yoon, 2012). Teacher educators can use theory like CRT or critical Whiteness studies to problematize White teacher silence about the impact of race and racism.

### 2.5.6   PSTs need support.

White teachers who are initially reluctant to talk about or critique race and racism can utilize critical race talk and demonstrate understanding of systemic racism (Gere et al., 2009). PSTs need the support of their instructors, engaging coursework, and significant class time dedicated to understanding racism and their role in perpetuating inequity (Blaisdell, 2005; Gere et al., 2009; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Solomona et al., 2006). Marx and Pennington (2003) and Blaisdell (2005) engaged in critical dialogues about race and racism with PSTs as their teacher educators. Teacher education can help PSTs to "understand their own racial identity formation and provide the learning space to work with the range of emotions and feelings of indignation that evolve from an exposure to White privilege" (Solomona et al., 2006, p. 147). Gere et al. reported that this type of "teacher transformation" is possible through exposure to multicultural literature, interrogation of attitudes about race and racism, and explicit race talk (p. 816). White teachers in Page's study started their coursework using color-blind talk about celebrating difference and moved towards articulating a more critical understanding of their own role in systemic racialized discrimination by the end of the course (2009, p. 17). PSTs should be given opportunities to discover their own participation in White supremacy and supportive teacher educators to guide them.

### 2.5.7   Frame teaching as social justice work.

Teacher educators concerned with equity should aim to frame each aspect of teacher preparation through a lens of teaching as social justice work (Lewis, 2001; Peters et al., 2016; Young, 2016). Lewis asserted that schools must be recognized as "social and political sites"

instead of "neutral arbiters of knowledge" (p. 803). Lewis called for teachers to interrogate injustice and take a more critical stance regarding their work. Young's study cautioned teacher educators to define and problematize PSTs' ideas of social justice. Simply working in a racially diverse school can conflate notions of social justice and "White savior" work. Young stated that teacher educators should remind PSTs that "schools themselves were rooted within a system of dominance and oppression" (2011, p. 1454). Peters et al. asserted that for PSTs to consider equity as the goal of teaching, the topic should be a core component across their preparation program (as opposed to part of the curriculum of one course). Echoing Zeichner et al.'s (2016) call for teacher involvement in the community outside of their schools, Peters et al. also suggested that PSTs play a more active role in getting to know the communities of the children they teach. Stoll (2014) called for anti-racism as defined by Pollock (2004), which included "challenging systems of racial inequality" (p. 701). Lewis and Solomona et al. (2006) suggested a more critical and social justice-oriented version of Multiculturalism.

### 2.5.8   Second-generation implications.

I position this dissertation study as a second-generation White teacher study. Second-generation White teacher studies informed this dissertation study by asserting that teacher educators and education researchers must think of their White teachers as capable of critical race talk. The findings and implications of this dissertation inform research on teacher critical race talk by identifying how and where the dialect diversity curriculum did or did not encourage discussions of racism and its consequences. Specifically studies suggest that teacher educators can guide teacher candidate talk about race and racism (Amos, 2011; Buehler, 2013; Case & Hemmings, 2005), engage their students in meaningful coursework (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014;

Johnson, 2002; Laughter, 2011), unpack deficit thinking about students of color and their families (Bauml & Castro, 2016; Garza & Garza, 2010), frame teaching as social justice work (Amos, 2011; Mason, 2016; Page, 2009), and support PSTs effectively (Crowley, 2016; Mason, 2016). Second-generation implications are distinguished by first-generation study implications because scholars also suggest considering new frameworks of analysis (Boucher, 2016; Mazzei, 2011), problematizing essentialized notions of White teachers (Berchini, 2016; Settlage, 2011), and investigating how contextual factors might prevent White teachers from engaging in critical race talk (Berchini, 2016).

**2.5.9 Guide teacher candidate talk about race and racism.**

White teachers have been shown to demonstrate both problematic talk about race and/or silence regarding issues of race and racism (Amos, 2011; Buehler, 2013). Therefore, teacher educators need to carefully guide teacher candidate talk about race and racism. Case and Hemmings (2005) guided teacher candidate talk about race and racism with a meta-dialogic approach in which:

> Students essentially talk about White talk or, as the case may be, the suppression of talk…to expose and address the discursive catalysts for White distancing strategies that prevent White women from engagement in antiracist curriculum…This approach aims to make implicit norms of White talk and White racial ideology explicit. (p. 623)

Segall and Garrett (2013) framed their analysis of teacher reluctance to talk about race and racism in coursework through the idea of narrative frames. They suggested that teacher educators can pay attention to how PSTs deal with new knowledge about the world and themselves in relation to their pre-exiting frames.

## 2.5.10  Engage PSTs in meaningful coursework.

In addition to journaling, dialogue, and coursework that involved reflections on theory, research has suggested that teacher educators engage PSTs in dynamic instruction about race and racism. Clark and Zygmunt (2014) recommended that teacher educators structure experiences to support PSTs' discovery of bias. They proposed tools such as implicit association tests, which can be used to spur "awareness to action" (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014, p. 157). Johnson (2002), Jupp and Slattery (2010), Laughter (2011), and Marx (2008) used life history or autobiographical narratives of White teachers/PSTs to collect data on White teachers' understandings of race and racism. Johnson also suggested PSTs experience immersion into racially diverse communities as part of their teacher preparation program (Johnson, 2002, p. 163). Segall and Garrett (2013) engaged PSTs in discussions of racism using a documentary film on Hurricane Katrina. Johnson and Laughter (2011) used life history as a tool to engage PSTs in learning about their racialized identities. Matias (2013) proposed digital storytelling as part of the teacher candidate curriculum to expose "hegemonic Whiteness" (p. 11). Teacher educators are urged rely on creative coursework to engage White PSTs in recognizing, critiquing, and understanding how Whiteness impacts their teaching.

## 2.5.11  Unpack deficit thinking.

In coursework, teacher educators can address and dismantle deficit thinking about students of color and their families (Bauml & Castro, 2016; Garza & Garza, 2010; Marx, 2008). Bauml and Castro suggested that teacher educators rely on Funds of Knowledge to help their PSTs unpack deficit thinking about students of color and their families. Researchers need to

problematize the divide between White teachers and their understandings of Latinx culture (Garza & Garza, 2010; Marx, 2008).

### 2.5.12 Frame teaching as social justice work.

Echoing calls from first-generation White teacher studies, second-generation studies also imply that teaching can be framed as social justice work (Amos, 2011; Bailey & Katradis, 2016; Bauml & Castro, 2016; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Mason, 2016; Page, 2009; Wade et al., 2008). According to Amos, social justice, moral responsibility, and anti-racism are important goals of teacher education programs. Baily and Katradis suggested, as per Nieto, that teacher educators can make social justice a common theme of education, focus "teaching as an ongoing process of transformation," help teacher educators to "learn to challenge racism and bias… [and] develop a community of critical friends" (Nieto, 2000, pp. 182–183, as cited in Wiedeman, 2002, p. 206, 225). Bauml and Castro suggested that teacher educators can push PSTs to "unpack deficit thinking," (p. 22) utilize Funds of Knowledge, and curriculum differentiation and scaffolding (p. 23). Case and Hemmings recommended anti-racism as a learning goal. Teacher education programs can include "transformative" elements.

PSTs must be able to leave programs demonstrating knowledge of asset frameworks such as Multiculturalism, Community Cultural Wealth, and/or Funds of Knowledge which address the impact of racism in classrooms (Banks, 1996; Moll et al., 1992). They can be versed in asset pedagogies, such as Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogies. Equity can be a theme found across the teacher education program, as Wade et al. (2016) warned that standalone multicultural education classes were reported as being viewed as supplemental: "This lack of integration may allow prospective teachers to compartmentalize issues of race, class, gender, and disability into a

peripheral area of concern that hinders prospective teachers from making a direct connection to teaching and learn" (p. 433). Page (2009) suggested a diffuse model of teacher education in which "there is no multicultural education course per se; rather, PSTs study multicultural education as part of all of their coursework" (p. 8). This type of diffuse model of teacher education frames teaching as social justice work. Teacher educators can take time to define social justice and it can be a theme across the coursework and all relevant learning experiences.

### 2.5.13  Support PSTs.

PSTs need time to negotiate new understandings about race. For example, Crowley (2016) suggested setting aside significant class time for PSTs to grapple with their own participation in racism. By not spending enough class time discussing the idea of being complicit in racism, students may "move too quickly into discourses of acceptance or taking action in regard to racism, they may bypass the critical reflection necessary" (Crowley, 2016, p. 1026). Mason (2016) recommended that to build White teachers with sociopolitical consciousness, time can be spent on self-reflection about their "racialized selves in relationship with schools and society, transformations occur – the students learn about themselves, about society, and together we may unlock the potential for these students to break through the codes" (p. 1055). Teacher educators can guide teacher candidate talk about race and racism, provide class time, and support for their students to consider what racism means. Baily and Katradis (2016) and Page (2009) suggested that teacher educators can expect non-linear progression in discussions about race and racism.

### 2.5.14 Consider new frameworks of analysis.

Some second-generation White teacher studies analyzed White teachers through new theories or theories borrowed from another discipline. For example, Amos (2011) explored the concept of empathy as a tool to teach pre-service teachers about Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and Boucher (2016) explored how the concept of solidarity could be used to build relationships across race lines. Clark and Zygmunt (2014) examined White teacher implicit bias against darker-skinned students through a trans-theoretical model for change. Scholars who want to study White teachers' understandings of race and racism can take cues from these studies.

### 2.5.15 Problematize essentialized notions of the White teacher candidate.

Although many first-generation White teacher studies implied that White teachers are deficit learners with regards to learning about race or racism (Levine-Rasky, 2000; Lewis, 2001; Solomona et al., 2006), prominent education scholars (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Milner, 2010) have documented pedagogies and approaches that White teachers have utilized to effectively teach to racially diverse classrooms. Similarly, second-generation White teacher studies problematize the notion of the White teacher or teacher candidate as unwilling, unknowing, or unable to discuss racism and its consequences (Berchini, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Laughter, 2011). Echoing the germinal work of Ladson-Billings (1995a), second-generation White teacher studies (Boucher, 2016; Johnson, 2002) and related theoretical pieces (Castro, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009; Settlage, 2011) further advocated reframing White teachers as knowing and able.

Many scholars have called for teacher educators to reframe the ways in which they think about their PSTs as unknowing, unwilling, or unable to talk about race or racism (Berchini, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Johnson, 2002; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Laughter, 2011; Lowenstein, 2009; Settlage, 2011). Johnson (2002) problematized the notion that White teachers are unknowing about race or do not have life experiences with racial and other forms of diversity. Lowenstein (2009) also called attention to lowered expectations of White PSTs by teacher educators with regards to learning about race and racism. Settlage found that his PSTs were engaging in critical race talk and teaching. He stated, "We contend the standard narrative about White preservice teachers and their supposed shortcomings in working with culturally and linguistically diverse youth deserves individual and collective scrutiny" (Settlage, 2011, p. 827). Settlage warned against teacher educators essentializing White teachers as deficit learners about race and racism saying, "[teacher educators] should guard against the possibility that teacher educators are complicit in perpetuating deficit perspectives" (2011, p. 807). Jupp and Slattery asserted there is much to learn from White teachers who talk explicitly about racism and called for purposeful sampling in education research. Boucher used the CRT tool of "counter-narrative" to investigate the narratives of successful White teachers of Black students (p. 88). Johnson also suggested that teacher prep programs further consider who they are accepting and preparing as teachers.

### 2.5.16 Problematize context – not just teachers.

Berchini (2016) and Buehler (2013) suggested that teachers who might otherwise feel comfortable addressing racism directly might be working in schools in which they cannot express critical views about race.  Berchini recommended that education researchers must consider contextual structures that new teachers encounter such as curriculum, colleagues, and

school discourses that impact teachers' abilities to maintain or become teachers who engage in discussions of race and racism (2016, p. 1042). Buehler suggested that school administrators must work to support teachers to talk about racism, "by showing teachers how language works to position people racially, and to reveal individuals' racial ideologies, school leaders can begin a conversation with staff members about their own forms of race talk" (2013, p. 650). Berchini pointed to the problematic hidden curriculum of Whiteness as another factor that reproduced racism in schools. Scholars like King (1991) and Milner (2007) have also called attention to the hidden curriculum of Whiteness in education and have called for research on how schools maintain and legitimate Whiteness.

All of the research reviewed above informs the focus, research questions, and methods of the proposed study. This project is inspired by the first-generation White teacher scholarship that has highlighted White teacher race talk avoidance (Haviland, 2008; Lewis, 2001; Pollock, 2004), White teacher color-blind commitments and performances (Blaisdell, 2005; Stoll, 2014; Welton et al., 2015), as well as research that has stressed continual deficit thinking, lowered expectations, and subsequent racialized discrimination by White teachers against students of color (Garza & Garza, 2010; Pollack, 2012; Solomona et al., 2006). The research questions and methodology of this project also drew upon the studies of the characteristics of White teacher talk about race and racism (Haviland, 2008; Picower, 2009; Pollock, 2004; Yoon, 2012) and second-generation White teacher studies in which scholars specifically investigated White teachers who engage in talk about racism and its consequences (Boucher, 2016; Crowley, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Laughter, 2011). The goal of this project is to contribute to scholarship promoting asset pedagogies that can potentially mitigate racialized discrimination in schools by informing White teachers educators to design curriculum and experiences for their PSTs that

help them to approach their practice as K-12 educators as social justice work (Gay, 2010; Godley & Minnici, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Milner, 2010; Paris, 2012).

## 2.6    DIALECT DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS

In this section I provide a brief overview of empirical studies on dialect diversity in schools including, but not limited to, research on language ideologies and racism, language variation, vernacular dialects, linguistic discrimination, linguistic discrimination in schools, and preparing teachers to teach across and about linguistic difference. Research on dialect diversity in schools draws heavily from the field of sociolinguistics in its theoretical and empirical grounding, in its explanations of the nature of language variation, as well as in its recommendations for language pedagogy in K-12 U.S. schools.

Throughout this dissertation project, I have argued that racism (White supremacy) is a persistent and pervasive factor in U.S. K-12 schools and that linguistic discrimination against students of color is an example of such racism. This section of the literature review will make explicit the theoretical and empirical ties between language ideologies and racial ideologies in the United States today. The dataset for this dissertation project draws from a teacher education course on teaching about dialect diversity in schools. Specifically, I analyzed predominantly White PSTs' explicit talk about race and racism while participating in a course on teaching language variation. The findings and implications of this project contribute valuable empirical knowledge to existing lines of research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism and how these understandings shape their perceptions of how to teach about dialect diversity in schools.

### 2.6.1    Language ideologies and racism.

Research has shown that in the United States there is a close relationship between language attitudes and racism/White supremacy (Bacon, 2017). For example, when White teachers hold deficit views about students of color when they speak a stigmatized vernacular dialect, this action is a form of racialized discrimination that can have a harmful impact on student outcomes (Godley et al., 2015; Heath, 1983). Widespread language ideologies, or "assumptions about language that are collectively held by a particular group of people within a particular sociocultural and historical context," have often served to uphold White supremacy by making the erroneous assertion that dialects spoken by middle or upper-class Whites are more correct or accurate than non-standard or vernacular dialects (Godley et al., 2007, p. 104). Language ideologies, such as Milroy and Milroy's (1985) notion of standard language ideology, are tied to broader systems of power and privilege, such as racism, classism, and sexism (Bacon, 2017; Bernstein, 1961; Godley et al., 2015). For instance, assertions about the ungrammaticality of features of vernacular dialects, such as the use of double negatives in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) (a dialect of English spoken by Black Americans with a rich history of grammar, semantics, and cultural significance for its speakers), reflect racist and erroneous beliefs about language since double negatives are frequently used in other world languages such as French and Spanish. In this way, the belief that some speakers of English use the correct, grammatical, and logical version of English while others speak an illogical ungrammatical variation of English is directly linked to the maintenance of racism, or White supremacy, in the United States today (Lippi-Green, 1997; Milroy & Milroy, 1985).

### 2.6.2  Language variation.

As opposed to being stable, fixed, or "correct," research has shown that language varies from person to person, place to place, over time and even within age groups (Reaser et al., 2017). Language is something that individuals and groups "do" or perform, and within and across groups, people "do" language differently (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014). Some scholars use the terms, language variety (or language variation) and dialect interchangeably because they both capture the fluid and performative nature of language itself (Godley et al., 2015). Throughout this project, I use the term *dialect diversity* to refer to the ways in which language usage varies across the United States.  The terms *language variety* and *dialect diversity* can both be used to refer to the linguistic realities of how people in the United States speak English. Although dialect itself a neutral term, it is often used in the pejorative to refer to those who are speaking a vernacular version of English (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014, p. 34). In sociolinguistic research, dialect "refer[s] to a variety of a language associated with a regionally or socially defined group of people" (Reaser, et al., 2017 p. 7). Reaser et al. noted that linguistically, no dialect is more valuable, interesting, logical or worthy of study than another. The term dialect used this way is neutral – no evaluation is implied, either positive or negative. (p. 7). From this perspective, the term dialect and more specifically the concept of dialect diversity is used in this dissertation project to refer to the specific ways of speaking throughout the U.S., not to the beliefs or power structures that undergird how languages are judged or perceived as more or less privileged or esteemed.

### 2.6.3 Standardized English.

Scholars have documented differences across regional variations of standardized English (SE). SE has also been called standard English, formal English, broadcast English, the language of wider communication, or mainstream English. In this dissertation, I will refer to the dominant and accepted forms of privileged English used in the United States today as standardized English (SE). Godley and Minnici (2008) wrote about how the term standardized English represents the ways in which speakers perform language based on dominant language ideologies that privilege one variety of language while disparaging another:

> Acknowledging that there is no politically neutral or "perfect" term to refer to the language variety privileged in mainstream educational, professional, and civic institutions, we have chosen to use the term standardized English rather than standard English to refer to this variety because it emphasizes that the language variety that is most privileged in the U.S. is in a constant state of being "standardized" by being continually portrayed as the language variety that is most "correct" or "proper." (p. 42)

The term SE describes the performance of English across the United States in which some grammatical and pronunciation features are shared across groups of people. Therefore, the notion that SE is a fixed, formal, or "standardized" language across the United States is an ideology, not a reality since what counts as SE can differ across regions and communities. Additionally, all language varieties of English spoken in the United States, including SE, are dialects or varieties of English. Johnson (2008) stated bluntly that "[f]rom a grammatical, communicative, and aesthetic perspective, all languages are equal" (p. 11). Reaser et al., (2017) wrote that there is "no single dialect of English that corresponds to Standard English (SE), speakers of English know it when they hear it" (p. 17). Moreover, SE is sometimes described as

"sounding right" (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009). This assertion that SE is "right" or natural leads to student confusion and deficit views of non-Standard dialects. Speakers of non-standard English in the United States have been often viewed through a deficit lens, especially speakers of vernacular dialects (such as AAVE or Chicano English), dialects that have historically received the most social stigma.

### 2.6.4 Vernacular dialects.

Throughout this study, dialects that vary from SE and have a history of receiving significant social stigma, such as AAVE, will be referred to as vernacular dialects. Reaser et al. (2017), wrote that "[a]lthough these terms [such as non-standard and non-mainstream] can be synonymously and all are in common use… we use the term vernacular dialects to describe dialects and dialect features that have substantial social stigma" (pp. 8-9). Additionally, due to the close relationship between language and racial ideologies in the United States today, this social stigma often appears in the form of racial discrimination. In other words, speakers of vernacular dialects often experience persistent, every day, and well-documented discrimination due to dominant racialized beliefs about their language usage and/or their race (Bacon, 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2015). In summary, the term, vernacular dialect, is used in this project because it calls attention to the power differentials between SE and vernacular/multi-dialectal speakers and reflects the critical focus of this dissertation on systemic social injustices, such as racism.

There are many highly stigmatized vernacular dialects and dialect speakers in the United States today (Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici, & Carpenter, 2006). For example, scholars have documented the ways in which speakers of Southern English (spoken by residents of the United States south) and Appalachian English (a variety of English spoken many people in and

around the Appalachian mountain chain) experience discrimination (Heath, 1983; Reaser et al., 2017). In addition, scholars also have argued that speakers of vernacular dialects such as Chicano English and African American Vernacular English (AAVE) not only experience discrimination due to their language usage but also due to their race (Cross et al., 2001; Smitherman, 1977). For example, speakers of AAVE experience discrimination in schools such as negative perceptions of AAVE and deficit thinking with subsequent lowered expectations by White SE speaking teachers about their academic abilities (Blake & Cutler, 2003; Cross et al., 2001; Godley et al., 2007).

### 2.6.5   Linguistic discrimination.

Sociolinguistic research has documented a history of deficit views about speakers of vernacular dialects such as AAVE both inside and outside of schools. Empirical research has documented dominant language ideologies that posit vernacular speakers as unfit, unable, or lacking the mental capacity to speak "properly" (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Heath, 1983; Reaser et al., 2017). In addition, research has documented White teachers' implicit deficit views about non-SE speaking students and their families that persist today (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Flores & Rosa, 2015).

Speakers of vernacular dialects, such as AAVE, experience persistent linguistic discrimination, such as linguistic micro-aggressions. Charity Hudley and Mallinson reported that some non-SE speakers might hear statements like, "I have never heard an intelligent person talk like you do" (2014, p. 53). Micro-aggressions are statements that might be viewed as benign or even a compliment by the dominant party. Charity Hudley and Mallinson further described the ways in which non-SE speakers may "internalize negative linguistic messages" and "may feel

insecure, anxious, unconfident, or apprehensive when communicating" (2014, p. 53). They called this acute awareness of being judged and stereotyped negatively because of one's dialect, linguistic insecurity. On the other hand, standardized English speakers benefited from a number of privileges including "sounding right" to other SE speakers and not being teased, ridiculed, or questioned for speaking a vernacular dialect (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014, p. 52). Relatedly, many scholars have documented negative White teacher attitudes and subsequently negative student outcomes regarding the use of vernacular dialects by students in classrooms (Blake & Cutler, 2003; Godley et al., 2007; Godley & Minnici, 2008; Heath, 1983).

**2.6.6   Linguistic discrimination in U.S. K-12 schools.**

For at least 40 years, sociolinguists studying language, power, and schools have problematized linguistic discrimination by White teachers against their students of color (Heath, 1983; Labov, 1969; Shuy, 1964). Scholars have linked linguistic mismatch to deficit thinking by teachers about their students and, most importantly, unequal outcomes for vernacular dialect speaking students (Cross et al., 2001; Dyson & Smitherman, 2009).

**2.6.7   White teacher beliefs about vernacular language usage.**

When teachers believe standard language ideologies about standardized English or "sounding right," they can perpetuate both linguistic and racialized discrimination against their students of color who speak vernacular dialects (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Godley et al., 2007). In fact, a number of scholars have called attention to the implicit Whiteness of education which promoted the usage of SE and the vilification of nonstandard and vernacular dialect

speakers (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014, p. 50; Sleeter, 2016). As a result, teachers risk imparting deficit views onto nonstandard speaking and vernacular speaking students and their families through sustained harmful practices, such a problematizing their academic abilities (Godley et al., 2007; Heath, 1983). Furthermore, despite research that has shown that all dialects of English are grammatically sound means of expression, scholars have documented negative perceptions and outcomes caused by linguistic mismatch between predominantly White teachers who identify as SE speakers and their students who may or may not speak a stigmatized dialect at home (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Heath, 1983).

Negative teacher judgments of nonstandard and vernacular speaking students are a continued problem in the United States today. Many teachers may remain unaware of their own participation in promoting racialized beliefs about language by their implicit promotion of standard language ideology that privilege SE speakers and problematize vernacular speaking students. Teacher and PSTs may be unaware of the myth of SE, the realities of language variation in the United States today, and the potential impact of linguistic discrimination may have on the outcomes of their students (Bacon, 2017; Lippi-Green, 1997; Reaser et al., 2017). Many teachers remain uninformed about language variation and discrimination (Bacon, 2017; Reaser et al., 2017). Thus, scholars who study linguistic discrimination in schools have pointed to the need for teachers to be prepared to approach the discussion of language variation in their classrooms. Reaser et al. (2017) stated bluntly that "judgements about students' academic abilities based on their dialect are always inappropriate" (p. 3). Bacon (2017) reported that even though teacher education programs are more likely than ever to prepare PSTs and in-service teachers to teach about and across linguistic differences, in the form of addressing first-time English language learners in the classroom, teachers still struggle to address the linguistic

variation and usage of vernacular dialects by students in their classrooms. Furthermore, Bacon argued that dominant language ideologies that problematize vernacular dialect speakers as deficit learners are, in fact, racialized deficit ideologies (2017, p. 1). Ladson-Billings (2017) argued:

> For me the need to reposition students of color in the space of normality in our teacher education programs is also critical. We cannot keep admitting teacher education candidates who see students of color, students whose first language is not English, and/or who are recent immigrants as defective and whose major need is to become some version of White, middle-class students (p. 155).

Scholars who study linguistic and racialized discrimination in schools have called for disrupting racism in schools through educating teachers and pre-service teachers about how their beliefs about language may perpetuate racist outcomes in classrooms.

### 2.6.8   Unequal outcomes for vernacular speakers.

Teacher negative perceptions about nonstandard and vernacular dialect speakers have been linked to lowered expectations and performances for vernacular speaking students when compared to their SE speaking classmates. Relatedly, teachers unaware of language variation have labeled Black students who do not speak SE at home as deficient, e.g., delayed developmentally, language impaired, with speech disorders, or even labeled as mentally retarded (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Heath, 1983; Reaser et al., 2017; Smitherman, 1977). Therefore, scholars have called for school policies to address respecting vernacular dialects (Blake & Cutler, 2003) and for teacher preparation to help SE speaking teachers to learn about language variation and their underlying deficit notions about non-SE speaking students that may potentially harm their non-SE speaking students' performances in school.

**2.6.9    Preparing teachers to address linguistic difference.**

Scholars have also investigated ways in which educating teachers and pre-service teachers about language variation, dialects, and language ideologies can potentially preclude the potentially malicious effects of linguistic mismatch (Alim, 2007; Godley et al., 2015). Teachers can be provided with curriculum that specifically addresses myths around language deficits and difference, including but not limited to, language variation, stigmatized dialect usage, and language ideologies. Godley et al. (2015) reported that this type of work is imperative because it "can help English language arts researcher understand two important relations: the relations between a particular linguistic forms and social power and the relation between language and literacy" (p. 105). Pre- and in-service teachers need to be exposed to theory and scholarship on how their ideas about language usage are tied to broader systems (racism, capitalism, and globalization) that privilege certain speakers and oppress or discriminate against others. A number of instructional approaches in teacher education have been shown to be effective. The dialect diversity course from which the data for this study was gathered implemented a number of these effective approaches.

**2.6.10    Critical language awareness/pedagogy.**

In order for teachers to successfully teach across linguistic and racial differences, teachers and pre-service teachers need to approach their teaching, specifically their pedagogical choices and instructional strategies, from a critical stance. Godley et al. (2015) wrote about the goals of critical language awareness (CLA) saying:

To overcome this deficit thinking and develop anti-racist Critical Language Awareness for teaching, teachers must understand and acknowledge Whiteness and Standardized English as non-neutral and to teach that ideologies surrounding Standardized English – historically the dialect spoken by affluent White people – work to reinforce existing structures of power that privilege middle and upper-class Whites. (p. 43)

CLA is by nature anti-racist and intersectional (i.e., aware of the ways in which race, class, gender and other social influences impact lived experiences) (Clark, Fairclough, Ivanic, & Martin-Jones, 1990; Hawkins, 1984). Teachers are responsible for evaluating their own identity, privileges and social standing (race, class, gender, language usage) and that of their students. CLA and Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP) (the instructional techniques built upon CLA principles) draw from theory on critical discourse analysis and include:

critical examination of the power structures reflected and created through language is essential to all language and literacy education…. [also] an instructional approach that guides students to critical examinations of the ideologies surrounding language and dialects, the power relations such as ideologies uphold, and the way to change these ideologies. (Godley et al., 2015 p. 41)

From a CLA approach, the study of linguistic variation, dialect diversity, and discrimination is framed in the context of broader systems of oppression like racism, sexism, and classism. Carpenter, Achugar, Walter, and Earhart (2015) wrote that a CLA approach to studying language variation will focus on the development of "operational and descriptive knowledge of the linguistic practices of their world, but also a critical awareness of how these practices are shaped by, and shape, social relationships of power" (p. 82). CLP, which draws from a CLA

perspective, advocates for instruction that focuses on racial inequalities, language discrimination and implicit deficit notions about the "other" (e.g., people of color, non-SE Speakers, etc.) in learning about language, dialects and grammar (Godley et al., 2015). CLP approaches argue that teaching students and teachers to recognize language varieties as grammatically equal or teaching students to code switch is not enough (Baker-Bell, 2013). Rather, CLP scholars argue that teachers and students must also learn how systemic racism and White privilege are related to language discrimination. The goal of CLP is for students and teachers to develop greater consciousness regarding the nature of language discrimination and social justice.

In conclusion, this dissertation proposal is framed by theories and empirical research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism and research on dialect diversity in schools. In both of these lines of research, racism, or the maintenance of White supremacy and persistent discrimination against students of color in classrooms, is a common theme. In fact, I argue that racialized discrimination against vernacular dialect speakers in classrooms by White teachers is an example of the type of problematic understandings of racism by White teachers that persists in classrooms today. In the end, this project documents White pre-service teachers' understandings of racism with regard to complex, persistent, and perhaps too often ignored forms of racialized discrimination, such as problematic White teacher commitments to racist language ideologies.

## 3.0    METHODS

### 3.1    INTRODUCTION

This project drew upon data collected by Amanda Godley and Jeffrey Reaser (2018) from the implementation of a 12-hour online mini-course titled, "Language Variation in English Language Arts Classrooms." Participants in this project included over 300 predominantly White English language arts (ELA) pre-service teachers (PSTs) from across the United States. The mini-course was run 14 times at 11 universities and produced two major data sources: pre- and post-questionnaires and discussion board posts in which PSTs responded to prompts regarding how to teach about dialect diversity in their future classrooms. Furthermore, discussion board post data were collected nine times at eight universities from 214 participants. Each of the 214 participants produced ten discussion board posts and commented on their classmates' discussion board posts at least two times. Therefore, the dataset analyzed in this amounted to 2,962 discussion board posts written by 214 predominantly White ELA PSTs. I coded specifically to capture emergent themes and significant patterns regarding teacher critical race talk, the context of teacher critical race talk, and any connections between teacher critical race talk and pedagogical decisions regarding teaching about dialect diversity.

My selection of teacher discussion board data as a valid and logical data source for examining White teachers' critical race talk is drawn from the empirical research on White

teachers' understandings of racism as documented through their participation in online discussion board coursework (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Godley et al., 2015; Wade et al., 2008). Moreover, in this study, teacher talk is viewed as representative of teacher beliefs and/or worldviews; therefore, this project is undergirded by Gee (1999) and Fairclough's (2001) theories of Discourses and critical discourse analysis (CDA). This study is informed by Fairclough's theory of CDA, which asserts that discourse, or in this case talk about racism, is a reflection of beliefs about how social power operates. In this project, the social power being coded for is critical race talk or discussions about racism and/or White privilege. The methodology of this study draws from the work of Haviland (2008), Solomona et al. (2006), and Yoon (2012). However, unlike Haviland, Solomona et al., and Yoon, in my analysis I aimed to document critical race talk instead of other discussions of race and racism which might also include superficial or casual references to race and racism that do not address systemic racism.

Drawing upon Howard's (2004) call for "racial discourse" in U.S. classrooms, I used the term critical race talk to describe talk about systemic racialized discrimination against people of color that included explicit mentions of lack of access to opportunities and resources for people of color and the extension of such privileges to Whites. While Howard called for "racial discourse" to occur between teachers and students, specifically in the context of Social Studies classrooms, in this project critical race talk was designed to examine themes within White teacher talk about race and racism. In addition to drawing upon Howard's call for explicit talk of racial discrimination in schools, my notion of critical race talk is grounded in theory and research which has documented persistent racialized discrimination against people of color in the U.S. today, both inside and outside of schools (Bell, 1992; Chubbuck, 2004; Garza & Garza, 2010; Harris, 1993; King, 1991; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Valencia, 2010; Watson, 2012; Welton et

al., 2015). For example, critical race talk might involve explanations about implicit racial bias against people or students of color or unequal access to opportunities in communities of color. Critical race talk challenges the notion of the White teacher as silent about race and racism and goes further than superficial mentions of race and racism in addressing unequal outcomes caused by racism in the United States today.

Specifically, I sought to explore themes, content, context, and relationship to teaching pedagogies within discussion board posts authored by White PSTs in which the participant at some point in their post engaged in at least one instance of critical race talk. I excluded from my analysis discussion board posts written by participants of color and discussion board posts in which White teachers mentioned race, racism, or racial categories but did not engage in discussions of explicit examples of racism in the U.S. today or in the past. Moreover, I distinguished the concept of critical race talk from White teacher talk about race and racism that only included superficial references of race and racism. I also excluded from my analysis discussion board posts in which racial categories or identities were mentioned but ideas of discrimination or power differentials were not discussed in the post (Bissonnette, Reaser, Hatcher, & Godley, 2016; Pollock, 2004).

In addition, I excluded from my analysis posts in which White teachers discussed differences in a color-blind or race-neutral way. By excluding these superficial mentions of race and racism and race-neutral discussions of difference, I sought to avoid analyzing already well-documented White teacher race talk avoidance strategies like color-blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Stoll, 2014). In an example from my dataset, Catherine from Western State wrote in a color-blind way about linguistic profiling. "Dialect is what gives us identity and culture, and it's important that we teach our students that tolerance and understanding apply to language just as

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much as they apply to other aspects of culture." Catherine talked about difference and culture without mentioning race or racialized discrimination. I excluded from my analysis such discussion board posts in which White teachers mentioned dialect, difference, race, or racism but failed to engage in at least one explicit mention or example of how racism operates in the U.S. today or in the past. Informed by my literature review, I instead sought to explore a more useful and perhaps generative line of research into the emergent themes, contexts, and relationships to pedagogy within White teacher talk about race and racism that acknowledged systemic discrimination against people of color and the benefits of White privilege.

## 3.2    RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the characteristics of White teachers' critical race talk about dialect diversity?
2. What prompts White teacher critical race talk?
3. How do White teachers respond to each other's critical race talk?
4. How does critical race talk shape White teachers' talk about pedagogy regarding dialect diversity and language ideologies?

### 3.2.1   Description of the dialect diversity mini-course

Between spring 2014 – spring 2016, Godley and Reaser (2018) collected data from ELA pre-service teachers' participation in a four-week online "mini-course" entitled, "Language Variation in English Language Arts Classrooms." The curriculum of the online mini-course was designed to introduce PSTs to language variation in the United States and to engage PSTs in

discussions about how they would respond to, and teach about, language variation, language ideologies, and linguistic discrimination in their future classrooms. For the sake of continuity throughout this dissertation proposal, I henceforth refer to the course as the dialect diversity mini-course.

The curriculum of the online mini-course was specifically designed to consist of 9-12 hours of coursework for PSTs. Godley and Reaser (2018) intended for ELA teacher educators to be able to use the mini-course as a stand-alone online unit or as a resource to be incorporated into a pre-existing university approved ELA teacher preparation course. A full description of the dialect diversity mini-course module topics and activities can be found in Appendix B.

### 3.2.2   Mini-course learning goals.

The mini-course was framed with two sets of learning goals: content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Content knowledge is defined by Godley and Reaser as, "the factual knowledge about a discipline or area of research that teachers need to know in order to teach their subject" (2018). In their explanation of the mini-course's learning goals for teachers, the authors also draw on Shulman's (1986) theory of PCK which defines PCK as "… [going] beyond knowledge of the subject matter per se to the dimension of the subject matter knowledge for teaching" (p. 9). In Shulman's description, PCK includes, but certainly is not limited to, knowing how to best represent content knowledge through "analogies, illustration, examples, explanations, and demonstrations" (1986, p. 9). Furthermore, PCK includes comprehension of:

What makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the

learning… and if those preconceptions are misconceptions, which they too often are… teachers need knowledge of strategies to most likely to be fruitful in reorganizing the understandings of learners. (Shulman, 1986, p. 10)

In other words, PCK focuses on how to effectively teach a topic. Teacher educators are urged to provide PSTs with access to both content knowledge and PCK in order to prepare teachers to be effective.

In the case of this dialect diversity mini-course, content knowledge was drawn from sociolinguistic research regarding language variation, dialect diversity, and language ideologies (or beliefs about language) in the United States today. Godley and Reaser (2018) described the dialect diversity content knowledge learning goals of the course as:

1. Dialects are patterned and grammatical.

2. Dialects are valid (e.g., have historical rationales, are worth sustaining, have expressive value).

3. Language varies by contexts (geography, history, purpose).

4. Language varies by social/racial community.

5. Language use and identity are strongly related.

6. Language as basis for judgment/prejudices about other things (education, politeness, intelligence, etc.) (p. 44)

These six aspects of sociolinguistic content knowledge focus on conveying to PSTs the findings of sociolinguistic research on the realities of dialect diversity and linguistic discrimination in the United States today (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014; Reaser et al., 2017). Scholars have argued that teachers need to have access to curriculum and materials that directly counter dominant language myths, i.e., the grammatical superiority of standard English

(SE), in order to best prepare PSTs to understand how these myths about language may impact their teaching and to best prepare them to teach about dialect diversity to their future students (Baker-Bell, 2013; Godley et al., 2015).

With regards to goals for developing PCK through the mini-course, Godley and Reaser (2018) described the pedagogical content knowledge of the dialect diversity mini-course as:

1. Accurate explanations about language.

2. Assessing students' language choices.

3. Developing students' mastery of Standardized Written English.

4. Considering the learning needs and linguistic/regional/SES/racial background of students.

5. Discussing language variation with students.

6. Teaching about White privilege and systems of power in language. (p.46)

Furthermore, throughout the dialect diversity mini-course, Godley and Reaser utilized readings, videos, and discussion board prompts that challenged PSTs to think through these specific PCK strategies aimed at teaching their future students about dialect diversity in the United States today. Godley and Reaser selected these six pedagogical learning goals in order to convey to PSTs the best practices for approaching teaching about dialect diversity in schools.

### 3.2.3   Mini-course module activities.

The online curriculum of the dialect diversity mini-course consisted of four modules. A full description of the modules and activities can be found in Appendix B. Each module included two or three sets of activities. Each set of activities included a realistic teaching scenario and online readings and videos that covered both the content knowledge about dialect diversity and

pedagogical content knowledge about teaching about dialect diversity. Next, within each module, PST participants were asked to answer a discussion board prompt that required them to apply content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge reviewed in that set of activities. Specifically, PSTs were asked to propose and describe how they would teach a certain topic to their future classrooms. A full description of the discussion board prompts can be found in Appendix C.

### 3.2.4   Mini-course module topics.

Each module of the mini-course was designed to cover a topic relevant to teaching about dialect diversity in schools. The first module introduced PSTs to language variation in the United States and asked them to consider how they would teach about dialects in literature, such as the Southern Dialect represented in *To Kill a Mockingbird.* The second module focused on introducing PSTs to grammatical patterns in vernacular dialects in the United States, such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Appalachian English. Module three asked PSTs to examine their linguistic identity and language usage to demonstrate their participation in language variation. Finally, module four asked PSTs to address documented instances of linguistic discrimination in the United States today and to consider how their own language usage, racial profiles, and related biases, and that of their students might impact their teaching. A more complete description of each module and activities is available as Appendix B.

### 3.2.5    Pre- and post-course questionnaires.

Godley and Reaser (2018) collected pre- and post-questionnaire data from each participant in the mini-course in order to analyze: (1) the relationships between teacher background characteristics and talk about teaching dialect diversity; and (2) teacher learning as a result of the course. The pre-questionnaire was separated into two sections. The first section asked PSTs to describe their racial, cultural, linguistic, and educational background. The second section asked PSTs to respond to hypothetical teaching scenarios concerning issues of language variation and dialect diversity. In the post- questionnaire, PSTs were prompted to respond to the same hypothetical teaching scenarios and then both reflect on and provide evaluative feedback on the mini-course itself (see Appendix A).

### 3.2.6    PST engagement in the mini-course.

Within each module, PSTs were prompted to respond to two or three discussion board post prompts about how to apply the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge they learned in that set of activities to their future classrooms. In total, PSTs were prompted to participate in ten discussion board prompts (see Appendix C). PSTs shared their responses to the discussion board prompts on the online discussion board platforms provided by their individual universities and interacted with each other by commenting on their classmates' discussion board posts. It is important to note that PSTs from each university engaged in their own self-contained class discussions online, meaning that the discussion boards were established and maintained by each instructor of each course at each of the eight universities in which discussion board data was collected (Godley & Reaser, 2018). In a preliminary analysis of 10% of the discussion board

data, discussion board posts averaged 190 words total (Ashwin, Godley, & Reaser, 2017). In addition, with each of the 214 participants posting at least 12 times to the discussion board through their own post or as a comment on a classmates' work, the discussion board dataset analyzed in this project included over 2,900 discussion board posts.

Across research sites, instructors did not engage in the online discussions by commenting or asking follow up questions of their students. In fact, even though the instructors were not given specific instructions to withhold their participation, across all nine iterations of the course, instructors rarely participated in the discussion boards by posting or commenting on PSTs' responses.

## 3.3 DATA SOURCES

The data sources for this study represent a subset of the data collected by Godley and Reaser (2018). First, only those participating universities for which both questionnaire and discussion board data were collected will be included. Second, discussion board posts written by participants who self-identified as a person of color were excluded from analysis.

### 3.3.1 Pre- and post-questionnaires.

I drew upon the demographic data that participants reported on the questionnaire in order to describe the participants' racial identities and other background characteristics. Questionnaire items related to teaching scenarios and perceptions of the mini-course were not relevant to my

research questions and were excluded from data analysis. The dataset did not allow me to link individual PSTs' questionnaires with their discussion board posts.

### 3.3.2 Discussion board posts.

The majority of the data analyzed in this project comes from the PSTs' discussion board posts in the online mini-course. Specifically, 95% of the participants in this project identified as White. Discussion board posts in which participants revealed that they were not White were used to identify and exclude all of that participant's posts from my analysis. In a preliminary analysis of 10% of this proposed dataset (N = 239 discussion board posts), the average word count for each discussion board post was found to be 190 words (Ashwin et al., 2017). In total, 214 participants (of all racial backgrounds) produced over 2,900 discussion board posts. I coded and analyzed each of the 2,962 discussion board posts to identify critical race talk and take note of emerged themes and patterns regarding critical race talk in the context of teaching about dialect diversity.

### 3.4    SETTINGS

This study drew upon discussion board and questionnaire data from eight distinct universities across the United States. I included nine iterations of the mini-course discussion and pre-questionnaire data sources as the data sources for this project as one university provided two complete sources of data (i.e., discussion boards and pre-questionnaire data). Table 3 (adapted from Godley and Reaser (2018) provides a pseudonym, university description, date when data

was collected, course name, and number of participants for each university setting included in my study.

**Table 3. Description of Universities (Adapted from Godley & Reaser, 2018)**

| University (Pseudonym) | University Description | Semester | Course | Number of Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Great Plains University | Midwestern, Public, High Research, Large | Fall 2014 & Summer 2015 | Educational Linguistics | 68 |
| Tidewater University | Southern, Public, Non-Research, Small | Fall 2014 | Language Variation in US Schools | 15 |
| Magnolia College | Southern, Public, Mid-Research, Large | Fall 2014 | Methods I | 19 |
| Western State University | Western, Public, Mid-Research, Medium | Fall 2014 | Language and English Education | 26 |
| Southern Tech | Southern, Public, High Research, Large | Fall 2014 | Teaching writing | 19 |
| Ravine College | Southern, Private, Non-Research, Small | Fall 2014 | Linguistics for Educators | 5 |
| Lakeside State | Midwestern, Public, High Research, Large | Spring 2016 | Teaching Methods | 39 |
| Rust University | Midwestern, Public, High Research, Large | Spring 2014 | Teaching Methods in ELA | 23 |
| | | | Total Participants | 214 |

**Notes:** [1] We describe participating universities/colleges by region, public/private, research emphasis, and size (small = under 5,000; medium = 5,000 – 15,000; large = over 15,000 students)

The participating universities represented a mix of distinct geographic locations, research/non-research focused universities, and a mix of large, medium and small universities. Each iteration of the mini-course occurred between the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2016. Furthermore, in each iteration, the mini-course was incorporated into a pre-existing course offered by the university, typically one that was required for ELA PSTs.

## 3.5    PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHICS

Between 5 and 68 PSTs from each university participated in the mini-course, for a total of 214 PSTs (White and students of color). An overwhelming majority of participants (90%) identified as pre-service teachers (PSTs), meaning that they were preparing to become K-12 classroom teachers through their coursework or practicum experiences in K-12 classrooms. Because so many participants identified as PSTs, the participants throughout this study will be referred to as PSTs. Furthermore, much like the demographics of current U.S. teacher populations, 79% of participants were female and 95% self-identified as White, with Black 3%, Latino 3%, Asian 3% and mixed race 2% making up the remainder of the participants. Since participants could select more than one racial identification, this number is greater than 100%. Additionally, 12% of participants self-identified as multilingual and another 12% reported that they were multi-dialectal or speakers of more than one dialect. Finally, 76% of participants reported completing prior coursework on linguistics. Another 71% reported completing coursework on multiculturalism.

**Table 4. Participant Self Identification of Race**

| University | Total Number of Participants | White | Black | Latinx | Asian | Mixed Racial Background |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Great Plains University | 68 | 61 | * | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Tidewater University | 15 | 15 | * | * | * | * |
| Magnolia | 19 | 17 | 1 | 1 | * | * |
| Western State University | 26 | 23 | * | 1 | 2 | * |
| Southern Tech | 19 | 15 | 1 | * | 3 | * |
| Ravine College | 5 | 4 | * | 1 | * | * |
| Lakeside State | 39 | 34 | 4 | 1 | * | * |
| Rust University | 23 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | * |
| Totals | 214 | 204 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| Percentage | | 95% | 3% | 2% | 3% | 2% |

Throughout this project, I refer to the participants as White or predominantly White since 95% of participants self-identified as White in the pre-questionnaire. However, it is important to note that it was only possible to racially identify the author of a specific discussion board post if they explicitly self-identified their race in that discussion board post. The individual participants in the project were not tracked by name and racial identity throughout their participation in the project due to IRB limitations regarding participant privacy. However, if a participant identified as a person of color, all of their discussion board posts were excluded from my data analysis.

### 3.6    DATA ANALYSIS

I relied on a combination of qualitative coding strategies frequently utilized together by researchers including open coding (Merriam, 2009), focused coding, and analytic memos based on both a priori descriptive codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldana, 2009) and emergent

themes (Charmaz, 2006). My data analysis involved four iterative rounds of open coding to address each research question (Merriam, 2009). In these open rounds of coding, I looked for both data which responded to the a priori descriptive codes I designed and emergent ideas I had not yet considered. Next, for each research question I completed open and focused coding to collapse similar codes, create new codes, and identify themes across and within the dataset (Charmaz, 2006).

The coding and analysis of this project rested heavily on my definition of critical race talk. In this study, I defined critical race talk as explicit talk about race and racism and connected these concepts to examples of structural and/or systemic racial discrimination and their consequences in the United States today (Castro, 2010; Pollock, 2004). I organized specific a priori coding categories derived from previous research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism in an attempt to capture critical race talk in my dataset. Specifically, the a priori descriptive coding categories that addressed my first research question, "What are the characteristics of White teachers' critical race talk about dialect diversity?" were designed to distinguish critical race talk from superficial race talk or race talk avoidance during my coding of the dataset.

I also drew upon at least two analytical tools commonly utilized in grounded theory projects: focused coding and memo-writing to inform my analysis. These tools benefited this project through contributing both rigor and accountability to my qualitative data analysis methods. Charmaz (2006) wrote about the usefulness of grounded theory coding strategies stating:

[T]he strength of grounded theory coding derives from this concentrated, active involvement in the process. You act upon your data rather than passively read them. Through

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your actions, new threads for analysis become apparent. Events, interactions, and perspectives come into analytic purview that you had not thought of before. (p. 59)

By engaging in focused coding and drawing upon memo-writing to document my coding decisions, I drew upon the strengths of grounded theory coding in accurately capturing emergent phenomena from my dataset.

I completed frequency counts as part of my analysis of White teacher critical race talk. Informed by Gee (1999) and Fairclough's (2001) work on discourse analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, I present the frequency of significant themes throughout my findings and analysis to demonstrate prevalence of certain "Discourses" or "worldviews" shared by White participants in my study. Across my findings, I highlight trends in explicit talk of race and racism, such as explicit critiques of Whiteness or recognition of the prevalence of deficit thinking, which I argue highlight specific shared understandings of race and racism from the White pre-service ELA teachers from across geographically diverse universities in the United States. Along with frequency counts, I share quotes from White teacher critical race talk which I use to clarify, describe, and demonstrate these themes to provide vivid examples of how White teachers in my study demonstrated specific understandings of race, racism, and their consequences.

### 3.6.1   Data management.

All data was stored on a password protected box.com account and accessed by only me, the researcher. Discussion board data collected from each university were currently stored in a file labeled by university pseudonym. Inside of each file was a set of PDF and Word document files. Before my first round of coding, I exported all of the discussion board data to an excel

spreadsheet labeled "Master Coding Excel Spreadsheet." I formatted the data from each of the nine iterations of the course into uniform columns labeled with relevant headings such as "university, discussion board module, discussion board prompt, participant name, etc.…." I completed each round of coding in this initial spreadsheet. For each set of codes related to a research question I added more columns. I added additional sheets to this master spreadsheet to keep my analytical coding memos which I revisited consistently throughout the open and focused coding process.

### 3.6.2 Memo-writing.

Throughout the data analysis process, I kept memos that documented my coding decision-making process. These notes included early and changing definitions of codes, examples of data, trends or emergent themes throughout the coding process, questions about my coding or data process, and interesting quotes which emerged from the dataset. Charmaz wrote that "[m]emos help you to develop your ideas in narrative form and fullness early in the analytic process. Your memos will help you clarify and direct your subsequent coding" (2006, p. 82). Memo-writing helped to not only document the coding process but served as an early stage of data analysis which assisted the creation of my final coding categories.

### 3.6.3 First round of coding.

My first round of open coding served to both identify and begin descriptive coding of discussion board posts relevant to my first research question, "What are the characteristics of White teacher critical race talk?" This round of coding was guided both by my own

understanding of the corpus of literature on White teachers' understandings of race and racism and through the a priori descriptive coding categories described in detail in Table 5. Saldana (2009) and Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to these types of codes as "descriptive" or "topical" codes as they "summarize in a word of short phrase… the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (Saldana, 2009, p. 70).

### 3.6.4   Qualifying a post as race talk.

A post only needed one specific mention of race, racism, their consequences in the post to be coded as critical race talk. In other words, the majority of a discussion board post could avoid, silence, or even change the topic from racism to another subject, but the post itself would still have been coded as critical race talk if the participant discussed one example or explanation of how racism operates in the United States today. During my coding, critical race talk emerged as one of the a priori codes included in Table 5. Critical race talk emerged as per my a priori coding categories of acknowledgement of: color-blindness as problematic, deficit thinking about people of color, lowered expectations for students of color, protection of Whiteness/White Supremacy, race talk avoidance, Whiteness as a racial identity, Whiteness impacting teaching, White privilege, and shared experiences with discrimination. Overall, my a priori codes were helpful in guiding the identification of critical race talk posts in this dataset.

**Table 5. A priori codes for research question one**

| Research Question | A Priori Descriptive Codes and Relevant Literature |
|---|---|
| 1.     What are the characteristics of White teachers' critical race talk about dialect diversity? | Acknowledgement of: Color-blindness as problematic (Amos, 2011; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Crenshaw, 1997; Milner, 2010; Stoll, 2014) Deficit thinking about people of color (Chubbuck, 2004; Garza & Garza, 2010; Valencia, 2010; Watson, 2012; Welton et al., 2015) How systemic racism operates against people of color (Bell, 1992; Harris, 1993; King, 1991; Pincus, 1996; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) Lowered expectations for students of color (Garza & Garza, 2010) Protection of Whiteness/White supremacy (Haviland, 2008; McIntyre, 1997; Picower, 2009; Yoon, 2012) Race talk avoidance (Haviland, 2008; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Pollock, 2004; Yoon, 2012) Whiteness as a racial identity (Gere et al., 2009; Lewis, 2001) Whiteness impacting teaching (Gere et al., 2009; Marx & Pennington, 2003) White privilege (Hytten & Warren, 2003; McIntosh, 1990; Page, 2009; Solomona et al., 2006) Shared experiences with discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991; L. Johnson, 2002) |

When a teacher mentioned race, racism, or their own White racial identity but did not connect it further to how their racial identity would impact their teaching by giving explanations or examples of how racism operates, the post was not coded as including critical race talk. Superficial mentions of race included mentioning the words White, Black, Asian, or another racial category. These superficial mentions of race lacked follow up discussion about how this racial identity would privilege or oppress. In addition, statements in which PSTs mentioned racism, but did not describe further details about why racism is a problem or who experiences racism, were also not coded as critical race talk. For example, a PST named Brittany wrote:

As a White woman from a working-middle class family, there could be some hesitations from students, who differ in background, in taking me seriously. To combat this, I would share my personal experiences of discrimination and prejudice and show my appreciation for language diversity by facilitation open, honest discussion.

Brittany mentioned her own racial identity and even the words discrimination and prejudice. However, Brittany did not engage in discussions of race, racism and their consequences. In fact, Brittany seemed to be asserting that as a White middle-class woman she can relate to those who have experienced systemic racial discrimination and prejudice. This assertion would be an example of a claim of reverse racism and a counterexample of the type of explicit talk about race and racism that I hoped to analyze in this project. Thus, my analysis complicated counting or analyzing mere references to race, racism, or racial categories by considering themes within White PST critical race talk.

In my first round of coding, if a discussion board post included at least one example of the acknowledgments of race and racism listed in the a priori codes for research question one, or if the PST addressed racism explicitly in another critical way, the discussion board post was coded with a "Y" in a column labeled "critical race talk." In addition to identifying whether or not a discussion board post included any critical race talk, I also coded for a priori and emergent themes and patterns. This first round of coding reduced my data source from 2,962 discussion board posts to 86 discussion board posts coded as including examples of critical race talk. After checking to make sure the participants did not identify as a person of color in another discussion board post, my set of discussion board posts labeled as including critical race talk was further reduced to 78 posts, or 2.6% of the total dataset.

According to Charmaz, "[F]ocused coding means using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely" (2006, p. 57). Informed by Charmaz's (2006) notion of "focused coding." Before beginning each subsequent round of coding, I reviewed the usefulness of the coding categories from my previous coding pass. Next, I refined and collapsed coding categories that best captured phenomena emerging from across the data. Next, in each subsequent round of coding, I completed open coding for one of my subsequent three research questions.

### 3.6.5   A priori codes for subsequent research questions.

With regard to research question two, "What prompts critical race talk?" I derived a priori coding categories based on relevant literature on White teachers' engagement with each other around race talk. In addition, I included descriptions of the various elements of the dialect diversity mini-course, as specific modules, topics or readings that may elicit more or less critical race talk among the predominantly White ELA PST participants. Furthermore, when considering the literature on White teacher race talk, relevant studies have pointed to specific elements of teacher education course curriculum (e.g., specific readings or discussion prompts as eliciting race talk) (Berchini, 2016; Crowley, 2016; Marx & Pennington, 2003).

Research question three asked, "How do White teachers respond to each other's critical race talk?" The majority of the research on White teacher talk about race and racism has documented persistent and pervasive race talk avoidance amongst White teachers and PSTs. Therefore, the majority of my a priori codes described discourse strategies used by Whites to avoid explicit discussions of race or racism, specifically: changing the topic, denial or rejection

of White privilege, discourse strategies aimed at distancing themselves from participation in White supremacy, Colormute or low-stakes discussion of racial difference, color-blind discussions of difference, and finally, praise for each other's willingness to broach such a controversial topic (but stopping short of critiquing racism) (Pollock, 2004). Notwithstanding the dominance of race talk avoidance, I also included a code for engagement in critical race talk/explicit discussions of race/racism with a classmate. Each of these codes is derived from relevant literature documenting White teachers' understandings of race or racism.

My final research question required me to examine connections between predominantly White ELA PSTs' critical race talk and their pedagogical decision making by asking, "How does critical race talk shape White teachers' talk about pedagogy regarding dialect diversity and language ideologies? A priori codes drawn from Godley et al. (2015) guided my coding of PSTs' proposed pedagogy by helping me to identify sociolinguistic content knowledge and PCK described by PSTs in their discussion board posts (see Table 6). These codes were designed to guide my analysis of the connections participants make between explicit critical race talk and pedagogical decisions. Table 6 provides an overview of my a priori coding categories for my subsequent research questions.

**Table 6. A priori descriptive codes for additional research questions**

| Research Question | A priori codes and relevant literature |
|---|---|
| 2. What prompts critical race talk? | Context:<br>Critical race talk in other PSTs' posts<br>Teacher education course curriculum (Berchini, 2016; Crowley, 2016; Marx & Pennington, 2003)<br>Mini-course design (Godley & Reaser, 2018)<br>    modules<br>    topics<br>    readings<br>    videos |
| 3. How do White teachers respond to each other's critical race talk? | Changing the topic (Haviland, 2008; Yoon, 2012)<br>Denial or rejection of White privilege (Picower, 2009; Solomona et al., 2006)<br>Distancing themselves from participation in White supremacy (Case & Hemmings, 2005; McIntyre, 1997; Yoon, 2012)<br>Colormute/or low stakes discussion of racial difference (Pollock, 2004)<br>Color-blind discussion of difference (Stoll, 2014; Welton et al., 2015)<br>Praise for each other's willingness to broach such a controversial topic (but stopping short of critiquing racism) (Haviland, 2008)<br>Engages in race talk/explicit discussions of race/racism with classmate (Berchini, 2016; Crowley, 2016; Laughter, 2011) |
| 4. How does critical race talk shape White teachers' talk about pedagogy regarding dialect diversity and language ideologies? | PST demonstrates knowledge of.... (adapted from Godley, et al., 2015)<br><br>Content knowledge (Godley et al., 2015)<br>.... all dialects are valid<br>.... all dialects: patterned and grammatical<br>.... language varies across history, geography, other contexts<br>.... language varies by race/SES<br>.... language and identity are closely connected<br>.... linguistic discrimination is prevalent<br><br>Pedagogical content knowledge (Godley et al., 2015; Shulman, 1986)<br>.... accurate explanations of language<br>... assessing student language usage<br>.... developing student mastery of SE<br>.... considering linguistic/racial/SES background of student<br>.... discussions of language variation<br>.... teaching about White supremacy and White privilege |

### 3.6.6   Second round of coding.

Before I began my second round of coding, I assessed the usefulness of my a priori coding categories for research question one. I found that all of my coding categories were capturing phenomena found in the 78 posts coded as including critical race talk. I added one coding category that I called "questions and implied questions." In these posts, PSTs were expressing areas of uncertainty about how to teach about linguistic profiling and racism. I also began to add the sub codes, a history of racism in the U.S., references to daily racism, LP and racism are the same, current events/Trayvon Martin discussion, and going past the racial binary to the code "how systemic racism operates." I also combined three codes about Whiteness (Whiteness as a racial identity, Whiteness impacts teaching, and White privilege) into one larger code called "Whiteness explicitly addressed" in order to get a sense for how many White PSTs were engaging in explicit discussions of Whiteness. I retained the specific codes about Whiteness to retain the details about the content of these discussions of Whiteness.

Next, as I completed the next pass of coding the discussion board data, I read each post and coded for emergent and a priori themes with regards to the newly designed codes for research question one and for research question two, "What prompts critical race talk?" In order to code according to research question number two, I decided by the content of each post if the post was authored in response to a mini-course discussion board prompt or authored in response to a classmate directly. If the participant mentioned another classmate directly or their post, I coded the post as being a response to a classmate/peer. If the post did not include references to a classmate's or peer's discussion board post, I coded it as being authored in response to a prompt. Lastly, I labeled the discussion board module and post that the discussion board post more broadly responded too.

### 3.6.7    Third round of coding.

Before beginning a third round of coding I examined the themes which emerged within the code called "questions and implied questions." I noticed at least six themes dominating these posts. The themes included: how to teach about White supremacy without reinforcing it, how to address "talking White," with students, how to handle teacher White identity or student White identity, challenging the Black/White binary, and creating a sensitive classroom environment. I used these codes to gather more detailed information on the content of the White PSTs questions and areas of uncertainty about how to teach about racism and dialect diversity.

### 3.6.8    Fourth round of coding

In order to code for PST responses to each other's critical race talk I had to examine the context of each post which was coded as including critical race talk. For each post that was coded as including critical race talk, I noted whether the post received a response from a classmate, whether that response itself included critical race talk. Lastly, I coded for themes within the content of that response. I utilized a priori codes from Table 6 to capture possible themes in the PST responses. In a focused round of coding of just these responses to critical race talk, three major themes emerged which included distancing strategies, praise without pushing, and challenging self/others to be more critical.

### 3.6.9 Fifth round of coding.

In order to answer the research question, "How does critical race talk shape White teachers' understandings of racism, dialect diversity and language ideologies, and critical pedagogy?" I examined the content of each of my 78 discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk. I took count of the themes which emerged within the posts. My a priori codes were accurate in capturing phenomena which emerged regarding learning goals and pedagogical strategies. Instead of focusing or refining my codes, I isolated the 30 discussion board posts in which White PSTs made explicit mentions of how they would first need to consider the racial and linguistic identities when considering pedagogical choices and learning goals regarding teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. By reading through these posts and taking detailed memos on themes within this subset of data, a three-step-process pattern emerged. First teachers noted the importance of getting to know the linguistic and racial backgrounds of students. Next, they discussed how they would select specific resources to meet their students' needs. Lastly, PSTs proposed a dialogue about social justice.

### 3.7    TRUSTWORTHINESS

I worked to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of my coding and analysis of data in a number of ways. First, Merriam (2009) instructed qualitative researchers to analyze and document coding decisions throughout the coding and analysis process. I completed this through systemic and organized memo-writing. Next, the breadth of my dataset, 78 discussion board posts, allowed for me to reach a saturation point in my coding and analysis of White teacher

critical race talk. Furthermore, Merriam (2009) warned researchers to consider the strengths and limitations of their data sources, writing:

> In judging the value of a data source, a researcher can ask whether it contains information or insights relevant to the research questions and whether it can be acquired in a reasonably practical yet systemic manner. If these, two questions can be answered in the affirmative, there is no reason not to use a particular source of data. (p. 153)

After my analysis, I concluded that the proposed data source informed my research questions and I was able to analyze my data in a "practical yet systemic manner" (Merriam, 2009, p. 153). In addition, careful notes of emergent themes in my coding spreadsheets and in my memos assisted in my analysis of data.

## 3.8 THE ONLINE NATURE OF THE DATASET

In comparison to other studies on White teacher talk about race and racism, two studies included in my literature review included the analysis of online discussions, Baily & Katradis (2016) and Wade et al. (2016). In my review of sociolinguistic research on race and racism in schools, this study is closely related to the analysis of a similar data set completed by Bissonnette et al. (2016) and Godley et al. (2015). Analysis of online discussion boards as part of pre- and in-service teacher training is a prevalent theme in educational research today (Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2009; Fishman et al., 2013).

Fishman et al. (2013) analyzed the effectiveness in conveying new curriculum to in service teachers through face-to-face versus online instruction. The authors found no significant differences regarding teacher understandings and implementation of the new curriculum based

on whether they participated in online or in-person instruction. In my study, it is difficult to determine whether the online nature of the course affected the teachers' discussion without a similar in-class discussion based on the same curriculum to compare it to. Fishman et al.'s research suggests that the participants in my study demonstrated similar understandings of the purpose and goals of the mini-course in their online discussions as they would have in a face-to-face delivery of the mini-course.

One limitation of my analysis of White teacher talk of race and racism through an online discussion board setting as opposed to a face-to-face classroom discussion is that I might have missed the opportunity to identify nuanced hesitancies and false starts in White teacher race talk. For example, in Haviland's work on White Educational Discourses, the author described elements of oral speech like pauses and false starts in her analysis of White teacher talk about race and racism. The online nature of my dataset did not allow for me to see these types of changes or "real time" growth in participants' discussions. I cannot analyze how long the participant took to craft a response to classmate or curriculum prompt.

Relatedly, Chen, Chen, and. Tsai (2009) analyzed the effectiveness of online discussions in engaging teachers in discussions regarding instructional development. The authors suggested that online discussions, when compared to in-person discussions, may remain superficial or surface level, while in-person discussions may elicit deeper discussions of content. However, the authors suggest that more research on these findings is required to make clear the advantages and distinctions between online and in-person teacher education.

## 3.9    LIMITATIONS

This project was limited in at least two other ways. First, as noted earlier, since the discussion board posts were not tied to individual student identities (due to limitations of the IRB), I did not have the opportunity to track student identity throughout the project (i.e., from pre-questionnaire to post-questionnaire). Thus, the self-reported demographic data collected in the pre-questionnaire was not linked to individual participants' discussion board posts throughout the curriculum. Therefore, given the extreme overrepresentation of White PSTs in the dataset, throughout the coding process, the only occasion that I assumed that the author of a post was not White was when they specifically identified their race in one of their discussion board postings. To be clear, once a participant identified as a person of color, all of their discussion board posts were excluded from my analysis. Another limitation of the study is that there were no opportunities to contact or follow up with participants to explain any ideas they expressed in their discussion board posts. This limited opportunities to establish trustworthiness, such as triangulation and member-checking.

# 4.0    FINDINGS

This project aimed to investigate the characteristics and context of White teacher critical race talk (Berchini, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Laughter, 2011). This chapter reports the findings of my analysis of White teacher engagement in critical race talk in online discussions of teaching about dialect diversity. I first discuss general findings regarding the prevalence of White teacher critical race talk. Next, I present my findings sequentially by research question:

1. What are the characteristics of White teachers' critical race talk about dialect diversity?

2. What prompts White teacher critical race talk?

3. How do White teachers respond to each other's critical race talk?

4. How does critical race talk shape White teachers' talk about pedagogy aimed at teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies?

## 4.1    FREQUENCY OF CRITICAL RACE TALK

In chapter two, I introduced research that has detailed the dearth of research on White teacher engagement in critical race talk. This scholarship has documented both active and passive race talk avoidance strategies, such as superficial talk about racism, silence, color-blind rhetoric, and reliance on discourse strategies that reposition discussions of racism and its consequences to other topics. In addition, second-generation White teacher studies of critical

race talk have challenged race talk avoidance by demonstrating White PST and teacher engagement in critical race talk. This investigation into White teacher critical race talk also challenges race talk avoidance, silence, and even superficial talk about racism.

### 4.1.1   Critical race talk avoidance.

My dataset was selected for analysis of White teacher critical race talk because the curriculum of the dialect diversity mini-course and its discussion board prompts directed participants to write about, share, and grapple with ideas of race, language, discrimination, and identity. Consequently, even though literature on White teachers' understandings of race and racism has demonstrated a lack of White teacher engagement in critical race talk, in the analysis of this specific dataset, I anticipated identifying multiple discussions of race, racism, and its consequences due to the learning goals of the mini-course and the topics addressed in the discussion board prompts. However, in my findings, I encountered a significant amount of White PST avoidance and silence regarding race and racism. Therefore, I first document and explain the scarcity of critical race talk found in my analysis of White teacher discussion board posts regarding teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. In other words, one of the first major findings which emerged from this dataset was the lack of White teacher engagement in critical race talk: critical race talk emerged in only 3% of the discussion board posts. In total, 78 of 2,962 discussion board posts were coded as including critical race talk, or explicit mentions of racism and its consequences. Table 7 demonstrates the overall percentage of discussion board posts coded as having at least one example of critical race talk within the post.

**Table 7. Frequency of Critical Race Talk in Discussion Board Posts**

| Total Number of Discussion Board Posts Analyzed | Number of Discussion Board Posts Coded as Critical Race Talk | Percentage of Discussion Board Posts Coded as Critical Race Talk |
|---|---|---|
| 2962 | 78 | 3% |

Discussion board posts in which racism was mentioned but not discussed further (e.g., "it's important to consider racism") were not coded as critical race talk in this analysis. I refer to these as simply race talk or superficial, or Colormute (Pollock, 2004), references to race and racism. For example, in response to prompt 2.2, Kathy from SoTech mentioned the phrase "the linguistics of White supremacy" and said that this is too harsh of a way to describe why SE is a preferred form of English in the United States today. This reference to White supremacy did not qualify as including critical race talk because the participant did not engage in further discussion or critique of White supremacy. Mallory from Tidewater also wrote in a superficial way about preferring the term African-American to Black, by sharing, "I also would use AAVE because I am personally not comfortable with using the term 'Black' and I find the term derogatory toward African American people." This mention of racial identifiers was not coded as critical race talk because it simply mentions words used to describe people of different racial backgrounds.

### 4.1.2   Missed opportunities for critical race talk engagement.

Next, I would like to highlight particular discussion board prompts to demonstrate how these prompts were designed to engage participants in discussions of race, racism and their consequences. In addition, I introduce data from my analysis which demonstrates how the PSTs answered these prompts while avoiding explicit discussions of race and racism. For reference, a full description of the discussion board prompts can be found in Appendix C.

In prompt 2.3, participants were asked to justify whether they agreed with Dr. Lisa Delpit who argued that it is "racist and classist" to deny vernacular speaking students access to certain "codes of power" which include mastery of SE or to side with Dr. James Sledd who argued that the promotion of SE in schools reinforces the "linguistics of White supremacy." In my analysis of responses to prompt 2.3, I did not code any responses to this prompt as including critical race talk. Although this prompt specifically addressed issues of White supremacy, power, and racism and it was posed to all participants in this mini-course, none of the participants responded with critical race talk. Even though participants may have made superficial mentions of racism or White supremacy in their responses, none of the participants engaged in discussions that detailed explicit examples of how systemic racism operates, such as recognition or discussions of White supremacy, White privilege, or examples of everyday discrimination experienced by people of color. Given how explicitly the discussion board prompt connected racial and language ideologies through the theories of Dr. Delpit and Dr. Sledd, the lack of engagement in critical race talk produced from this specific discussion board prompt is notable.

In another example of missed opportunities to discuss racism in a productive way, prompt 4.1 asked participants to design activities to help their students to learn about linguistic profiling and linguistic discrimination. Participants were asked to discuss their racial identity and that of their students. Godley and Reaser wrote:

> How would your learning goals and activities change depending on both your linguistic and racial identity and your students' linguistic and racial identities? In other words, would you teach about linguistic discrimination differently if your students identified as vernacular English speakers or if they saw themselves as standardized

English only speakers? How would your racial and linguistic identity shape how you taught this content?" (2018)

In my analysis, I found that only 30 discussion board posts written in response to prompt 4.1 were coded as including critical race talk. This number seems low considering that the prompt was directly posed to 214 participants. This means that participants avoided explicit talk of racism by not mentioning or superficially mentioning their racial identity or that of their students. It is important to note that even with only 30 discussion board posts from this prompt coded as including critical race talk, responses to this prompt provided the most engagement of critical race talk when compared to the all of the other discussion board prompts. Compared to other prompts, this prompt asked PSTs more directly to talk about race and racism. Although more PSTs responded with critical race talk to this prompt versus others, pervasive race talk avoidance was still apparent in the PSTs' responses to all the prompts.

In prompt 4.2, participants were asked to design activities for their potential students to learn about linguistic discrimination through British-Guyanese poet John Agard's poem, "Listen Mr Oxford Don." Once again, my analysis found that participants demonstrated a lack of engagement in discussions of race, racism, and its consequences, despite being prompted to discuss linguistic discrimination in their responses. The discussion board prompt asked participants:

> Consider: How would you design discussion questions and activities about the poem to raise issues of linguistic discrimination, English language variation, and language and identity? Be as specific as possible. Give detailed descriptions of the activities or questions you would pose and describe verbatim how you would frame the

lesson and/or explain potentially unfamiliar concepts (such as linguistic discrimination).

(Godley & Reaser, 2018)

Even though this prompt specifically asked participants to discuss examples of pedagogies that would "raise issues of linguistic discrimination," only five discussion board post responses included at least one example of critical race talk. Again, White teacher engagement in critical race talk in their responses to this prompt was infrequent.

Lastly, in a final example of missed opportunities for critical race talk, the final prompt of the mini-course, 4.3, asked participants to discuss what they had learned about language variation and its "connection to widespread stereotypes and discrimination." In addition, PSTs were asked to express "two to three major ideas you are taking away from these modules." Again, this prompt was posed to all 214 participants. In this case, only three discussion board posts responses to this prompt were coded as including critical race talk. Thus, White PSTs in this study seemed reluctant or hesitant to engage in critical race talk regarding teaching about language ideologies and dialect diversity.

### 4.1.3   Race talk avoidance strategies amongst White PSTs

Overall, as previously stated, my analysis found that only 3% of all discussion board posts (78/2,962 discussion board posts) were found to include at least one example of critical race talk. As a reminder, I coded critical race talk as mentions of race or racism in which participants acknowledged how racism is related to deficit thinking about people of color, daily experiences with discrimination, or explicit discussions of how White privilege shapes values and norms in the United States today. However, the lack of critical race talk does not mean that

participants did not make passing, or superficial, mentions of race or racism. However, these discussions often did not include critical race talk or talk of racism's consequences.

This brief analysis of race talk avoidance provides important context for my further analysis of the phenomena of critical race talk as it emerged in this dataset. Race talk avoidance strategies used by PSTs in this dataset included, but were not limited to, superficial talk about race/racism, reliance on abstract liberal color-blind appeals to minimize or reposition discussions of racism to another topic like culture or class, descriptions of celebrating difference in a race neutral manner, and finally distancing strategies used by PSTs to separate themselves from explicit discussions of racism and its consequences.

*Abstract liberal color-blind discourse strategies.* Many of the PSTs in this study used color-blind talk to discuss racial inequity, as has been documented in previous studies of White teachers (Stoll, 2014; Welton et al., 2015; Yoon, 2012). For example, in response to Prompt 1.2, participant Amy from Great Plains 1 drew upon color-blindness in her description of teaching her students about dialect and difference. She wrote:

> Students should learn what dialects are (patterns in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar) and what they are influenced by (cultural, personal, and regional backgrounds). This can occur anywhere and for any group of people.  Students should examine patterns in their own speech to gain perspective on why they judge certain dialogues the way they do and to practice inquiry and pattern identification.

Although Amy addressed elements of the discussion board prompt, which asked her to examine how to teach about dialects in literature, she avoided articulating connections between racial and language ideologies. This post was not coded as explicit talk about racism because Amy used race neutral language to talk about how people are judged. Amy promoted the color-

blind notion that discrimination can happen to anyone, when she wrote, "This can occur anywhere and for any group of people." Becky from Great Plains 1 also utilized a color-blind explanation of linguistic discrimination that recalled the problematic yet pervasive notion of the United States as a "melting pot." In response to prompt 4.1, which asked participants to detail what they would want their students to know about linguistic discrimination, Becky wrote:

> The United States should be the most linguistically tolerant nation on the face of the earth because our citizens come from everywhere. And because of the fact that all of our ancestors had to go through a transition where English was not their mother tongue… You should be free to speak in whatever way is comfortable for you and your fellow citizens don't misjudge you.

Appealing to the notion that as U.S. citizens we "all come from immigrants," is an example of an abstract liberal color-blind discourse strategy used to minimize the impact of racialized discrimination against people of color today (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). By appealing to the notion that "our citizens come from everywhere," Becky perpetuated the myth of the United States as a "melting pot." This problematic color-blind discourse strategy minimizes racism by asserting that withstanding discrimination is a common and insignificant experience for every U.S. citizen (or their ancestors). As well as minimizing the experiences with discrimination that those who are linguistically and racially profiled today, this color-blind retelling of U.S. history conflates difference and discrimination. What's more, this strategy minimizes the lived experiences of those who were forcefully moved to this country in chains through a system of chattel slavery. This discourse strategy equates the experiences of those who lived and died as property with those who spoke English with a pronounced accent. Most of all, the problematic "melting pot" explanation of difference ignores the ways in which the descendants of enslaved

Africans and people of color in the United States today still experience daily, systemic, and pervasive discrimination today due to the color of their skin and/or the sound of their voice.

### 4.1.4 Celebrate difference

.Relatedly, the notion of the importance of "celebrating difference" has also been critiqued as a discourse strategy which used color-blind and race neutral language to minimize the experiences of those who experience racial discrimination (Banks, 1996). For example, a discussion about discrimination against vernacular dialect speakers could be repositioned as a race talk avoidant discussion about the importance of celebrating differences. By changing the topic from discrimination to difference, discussion of racism and its consequences is avoided. Celebrating difference emerged in discussion board posts in which participants would list authors or artists of color and insist that examples of their literature or music be included in their lessons on dialect diversity. However, these posts lacked explanations of how or why inclusion of these resources would contribute to learning about language ideologies. For example, Frank from Magnolia wrote about including the work of Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou. However, Frank did not explain how including these resources would relate to teaching about discrimination or racism. Frank shared, "Studying successful authors, like Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou who unashamedly use AAVE in their work, I think definitely gets students and teachers alike to understand all language varieties as important to identity." Frank called for the inclusion of Hughes and Angelou, who wrote in vernacular dialects as a positive, because "all language varieties [are] important." Celebrating difference, as a discourse strategy, might allow teachers to reposition discussions of discrimination to difference. Frank touched on how their dialect usage might have been negatively received by using the word "unashamedly." Though,

Frank stopped short of explaining why these authors would feel shame for writing in a dialect. By focusing on celebrating difference, Frank and other PSTs who promoted celebrating difference as a learning goal missed opportunities to discuss how to engage their students in critical discussions of the impact of linguistic discrimination as a form of racism.

**4.1.5   Distancing strategies.**

Several distancing strategies emerged in the discussion board posts in which participants would mention race or racism and then distance their own participation in racism through changing the topic or discussing how another person they know may be guilty of participating in discrimination (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Haviland, 2008; McIntyre, 1997). The participants who authored these posts stopped short of admitting or critiquing their own participation in racism and/or discrimination. For example, Madison from Great Plains 2 used a distancing strategy of changing the topic when writing in response to discussion board prompt 2.2, which asked participants to critique whether speaking in SE was an act of White supremacy. Madison wrote:

> However, I do believe that formal linguistics, and learning how to articulate professionally through Standardized English is a way of opening doors for opportunity in students' lives, and I do not think that it has anything to do with promoting White supremacy.

Even though the mini-course module presented a curriculum with a clear learning goal to make explicit the connections between racial and linguistic ideologies, Madison changed the topic from White supremacy as a cause of linguistic discrimination to the abstract notion of "professionalism."

Jamie, a participant at SoTech used both color-blind talk and a distancing strategy to sidestep discussion of her own racialized views of language discrimination. Jamie explained how people close to her too often discriminated against people of other races for speaking a vernacular dialect. In response to prompt 2.2, which asked participants to discuss teaching students about code switching and the Academic Mastery Program, Jamie wrote:

> I have often heard members of my family, community, peer group, etc. lament the use of incorrect English, whether it's by a Southern English speaker, an African American English speaker, or a "Valley Girl" speaker using uptalk. My father often comments about interviews with NFL players on TV saying that they're "incompetent" and need to "speak right," when in reality, they're speaking in their dialect. He doesn't seem to understand that their intelligence and competency have nothing to do with their language, nor does he understand that their use of language is not a result of failing to use "proper English" correctly.

Jamie mentioned how acquaintances explicitly expressed deficit views about both African American and "valley girl" speakers. However, Jaime did not distinguish how these deficit views might be linked to larger systems of that fuel oppression based on race or even age. Also, by providing examples of people who stereotypically represent both Black and White racial backgrounds, professional athletes and "valley girls," Jamie risks implying that both Black and White people are often victims of linguistic profiling. Overall, Jamie avoids making any connections between racial and linguistic ideologies.

### 4.1.6  Putting the burden of race talk on potential students.

Lastly, it is important to call attention to discussion board posts in which PSTs included superficial mentions of race and racism before suggesting a learning activity for their students that would require the students, and not the teacher, to explain or discuss examples of how racism and linguistic discrimination are related. For example, Amber from SoTech wrote in response to prompt 4.1 which asked participants to describe what they want their students to learn about linguistic profiling:

> I would have the students listen to the poem on audio and then let them watch John Agard present his poem. The purpose is to let them guess his race by listening to his voice and then letting them view his face. In the classroom, I would have the students to write down their thoughts in an essay fashion by answering the following questions: Define linguistic discrimination. According to the poem, Listen Mr Oxford Don, do you believe that linguistic discrimination exists in school? Can you provide examples? After providing examples, what do you think you can do to diminish linguistic discrimination? The linguistic discrimination discussions tend to judge others because of how each culture are expected to present themselves through their dialects. After giving them a few minutes to write their essay I would show the students a cartoon, "Scrub Me Mama With A Boogie Beat," which is a Walter Lantz Production created in 1941. I would have the students to describe racial identity and linguistic discrimination as a response essay to turn in.

Amber proposed asking students to linguistically profile the poet, define and provide examples of linguistic discrimination, describe when linguistic discrimination happens in their schools, develop a plan to mitigate linguistic discrimination, and to then write an essay on a

cartoon related to linguistic discrimination. Amber's post suggested that students would be expected to complete those tasks independently. Amber used race avoidant language to explain how linguistic discrimination is based on how each "culture" presents itself; thus, this post was not coded as including critical race talk even though the participant mentions race, discrimination, and racial identity. Amber's discussion board post avoided engaging in critical race talk, even though she mentioned the word discrimination. However, she promoted learning goals and activities which would require her students to engage in difficult discussions of racism and its relationship to linguistic profiling. By prompting her students to think deeply about racism and its consequences but by avoided engaging in critical race talk herself, Amber demonstrates how White teachers may recognize the importance of discussing racism but at the same time be hesitant to engage in critical race talk (Baily & Katradis, 2016).

### 4.1.7 Imagining the potential for race talk.

In a final note about the scarcity of critical race talk as documented in my analysis, I want you to imagine now that each participant in this project (N = 214) engaged in one critical discussion of racism in their discussion board post in response to at least one prompt. The addition of these 214 prompts would bring the total number of posts coded as critical race talk to 292 or almost 10% of discussion board posts (as opposed to my 3% findings). Consider further, if more than half of the predominantly White PST participants included for analysis in this project (N = 120) engaged in at least one explicit discussion of racism and its consequences in one post, prevalence of critical race talk in this project would have more than doubled to around 196/2962 posts. Overall frequency would have changed from 3% to 7%. In other words, even though the mini-course was designed with specific discussion board prompts to engage

participants in discussions of racism and discrimination and even though the course was grounded in theory and pedagogy in which these critical discussions are promoted (i.e., critical language awareness and Godley & Minnici's [2008] Critical Language Pedagogy) the overall amount of critical discussions about racism were extremely low. Additionally, even though we know that White teachers will avoid or silence race talk, I expected to see more engagement in discussions of race, racism and their consequences in this dataset than the 3% which emerged.

## 4.2     WHITE PST PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT IN CRITICAL RACE TALK

My analysis of over 2,900 discussion board posts for engagement in critical race talk yielded only 78 discussion board posts in which White PSTs explicitly discussed racism and its consequences. However, in an analysis of *who* participated in critical race talk, I found that the posts that included critical race talk were authored by a total of 29% of the White PST participants (56/214). Given that the percentage of critical race talk was so low, the number of participants who engaged in critical race talk was much higher in comparison. Nearly one third of the White PST participants in the online mini-course project engaged in at least one discussion of racism and its consequences. As a researcher interested in engaging PSTs and teachers in discussions of race and racism as an essential element of preparing teachers to approach teaching as social justice work, I find this number promising. Given both the depth and breadth of research on White teacher race talk silence, avoidance, and discourse strategies that minimize or ignore racism, the fact that without much instructor engagement (across all university sites), so many of the White PSTs of who enrolled in the dialect diversity mini-course engaged in critical race talk highlights the potential for teacher educators and researchers to continue to challenge

the notion of the White teacher as unwilling, unknowing, or unable to engage in critical race talk (Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Laughter, 2010).

I refer to each set of data from each course as a "university." However, Great Plains provided two sets of data that I was able to analyze for this project. Therefore, I have labeled the data collected for Great Plains from the fall of 2014 as Great Plains 1 and the data collected in the summer of 2015 as Great Plains 2. Both courses were taught by the same instructor. In a later section, I analyze important differences and similarities found between the discussion board posts from Great Plains 1 and Great Plains 2.

Table 8 shows the frequency of critical race talk from participants and frequency of critical race talk discussion board posts by university. The university site that had the highest percentage of White critical race talk participants was Lakeside university with 17 White PSTs or 44% of the total number of participants authoring discussion board posts that included critical race talk. At Great Plains 1, 15 White PSTs or 37% of the participants in that course engaged in critical race talk. These two universities also had the most students enrolled in their courses with 39 and 41 students enrolled, respectively. In addition, Lakeside and Great Plains 1 produced the highest percentage of discussion board posts that included critical race talk. Tidewater and Ravine, the two universities with courses that had the smallest number of enrolled students had the lowest percentage of participants who engaged in critical race talk.

**Table 8. Participant Engagement in Critical Race Talk (CRT) by University**

| University | Number of Course Participants Total | Number of White Participants that Participated in CRT | Percentage of all Participants that Participated in CRT | Number of DB Posts Total | Number of Discussion Board Posts Coded as CRT | Percentage of DB Posts Coded as CRT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lakeside | 39 | 17 | 44% | 783 | 20 | 3% |
| Great Plains 1 | 41 | 15 | 37% | 414 | 25 | 6% |
| Magnolia | 19 | 6 | 32% | 279 | 8 | 3% |
| Western State | 26 | 7 | 27% | 427 | 9 | 2% |
| SoTech | 19 | 4 | 21% | 173 | 7 | 4% |
| Rust | 24 | 4 | 17% | 365 | 4 | 1% |
| Great Plains 2 | 27 | 2 | 7% | 279 | 4 | 1% |
| Tidewater | 15 | 1 | 7% | 163 | 1 | 1% |
| Ravine | 5 | 0 | 0% | 79 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 214 | 56 | 26% | 2962 | 78 | 3% |

As stated in the methods section, the teachers who participated in this online mini-course on teaching about dialect diversity were predominantly (95%), but not all, White. Table 9 provides a more detailed analysis of the number and percentage of White PSTs who participated in critical race talk by university.

**Table 9. White Participant Engagement in Critical Race Talk by University**

| University | Number of Course Participants | Number of White Course Participants | Number of White Critical Race Talk Participants | Percentage of White Participants that Engaged in CRT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lakeside | 39 | 34 | 17 | 50% |
| Great Plains 1 | 41 | 36 | 15 | 42% |
| Magnolia | 19 | 17 | 6 | 35% |
| Western State | 26 | 23 | 7 | 30% |
| SoTech | 19 | 15 | 4 | 27% |
| Rust | 23 | 23 | 4 | 17% |
| Great Plains 2 | 27 | 25 | 2 | 8% |
| Tidewater | 15 | 15 | 1 | 7% |
| Ravine | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 214 | 192 | 56 | 29% |

At Lakeside university, 50% of the White participants engaged in at least one example of critical race talk in their discussions of teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. Moreover, the majority of the White PSTs from Great Plains 1, Magnolia, and Western State also engaged in critical race talk at least once. Overall, the number of White PST participants who engaged in at least one discussion of critical race talk is promising for teacher educators and education researchers who seek to engage White PSTs in discussions of race and racism for the purpose of mitigating racism in U.S. K-12 schools. These findings suggest that White teachers are reluctant yet able to discuss racism.

**Table 10. White Engagement in Critical Race Talk by University Considering Course Racial Demographics.**

| University | Percentage of White Participants that Engaged in CRT | Percentage Participants of Color Enrolled | Total Number of Course Participants | Number of White Critical Race Talk Participants | Number of White Course Participants | Number of Black Course Participants | Number of Latinx Course Participants | Number of Asian Course Participants | Number of Mixed Racial Background Course Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lakeside | 50% | 13% | 39 | 17 | 34 | 4 | 1 | * | * |
| Great Plains 1 | 42% | 12% | 41 | 15 | 36 | * | * | 1 | 4 |
| Magnolia | 35% | 11% | 19 | 6 | 17 | 1 | 1 | * | * |
| Western State | 30% | 12% | 26 | 7 | 23 | * | 1 | 2 | * |
| SoTech | 27% | 21% | 19 | 4 | 15 | 1 | * | 3 | * |
| Rust | 17% | 0% | 23 | 4 | 23 | * | * | * | * |
| Great Plains 2 | 8% | 7% | 27 | 2 | 25 | * | 1 | 1 | * |
| Tidewater | 7% | 0% | 15 | 1 | 15 | * | * | * | * |
| Ravine | 0% | 20% | 5 | 0 | 4 | * | 1 | * | * |
| Total | 29% | | 214 | 56 | 192 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 |

Table 10 shows the frequency of White teacher engagement in critical race talk by university as related to the self-reported racial diversity of the mini-course participants. White PSTs were more likely to participate in critical race talk in courses in which more racial diversity was present and the relative class size was large. For example, 50% of White PSTs at Lakeside participated in critical race talk with a class size of 39 participants and 13% of participants self-reporting as people of color. Relatedly, 27% of White participants at SoTech participated in at

least one example of critical race talk. SoTech reported a class size of 19 participants with 21%

reporting as people of color (one participant reporting as Black and three reporting as Asian). By

contrast, I found very limited White teacher engagement in critical race talk at Tidewater (7%)

which reported a relatively smaller class size of 15 all White participants. In addition, I did not

find any critical race talk amongst the White participants at Ravine which reported five

participants total with one student or 20% reported as Latinx. In summary, the findings of this

analysis suggest that White teachers are more likely to engage in critical race talk in relatively

larger class sizes with more racially diverse students.

Comparing the White teacher critical race talk engagement in the Great Plains 1 and

Great Plains 2 classes demonstrates how relatively larger class size and increased racial diversity

may promote White teacher critical race talk. Forty-two percent of White teachers in the Great

Plains 1 class participated in critical race talk. This iteration of the course included 41

participants total with 12% of participants reporting as having racial backgrounds other than

White (one participant reporting as Asian and four reporting as having mixed racial

backgrounds). By comparison, only 8% of White teachers in the Great Plains 2 class participated

in critical race talk. The class size was smaller with 27 participants and only 7% of participants

reporting as Latinx and Asian (one Latinx and one Asian).

### 4.2.1   White PST engagement in critical race talk by region.

Table 11 shows critical race talk engagement by White participants by region. The

participants in my study who were enrolled at two Mid-Western universities, Lakeside and Great

Plains 1, were more likely to engage in critical race talk than participants from other geographic

regions. In addition, the participants from two Southern universities, Tidewater and Ravine, were

least likely to engage in critical race talk. Further complicating my analysis of regional critical race talk participation are the finding that show that participants in Great Plains 1 were much more likely to engage in critical race talk than the participants in Great Plains 2. Almost half of the White PST participants at Great Plains 1, 42%, engaged in critical race talk in their discussion board posts. Only 8% of the participants in Great Plains 2 engaged in critical race talk. Both courses had the same curriculum and instructor. When examining Table 10, specifically the distribution of critical race talk likelihood and region, there is no clear trend or pattern between critical race talk participation and region. Furthermore, this lack of correlation between region and critical race talk must be considered in conversation with previous research on the relationship between regionality and race talk found in the work of Bissonnette et al. (2016).

Table 11. Critical Race Talk by University with Region

| University (Pseudonym) | Region | Number of White Participants that Engaged in CRT | Percentage of White Participants that Engaged in CRT | Number of Discussion Board Posts Coded as CRT | Percentage of DB Posts Coded as CRT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lakeside | Midwestern | 17 | 50% | 20 | 3% |
| Great Plains 1 | Midwestern | 15 | 42% | 25 | 6% |
| Magnolia | Southern | 6 | 35% | 8 | 3% |
| Western State | Western | 7 | 30% | 9 | 2% |
| SoTech | Southern | 4 | 27% | 7 | 4% |
| Rust | Midwestern | 4 | 17% | 4 | 1% |
| Great Plains 2 | Midwestern | 2 | 8% | 4 | 1% |
| Tidewater | Southern | 1 | 7% | 1 | 1% |
| Ravine | Southern | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| | Total | 56 | 29% | | |

When examining the distribution of critical race talk by region in Table 11, there is no clear trend or pattern between critical race talk participation and region. This finding complicates previous research on the relationship between regionality and race talk found in the work of Bissonnette et al. (2016) on a subset of this same dataset. The authors found more talk about race and racism in two Southern sites (Magnolia and SoTech) than in a Midwestern site. However, in the larger dataset, participants from two Midwestern universities, Great Plains and Lakeside, were more likely to engage in critical race talk than students from universities in other regions, including Southern schools.

When considering regionality alone, my findings differ from those of Bissonnette et al. (2016). However, I did not examine the diversity of the geographic region around the universities, as Bissonnette et al. did. Bissonnette et al. argued that both regionality and diversity in the university's community and surrounding geographic area explained the greater frequency of race talk at the Southern universities. My findings suggest that regionality may not have been as important a factor as diversity of the university and surrounding area. Additionally, differences in the findings may be explained by the fact that our studies used slightly different definitions of race talk. Bissonnette et al. viewed race talk as including mentions of race and racism that were not explicitly tied to inequities or unequal outcomes (i.e., superficial mentions of race and racism) while I only included talk that explicitly mentioned the effects of racism or privilege.

When considering regionality alone, my findings might contrast those of Bissonnette et al. However, by only considering regionality, I would not be fully drawing upon the full scope of Bissonnette et al.'s argument. In addition to regionality, the authors maintained that the racial demographics of the universities and in the geographic areas surrounding the universities and the

life experiences of the participants also seemed to contribute to increased race talk (or avoidance of race talk). Therefore, I analyzed my dataset not only for trends regarding regionality, but PST participant identity, including reported experiences with racial and linguistic diversity, as collected in their pre-mini course questionnaires. The purpose of this analysis was to examine how self-reported experiences with racial, gender, and other experiences with diversity both inside and outside of the mini-course might relate to PST likelihood to engage in critical race talk. Table 12 depicts the percentage of White participants who engaged in critical race talk and the various background characteristics of mini-course participants and their life experiences collected from the pre-mini-course questionnaire.

**Table 12. Percentage of White Participants that Engaged in Critical Race Talk by University with Demographics**

| University (Pseudonym) | Region | Size of Class (%) | White Participants that Participated in CRT | Percentage of DB posts coded as CRT | Not White (%) | Women (%) | Reporting Diverse Social Groups (%) | High School Teachers (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lakeside | Midwestern | 39 | 50% | 3% | 13% | 72% | 36% | 72% |
| Great Plains 1 | Midwestern | 41 | 42% | 6% | 12% | 80% | 34% | 78% |
| Magnolia | Southern | 19 | 35% | 3% | 11% | 58% | 42% | 89% |
| Western State | Western | 26 | 30% | 2% | 12% | 81% | 19% | 88% |
| SoTech | Southern | 19 | 27% | 4% | 21% | 84% | 16% | 84% |
| Rust | Midwestern | 23 | 17% | 1% | 0% | 70% | 17% | 100% |
| Great Plains 2 | Midwestern | 27 | 8% | 1% | 7% | 85% | 22% | 37% |
| Tidewater | Southern | 15 | 7% | 1% | 0% | 100% | 53% | 13% |
| Ravine | Southern | 5 | 0% | 0% | 20% | 100% | 20% | 40% |

Several themes emerged in the analysis of the demographics reported in Table 12 when considering PSTs' likelihood of participating in critical race talk. These themes included increased critical race talk in universities which reported larger class sizes, higher rates of gender diversity, and higher numbers of enrollment of PSTs preparing to work in high schools. These findings correspond with the findings of Bissonnette et al., which suggest that PSTs who report diversity of life experiences were less likely to avoid critical race talk.

To begin, the courses with the largest class sizes tended to have both the highest number and percentages of participants engaging in critical race talk (i.e., Lakeside and Great Plains 1 with 39 and 41 students enrolled and 50% and 42% of White participants engaging in critical race talk, respectively). A similar theme emerged when analyzing the likelihood of critical race talk participation when considering gender diversity. Specifically, the courses with more men enrolled tended to have more participants engaging in critical race talk. Also, in courses in which the vast majority of the PSTs were preparing to become high school teachers, as opposed to middle and elementary school teachers, I found more participants engaging in critical race talk.

Furthermore, when I analyzed the 50% White teacher engagement in critical race talk by White PSTs at Lakeside university, I found that Lakeside had the second largest class size, the third largest representation of men, the third largest representation of reporting diverse social backgrounds, as well the largest majority of teachers (70%) preparing to teach high school. A comparison of the reported demographics from the participants in Great Plains 1 and Great Plains 2 strengthens these findings that university courses with larger enrollments, participants from more diverse backgrounds (with regards to gender, race, and reported experiences with diverse social groups) and more teachers preparing to be high school teachers produced more critical race talk than courses with fewer participants, less diverse students enrolled, and more

teachers preparing to instruct middle or elementary school. Participants in Great Plains 1 produced 25 discussion board posts coded as critical race talk authored by 42% (or 15) of the White PST participants enrolled in the course. Participants in the Great Plains 2 course produced four discussion board posts coded as critical race talk as authored by 8% (or two) of the White PSTs enrolled in the course. Again, both courses were taught by the same instructor and utilized the same dialect diversity and language ideologies mini-course. However, differences between the reported demographics of the PST participants shows that Great Plains 1 had more students enrolled (39 vs. 27), a slightly larger representation of people of color (12% to 7%), more PSTs who reported experiences with diverse social groups (34% to 22%), and notably 78% of the PSTs from Great Plains reported preparing to instruct high school vs. only 37% of the teachers from Great Plains 2.

Overall, in my analysis of regional differences, I did not find strong correlations between region and White PST critical race talk likelihood; however, this analysis, as informed by the work of Bissonnette et al., (2016), found that diverse PST classroom demographics and experiences, as well as class size and the percentage of PSTs planning to teach high school (as opposed to middle or elementary school) may contribute to increased White PST critical race talk.

## 4.3    CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITICAL RACE TALK

The central research question for this study was, "What are the characteristics of White teacher critical race talk regarding teaching about dialect diversity?" To answer this question, I first needed to identify the discussion board posts in which White teachers talked in a meaningful

way about the impact of racism in the United States today. In contrast to studies on White teacher race talk which included superficial mentions of race and racism and documented race talk avoidance strategies and discourse strategies that maintained or supported White supremacy (Bissonnette et al., 2016; Buehler, 2013, Haviland, 2008, Pollack, 2004), in this project I was interested in only examining talk about race and racism in which White PSTs engaged in discussions about racism that reflected a critical understanding of the impact of racism in the United States today. I aimed to examine emergent themes and trends within and across these critical discussions about racism with the intent of contributing to scholarship on White teachers' understandings of race and racism (as presented in my chapter two literature review). Throughout my analysis, I excluded general race talk which included superficial references to race, racism, and racial categories in which participants used race words but failed to acknowledge how racism impacts or has impacted people of color.

### 4.3.1 Themes in critical race talk.

After reading each discussion board from all nine universities, I was left with a subset of 78 posts which I identified as including critical race talk. After coding and analysis within and across the posts, four prominent themes emerged: recognition of how systemic racism impacts people of color, engagement in discussions of Whiteness, recognition of the prevalence of deficit thinking about people of color and questioning about how to teach about topics like linguistic and racial profiling. Table 13 depicts the prevalence of each of these themes in the dataset. It is important to note that a discussion board post could be coded to include more than one theme, therefore the sum of the frequencies of the themes add up to more than 100%. Forty-five discussion board posts or 58% of the posts coded as including race talk were coded as including

explicit examples or mentions of how systemic racism operates in the United States today or in the past. Twenty-nine posts, or 37% of the critical race talk posts, were coded as including explicit discussions of Whiteness as a notable racial identity. Twenty-eight percent of the discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk, or 22 posts, included references to recognition by White PSTs that deficit thinking about people of color is a prevalent problem (both inside and outside of schools). Lastly, 20 posts, or 26% of the critical race talk posts included questions or areas of uncertainty posed about how to teach about linguistic and racial profiling.

Table 13. Themes within White PST Critical Race Talk

| Theme | Number of Critical Race Talk Posts | Percentage of Critical Race Talk Posts |
|---|---|---|
| Recognition of How Systemic Racism Operates | 45 | 58% |
| Explicit Discussions of Whiteness | 29 | 37% |
| Recognition of Prevalence of Deficit Thinking about People of Color | 21 | 28% |
| Questioning How to Teach About Linguistic & Racial Profiling | 20 | 26% |

### 4.3.2 Recognition of how systemic racism operates.

The most frequent of the four major themes which emerged from White PST critical race talk were posts that included explanations and examples of how systemic racism operates in the United States. Pervasive and harmful racialized discrimination in the United States has been

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documented at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels of society (Bell, 1992; Pincus, 1992). In addition, racialized discrimination has been documented as both overt and perpetuated through seemingly harmless, yet pernicious microaggressions (Bonilla-Siva, 2010; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). The coding category "how systemic racism operates" was designed to capture examples of discourse by White PSTs in which they explained one or several examples of overt or nuanced racial discrimination as it may impact (or has impacted) people of color in the United States. Fifty eight percent of the critical race talk discussion board posts were also coded as including explanations of how systemic racism operates.

Some PSTs were broad in their explanations of the pervasive nature of racialized inequities in the United States as they relate to dialect diversity. For example. Ruth from Great Plains 1 stated bluntly that discrimination against students of color not only occurs but is well-documented. Ruth wrote, "There have been countless studies done in various schools across the country where students of color or low SES are discriminated against and not provided the same opportunities as their middle-class classmates." Similarly, Annah, a PST from Western state asserted that she has observed teachers ignoring opportunities to discuss racism. She added that these kinds of careless oversights might perpetuate racism. Annah shared, "I have definitely seen teachers attempt to teach about an issue like slavery and never actually connect it to racism today. It is easy to (unknowingly) perpetuate systems that condone racism and discrimination when we pretend they don't exist." Ruth and Annah talked about racism as a pervasive problem that is documented and yet ignored. Annah even stated that ignoring these topics in classrooms makes it easy for people to forget about racism, which might lead to racism being overlooked and perpetuated by others. These examples of critical race talk by White teachers draw attention

to broad descriptions of the ways in which systemic racism perpetuates in the United States today. In another general comment on racism, Carlotta from Rust University shared:

> It would be important for me (not sure how to word this learning goal) to help students first see and then analyze and evaluate how power, privilege, dominant culture, & discrimination are related and how they function today.

Along with these general descriptions of racism in the United States today, some PSTs critical race talk was much more specific. Subsequently, three sub-themes of "how systemic racism operates" emerged. Table 14 shows the prevalence of these sub-themes across the discussion board dataset. In 30 discussion board posts labeled as critical race talk, 38% of the critical race talk posts, White PSTs made assertions that linguistic profiling and racism are the same. In 13 posts or 17% of the critical race talk posts, White PSTs used language to describe more specific examples of how people of color in the United States may experience racialized discrimination on a daily basis. Finally, in six posts, or 8% of the total dataset, PSTs made explicit mentions of racist events or racist practices that relate to key historical events or practices from U.S. history.

**Table 14. Emergent Themes within Recognition of How Systemic Racism Operates**

| Theme | Number of Critical Race Talk Posts | Percentage of Critical Race Talk Posts |
|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Profiling and Racism are the Same | 30 | 38% |
| References to Daily Racism/Life Experiences of People of Color | 13 | 17% |
| History of Racism in the United States | 6 | 8% |

### 4.3.3 Linguistic profiling and racism are the same.

Nearly 40% of the discussion board posts coded as critical race talk included specific mentions of how linguistic profiling and racism are the same thing (38%). The overlap between language and racial ideologies emerged through PSTs' engaging in conversations about how they would approach teaching linguistic profiling as a form of racism, or as discussions about how they considered linguistic profiling and racism to be the same thing. Several PSTs specifically noted that linguistic identity is very similar to racial identity. Specifically, Rebecca from Great Plains 1 commented that racial and linguistic identity are "so interwoven." She wrote:

I do find so much truth in the fact that racial and linguistic identity are so interwoven it can be difficult to separate them; I don't think this is a bad thing, but the profiling that comes as a result of it is detrimental.

Similarly, Meighan, also from Great Plains 1 wrote that linguistic profiling is "similar, if not identical to profiling based on race." Writing further, Meighan shared:

I would want to bring in linguistic profiling as well and discuss with my students how profiling based on language is very similar if not identical to profiling based on race. Making assumptions based on the way a person looks or talks is wrong and prejudicial, and I'd want my students to be aware of their own misconceptions.

Meighan wrote more about the overlap between linguistic and racial profiling than Rebecca who focused on how racial and linguistic identities often overlap. Steven from Lakeside wrote that he would prompt his future students to analyze the ways in which linguistic and racial identities correspond by analyzing texts which demonstrate both racial and linguistic diversity. He shared, "Students could analyze these moments in the text and have a productive, meaningful conversation about the implications of the dialects in terms of race, social standing, economic

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status, and gender." Steven proposed asking his students to make connections between nonstandard dialects used in text and systems of racial and linguistic oppression.

These findings contribute in two ways to a better understanding of White PST thinking about race and racism. First, in these posts PSTs are grappling with mapping knowledge, perhaps newly acquired, about linguistic profiling onto pre-existing (or more established belief) that judging others due to race is wrong. For example, both Rebecca and Meighan proposed teaching strategies that are reliant on their students making connections between racism and linguistic discrimination as a reference point for their students' learning. In contrast to research on White teachers' understandings of racism which too often showed avoidance of discussions of racism, some teachers in this study not only engaged in discussions of racism but used these discussions as a starting point to analyze a specific type of racialized discrimination (linguistic discrimination). Second, the prevalence of the theme that linguistic profiling and racism are the same (which was found in 38% of the discussion board posts) shows that perhaps using linguistic profiling as an example of everyday, pervasive, and pernicious racism is a pathway for teacher educators and education researchers who want to engage their White PSTs in critical conversations about everyday racism.

### 4.3.4   References to daily racism/lived experiences of people of color.

The posts coded as including references to the daily lived experiences of racism by people of color in the United States also emerged as a prominent sub-theme in the coding category, "how systemic racism operates," constituting 17% of the posts coded under this theme. In these posts, PSTs attempted to articulate specific examples of lived experiences of their students who might experience or cope with discrimination due to their race and/or language

usage. For example, Anna from Lakeside wrote about how both Sledd and Delpit's arguments in prompt 2.2, about students of color learning SE, are problematic. Anna stated that neither scholar explicitly acknowledged that students of color will be discriminated against regardless of their ability to speak SE. Anna shared that both Sledd and Delpit's arguments, "Avoid addressing the larger issue, which is that disadvantaged students are oppressed by the school system regardless of whether or not they learn the language of White supremacy." Jamie from SoTech suggested that she would highlight the language used by poet John Agard in his work "Listen Mr Oxford Don," in which the poet shared his personal experiences feeling discriminated against. Jamie wrote:

> To relate [the poem Mr Oxford Don] to discrimination in general, I would make sure that my students see that the speaker has been treated as a criminal because of his language – in the same way that people in the past (and present) have been treated poorly/discriminated against because of their race, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

Agard has been made to feel like a "criminal." Jamie pointed to specific language in which Agard demonstrated what it feels like to experience racism. Laura from Great Plains 2 shared her impressions of the difficult experiences of her students of color speaking SE. Laura wrote:

> I usually phrase it like, "I understand that this sounds like you're 'talking White' but that just happens to be the privileged way of speaking... It's not just me trying to tell you what to do"- Or something of the sort. It's a hard situation because of having to not only work with students to recognize linguistic choices but also with having to ask students to adopt something that they may consider part of systemic oppression.

Laura extended her thinking beyond addressing the notion that SE is preferred or academic. She directly related using SE to experiences her students of color have shared with her regarding how their peers may point out the Whiteness of speaking in SE. Laura then explained that since SE is perceived as a privileged and White way of speaking, when she requires her future students to use SE in her classroom she may be reinforcing a behavior that they may view as encouraging their own "systemic oppression." Laura's post demonstrates how a White teacher who engaged in critical race talk was able to articulate complex understandings of how their students of color may be navigating decisions about how they speak based on how others judge them. Laura's critical race talk also articulated understandings of how racialized judgements about language need to be considered by instructors. Laura pointed out that requiring her students to use SE may be problematic when considering her perhaps newly discovered racialized understandings of dialect diversity and linguistic discrimination.

### 4.3.5    History of racism in the United States

Within the larger theme of how systemic racism operates, 8% of discussion board posts which were coded as including critical race talk included specific references to the history of racism in the United States. Carol from Western State is broad in her comment:

> I feel like it is sometimes very easy to pretend that discrimination is a thing of the past and that we have moved beyond things like racism or classism or sexism when in reality these are still issues in our society that need to be addressed.

Carol pointed out that even though we have a history of racism, classism, and sexism in the United States, these issues are still prevalent today. Charlene from Western State cited a more specific example of racism in U.S. history when she recalled how, "Whites in America

forced Indian children into boarding schools and punished them for speaking their native tongues." Charlene related linguistic discrimination against nonstandard and vernacular speaking students to the traumatic, compulsory, and systematic assimilation of Native American children into U.S. public schools. Christy from Lakeside wrote:

> The power that SWE (standardized written English) and 'standardized' English has, was obtained by forced assimilation and horrendous inequality. This malevolence and apathy towards minorities and marginalized groups informed the 'codes of power', so it would be incredibly problematic to maintain that. Ideally, we should make strides to counter the forces which have oppressed and silenced so many people throughout history.

Christy detailed how marginalized and oppressed peoples throughout U.S. history have been punished through linguistic discrimination and forced assimilation into learning dominant language like SWE and SE. Charlene and Christy's critical race talk demonstrates how White PSTs can articulate powerful examples of how throughout U.S. history race and racism have been operationalized through dominant racialized language ideologies which privilege SE over the languages used by people of color.

### 4.3.6 Explicit discussions of Whiteness.

The theme of explicit discussions of Whiteness emerged after my first round of coding as an overarching theme found in three of my a priori codes: recognition of Whiteness as a racial identity, acknowledgement that Whiteness impacts teaching, and explanations of White privilege. Each of these codes emerged frequently within the discussion board posts labeled as including critical race talk: 19%, 13% and 13%, respectively. Overall, 37% of the discussion board posts that included critical race talk included these explicit discussions of Whiteness. In

other words, in over one third of the critical race talk discussion board posts, White PSTs explicitly discussed their White racial identity or that of their students. Moreover, in these posts, PSTs questioned or expressed explicit concerns over how their own Whiteness and White privilege might impact their teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. Table 15 shows the number and frequency of critical race talk discussions which included discussions of Whiteness.

**Table 15. Emergent Themes within Explicit Discussions of Whiteness**

| Theme | Number of Critical Race Talk Posts | Percentage of Critical Race Talk Posts |
|---|---|---|
| Whiteness as a Notable Racial Identity | 15 | 19% |
| Whiteness as Impacting Teaching | 10 | 13% |
| White Privilege | 10 | 13% |

### 4.3.7 Whiteness as a racial identity.

In 19% of the discussion board posts labeled as including critical race talk, PSTs made explicit mentions of Whiteness as a racial identity worthy of discussion. As opposed to research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism in scholarship that has documented White silence or denial regarding White privilege (Garza & Garza, 2010; Lewis, 2001), in these posts PSTs explicitly discussed Whiteness and the language historically used by Whites as a problematic ideal in the United States. For example, Ruth from Great Plains 1 wrote "Our institutions favor the dialects and language of the White middle class." Ruth wrote further about how studies have shown that students of color experienced discrimination and unequal outcomes when compared to their White peers. Later in another discussion board post, Ruth stressed again

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that to be "Successful, one must walk the walk and talk the talk of the middle to upper class White person." By explicitly mentioning Whiteness and as a preferred racial identity and "White talk" as the preferred language in U.S. institutions, Ruth implied to her classmates that discussions of racism need to also include discussions of the problematic nature of Whiteness. By talking about Whiteness as a problem, Ruth engaged in the kind of work that critical Whiteness scholars call for by taking a critical approach to Whiteness. Another PST participant from Great Plains 1 named the Whiteness of her students and asserted that "a mainly White class would benefit from learning more about [linguistic profiling]." Throughout these discussion board posts and others, PSTs problematized the neutrality of Whiteness.

### 4.3.8   How Whiteness might impact teaching.

In 13% of the discussion board posts labeled as including critical race talk, PSTs made explicit mentions of how Whiteness might impact their instruction. Morgan from Lakeside shared, "I think that because my linguistic identity would be considered standardized English and my racial identity is White, I would have to be sensitive and aware of the more marginalized dialects and races present in my classroom." Morgan acknowledged that her Whiteness would impact her teaching and she would need to actively participate in understanding the experiences of her students who might experience systemic discrimination due to the ways in which they speak or their race. Patrick from Lakeside directly addressed how his Whiteness is not only a privilege but may impact his teaching by writing:

> Being a White, middle class, heterosexual, Christian male who uses primarily
> Standard English, I need to go into the class knowing that I have social privilege because

the high majority of my social-identity traits fall into the dominant category of American society.

Patrick labeled his Whiteness, as well as his use of SE, as placing him in a position of privilege. In literature highlighting race talk avoidance, scholars have problematized the way in which Whiteness as a racial identity is too often ignored or labeled as neutral by White teachers and PSTs (Buehler, 2013; Lewis, 2001). However, these findings demonstrate how some participants in my study not only engaged in naming their Whiteness, but they began to think through specifically how Whiteness might impact their teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. Carin from Great Plains 1 questioned her classmates directly about navigating her own Whiteness in her classroom. She asked about how to prevent the "nice White lady myth" (the notion of the White savior teacher who selflessly helps children of color) from impacting her teaching. Carin expressed concern about "replaying" this kind of perpetuated racist myth in her classroom.

These examples of PSTs grappling with how to deal with their White identities in their classrooms provides insight into the ways in which PSTs can potentially problematize their neutral positionality as teachers to confront racist ideologies that too often remain unchecked in K-12 classrooms in the United States today. The dataset included many more examples of White PSTs problematizing their Whiteness. Jamie from SoTech wrote frankly to her classmates:

> As most of us are White, standard-English speaking females, we need to be especially sensitive and receptive to possible problems with language that our students may be having. This will be difficult sometimes, because it's easy to fall into the idea of thought that speaking/writing the standard is just as easy for everyone as it is for us.

Jaime called attention to the overrepresentation of White females in the teaching population and called upon her fellow PST classmates to pay attention to how their racialized ideas of what is normal speech for all students might hold true for all students. Jaimie's classmate Hazel responded directly to her post, sharing:

> I think the point of our (mostly) being "White, standard-English speaking females" could be a sensitive topic in other environments, but it's completely true. It could be very easy to get frustrated with students, because it's so difficult not to say, 'because that's how it is' and 'it's so easy, standard, and basic -- why don't you understand?'

Hazel's comment called attention to the ways in which White teachers might view talking about being White or being called out on as White as a sensitive topic. Discussing race or racism in schools is often avoided due to teacher fears about being unprepared to respond to student needs or the outright denial of White privilege and racism by teachers themselves (Baily & Katradis, 2016; Garza & Garza, 2010). Hazel's post also argued that being White is connected to certain usages of language. Furthermore, Hazel connected being White to teacher experiences in which White teachers may become frustrated with their vernacular speaking students of color.

The exchange between Jaimie and Hazel demonstrates how PSTs grappled with content knowledge gained from the mini-course, specifically, the idea that racial and language ideologies overlap. As a result, in this exchange we see how these PSTs were grappling with scenarios in which their Whiteness might impact their expectations about how their students speak and learn to speak SE. These types of explicit discussions of Whiteness have not only been called for by critical Whiteness scholars in education research (Crowley, 2016; Haviland, 2008), but by scholars who study pedagogy and teacher decision making regarding teaching about linguistic

variation and dialect diversity from a critical perspective (Bissonnette et al., 2016; Godley & Minnici, 2008; Godley et al., 2015). By negotiating how Whiteness will impact their teaching about dialect diversity, these teachers are demonstrating race talk which promotes critical language awareness and Critical Language Pedagogy.

### 4.3.9 How White privilege operates.

I also found examples of PSTs explaining how White privilege operates. This phenomenon emerged in 13% of the posts labeled as including critical race talk. Patrick from Lakeside proposed a pedagogical approach to teaching about White privilege in which students moved around the classroom in a "privilege walk" to help his students visualize how privilege and discrimination work. Patrick wrote:

> [I would] make sure [my students] understand that [linguistic discrimination happens] when somebody forms judgements and prejudice based on the "perceived" social traits (race, gender, social economic status, sexual orientation…. I'd want students to see just how unfairly people are treated because they are judged "negatively" due to their language, so that they may be aware of it and help become part of the solution. I'd also organize an activity in which students do self-examination of their social traits: which are either subordinate or dominant in society. This can be done by a privilege walk, and having students take a step forward if they are White, a step back if they are female, etc. And students would become aware of how privileged they are according to their social class, and how likely they'd be prone to linguistic profiling.

Patrick implied that he hopes his students will make connections between beliefs about prejudice, White privilege, and linguistic privileges through this proposed activity. Alexis from

Great Plains 1 wrote that it is important to teach White students about White privilege so that they can "use their potential, 'White' privilege to help work toward a solution to this issue." One of the content learning goals of the online mini-course, as informed by Critical Language Pedagogy, was for PSTs to be able to explain how White privilege operates. Therefore, the emergence of discussions of White privilege in this dataset were not unexpected.

However, the high frequency of all three discussions of Whiteness from within the dataset of discussion board posts labeled as including critical race talk (Whiteness as a racial identity, Whiteness as a factor in White teacher's classrooms, and specific explanations of White privilege) speaks to the potential of White PSTs to engage in meaningful discussions of racism. With no involvement from instructors at any of the university research sites, PSTs explicitly discussed Whiteness in 37% of their discussions labeled as critical race talk.

Critical Whiteness theory highlights the problematic performances and ideologies perpetuated by the notion that Whiteness is itself a neutral racial identity (Buehler, 2013; Chubbuck, 2004; Solomona et al., 2006). Furthermore, White teachers may have a hard time recognizing how race impacts their lives due to pervasive and problematic abstract liberal color-blind ideologies which assert that the United States today is "post-racial" (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Lewis, 2001). As a result of these problematic understanding of Whiteness as neutral, scholars have argued that instead of ignoring Whiteness and its ties to maintenance of racism/White supremacy, Whiteness must be viewed as an influential and problematic racial identity which requires critical analysis (Haviland, 2008). For example, White teachers must consider how their life experiences in the United States today have been shaped by White privilege.

Notwithstanding the research on race talk avoidance and the problematic, yet pervasive, assumption of the neutrality of Whiteness, 37% of discussion board posts identified as including

critical race talk in this dataset were coded as having explicit discussions of Whiteness. As a researcher who hopes to engage White teachers and pre-service teachers in the important work of understanding and articulating racial realities that create unequal outcomes for students of color, I find the emergence of these discussions of Whiteness by White teachers promising. These findings can be used as a pathway for teacher educators who want to prompt their White PSTs to think about teaching as social justice work. Teacher educators could consider explicit discussions of Whiteness as both a content goal and pedagogical strategy to engage their students in discussions of race, racism, and how their consequences can impact their teaching.

### 4.3.10 Recognition of the prevalence of deficit thinking about students of color.

The third theme found in discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk was the recognition of prevalent deficit thinking about students of color and their families. Twenty-eight percent of the discussion board posts labeled as including critical race talk (or 21 posts) mentioned deficit thinking about students of color, their families, and their language. John from Lakeside raised the example of Rachel Jeantel as someone who was linguistically profiled and subsequently labeled as unintelligent and untrustworthy when she shared her account of the murder of Trayvon Martin. John shared in his discussion board post:

> I cannot help but recall the treatment of Rachel Jeantel, during the Zimmerman trial, whose dialect was considered a sign of flippancy and low intelligence. It's critical that teachers realize that "non-traditional" dialects are in no way indicative of either of these traits.

John stated that Rachel was linguistically profiled as an unintelligent or untrustworthy witness during the media coverage and trial of George Zimmerman due to her vernacular dialect

usage. John then argued that teachers should not make assumptions about their students' academic abilities due to their dialect. Charlene from Western State extended John's point by writing about how teachers profiled the cultures of vernacular speaking students as deficit or inferior. Charlene warned, "When we judge another dialect against our own in terms of sounding less intelligent, or being a marker of education, we are unfairly relegating part of their cultural identity to a place of inferiority." Charlene recognized the ways in which judgements about language and dialect usage relate to deficit views about people of color and their families. James from Great Plains 1 shared personal experiences with his classmates about how he had participated in linguistically profiling Black people speaking AAVE. James wrote, "I have always cringed when I hear African Americans speak in AAVE because I always thought that it was grammatically incorrect and that they needed to learn how to speak properly." Some participants made impersonal comments about the pervasive nature of deficit thinking about people of color, such as Amber from SoTech who wrote:

 If a Spanish-American student is having a discussion in class using his 'Spanglish' dialect for some teachers the student would be labeled as a poor lower socioeconomic status student because of how they speak. Then, the teacher would put labels on his because of the way the student dress and other things.

In contrast to James, who used the discussion board activity to admit to his own participation in racial discrimination, Amber instead shared vague ideas about teacher deficit views about non-SE speech.

Overall, in these posts, the PSTs expressed understanding that there are pervasive deficit views about people of color that can influence how teachers think about the academic potential of their students, specifically regarding their abilities to learn and perform ELA activities in SE.

By calling attention to these deficit views about students of color through nuanced forms of racism like linguistic profiling, teacher educators and researchers may be able to engage White teachers in discussions about their implicit deficit views about people of color. Although White teachers may be adamant that they do not hold racially discriminatory views about their students of color more generally, by learning about the realities of dialect diversity (i.e., the notion that all dialects are grammatical and valid and that linguistic profiling is a form of racism), White teachers may be better prepared to engage in discussions, as James did, that demonstrate their own participation in holding racialized deficit views about the language usage of people of color.

**4.3.11 Questions and implied questions about teaching linguistic and racial profiling.**

Throughout the discussion board posts in which White PSTs used critical race talk, I noticed an emerging pattern of PSTs' questions or expressions of uncertainty about how to teach about dialect diversity and language ideologies. Within these 20 posts (or 26% of the posts coded as including critical race talk), participants actively questioned each other and/or their instructor about approaching the topics of racism and linguistic profiling in their classrooms. These questions and areas of uncertainty highlight two specific areas of concern for White PSTs, specifically, managing their White identity or that of their students (17%) and teaching about White supremacy without reinforcing it (14%). Table 16 shows the number and frequency of these sub-themes in the dataset.

**Table 16. Emergent Themes within Questioning and Implied Questions**

| Theme | Number of Critical Race Talk Posts | Percentage of Critical Race Talk Posts |
|---|---|---|
| How do I handle my White identity/the White identity of my students? | 13 | 17% |
| How do I teach about White supremacy without reinforcing it? | 11 | 14% |

### 4.3.12 Managing my White identity and that of my students.

Thirteen discussion board posts labeled as including critical race talk were also coded as including questions or implied questions about managing the Whiteness of the teachers or the Whiteness of students when teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. Carin from Great Plains 1 grappled with perpetuating the notion of the all-knowing White savior teacher. Carin struggled with, as she phrased it, being a "nice White lady." Erin from Great Plains 1 wrote about the importance of making sure that White students are able to understand their role in participating in racialized discrimination. Jamie from SoTech implied areas of uncertainty about her own experiences linguistically profiling others and being linguistically profiled while growing up in a Southern dialect speaking community. Jamie questioned her peers in her discussion board post about the responsibilities of White teachers today. She implied that they need to be understanding of their student's language home usage and how it might differ from SE. Therefore, Jaimie asserted that some students may find speaking SE to be more difficult than others. Jamie's post, along with other White PST participants who engaged in critical race talk, implied questions such as, "What are White teachers responsible for knowing about their students before they teach them standardized English?" These questions about how to manage

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Whiteness in classrooms demonstrates how teachers are grappling with considering their race in their approaches to teaching racially and linguistically diverse students. Specifically, I found examples of teachers considering how they might view their vernacular speaking students' academic abilities through a deficit lens. In addition, the White PSTs in this study wrestled with managing their own racial identities with regards to that of their future students.

### 4.3.13  Teaching about White supremacy without enforcing it.

Eleven discussion board posts coded as critical race talk included questions about how to teach about White supremacy without reinforcing it. In these posts, PSTs grappled with how to manage the preferential treatment given to Whiteness as a racial identity and the relationship of Whiteness to learning and speaking SE. Ruth from Great Plains 1 shared uncertainty about the burden of teaching her students that they must switch between their home dialect and SE due to discrimination they might face when speaking the home dialect in another setting. Ruth wrote, "I do not think we should make students feel less than by brainwashing them into thinking that their preferred vernacular is looked down upon by society." Ruth was unsure that it was appropriate to teach students that their vernacular dialect will always be judged negatively. In another example of this phenomena, Melissa from Great Plains 1 wrote about the experiences of her Black students who are judged by their Black peers for talking in SE. She imagined the complicated reality of language choices managed by her Black students. Melissa shared:

> African Americans experience prejudice from White people for speaking their vernacular but are considered 'sell-outs' by their own community if they speak otherwise. What are they supposed to do? I can only imagine what kind of identity struggle this would be.

Melissa went further than Ruth by imagining how her vernacular speaking students understand their own participation in reinforcing White supremacy through linguistic discrimination. She noted that when her Black students speak SE they might be judged negatively by their peers.

Overall, the themes addressed by PSTs in their questions and expressions of uncertainty might inform teacher educators and researchers to guide their thinking about effectively engaging White PSTs and teachers in critical race talk. These findings provide insights regarding which topics PSTs may struggle with when teaching about discrimination and racism as a result of beliefs about language and dialect usage.

## 4.4    PROMPTING WHITE TEACHER CRITICAL RACE TALK

After exploring themes that emerged from White PST critical race talk, I turned to my next research question, "What prompts White teacher critical race talk?" To answer this question, I first examined each discussion board post coded as including critical race talk to see if it was written in response to a mini-course module prompt or in response to a peer discussion board prompt. Additionally, I examined each discussion board post coded as including critical race talk which was written in response to a peer discussion board prompt to see if the peer had self-identified at any point in the dataset as a person of color. Next, I examined whether each discussion board post coded as including race talk (N=78) received a response from a peer or not. I examined the context of each discussion board prompt by searching the discussion board posts from each course and module to see if a classmate responded to the post coded as critical race talk. I coded these posts as "responses to critical race talk." Lastly, I isolated these responses

to critical race talk and analyzed this subset of posts as either including critical race talk or not and then I analyze these posts for emergent themes and trends.

### 4.4.1   Discussion board prompt or peer.

Table 17 shows the number and percentage of discussion board posts coded as critical race talk that were prompted by the discussion board prompt (i.e., prompt 1.1., 2.1, etc.) or written directly in response to a peer. In this analysis, I wanted to get a sense of whether discussions about critical race talk were produced by the prompts included in the curriculum or produced in response to peer discussion board posts. In other words, were PSTs writing about racism more in response to the curriculum more broadly or to each other. I coded a discussion board prompt as being prompted by a peer when they referenced a classmate or the content of their classmates' post directly in their writing. For example, Mike from Magnolia wrote directly to a peer starting, "Samantha, I completely agree with you about…." In another more nuanced example of a discussion board post coded as being prompted by a peer, Buddy from Great Plains 1 began his post "Building from that, because I love the social justice dimension here, being able to identify that it is a part of us all without condemning everyone is another important aspect." By beginning his thought as "building from that," Buddy connected his ideas to a previous post from a classmate.

Thirty-three percent or 26 of the 78 discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk were prompted by a peer's post. Fifty-two posts, or 67% of the discussion board posts were prompted directly in response to a discussion board prompt as per the mini-course curriculum. This analysis showed that mini-course curriculum prompts produced more critical race talk discussion board posts than responses to peers.

The posts in which a participant engaged in critical race talk but had also identified as a person of color (at any point in their discussion board posts) were otherwise excluded from my analysis as they did not inform my other research questions which focused more specifically on the characteristics of White teacher critical race talk. However, with regards to research question two, "What prompts White teacher critical race talk?" discussion board posts by participants of color could be identified as prompts for White teacher critical race talk engagement. I examined the 26 discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk to identify if the White participant authored this post in response to a peer who had at some point in the dataset self-identified to be a person of color. Subsequently I found that of the 26 White teacher critical race talk posts prompted by peers' posts, only three posts were authored in response to a post by a peer of color. Thus, the discussion board posts of teachers of color did not seem to prompt White teachers' critical race talk more than other White teachers' posts.

Table 17. Prompting Critical Race Talk: Peer or Discussion Board Prompt

|  | Number of Discussion Board Posts | Percentage of Overall Critical Race Talk |
|---|---|---|
| Prompt | 52 | 67% |
| Peer | 26 | 33% |
| Total | 78 | 100% |

### 4.4.2 Curricular modules topics and critical race talk.

Table 18 shows the number and percentage of critical race talk posts produced by PSTs in each module of the mini-course. See Appendix B for a complete description of the modules.

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Critical race talk was prompted within each curricular module. Module four, which covered topics regarding teaching about linguistic discrimination and power, produced almost half (49%) of the discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk. Module one produced 19 posts or 24% of the total discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk. Module two produced 12 posts or 15% of the critical race talk. Lastly, module three produced nine posts coded as including critical race talk regarding teaching about dialect diversity or 12% of my representation of critical race talk.

Table 18. Module Topics and Critical Race Talk Frequency

| Module Number and Topic | Number of Critical Race Talk Posts Coded from this Module | Percentage of Critical Race Talk Posts Coded from this Module |
|---|---|---|
| 4 - Teaching about Linguistic Discrimination and Power | 38 | 49% |
| 1 - Teaching about Dialects in Literature | 19 | 24% |
| 2 - Responding to Vernacular Dialects in Student Writing & Speech | 12 | 15% |
| 3 - Leading Discussions of Investigations of Identity and Language Variation | 9 | 12% |
| Total | 78 | 100% |

### 4.4.3 Discussion board prompts and critical race talk.

Table 19 provides an overview of the number of discussion board prompts written in response (directly or indirectly) to a specific discussion board prompt. A full description of the discussion board prompts can be found in Appendix C.

**Table 19. Which Discussion Board Prompts Elicited Critical Race Talk?**

| Discussion Board Prompt | Number of Critical Race Talk Posts | Percenta Critical Talk P |
|---|---|---|
| 4.1 Linguistic Profiling | 30 | 38% |
| 1.1 Dialect Myths | 18 | 23% |
| 2.2 Academic English Mastery Program | 12 | 15% |
| 3.1 Personal Experiences with LD | 6 | 8% |
| 4.2 Listen Mr. Oxford Don | 5 | 6% |
| 3.2 Student Learning and Individual Language Identity | 3 | 4% |
| 4.3 Final Reflections on Course | 3 | 4% |
| 1.2 Dialects in Literature | 1 | 1% |
| 2.1 Vernacular Grammar and Usage Patterns in Student Writing | 0 | 0% |
| 2.3 Delpit vs Sledd | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 78 | 100% |

Prompt 4.1 produced the greatest number of discussion board posts that included critical race talk (38%), followed by discussion board prompt 1.1 (23%), and discussion board prompt 2.2 (15%). Prompt 4.1 asked:

> Post to the "Linguistic Profiling" discussion. Drawing on your answers to Activity
> 1, and the readings/viewings about linguistic profiling and linguistic discrimination, what
> would you want your students to learn about linguistic profiling? What materials,

activities and discussion questions would you use? How would your learning goals and activities change depending on both your linguistic and racial identity and your students' linguistic and racial identities? In other words, would you teach about linguistic discrimination differently if your students identified as vernacular English speakers or if they saw themselves as Standardized English only speakers? How would your racial and linguistic identity shape how you taught this content? (Godley and Reaser, 2018)

In this discussion board prompt, PSTs were asked directly to engage in discussions of teaching about linguistic profiling and how they would be impacted by the linguistic and racial identities of their potential students. The prompt also asked teachers to discuss how their own racial and linguistic identities might impact how they teach about linguistic discrimination. This prompt explicitly asked PST participants to discuss linguistic discrimination and to consider both their own racial backgrounds and that of their students explains why the most discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk were written in response to this prompt. However, as already discussed, the majority of PST participants who answered this post did not engage in explicit discussions of race and racism in their responses. Both the engagement and avoidance of race talk produced by this prompt suggest that teacher educators need to be very direct in their instructions to their PST students. For instance, perhaps prompt 4.1 could have been summarized into a more direct question such as "How will your racial identity and that of your students' impact how you teach them about linguistic discrimination?"

The prompts that produced the fewest number of posts that included references to race and racism were prompts 1.2, 2.1, and 2.3. Prompt 1.2 asked PSTs to consider how they would teach dialects in literature, such as Southern dialect in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In an earlier section of this chapter, I addressed the ways in which prompt 2.3 (to comment on the

scholarly arguments of Dr. Lisa Delpit and Dr. James Sledd) asked PST participants to engage in critical race talk. However, prompt 2.3 did not elicit any critical race talk from the PSTs. Similarly, in prompt 2.1, Godley and Reaser (2018) asked participant PSTs to respond to the following prompt. "How would you teach your students about the vernacular grammar and usage patterns you have noticed in their writing and how they compare to the patterns of Standardized Written English (SWE)?" In these proposed individual discussions with a student about their writing, PSTs did not mention race, racism, or any language coded as critical race talk. These findings support the growing body of research that has shown that race talk avoidance is prevalent among White teachers (Milner, 2012; Pollock, 2004).

Finally, I analyzed how many PSTs were prompted solely by the content of module four to engage in discussions of race and racism. I looked at all of the responses coded as critical race talk in response to all of the discussion board prompts. I coded for the participants who only participated in discussion board posts coded as critical race talk prompted by module four. Table 20 shows that at five of the university mini-course sites, Tidewater, SoTech, Western State, Great Plains 1, and Rust, the majority of their participants who authored discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk, were prompted to engage in critical race talk in their discussion board writing only by prompts in module four – not by any previous discussion board prompts. In other words, even students who avoided race talk in all earlier discussion board post prompts, such as the 2.2 and 2.3 discussions about the linguistics of White supremacy, engaged in discussions about racism and discrimination when directly prompted to talk about ideas like linguistic profiling in module four.

**Table 20. Percentage of PSTs Engaging in Critical Race Talk only in Module Four**

| University | Percentage of CRT Participants that only Participated in CRT in Module Four |
|---|---|
| Tidewater | 100% |
| SoTech | 75% |
| Western State | 60% |
| Great Plains 1 | 57% |
| Rust | 50% |
| Magnolia | 33% |
| Lakeside | 24% |
| Great Plains 2 | 0% |
| Ravine | 0% |

In summary, two interesting ideas emerged from this set of findings regarding prompting White PST critical race talk. The first is PSTs' willingness to engage in critical race talk in response to each other. One third (33%) of all discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk in this project were written in direct response to the ideas that another peer presented in their discussion board post. This percentage suggests that not only are some White PSTs knowledgeable about racism (Berchini, 2016; Castro, 2012; Laughter, 2011), but they are able to engage in critical race talk discussions with their peers. On the other hand, even though certain discussion board prompts included specific directions to address issues, such as racial identity or discrimination (e.g., the prompt in module 4.2 which in summary asked, "how could your racial identity and/or that of your students impact your teaching?"), PSTs did not always respond to these questions. Perhaps these prompts were written in a way that PSTs viewed as optional; when presented with a list of questions to answer, PSTs chose to respond to prompts that did not require critical race talk. This finding suggests that teacher educators or education researchers

interested in prompting White PSTs to discuss racism should pose directed and explicit questions to potentially prevent these questions from being avoided or as being viewed as optional.

## 4.5 PST RESPONSES TO CRITICAL RACE TALK

My third research question asked, "How do White PSTs respond to each other's critical race talk?" I analyzed the dataset of discussion board posts that included critical race talk for PST responses to critical race talk in three ways. I first examined whether these posts received direct responses from classmates. Next, I coded whether the classmate's response included critical race talk or not. Finally, I coded the responses to critical race talk (both those that included critical race talk themselves and those that did not include critical race talk) for emergent themes across, and within, the critical race talk response posts.

### 4.5.1 Responses to critical race talk.

I examined the context of each post coded as critical race talk by reading all of the posts before and after the post coded as including critical race talk. For each of the 78 discussion board posts that included critical race talk, I marked whether that post received at least one response from a classmate. From this analysis, I found that 28% of the discussion board posts that included critical race talk received a response from a classmate and 72% did not receive a response from a classmate. The 22 posts that received responses received 35 separate responses/posts from classmates. Table 21 shows the number and frequency of critical race talk discussion board posts receiving a peer response.

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**Table 21. Frequency of Critical Race Talk Discussion Board Posts Receiving a Response from a Peer**

|  | Number of Discussion Board that Included Critical Race Talk | Percentage of Discussion Board Posts that Included Critical Race Talk |
|---|---|---|
| Did not receive a response | 56 | 72% |
| Received at least one response | 22 | 28% |
| Total | 78 | 100% |

Table 22 shows the percentage of the 35 responses to peers' critical race talk that included or did not include critical race talk themselves. Fifty-seven percent of those posts (N = 20) included critical race talk and 43% of these posts (N = 15) did not include critical race talk. Thus, slightly over 50% of these responses to critical race talk also included critical race talk.

**Table 22. Discussion Board Post Coded as Responses to Critical Race Talk: Critical Race Talk or No Critical Race Talk**

|  | Number of Posts | Percentage of Posts |
|---|---|---|
| Critical Race Talk | 20 | 57% |
| Not Critical Race Talk | 15 | 43% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

After carefully reading each response, I noted emergent themes developing within and across these responses (see Table 23). Specifically, I identified examples in which PSTs pushed each other to be more critical in their discussions of dialect diversity and language ideologies. Next, I found instances in which PSTs were utilizing well-documented distancing strategies to

separate their understandings of racism and discrimination from their own participation in racialized discrimination.

**Table 23. Emergent Themes within PST Responses to Critical Race Talk**

| Theme | Number of Posts | Percentage of Posts Coded as Critical Race Talk Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Pushing Self/Others to be Critical | 29 | 83% |
| Utilized Distancing Strategies | 7 | 35% |

### 4.5.2 Pushing self/others to be critical.

Of the 35 posts coded as responses to critical race talk, 29 posts, or 83% of these responses, included specific language that pushed the author of the original post to be more critical of their own assumptions and of their students' assumptions regarding race and racism. This finding is significant because related scholarship has mostly called attention to White teachers who sustain racism through silencing or avoiding critical discussions of race, racism, or inequities produced through other systems of oppression (Buehler, 2013; Pennington et al. 2012; Pollock, 2004). However, recent studies on White teachers have demonstrated White PST and teacher participation in explicit discussions of racism and its consequences (Boucher, 2016; Crowley, 2016). My finding that PSTs' responses to classmates' critical race talk often (83% of the time) included encouragement to be even more critical about race contributes additional examples of productive White teacher dialogue about race.

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For example, in a response to a classmate's discussion board post about making his teaching more critical by including resources that challenge the status quo of racialized ideologies about language, Patrick from Lakeside wrote about how he wanted to teach about linguistic discrimination. He shared, "This may be hard to find sources and teach it, but it would open students' eyes to how institutions marginalize people of minority dialects." Patrick shared that even though it will be more work for him as a teacher to gather resources and materials to teach about linguistic discrimination, he believed that teaching about inequity will be a transformative experience to help "open student's eyes" to marginalization. Patrick expressed an interest in challenging himself as a teacher to do the tough work of teaching for the goal of social justice. Rebecca from Great Plains 1 also wrote in response to a classmate who discussed teaching about realities of dialect diversity. Like Patrick, Rebecca challenged herself and another classmate to be more critical about how teachers might privilege or oppress dialects of English in their classrooms. Rebecca wrote:

> I also agree completely that there needs to be an emphasis on the equality of English dialects within a classroom. My question still remains as to how we can encourage this perception within our students? This is what I continue to wrestle with when thinking about my future classroom.

By mentioning "equality of English" first, and then mentioning how she is "wrestling" with how to teach this in her future classroom, Rebecca grappled with challenging herself and her classmates, via the discussion board, to be more thoughtful in their approach to teaching about dialect diversity to their future students. Meighan from Great Plains 1 also expressed her struggle to be more critical. Meighan praised a classmate's plan to discuss White privilege but questioned her classmate directly about how they planned to teach about this topic. She wrote:

I agree with you; bringing attention to this issue could possibly allow "White privilege" to work productively to eradicate linguistic profiling! What kinds of questions would you ask a classroom to keep students engaged with the topic and open to discuss it?

Meighan's comment implied that she wanted her classmate to be more specific when she articulated how she'll prompt her students to discuss White privilege with regards to eradicating linguistic profiling. Meighan challenged her classmate to be more critical and more specific in her thinking about how to approach social justice issues or equity issues like racism. In another example, Annah from Western State wrote in response to a classmate's post about how necessary discussions of discrimination are in all-White classrooms. Annah shared her experience noticing unchecked racism in schools:

I have absolutely seen this in classrooms where all, or almost all of the students are White, so these kinds of discussions are easily skipped over. Teachers can't let that happen. This is one aspect of the English mastery program from a few weeks ago that I really liked. it acknowledged that certain systems that discriminate against individuals with linguistic differences are still in place and worked to give more power to students by educating them about the system, why it is wrong, but helping them work within it when they need to.

Annah's post addressed the issue of teaching about equity in an all-White classroom. Annah noted that as students of privilege, White students, and more importantly their teachers, need to recognize that privileged students need to learn about systems of racial and linguistic oppression which they participate in to help mitigate injustice.

Joshua from Lakeside challenged a classmate who shared that their students would not have experienced racial or linguistic discrimination. He wrote:

> I wanted to push a little on your last sentence. I have a feeling that the majority of our students (depending on their age) will already have experiences with the effect their dialogue has on audiences outside of their communities. Due to this, I don't think I would personally teach my students how their speech can be perceived by others, but instead, I would try to use their experiences to guide their thinking towards the different ways they use language in their lives and why. This way, they could use language purposefully. What do you think?

Joshua challenged his classmate to more deeply consider the life experiences of his students and how they as instructors can create and maintain a dialogic classroom where student experiences and voices are heard.

In summary, White PSTs responses to each other's critical race talk often pushed or challenged themselves or others to think more critically. These findings speak to the potential of White PSTs engaged in productive conversations about race, racism, and their consequences. Specifically, these findings show that White PSTs are already challenging each other to be more critical in their language and approaches to teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. Moreover, these findings complement the work of scholars and teacher educators who promote critical awareness and pedagogies which often require their PSTs to unpack discussions of race, racism, and their consequences in teacher preparation classrooms (Godley et al., 2015; Swalwell, 2016).

### 4.5.3 Distancing strategies to avoid critical race talk.

Although I found significant engagement in critical race talk as well as encouragement among peers to respond to critical race talk, I also documented race talk avoidance strategies. Seven posts, or another 35% of discussion board posts coded as responses to critical race talk, included distancing strategies, or ways of talking about racism that describe discrimination, but separated the author/PST from admitting their own participation (Case & Hemmings, 2005; McInytre, 1997).

The strategy of distancing oneself as a participant in racism has been documented in previous scholarship (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Haviland, 2008; McIntyre, 1997). Case and Hemmings wrote that in discussions of racial inequities in schools they found that White teachers, specifically women in their study, "distanced themselves through strategies of silence, social disassociation, and separation from responsibility" (p. 606). I found PSTs using these types of distancing strategies in my study. For example, PSTs in my study might recount the racism of a friend or family member but stopped short of condemning their friend's behavior or admitting to their own participation in racist discrimination too. Other PSTs in my study used a distancing strategy of admitting the pervasive and destructive nature of racism in the United States today, but then repositioning discussions of racism as a problem too extensive for them to be held accountable for mitigating it. For example, a PST might mention an example of how racism negatively impacts people of color, but then ask rhetorically, "but what can I do?" By summarizing the totalizing impact of racism and articulating that this is something out of their control, some PSTs distanced themselves from a discussion of their own participation in maintaining or mitigating racism. For example, Madison from Great Plains 2 shared:

I would definitely agree that people were born to make snap judgments about others without even thinking about it. This is an interesting thought that has never crossed my mind, actually. I would like to think that this has been going on since the beginning of human life.

Madison characterized discrimination and profiling as natural, ingrained, and going on since the beginning of time. Ana from Great Plains 2 wrote:

I believe that it is unfortunate that the White or standardized English is the only one that is truly accepted in school and work, but it also makes sense to me that there be one standard so that everyone can communicate. Without this sort of standard, we could as well be speaking different languages which I believe might lead to greater cultural rifts.

Ana referenced SE as both White and unavoidable. Madison and Ana both used language that distanced not only their own participation, but anyone's participation in maintaining inequities. Their portrayal of racism and linguistic profiling implied that racism and discrimination are natural, unavoidable, permanent and thus not worth trying to combat.

Carol from Western State used a different distancing strategy to demonstrate that she understood racism but did not participate in it. Instead of discussing her own participation in maintaining racial inequities, she talked about someone close to her who discriminated against others (Case & Hemmings, 2005). Carol shared, "My grandfather had a horrible habit of asking tech support people if they are even in the US when he struggled to understand them because of their accent and his failing hearing. I can't imagine how insulting this must be." Carol's example is interesting because she explained how racism and discrimination operate in the United States today, but she stopped short of admitting to her own participation in racialized discrimination.

Instead, Carol shared a story about her grandfather. Cooper from Lakeside also used this distancing strategy. Cooper explained how people he knows, but not him, linguistically profile others. He wrote, "I definitely see that in people from my hometown as well. AX is seen as inferior and uneducated while ASK is the superior pronunciation." Cooper and Carol both acknowledged that racism, through linguistic profiling or other forms of discrimination, is wrong and prevalent. However, both PSTs avoided or stopped short of addressing how they might be responsible for, or take action in, mitigating racism inside or outside of their classrooms.

In a final example, Daniel from Great Plains 1 avoided critical race talk and repositioned his discussion of racism to classism. Daniel distanced himself from engaging in a discussion of Whiteness and racism by changing the topic of his post from race to class. Daniel shared:

> Racism is certainly a part of linguistic profiling, and may be the most prevalent linguistic profiling, but there are certainly other discriminatory areas, such as gender or class. A White person could discriminate against another White person just because he or she sounds poor, thereby making them "uneducated" and not worth the time to converse with.

Daniel changed the topic of a conversation about racism to other "discriminatory areas, such as gender or class." In addition to distancing himself from a discussion of racism or Whiteness, by changing the topic from racism to another form of discrimination, Daniel utilized a well-documented race talk avoidance strategy that scholars have warned can minimize the voices and experiences of those who experience daily and systemic racial prejudice (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

In summary, the distancing strategies found in my study support previous research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Haviland, 2008).

Some of these teachers engage in critical race talk, or explicit discussions of the extent and impact of racism in the United States today, but when they utilized a distancing strategy to separate their own participation in racism they are also distanced themselves from taking responsibility in mitigating racism, both in their own thinking and in their teaching (Case & Hemmings, 2005; McIntyre, 1997). In addition, the critical race talk avoidance strategies found in my study demonstrate that an investigation into critical teacher education curriculum or White teacher engagement in race talk will likely encounter widely documented strategies to avoid talk about racism.

## 4.6    CRITICAL RACE TALK & TEACHER PEDAGOGY

The final research question that guided this study was aimed at analyzing the proposed learning goals and pedagogies described in the discussion board posts by the White PST participants who engaged in critical race talk. Research question four asked, "How does critical race talk shape White teachers' talk about pedagogy aimed at teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies?" To answer this question, I analyzed the discussion board data for language- and dialect-related learning goals and pedagogies using codes derived from Godley et al.'s (2015) work on Critical Language Pedagogy. I also recorded emergent trends and themes found across the discussion board posts.

### 4.6.1 Learning goals and pedagogies expressed in critical race talk.

**Table 24. Learning Goals found in PST Critical Race Talk**

| Learning Goals & Pedagogies | Number of Discussion Board Posts Coded as Critical Race Talk | Percentage of Discussion Board Posts Coded as Critical Race Talk |
|---|---|---|
| Considers Linguistic Background of Student | 44 | 59% |
| SES/Race Impacts Teaching about Dialects | 28 | 40% |
| Linguistic Discrimination is Prevalent | 27 | 35% |

Table 24 shows the three most frequent learning goals and pedagogies which emerged across the discussion board posts: considering the linguistic background of students, recognizing the impact of SES and race on teaching about dialect diversity, and teaching that linguistic discrimination is a prevalent problem in the United States today.

The most frequent theme that emerged from posts that included critical race talk was the notion that teachers must consider the linguistic backgrounds of their students when teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. Across these 44 discussion board posts, participants outlined a similar pathway for teaching their future students about dialect diversity and language ideologies.

### 4.6.2 Know your students.

To begin, PSTs explicitly mentioned considering the linguistic background of their students. Overall, the notion that teachers need to consider the racial and linguistic background of their students to effectively teach about dialect diversity and language ideologies was

identified in 59% of the discussion board posts in which PSTs used critical race talk. Lauren from Lakeside shared with her classmates that it is important for teachers to first demonstrate accurate content knowledge about the realities of dialect diversity and language ideologies to understand their students' linguistic and racial identities. Lauren wrote that teachers need to know the difference between dialect usage and incorrect usage of English so that they understand students and their language choices. Lauren shared:

> A teacher who recognizes the correct structures and vocabulary of her students' dialects is able to distinguish between incorrect uses of a dialect and uses of a different dialect. This mindset helps to value students' languages in this classroom so that they are able to learn without being silenced."

Lauren referenced teacher mindsets that might otherwise demonstrate problematic yet well-documented teacher deficit views about student nonstandard and vernacular dialect usage (Blake & Cutler, 2003; Cross, Devaney, & Jones, 2001). Ruth from Great Plains 1 also talked about moving past deficit thinking about student language usage. She extended her comments from addressing getting to know her student backgrounds to including parents into conversations of how to best teach to all students. Ruth wrote:

> In my experience, wishing a student would speak better, more fluent English is not the answer. Ignoring the language barrier is also not the answer. We work in public schools and it is our job to see to it that all our students receive the best education, not just the ones who speak like we do. We need to create resources for these students, i.e. ways to get parents involved, celebrate diversity within academics. These students often fail because they do not think the teachers care about them.

Ruth described how teachers need to face the linguistic diversity in their classroom with resources to help students of all linguistic backgrounds to succeed. Ruth also warned that teachers must be aware of implicit deficit views that they might hold about not only their students' language usage, but deficit views about their students' parent and their abilities to support their children's academic success. Ruth demonstrated understanding of how implicit racialized deficit views about students of color extend to deficit views about the family, culture, and neighborhood of a child (Garza & Garza, 2010; Heath, 1980; Valencia, 2010).

Carol from Western State proposed a specific learning activity aimed at getting to know more about the ways in which privilege and discrimination from larger social forces, such as racism and sexism, impact her student's lives. Carole wrote:

> [I would implement an] activity in which students would self-identify things like their gender, race, linguistic dialect, etc. From there they would examine in what ways they are privilege and in what ways they might be discriminated against. My example would be that I am privileged because I am White and speak mostly standard English but I can potentially be discriminated against because I am a woman.

Carol's proposed activity to get to know her students further also involved deconstructing elements of her own identity for her students.

Overall, in the discussion board posts in which White PSTs engage in discussions of critical race talk, the majority of PSTs asserted the importance of learning about the linguistic, racial, and or community backgrounds of their students to effectively teach future students of all backgrounds to recognize, name, and hopefully mitigate oppression in their lives, such as linguistic profiling or other forms of racialized discrimination.

### 4.6.3 Select learning resources appropriate for your students.

Next, PSTs described how knowing about their students' backgrounds would impact how they selected resources and materials appropriate to creating their desired dialogue about racial and linguistic privilege with their students. This theme emerged from within the discussion board posts which were labeled as both including critical race talk and including the importance of knowing your students' racial and linguistic backgrounds. Overall, PSTs mentioned carefully selecting materials and resources to teach their students about linguistic profiling by exposing students to materials that would help them to become aware of linguistic profiling and their role as either a privileged SE speaker or a target of linguistic and racial discrimination. Danielle also added to this discussion the idea that she believed that students will be motivated to learn about topics that they can see as useful in their daily lives. Danielle from Western state shared, "Students won't care to learn about something that they don't feel affects them in their personal lives."

Approaching the topic of teaching about linguistic profiling to students who have both linguistic and racial privilege, Alexis from Great Plains 1 wrote about selecting topics, materials, and resources to teach her future students about White privilege and the impact of discrimination. Alexis shared:

> I would argue against [those who say all White classes don't need to learn about linguistic profiling] and say it is just as if not more important to teach profiling in a White classroom. A diverse population sadly knows the harsh reality of linguistic profiling. Therefore, a mainly White class would benefit from learning more about it, I knew it existed, but didn't have a word for it, nor did I know how prominent it was, or that there were centers trying to combat the issue.

Alexis stated that White students need to learn about discrimination because they might be unaware of the pervasive nature of linguistic profiling. She even shared how she was unaware of linguistic profiling and its impact. Alexis implied that White students might perpetuate and ignore discrimination against those who speak a vernacular dialect if they do not learn more about language ideologies and dialect diversity.

Samantha from Western state wrote that she would use the resources from the dialect diversity mini-course to teach about dialect diversity and language ideologies. She wrote about the HUD video (which depicts a White man on the phone asking about potential rental property availabilities who impersonates various nonstandard and vernacular dialects, but only received a positive response when he spoke in SE). Samantha shared:

> I would use the exact same videos that we saw in this module, especially the one with the White man calling using different voices and then happens to get the apartment when he is portrayed "as White" due to his voice. That specific video was shocking, even if it was scripted; it is based off of true events. I would use the statistics that I read about how many reports of racial profiling, specific to housing, is filed each year. I would also incorporate the activity used in this module because it is a good way to get the students thinking about how they compare language to specific types of people.

Samantha specifically mentioned how the video depicted the overlap of racial and language ideologies when she called attention to the scene in the HUD video when the man who "gets" the apartment is "portrayed 'as White' due to his voice." Samantha reported that her reaction to this blatant portrayal of unequal outcomes due to implied racism through only hearing someone's voice as "shocking." Samantha stated that she would share this video as well as supporting data with her future students about unequal outcomes, specifically regarding housing,

due to racism. Samantha and other PSTs who engaged in critical race talk in their discussion board posts mentioned using the HUD video as an appropriate resource to show White SE speaking students a vivid example of linguistic profiling as racism in action. Within these discussion board posts coded as including critical race talk about teaching dialect diversity and language ideologies, we see examples of White teachers choosing learning resources that are appropriate and interesting for the students who make up their future classrooms.

### 4.6.4 Social justice as a learning goal

After getting to know the racial and linguistic backgrounds of their students and selecting materials appropriate for those students, PSTs next suggested beginning a discussion or dialogue with students about dialect-related content knowledge and student life experiences. Often times, PSTs suggested that these discussions center on social justice and change. In discussion board posts in which PSTs included critical race talk, the theme of dialogues about social justice emerged as a common learning goal. For example, Carol from Western State bluntly stated that as a teacher it would be important for her to position discussions of racism and classism, and sexism at the forefront of her teaching. Carol shared:

> First and foremost, I would want to teach my students that linguistic profiling and linguistic discrimination exist and are wrong. I feel like it is sometimes very easy to pretend that discrimination is a thing of the past and that we have moved beyond things like racism or classism or sexism when in reality these are still issues in our society that need to be addressed. We are doing our students a disservice if we allow them to be blind to these issues even if they are not the ones being discriminated against.

Carol detailed the ways in which she would share with her future students that discrimination is not a problem of the past, but that is something that still happens today. Considering literature critiquing abstract liberal notions of a "post-racial" United States, (Bonilla-Silva, 2010), Carol's proposed learning goal of reminding her students that "racism or classism or sexism" are still problems today that need to be addressed by everyone, including students, is a significant finding. In addition, Carol extends a step further by stating that teachers who do not address systemic discrimination in their classrooms are "doing our students a disservice." To Carol, students must leave their school experiences with knowledge about the importance of recognizing and mitigating systemic oppression (like racism). Alexis from Great Plains suggested that she would need to know her students to create a dialogic classroom and move towards discussions of social justice. Alexis wrote:

> Hopefully I've already set the tone of a safe and comfortable classroom where students will feel okay having a discussion about language discrimination, especially if someone in the class does use a different dialect, vernacular, have an accent, etc. Helping my students become aware of issues going on in the world is something I am very adamant about incorporating into the classroom.

Alexis shared that creating a "safe and comfortable" environment should be a priority when teaching about language discrimination. Alexis also stated that it is important to consider the perspectives of vernacular speaking students and their comfort regarding sharing their experiences with discrimination. Lastly, Alexis broadly implied that awareness of social injustices in the world would be incorporated into classroom discussions. Morgan from Lakeside extended her discussion past recognition of discrimination as a present problem with her future

students to a discussion about how to mitigate discrimination. Morgan suggested a classroom activity in which students can take action towards pursuing social justice. Morgan wrote:

> Once we finish talking about what dialects are and which dialects are found in our community (or state/country, if the community is more homogeneous), we will talk about which stereotypes are attached to each dialect, where you might hear them, who uses them, etc. This conversation will lead to reading a poem or piece of literature about how linguistic discrimination is damaging and wrong, which will then lead to a conversation about why we can't discriminate period, and how we can stop linguistic discrimination. Students can come up with ideas, form small groups, and do a PSA video project where they create a commercial advocating against linguistic discrimination (like the one we watched for this module) and once they have created their videos, we can watch them in class.

Morgan discussed using her students as agents of change by taking action in their own school. Discussions such as Alexis' and Morgan's, demonstrate how White teachers who engage in critical race talk are able to design classroom activities aimed at helping their students to both gain awareness of, and to take action against, social injustices. Morgan's activity goes a step further than Alexis' by proposing a classroom activity in which her students would be "advocating against" linguistic discrimination. This notion that social justice, through mitigating discrimination, should be a salient learning goal when teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies is an ideal proposed by scholars who promote Critical Language Pedagogies (Carpenter, Achugar,Walter, & Earhart, 2015; Godley and Minnici, 2008).

## 4.7    SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Six major findings emerged from my analysis of White PST critical race talk in discussions about teaching dialect diversity and language ideologies.

First, the frequency of critical race talk in the 2,900 discussion board posts was low, with only 78 posts (or 3%) being coded as including critical race talk. There were many missed opportunities for critical race talk engagement by White PSTs, particularly given the explicit focus and design of the curriculum on diversity, prejudice and privilege, and language ideologies. PSTs used race talk avoidance strategies throughout their discussion board posts. Overall, PSTs' critical race talk was interwoven with superficial talk of race and race talk avoidance strategies throughout the mini-course.

Second, 29% of White PST participants authored at least one discussion post coded as including critical race talk. Despite the small overall frequency of critical race talk in the dataset, the fact that almost one third of White PST participants in this project engaged in critical race talk seems high and suggests that participants are able, yet reluctant, to engage in discussions of race and racism.

Third, four themes emerged across White PST critical race talk: recognition of how systemic racism operates; participation in explicit discussions of Whiteness; recognition of the prevalence of deficit thinking about students of color and their families; and questions or areas of uncertainty about how to teach about racism. Within each of these themes, distinct sub-themes emerged that showed PST engagement in considering the ways in which people of color experience racialized discrimination. In addition, White PSTs considered how their own racial and linguistic privileges may impact their teaching.

Fourth, I found that most White PST critical race talk in this project was prompted by the discussion board module prompts themselves as opposed to direct responses to peers. Specifically, White PSTs were most likely to engage in critical race talk in response to the module four discussion board prompts which were focused on teaching about linguistic discrimination and power. PSTs engaged in the most critical race talk in response to prompt 4.1 which asked PSTs to consider how they would consider the racial and/or linguistic backgrounds of their students in their teaching and how their own racial/linguistic backgrounds would impact their teaching.

Fifth, I found that most PSTs who engaged in critical race talk in their discussion board post did not receive a response from their classmates. In PSTs' responses to peers' critical race talk, the PSTs overwhelmingly challenged each other to think more critically, use more specific language, and consider the implications of discussions of race, racism, discrimination, and language ideologies.

Sixth, PSTs who engaged in critical race talk often followed a similar three-step process when suggesting learning goals and pedagogies for teaching their future students about dialect diversity and language ideologies. This process started with getting to know students, choosing curriculum materials to meet the racial and linguistic backgrounds of their students, and finally engaging students in discussions which centered on issues of equity and social justice.

# 5.0    IMPLICATIONS

This goal of this study was to investigate the characteristics and context of White teacher critical race talk (Berchini, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Laughter, 2011). The overarching research question that framed my study was, "What are the characteristics of White teacher critical race talk?" Three additional research questions framed my analysis of the context of White teacher critical race talk: "What prompts White teacher critical race talk?", "How do White teachers respond to each other's critical race talk?" and "How does critical race talk shape White teachers' talk about pedagogy aimed at teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies?" The findings of this project contribute to current research on White teacher race talk, literature on teaching about dialect diversity from a critical stance, and scholarship on the productive integration of critical pedagogies in teacher preparation coursework and practicum experiences.

## 5.1    SIGNIFICANCE

My study documented critical race talk amongst 214 predominantly White ELA PSTs from across eight universities in the United States. Many recent studies have documented White teachers' strategies for avoiding race talk. By contrast, this project documented White teachers' explicit discussions of race and racism or what I call critical race talk.

With regards to research design and method of data collection, this study is distinct from previous research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism due to the size and scope of the study and because of my lack of involvement in the course implementation and design. Compared to previous research, this study had one of the largest numbers of participants and universities represented, with 214 participants from eight different universities. With regards to research methods, this project is distinct from other research on both White teachers' understandings of race and racism and research on dialect diversity and linguistic discrimination in schools because unlike most of the studies reviewed in my literature review, I neither served as the instructor for any iterations of the mini-course nor designed the mini-course. I also did not have a relationship with any of the participants. In summary, due to the size of this study and my distance from the participants and course, the findings and implications of this study may be more generalizable than previous studies.

In addition, this study is distinct from other studies on White teachers' understandings of race and racism because it bridges research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism with research on sociolinguistics and racialized language ideologies in classrooms. No existing studies of White teachers' understandings of racism incorporated beliefs about linguistic profiling, language ideologies, or racial bias by White teachers against their nonstandard or vernacular speaking students of color.

Finally, this study is a significant contribution to existing studies of White teachers' understandings of race and racism because I not only analyzed White teacher critical race talk, but I also looked at connections that White PSTs who engaged in this talk made to their instructional decision making. Unlike many of the studies reviewed as part of my literature

review, this study sought to explore the connections PSTs, who engaged in critical race talk, made between knowledge about language ideologies and racism and their pedagogical reasoning.

## 5.2 IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study shaped five significant implications for teacher educators and scholars interested in White teachers' understandings of race and racism for the purpose of mitigating racism in schools. I introduce each implication in turn below.

### 5.2.1 Critical race talk is distinct from superficial discussions of race and racism.

In chapter three, I defined critical race talk as explicit discussions of race and racism. Informed by previous research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism, I designed specific a priori codes to capture various aspects of critical race talk from my dataset. These codes included acknowledgements of specific ways in which White teachers have shown preference for Whiteness and deficit views about their students of color. As a result of my analysis of White teacher discussion board talk about teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies, I was able to capture a subset of data in which White teachers engaged in critical race talk, as opposed to talk about race and racism more generally (which might include race talk avoidance strategies and superficial mentions of race and racism). In my study, 56 White PSTs or 29% of White participants in this project engaged in critical race talk at least once during the mini-course. This percentage is high in comparison to limited amounts of White teacher race talk documented by previous research.

My study found that White teacher critical race talk included high frequencies of the following themes: how systemic racism operates (58%), how linguistic and racial profiling are similar (38%), and why Whiteness is problematic (37%). In addition, PSTs who engaged in critical race talk asked questions about how to address issues like Whiteness and White supremacy in their future classrooms without reinforcing White supremacy (26%). White teachers in my study who responded to their peers' critical race talk often challenged each other to be more critical in their explanations of racism by questioning their classmates' vague language or proposed classroom activities regarding teaching about racism and discrimination. Finally, some White PSTs in my study made connections between their own racial identities and that of their students when considering the learning goals and pedagogy of their future classrooms. These teachers discussed how they would select curriculum resources and design activities for dialogues about race and racism by first considering the racial and linguistic backgrounds of their students.

This first set of findings suggests that researchers interested in studying White teachers' understandings of race and racism should assume that White teachers are able to engage in both superficial race talk and critical race talk. In contrast, previous research on White teacher race talk has documented widespread and pervasive race talk avoidance by Whites and White teachers through White Talk, distancing strategies, low stakes discussions of racism, color-blind talk, and other discourse strategies designed to minimize or avoid discussions of racial inequities (Bonilla -Silva, 2010; Buehler, 2013; Lewis, 2001; McIntyre, 1997; Pollock, 2004). As opposed to studying superficial mentions of race and racism, the findings of this project suggest that education researchers should instead focus on critical race talk. Critical race talk discussions amongst White teachers might include discussions about how racism operates, how Whiteness

should be problematized, or how teachers can teach about White supremacy without reinforcing it.

The findings of this project complement other studies which have suggested that despite encountering superficial White teacher race talk and race talk avoidance, White teachers are able to discuss racism in complex ways but they are sometimes precluded by contextual obstacles (Berchini, 2016; Laughter, 2011). Previous research on White teacher race talk engagement recommends that researchers continue positioning White teachers as capable of critical discussions of race and racism, focusing their analyses on ideas more complex than race talk avoidance or silence, and perhaps turning to a new theory or approach to study White teachers (Crowley, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010).

Likewise, education researchers should aim for White teacher critical race talk engagement in their teacher education classes, despite their encounters with White teacher superficial race talk or race talk avoidance. As a result, researchers and teacher educators should inform their work with recent studies which have documented ways in which White teacher engage in more critical discussions of race and racism. These scholars have called for research which complicates the notion of the racially unaware White teacher (Berchini, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Crowley, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010).

This first set of findings also hold implications for teacher education. Teacher educators are urged to recognize that their PSTs and in-service teachers are not arriving to their teacher education or continuing teacher education courses as unknowing or naïve with regards to knowledge of racism (Laughter, 2011). Promising methods for teacher educators to promote critical race talk in their classrooms include asking White teachers to read about racism as documented in U.S. history, exposing students to media on current social justice movements like

#blacklivesmatter, and designing activities for White teachers to respond to these resources in discussions or writing.

The findings of this project suggest that exposing White teachers to curriculum which engages them in learning goals and activities aimed at learning about racism and discrimination will elicit White teacher critical race talk. Furthermore, teacher educators are urged to expose teachers to discussions of racism as it impacts their own lives and potentially the lives of their students. I found the most critical race talk occurred when teachers discussed their own experiences with discriminating against others, not when asked to critique outside programs or literature depicting discrimination. Overall, teacher educators need to approach their work, design their curriculum, select their resources, and plan their classroom activities from the perspective that their White teachers might be reluctant to, but ultimately are capable of, engaging critical race talk.

## 5.2.2   The same teachers who engage in critical race talk also avoid critical race talk.

Not only are White teachers capable of critical race talk, they also make decisions about *when* to engage in critical race talk. The findings from this study show that although only 3% of the discussion board prompts were coded as including White PST critical race talk, 29% of White participants employed critical race talk at least once. This means that the same teachers who engaged in critical race talk in one discussion post response often avoided critical race talk in another. I found that White teachers in my study were more likely to engage in critical race talk when prompted directly to talk about race and racism, when prompted to talk about their personal experiences with White privilege, and when they were part of a larger class in which many diverse perspectives from classmates were shared. Perhaps direct questioning, discussions

of personal experiences, and a more diverse representation of classmates fostered classroom (or online) environments in which participants felt more comfortable participating in a dialogue about racism.

I found that increased diversity in teacher education course participant population produced more critical race talk. Of the nine university classes in my analysis, five universities, Lakeside, Great Plains 1, Magnolia, Western State, and SoTech, produced 88% of the critical race talk found across all datasets. Additionally, these five university classes accounted for 88% of the participants who participated in critical race talk. These university classes were characterized by larger class sizes (19+), a greater percentage of teachers who were preparing to teach high school (72%+), slightly more racial diversity (11%+), and more gender diversity, with less than 84% of participants reporting as female. This is significant because many previous studies have examined individuals or small groups of homogenous White female PSTs and their understandings of race and racism (Haviland, 2008; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Picower, 2009). By contrast, this study suggests that even a slight bit of increased diversity of perspectives within a teacher education course may increase the likelihood of White PSTs participating in critical race talk.

Therefore, the notion that PSTs who avoid critical race talk are unable or unknowing about racism does not help to explain White teacher critical race talk engagement or avoidance in my study. Rather, PSTs in my study were likely to engage in critical race talk based on certain contexts, such as when prompted to comment on content about racism and discrimination, when prompted with direct questions about their experiences maintaining racism as Whites, or when more diverse perspectives were present.

Recent research on White teachers and racism have also problematized the notion that White PSTs are alone responsible for avoiding critical race talk in classrooms and have pointed to contextual obstructions like curriculum and/or administrators as precluding specific discussions of racism (Berchini, 2016). The findings of this study complement the arguments of Berchini (2016) and Crowley (2016) who posit that factors outside of teachers must be studied for eliciting or precluding critical race talk.

My findings suggest that researchers should problematize the *context* of critical race talk, not just the participants. The findings of this study and others suggest that White teachers will engage in explicit discussions of racism and critical race talk under the right conditions (Crowley, 2016). In this study, teachers engaged in more critical race talk when asked to explicitly discuss racism, specifically their own experiences of Whiteness. Researchers interested in studying White teacher critical race talk in future research are urged to consider specific elements of the instructional context, such as whether the curriculum includes discussions that explicitly address systemic racism. Instead of labeling White teachers as unknowing or unable to engage in critical discussions of racism, researchers should problematize why critical race talk engagement was limited in their studies. What factors can researchers identify in the teacher education context which would preclude race talk? Did teachers have access to theory and research to articulate racism? Did teachers have opportunities to practice considering how racial and language ideologies overlap? Researchers are cautioned not to assume that White teachers are unable to discuss racism.

The findings of my study suggest that more research on diverse teacher education settings is needed, particularly since the diversity of the context may increase the likelihood for White teacher critical race talk. In fact, existing studies that have documented White teacher race talk

engagement were all focused on a single university and were limited to case studies of one to six teachers (Berchini, 2016; Boucher, 2016; Crowley, 2016). Future research on White teacher critical race talk should include larger samples of participants who represent diverse backgrounds.

In addition, the limited critical race talk found in this study suggests that White teachers need carefully planned dialogues and encouragement from others to participate in critical race talk. Researchers are thus urged to focus on teacher education courses and programs that help teachers practice and establish dialogues about race and racism that move past race talk and into critical race talk engagement. These dialogues would allow opportunities for researchers to study the role of engaged teacher educators as they, for example, challenge vague language and ask directed follow up questions to participants that might elicit more critical race talk. By contrast, one sided data collection such as prompt responses, questionnaires, surveys, and one-time interviews may not create enough dialogue and chance for follow up questioning as small group discussions, classroom discourse analysis, more interactive online discussion boards, or a series of conversational interviews.

The findings of my study have implications for the design of teacher education courses, programs and activities that would foster White teachers' critical race talk. Teachers in my study were more likely to engage in race talk when they were asked to specifically discuss their experiences with race and racism. In addition, teachers in my study were more likely to engage in critical race talk discussions in which they were prompted to discuss Whiteness and discrimination. In response to prompts 1.1 and 4.1, some White PSTs discussed not only the ways their White identities might impact their judgements about student language usage but how these views may negatively impact their students of color who use vernacular dialects. This

notion contrasts with earlier work on Whites and Whiteness, such as the work of Lewis (2001) who argued that White teachers in her study did not view Whiteness as a racial identity that might influence their teaching.

Similar to studies by Solomona et al. (2006) and Page (2009), which engaged teachers in discussions critical of White privilege through utilizing McIntosh's (1990) work, I suggest that teacher educators seeking to engage White teachers in critical race talk can inform their work by challenging teachers to explicitly discuss their own Whiteness and White privileges. However, similar to Godley & Minnici (2008) and Godley et al. (2015), I suggest that these discussions of Whiteness and White privilege are framed specifically as impacting White teachers' instruction by considering how White privilege should shape learning goals and pedagogical approaches to teaching.

In my study, teachers responding to critical race talk challenged each other to be clear or more critical when they used vague language to discuss racism and discrimination. I recommend that teacher educators inform their work on engaging critical race talk with awareness of race talk avoidance strategies so that they can also expand on race talk and challenge their students instead to engage in more productive critical race talk. Teacher educators need to have the skills and provide their teachers with the skills to also identify and challenge discourse strategies which leave racism in K-12 classrooms unchecked, maintained, or minimized (Haviland, 2008; McIntyre, 1997; Picower, 2009).

Lastly, I found that PSTs in the largest classes engaged in the most discussions of explicit race and racism. By contrast, the smallest two courses (Tidewater and Ravine), which had only women enrolled, produced very limited critical race talk (1 post total). Considering the findings of my study, teacher educators who want to promote critical race talk in their courses should

argue for class sizes large enough to represent various points of view and encourage diversity of perspectives among students. Additionally, as found in this study, when teachers directly prompted their students to share their experiences with racial privilege and discrimination and encourage dialogues between participants, PSTs were more likely to engage in critical race talk. By including diversity of perspectives, teacher educators can further promote discussions of critical race talk in their classrooms.

### 5.2.3   Discussions of Whiteness lead to critical perspectives on race.

In comparison to other theoretical frames often used to explain and theorize White teacher's understandings of race and racism, such as Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), King's (1991) theory of dysconscious racism, or Helms' (1990) theory of White racial identity development, critical Whiteness studies provided a better explanatory framework for the specific themes that emerged in my analysis of White PST critical race talk (Whiteness as a notable/not neutral racial identity, discussions of how Whiteness may impact teaching, and descriptions of White privilege). This finding complements recent research on White teachers' understandings of race and racism that have specifically demonstrated that White PSTs can critique Whiteness, problematize race-neutral discussions, and even label the neutrality of Whiteness as pernicious (Crowley, 2016; Stoll, 2014; Yoon, 2012).

Specifically, in my study I found that when White PSTs engaged in critical race talk, participants frequently explicitly mentioned and critiqued Whiteness as both a racial identity worthy of discussion and articulated how Whiteness might impact their teaching about dialect diversity and language ideologies. In addition, White PSTs engaged in explicit discussions of Whiteness as it impacted their thinking about language ideologies and how it might impact their

teaching about dialect diversity. The prevalence of Whiteness as a subject of critique by White PSTs in White teacher critical race talk suggests that researchers and teacher educators interested in promoting critical race talk by White teachers should frame their work in studies informed by critical Whiteness theory.

Because teachers in my study who engaged in critical race talk were likely to include explicit critiques of Whiteness, I argue that recent scholarship on racism in schools have relied too heavily on critical race theory (CRT) for theory to explain White teachers' engagement in race talk (Blaisdell, 2005; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Matias, 2013; Settlage, 2011). CRT is an appropriate theoretical frame for informing White teachers about material and legal inequities caused by racism (Bell, 1980; Harris, 1993). CRT also is used in salient work which amplifies the voices of those who experience systemic daily discrimination in schools due to their race (Pabon, 2015; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). However, the findings of this study suggest that critical Whiteness studies, which focuses on problematizing Whiteness and White experiences upholding racism, might be a more appropriate theoretical frame for capturing and analyzing themes within White teachers' critical race talk. My argument responds to calls by scholars who have called for research that studies White teachers' complex understandings of racism from a new or borrowed perspective (Berchini, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010).

The findings of this study also suggest that teacher educators can introduce PSTs to critical Whiteness studies to help teachers problematize Whiteness and make connections between their own racial identity and their teaching. This is not to say that there is not a role for CRT and CRP in teacher education; these theories are important tools for informing learning goals about naming and explaining micro-aggressions, analyzing the unequal material and psychic outcomes caused by White supremacy as experienced by people of color in the U.S.

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today, and building asset-based beliefs about students of color in classrooms (Gere et al., 2009; Ladson-Billing 1995a; Young, 2011). However, the findings of this study show that White teachers were more likely to engage critical race talk through discussions that lead with Whiteness. While coursework informed by research on pedagogies associated with CRT and CRP would certainly be appropriate to be included into teacher education and continuing education courses, I argue that teacher educators would benefit by revisiting research framed in critical Whiteness studies in order to engage White teacher critical race talk. Teacher educators could use germinal work by Lewis (2001) which demonstrates how White teachers and school employees disregarded Whiteness as a racial identity. This article highlights Whiteness as a racial identity that is problematically reported by Whites as neutral and it could be paired with work on abstract liberalism, perhaps Bonilla-Silva's latest edition of his work on color-blind racism. In addition, teacher educators could use research on White discourse strategies that dismiss and maintain racism such as Haviland's (2008) work on White Educational Discourses or Yoon's (2012) or Picower's (2009) work on White ways of talking about racism. There are many resources available for teacher educators who want to elicit discussions of critical race talk with their White students by problematizing Whiteness.

In my findings, participants discussed how their Whiteness may be linked to unequal outcomes for students of color when compared to their White peers. These discussions could be viewed as important steps in engaging and convincing the predominantly White teaching force that teaching is essentially social justice work. Ladson-Billings's (1995) theory of Culturally Relevant Teaching found that teachers who approached their teaching of Black students from a culturally relative standpoint believed that all the students were capable of academic success; saw their pedagogy as art—unpredictable, always in the process of becoming; saw themselves as

members of their students' communities; and saw teaching as a way to give back to the community (p. 478) To Ladson-Billings, teachers must envision teaching as a task that extends beyond classrooms. Teachers must reshape beliefs about student abilities. Moreover, they should recognize that teaching has the potential to contribute in a positive way to communities, such as through "giving back."

Paris (2012) more recently wrote about the potential for critical pedagogies, such as Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, to make connections between the work of teachers in developing and supporting their students' abilities both inside and outside of classrooms. Paris wrote:

The term culturally sustaining requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive of or relevant to the cultural experiences and practices of young people—it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. (p.95)

The findings of my study suggest that teacher educators can and should engage their pre and in-service teachers in critical race talk for the purpose of convincing these educators that their work is essentially social justice work. By convincing teachers that engaging in social justice work is an essential element of teaching, pre-service and in-service teachers may be more willing to utilize critical pedagogies such as Culturally Relevant/Responsive/Sustaining pedagogies that have already been carefully designed and promoted by educational scholars (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2010; Paris, 2012). Subsequently, teacher educators are urged to frame their coursework and teacher training curriculum to expose pre- and in-service White teachers to critical pedagogies.

### 5.2.4 Many White teachers came to see linguistic profiling as racism.

In this study, 38% of the discussion board posts labeled as critical race talk included discussions about how racism and linguistic profiling are the same. The frequency of this theme within the dataset demonstrated how some White teachers seemed to better understand covert, systemic racism by discussing systemic linguistic discrimination against Black people (Blake & Cutler, 2003; Cross, DeVaney, & Jones, 2001; Godley et al., 2007). Additionally, some participants in this study admitted their own participation in linguistic and racial discrimination against others. Other PST participants articulated understandings of the possible perspectives of their vernacular speaking students and how they make decisions about how they speak. These ideas were prompted by specific discussion board prompts within the mini-course curriculum that elicited teachers to talk about their participation in racism through their judgments about others' language usage.

These findings suggest that given the link between racialized standard language ideologies upheld by White teachers and systemic racism in schools, more researchers should study the relationship between teachers' understandings of racism and their understandings about language/dialects. Furthermore, despite important critical scholarship within the field of English education that has prompted analyses of how racism and language impacts schooling (Cross et al., 2001; Heath, 1981; Milroy & Milroy, 1985; Bernstein, 1961; Smitherman, 1977), none of the research reviewed in my literature review on White teachers' understandings of race and racism considered research about racialized language ideologies in schools, teacher beliefs about language ideologies, or unequal outcomes for nonstandard and vernacular speaking students. The issues of language and how it relates to identity, power, and discrimination have limited the field of ELA teacher education research; however, I argue that education researchers outside of the

field of ELA may benefit from including critical theory on racism and language ideologies into their theoretical understandings of how racism operates in schools (Dyson & Smitherman, 2005; Godley & Minnici, 2008). All teachers should have access to theory and pedagogies which help them to problematize, identify, and help mitigate every day and nuanced racism in schools, such as linguistic profiling.

My findings about teachers' understandings of linguistic profiling as racism also suggest that White PSTs may find linguistic discrimination to be a topic that elicits discussions of critical race talk. When White PSTs in this study engaged in discussions of linguistic profiling, they made connections to how Whiteness might impact their teaching about dialect discrimination and discussed how some White teachers hold implicit racialized deficit views about the academic abilities of their students of color due to their usage of vernacular dialects. Thus, PSTs engaged in discussions of Whiteness not just as a preferred skin color, but as a way of speaking, for example, by discussing how SE is sometimes viewed as "talking White." Some participants even directly questioned or expressed uncertainty about how to teach about SE without reinforcing White supremacy. I argue that teachers from all content area backgrounds should learn about the language ideologies, dialect diversity, and dialect myths that privilege SE speakers as part of their preparation classes or continuing education as in-service teachers. These discussions about racism as a system of oppression that extends beyond skin color into teacher beliefs about student language could prove useful in prompting productive critical race talk in pre and in-service teachers from all content areas.

### 5.2.5 White PSTs had many questions about teaching about racism, language and social justice.

In this study, 26% of the White PST critical race talk included specific questions or expressed areas of uncertainty about how to teach about race and racism with regards to dialect diversity and language ideologies. Not only did PSTs ask a lot of questions about teaching about discrimination, the themes which emerged within these areas of uncertainty included complex issues such as: How do I manage my White identity and that of my students?  How do I teach about White supremacy without reinforcing it? How do we push past the Black/ White racial binary? How do I create a classroom environment to handle this topic? These questions are significant in the face of research which has problematized White teachers race talk avoidance but has perhaps ignored questioning teachers directly about why they do not engage in discussions of race and racism. Baily & Katradis (2016) found that some teachers avoided talk of race and racism due to teacher fears about being unprepared to meet the needs of student responses. PSTs in my study shared similar uncertainties on how to approach teaching about discrimination and using critical race talk to do so. However, instead of labeling these questions as problematic, I suggest that the final implication of this project is for education researchers to study and teacher educators to make space for White PSTs' questions and uncertainties about teaching about race and racism.

Teacher educators need to be open to questions from their students about how to approach topics like racism and discrimination. Teacher educators are urged to dispel the notion that PSTs need to have the right answer about how to teach about systemic oppression right away. Teacher educators should create classroom environments (online or in person) with specific time and resources dedicated towards gathering and answering teacher questions.

Teacher educators can use these expressed questions and implied areas of uncertainty as a guide for their own practice. For example, teacher educators should address their curriculum to see if they are providing their students with resources and opportunities to ask questions while practicing critical race talk. Students also need opportunities to form arguments and explanations about racism that demonstrate that their own Whiteness can at times be problematic. Perhaps teachers are unsure of how to position their Whiteness in the classroom. Perhaps teachers are uncertain if they are responsible for addressing racism in classrooms comprised of all White students. Do White teachers feel unprepared to discuss ideas of "talking White" with their students? These areas of concern and questions from PSTs might serve as pathways for those interested in prompting critical race talk discussions with their White PSTs, teachers, or teacher educators who are hoping to inspire their PSTs to approach teaching about race and racism confidently and frequently in their practice. Informed by critical pedagogies like CLP and CRP, teacher educators should allow their students to engage in dialogues and should be prepared to answer students' questions and concerns.

### 5.2.6 Call to Action

In the face of sustained racialized discrimination against students of color by their White teachers, it is imperative for scholars to continue to investigate the ways in which White teachers understand race and racism. One productive way in which scholars can examine White teachers' understandings of racism is by examining White teacher critical race talk. The findings and implications of this study demonstrate productive nature of critical race talk engagement amongst White teachers in the pursuit of equity and social justice in U.S. K-12 schools. Teacher educators should utilize strategies that encourage White PSTs to consider power, privilege, and

equity when teaching about racism and discrimination, especially when teaching about language variation and literacy. Moreover, all teachers should have access to critical pedagogies, such as Critical Language Pedagogies or Culturally Relevant/Responsive/Sustaining teaching practices in order to pursue social justice as an everyday learning goal in their classrooms. Lastly, this study contributes to scholarship on White teachers' understandings of race and racism through providing insight into White teachers capable of engaging in the difficult work of recognizing and reducing racism in their own practice through knowledge and implementation of critical pedagogies.

# APPENDIX A

## A.1    PRE- AND POST-QUESTIONNAIRE

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Part 1. General background information

1. Gender Identification

Female

Male

Other

2. Racial Identification (Choose all that apply)

Latino

African American or Black

White

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Other:

3. List all the places you have lived (city/town, state, and country if not the United

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States)

4. Where do you consider yourself "from"? (what place do you consider your home or what place do you feel had the most formative effect on who you are?)

5. Throughout your middle and high school years, your social groups tended to be: (Check all that apply)

Diverse (linguistically and/or culturally)

Homogeneous (linguistically and/or culturally)

Urban

Suburban

Rural

Interested in sports

Interested in music

Outdoorsy

Religious

Interested in gaming

Interested in the arts

Other:

6. At what university or college are you currently enrolled?

7. What is the name or number of the class you're enrolled in that directed you to take this questionnaire?

8. How many semesters of undergraduate education have you completed?

9. How many semesters of graduate education have you completed?

10. How many semesters/months/years have you spent observing or teaching in

schools? Please describe how long and the type(s) of experiences (e.g., "two months observing a 9th grade class, six months tutoring 5th graders, and fifteen weeks student teaching full time")

11. As of now, your career goal or profession is:

Elementary school teacher

Middle school English teacher

High school English teacher

Other educational professional

Other

12. Prior to this semester, did you take any of the following types of courses? (Check all that apply)

Sociolinguistics/English Dialects

LGBTQIA Literature or Studies

Multicultural Education

History of the English Language

Uses of Literacy

English Grammar

Women's Studies/Gender Studies

Ethnic Studies/Urban Studies

Introduction to Linguistics

None of the above

13. What languages do you speak other than English?

14. If you speak a language other than English, where did you learn it? (Choose all that

apply)

School

Home

Time in another country

Other:

15. How would you describe how YOU use language in your life? (Choose all that apply)

I speak English with some people/in some situations and another language with/in others

I speak pretty much the same way to everyone

I vary my spoken language noticeably for different audiences

I vary my spoken language noticeably for different settings

I don't speak a dialect

I only speak one dialect

I use two or more dialects regularly

I use language differently in academic/formal settings and in my everyday life

I use language similarly in academic/formal settings and in my everyday life

Other:

16. Please explain how any of the factors mentioned above (i.e., geographical background, gender and race identification, coursework, your language and dialect use, etc.) have shaped your thinking about language variation if all. Also describe how these factors affect how you address language and gender in your classroom/educational thinking?

Part 2. *Pre-Questionnaire: New Teaching Scenario Items (2015-16 Version).* The following section

Scenario 1: You are teaching 7th grade ELA in a diverse urban high school and you notice that your students regularly use features of their vernacular dialect in their academic essays, the most common of which is the subject-verb agreement pattern seen here: "Esperanza wish she have different hair." You give students substantial written feedback on their ideas and organization in their papers. In addition:

- Since you've already reviewed subject verb agreement in Standardized English, you circle the errors on students' papers and tell students that they can earn back grammar points by independently correcting the errors.

- You take 15 minutes of class time to conduct a short lesson about the grammatical patterns of verb endings in Standardized and vernacular varieties of English. You end by explaining to students that they can use grammatical patterns of vernacular dialects in their journals, but they must use Standardized English in their formal essays.

- You take 15 minutes of class time to lead a discussion about Standardized English, asking students to think about who decides what "Standard" is and the rationales for using vernacular dialects in school and writing. You conduct a short lesson about the grammatical patterns of verb endings in Standardized and vernacular dialects, concluding by telling students to be deliberate about their language choices.

- You ignore these grammatical patterns in your students' academic writing.

- You share your observations of the subject/verb patterns with your students,

saying, "It's fine to talk that way with your friends, but in school or for a job interview you need to use Standardized English."

Please explain your choice for teacher response #1 (the one you'd be most likely to use).

Please explain your choice for teacher response #5 (the one you'd be least likely to use).

Explain your ordering of the teacher responses you ranked #2, #3 and #4. Why did you put them in this order?

Scenario 2: Your White suburban students are reading *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, a novel written from the perspective of Celie, a poor, uneducated, Black woman living in rural Georgia who is abused by her father and later her husband, but who ultimately becomes empowered through her relationship with a female jazz singer, Shug. You have planned a class discussion related to a scene in which Celie is writing a letter to her sister that says: "I feel a little peculiar around the children. For one thing, they grown. And I see they think me and Nettie and Shug and Albert and Samuel and Harpo and Sofia and Jack and Odessa real old and don't know much what going on. But I don't think us feel old at all. And us so happy. Matter of fact, I think this the youngest us ever felt." After you point students to this section for discussion, a student says, "I can't even understand what is happening in this book. It doesn't make any sense. It's not even written in correct English." "Yeah," agree other students. In response:

- You ask the students to pull out their phones and consider whether their

parents or grandparents would understand the language of their texts. You ask students, "Does this mean your language isn't valid? Should you have to use Standardized English in your texts and with your friends?" End by explaining that language is constantly changing and used differently by different groups of people.

- You note that the author is not trying to have her characters use "correct English." Instead, the dialect used in the book is an accurate representation of the way uneducated Blacks spoke at the time, and it is an important aspect of making the text feel authentic.

- You have students translate the language into Standardized English and discuss the effect it has on the feel of the text. You then use this activity to launch a discussion about code-switching and the contexts in which it's valuable to use vernacular dialects.

- You ask students to unpack what the term "correct English" means and why they think that Walker's use of "correct English" for her characters' voices would have been a better choice. You engage them in a discussion about the author's choice to have some characters use vernacular dialects and others use Standardized English and in a discussion of Celie's views on learning Standardized English.

- You note that the book is written in a different dialect and that everyone's dialect connects them to a time and place. Then you discuss how people from different geographic areas or with different backgrounds tend to use different dialects. You stress the importance of using Standardized English in formal contexts like school and job interviews.

Please explain your choice for teacher response #1 (the one you'd be most likely to use).

Please explain your choice for teacher response #5 (the one you'd be least likely to use).

Explain your ordering of the teacher responses you ranked #2, #3 and #4. Why did you put them in this order?

*Post-Questionnaires.* Our post-questionnaires for both 2014 and 2015-16 were much

shorter than the ones that teachers completed at the beginning of the mini-course and consisted of two parts. The first section asked preservice teachers to respond to the same teaching scenarios they were given in the pre-questionnaire. This allowed us to look for changes in their responses and thus their pedagogical content knowledge. The second section consisted of eight questions that asked participants to reflect on and evaluate our mini-course. We used this section to determine which parts of our mini-course teachers perceived as most useful and to make small adjustments in the course as needed. The questions about the mini-course were:

1.     On average, how many hours PER WEEK did you spend on curriculum-related work, including reading the materials, viewing videos, and reading and responding to the online discussions?

2.     How useful were the teaching scenarios (written)?

        Not useful

        Somewhat useful

        Very useful

        Extremely useful

3.     How useful were the teaching scenarios (videos/blogs)?

        Not useful

        Somewhat useful

        Very useful

        Extremely useful

4.     How useful were the readings about language and language variation?

        Not useful

Somewhat useful

Very useful

Extremely useful

5.      How useful were the online discussions?

Not useful

Somewhat useful

Very useful

Extremely useful

6.      Thinking back over all parts of the curriculum, is there one part or theme that stood out as the most useful to you? (If nothing comes to mind, simply write "N/A")

7.      Thinking back over the readings and media (videos, blogs, etc.), is there one that stood out as the most interesting, useful or surprising to you? (If nothing comes to mind, simply write "N/A")

8.      What is the one topic, knowledge, theme, or pedagogy that you learned about in these modules do you think will be the most important or useful to you as a teacher?

## APPENDIX B

## DESCRIPTION OF MINI-COURSE MODULES – TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES

| Mini-Course Module/Topic | Activities |
|---|---|
| 1.<br><br>Teaching about dialects in literature | • Watch the opening of American Tongues to hear accents from around the United States:<br>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0dMTgA5mxg&feature=fvst<br><br>• Read about American varieties and dialect myths and realities. Explore one American dialect by clicking on the link at the top of the page:<br>http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/<br><br>• Read What is Standard English?<br>http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/standardamerican/<br><br>• Watch this short video on Pittsburgh dialect ("Pittsburghese") created by a middle school student:<br>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1eSQ2u0STQ<br><br>• Watch this video about changes in accents in Charlotte, NC:<br>http://tinyurl.com/charlottelang<br><br>• Read "Everyone Has an Accent" by Walt Wolfram:<br>http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-18-fall-2000/feature/everyone-has-accent. Please do the activities in this reading (they're fun!). |

| 2.<br><br>Responding to vernacular dialects in student writing and speech | • Read "Talking about Language Variation with Your Students."<br><br>• Do the "Discovering Dialect Patterns: A Special Use of BE in African American English" activity.<br><br>• Do the "A-prefixing Quiz" (Appalachian English) at: http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/a-prefixing/<br><br>• Read about features of African American English at: http://www.hawaii.edu/satocenter/langnet/definitions/aave.html#vocab-hce Be sure to read about the grammatical features.<br><br>• Watch David Crystal making the case that texting is good for the English language: (focus on minutes 5-10) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h79V_qUp91M)<br><br>• Watch this video about the Academic English Mastery program in Los Angeles Unified Schools District. The program aims to teach students the patterns of Standardized English (which it calls "Mainstream American English"): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xX1-FgkfWo8 |
| 3.<br><br>Leading discussions and investigations of identity and language variation | • Reading 1: Talking about Language Variation with Your Students.<br><br>• Reading 2: "Discovering Dialect Patterns: A Special Use of BE in African American English"<br><br>• Hypothesizing about dialect patterns activity<br><br>• Read "Language Variation and Identity"<br><br>• Read "Code-Switching and Code-Meshing"<br><br>• Watch Jamila Lyiscott's TED talk, "3 Ways to Speak English": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9fmJ5xQ_mc |
| 4.<br><br>Teaching about | • Do the Module 4 Activity (located in the folder of readings for the modules).<br><br>• Watch the Housing and Urban Development Public Service Announcement (PSA) about linguistic profiling. Watch the PSA at: |

| linguistic discrimination and power | http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAZMIC_OwTw |
| --- | --- |

- Read about linguistic profiling post-Hurricane Katrina at: http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2006-08-22/article/24914

- Complete the "Listen Mr Oxford Don" poem activity

- A video of the author reading his poem:

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ywy-Tthdg7w

- Complete the Language Variation post-questionnaire.

- Module 4 Activity.

- Imagine you're on a bus and overhear a heated conversation between two people a few seats back. You don't want to look to see who is talking; instead, you listen to their voices in order to create a mental image of the two participants. What characteristics do you think you could successfully use their speech to identify and which characteristics do you think you would likely get wrong? To get you started, a list of traits appears below. As you consider the trait, estimate how accurate you think you would be correctly identifying each trait. For the sake of the discussion, for each trait select an accuracy range from: 0-24%, 25-49%, 50-74%, 75-89%, and 90-100%. You can add traits of your own to the list and estimate how accurately you could identify them.

    o Sex (gender)

    o Race (ethnicity)

    o Region

    o Education level

    o Socioeconomic status/class

    o Age

    o Sexual orientation

    o Nationality

    o Urban or rural background

    o Religion

    o Occupation

- o Politeness

- Consider:

  - o What can you tell about people by their speech?

  - o Can you always identify people by their speech or only sometimes? What factors into whether you can identify people by their speech or not?

  - o Looking back at your answers above, which do you think are most accurate and which do you think would be based on stereotypes or overgeneralizations?

**APPENDIX C**

**MINI-COURSE MODULE TOPICS & DISCUSSION BOARD PROMPTS**

| Mini-Course Module/Topic | Discussion Board Prompt |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Teaching about dialects in literature | 1.1. Post to "Dialect Myths" discussion board. Pick one of the myths in the article. |
| | Questions to consider: |
| | When have you personally experienced or heard someone espouse this myth? |
| | In what ways would knowing the "reality" of this myth make a teacher more effective at teaching literacy than a teacher who believed the "myth"? |
| | In other words, what specific pedagogical choices might differ between teachers who know the reality versus those who hold the myth? |
| | 1.2. Post to "Dialects in Literature" discussion. Drawing from all the readings and viewings in this module, how would you respond to the teaching |

scenario at the beginning of the module? Try to be as specific as possible, describing verbatim what you would say. Questions to consider:

What do you think students should learn about dialects? ("Everyone Has an Accent" might be helpful to apply here).

What should students know about Southern dialects, in particular?

How could you help students think about and value Harper Lee's (and other authors') deliberate representation of specific dialects in their work?

How could you link students' examination of dialects to literary analysis, such as setting, characterization, and point of view?

2. Responding to vernacular dialects in student writing and speech

2.1. Post to the "Opening Scenario" discussion. Look back at the Module 2 "Opening Scenario." Drawing from your readings, viewings, and activities, how would you teach your students about the vernacular grammar and usage patterns you have noticed in their writing and how they compare to the patterns of Standardized Written English (SWE)? Try to be as specific as possible, describing verbatim what you would say. Questions to consider:

What terms would you use to describe the language varieties that your students are using and to describe SWE?

How would you balance ease of understanding, clarity, respect for students' language varieties, and necessary detail when describing language varieties?

Would you need to provide an overview of language variation/dialects

in the English language and clarify any "myths" students might hold?

How much detail would you need to provide about the patterns you see in students' language use? For instance, would you specify that some patterns are grammatical, some phonological (accent/sound), and some vocabulary? Would you need to distinguish between written and oral language patterns?

How might you use the "discovering dialect patterns" activity as a model for helping your students discover grammatical patterns in vernacular and SWE varieties?

2.2. Post to the "Academic English Mastery" discussion. As noted in the Academic English Mastery video, research has shown that the program has a significant impact on students' reading and writing scores, so there is a documented academic benefit to the program. Drawing on the readings, viewings, and activities you have done this week, answer the following questions:

What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? Consider carefully how the program asks students to think about language variation and if it reinforces or challenges any of the "myths" you read about in Module 1.

The Academic English Mastery program has only been used in elementary schools in Los Angeles. What elements of the program or its approach do you think would be useful for students in grades 7-12? How would

you adjust the program or its approach for your students?

2.3 Post to the "Academic English Mastery" discussion: Please respond to another student's wiki post. In your response, you may also address the following optional question: There is much controversy about programs like the Academic English Mastery program. Educators such as Dr. Lisa Delpit (1995) support such programs because they believe that it is the obligation of English teachers to teach their students (particularly disempowered students) the "codes of power," such as Standardized English. They argue that these codes of power provide access to powerful institutions such as college and high-status professions. Delpit argues that it is classist and racist not to teach these codes of power because if students can't speak and write these codes, like Standardized English, they will be shut out of power structures in mainstream U.S. society. Delpit emphasizes that teachers must also demonstrate that they value the non-standard language varieties that their students use. On the other hand, educators such as Dr. James Sledd (1996) call this type of approach the "linguistics of White supremacy" because it promotes "formal initiation into the linguistic prejudices of the [White] middle class."

Which side of this argument do you find most convincing and why?

| 3. Leading discussions and investigations | 3.1 Post to the "How I Talk" discussion. Describe a time when you were in a situation where you spoke markedly differently from others OR the way you spoke brought unwanted attention to you. How did it affect your conversation and connection to others? How did it make you feel? Were there material consequences of this linguistic difference (for instance, were you |

of    identity    denied a job or apartment?)

and    language        Now, reflect on other people's reactions to your language use across

variation    your adult life. In what ways have you been linguistically privileged? In what

ways have you faced discrimination or disapproval for your language use?

3.2 Post to the "Opening Scenario" discussion. For this module, our

opening teaching scenario can be found through a teacher's blog and online

video: http://thatshowitalk.blogspot.com. The "That's How I Talk!" project was

created by high school English teacher Nora Bergman who teaches in a

culturally and linguistically diverse high school in Decatur, Georgia. In her

blog, Nora investigated identity and variation in her students' lives and tracked

her students' learning as they investigated identity and variation in their own

lives.

How would you construct an assignment through which students could

investigate and critically reflect on identity and language variation in their own

lives? Jamila Lyiscott's TED talk could help you think about this. Questions to

consider (you don't need to answer all of them):


What do you think Nora intended students to learn about language

variation and identity through the "That's How I Talk!" project? What would

your learning goals be?

After reading students' blogs, what did students seem to learn? What

misconceptions or confusions about language variation seemed to remain?

What is the place and value of a project like this in a secondary English

class? You might think about the knowledge you would gain about your students that might help you be a more effective teacher.

What aspects of the "That's How I Talk!" project would you use or revise if you were to assign a project like this in your class?

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.<br><br>Teaching about linguistic discrimination and power | 4.1 Post to the "Linguistic Profiling" discussion. Drawing on your answers to Activity 1, and the readings/viewings about linguistic profiling and linguistic discrimination, what would you want your students to learn about linguistic profiling? What materials, activities and discussion questions would you use? How would your learning goals and activities change depending on both your linguistic and racial identity and your students' linguistic and racial identities? In other words, would you teach about linguistic discrimination differently if your students identified as vernacular English speakers or if they saw themselves as Standardized English only speakers? How would your racial and linguistic identity shape how you taught this content?<br><br>4.2. Post to the "Opening Scenario" discussion. In your 12th grade World Literature class, you would like students to learn about linguistic discrimination, language politics and the varieties of English that are represented in World Literature. In your textbook, you find the poem, "Listen Mr Oxford Don" by British-Guyanese poet John Agard. You also find the following resources to support your discussion of the poem:<br><br>A video of the author reading his poem:<br><br>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ywy-Tthdg7w |

A student-created visual representation of the poem: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDiI7ngUJ_A

Consider: How would you design discussion questions and activities about the poem to raise issues of linguistic discrimination, English language variation, and language and identity? Be as specific as possible. Give detailed descriptions of the activities or questions you would pose and describe verbatim how you would frame the lesson and/or explain potentially unfamiliar concepts (such as linguistic discrimination).

4.3 Post to the new discussion: "Final Reflections." Now that you have considered language variation from various perspectives, including its importance in literature, its role in students' writing and talk, its link to identity, and its connection to widespread stereotypes and discrimination, what two or three major ideas are you taking away from these modules about teaching about language variation?

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