

White Women Teachers and the Possibilities of Harm Reduction

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the potential of harm reduction principles to illuminate and mitigate the harmful effects of Whiteness on public schooling. More specifically, this project explores the potential of harm reduction to allow White women teachers to engage the harmful effects of Whiteness in their majority-student-of-Color public secondary school classrooms. I employ critical understandings of Foucauldian power and Whiteness in order to articulate the effects of Whiteness and power – even as I rely on post-structuralist understandings of subjectivity and discourse to illuminate the ways that Whiteness and power can be neither surmounted nor overcome by individual subjects. I draw from literature on teacher identity, Critical Whiteness Studies, Critical Discourse Analysis, Foucauldian understandings of power, and Hall’s framing of ideology and articulation to reimagine our theoretical and embodied understandings of White

teachers' Whiteness. In the tradition of Participatory Action Research, this project relied on an intensive yearlong collaboration with four White female public high school teachers in majority-student-of-Color classrooms. By engaging directly, collaboratively, and critically with Whiteness, this project offers new vocabularies and possibilities for educational equity and racial justice.

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Index

Introduction	9
<i>Background</i>	11
<i>Audience and Participants</i>	12
Literature Review	16
<i>Empirical Research on White Teachers and Schools</i>	16
<i>White teachers and a racialized “other”</i>	17
<i>White teachers and Whiteness</i>	18
<i>Empirical Research on Teacher Identity</i>	21
<i>Empirical Research on Whiteness and Language</i>	25
<i>Empirical Research on Whiteness and Discourses of Whiteness</i>	26
Theoretical Framework	30
<i>Foucauldian Power and Whiteness</i>	30
<i>Subjectivity, Self-Understanding, and Social Identities</i>	33
<i>Ideology and Articulation</i>	36
<i>Discourse</i>	38
<i>Harm Reduction</i>	41
<i>What is harm reduction?</i>	42
<i>Harm reduction in classrooms</i>	45
<i>Whiteness and harm</i>	47
<i>“Help” and harm</i>	50
<i>Harm reduction and Whiteness</i>	52
Methods	54
<i>Traditions of Research</i>	55
<i>Researcher Positionality</i>	57
<i>Participants and Context</i>	59
<i>Amy</i>	60
<i>Windmill Charter School</i>	62
<i>Kim</i>	63
<i>Wealton High School</i>	66
<i>Kylie</i>	68
<i>LEARN Charter Academy</i>	69
<i>Emma</i>	71
<i>Township High School</i>	72
<i>Research Design and Data Collection</i>	74
<i>Data Analysis</i>	76
<i>Ethical Considerations</i>	79
Research Questions	84
Findings Overview	86
Findings Part 1: Difference	90

<i>Initial Understandings: Difference Divorced from Whiteness and Power</i>	91
<i>Acknowledging difference is “salt in the wound”</i>	97
<i>Cultivating Suspicion: Difference and Connection</i>	101
<i>Difference and Whiteness</i>	105
Findings Part 2: Connection	109
<i>Initial Understandings: Connections, Effort, and Intent</i>	110
<i>Cultivating Suspicion: Connection is “Self-Serving”</i>	114
<i>Connection and Whiteness</i>	117
Findings Part 3: Control	125
<i>Initial Understandings: Control as Necessary</i>	125
<i>Cultivating Suspicion: Control for Whom?</i>	128
<i>Control and Whiteness</i>	131
Findings Part 4: Power	138
<i>Initial Understandings: Resisting or “Equalizing” Power</i>	139
<i>Cultivating Suspicion: “Running Away from Power”</i>	142
<i>Power and Whiteness</i>	143
Findings: Concluding Remarks	150
<i>The Reach of Whiteness</i>	150
<i>Whiteness and the Body: “Not If, But How”</i>	154
Discussion	157
<i>The Process of Whiteness: Difference, Connection, Control, and Power</i>	157
<i>“Needing not to Know”: Discourse and Harm Reduction</i>	158
<i>White Teachers: What Does It Take Not to Know?</i>	162
<i>Beginning with Harm: Educating White Teachers</i>	163
Conclusion	165
References	168
Appendices	183

Introduction

White¹ women make up the vast majority of public school teachers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015) — and yet their subjectivities do not equip them to meet the needs of students of Color (Delpit, 2006; McIntyre, 1997; Pruitt, 2004). Rather, White teachers perpetuate racism in their classrooms – often despite good intentions and decades of educational research meant to help White teachers understand and interrupt racism. While most research explores the ways that White teachers perpetuate racism through stereotypes and implicit biases (see: Chubbuck, 2004; Marx 2006; McIntyre, 2002; Powell, 1997; Sleeter, 2008; White, 2012; Yoon 2012), this dissertation expands our area of analysis by arguing that we must also understand racism as perpetuated through White teachers’ racialized self-understandings and conceptions of Whiteness itself. In other words, this project broadens previous understandings of racialized harm to include the consequences of Whiteness and White teachers’ discourses for students of Color.

Unlike most research on Whiteness and White teachers, this dissertation does not offer a “solution” to the ways that White teachers perpetuate racism and racialized harm in classrooms. Rather, this project upends commonly-held assumptions about White teachers teaching across racialized difference: for example, the value, importance, and possibility of minimizing racialized differences between White teachers and students of Color or the potential of White teachers to fully disrupt their own role within racism in public school classrooms.

¹ Throughout this dissertation, I capitalize “Color,” “White,” and “Whiteness”. While there is little consensus regarding capitalization of these terms, I capitalize all of these words in order to highlight their salience and prominence in the process of racialization.

Rather than imagine White teachers as able to transcend the harm of Whiteness, this project works to deepen our understanding of the harm that White teachers do — and, in doing so, perhaps mitigate that harm. In adopting this perspective, this dissertation draws from the public health tradition of harm reduction in which any research meant to reduce harm must first acknowledge that it is incapable of eliminating that harm (Karoll, 2010; Roberts & Marlatt, 1999; Wodak, 2003): This dissertation does not seek to change teacher demographics, but to engage with the current demographic reality in schools. Rather than ignore the ways that Whiteness circumscribes what is possible when a White teacher stands in front of a classroom of students of Color, this project engages that painful reality.

In addition to harm reduction, this project takes up Participatory Action Research methodologies to explore how White women teachers understand Whiteness and the effects of that Whiteness in classrooms. In collaboration with four other White women teachers, this dissertation traces the work of supporting White women teachers to think critically about Whiteness and engage the harmful consequences of that Whiteness in their classrooms and with students of Color. In effect, this dissertation maps the workings and consequences of Whiteness in classrooms that serve students of Color and offers beginning vocabularies with which to articulate those consequences.

This project is the result of a profound and ongoing collaboration between myself -- a White woman and former teacher who taught in schools that served exclusively students of Color -- and four other White women teachers who taught in schools with similar student demographics. Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma², and I worked together for a year: I observed each teacher's classroom for over 50 hours, met regularly with the teachers to analyze their classrooms

² The names of all individuals and locations have been changed to protect anonymity.

and teaching in group research meetings, and interviewed each teacher for over 10 hours. The insights and questions shared here are the products of our intensive collaboration.

Background

Theoretical and philosophical scholars of Whiteness and race have long called for qualitative research that turns the “research eye” back onto Whiteness itself (Applebaum, 2010; Morrison, 1992; Thompson, 2010). This project moves beyond previous explorations of how White teachers make sense of and relate to their students of Color and examines how White female teachers make sense of Whiteness: How White teachers understand the consequences of their own Whiteness for themselves and for students of Color. For example, the ideas, experiences, feelings, and behaviors that are normalized or marginalized in White teachers’ classrooms and the ideologies that protect and justify such normalization or marginalization. Only by exploring the ways that White teachers understand ourselves and the consequences of our own Whiteness can we fully understand the ways White teachers are complicit in reproducing racism and racialized harm in their classrooms.

Significant research explores White teachers’ biases against and prejudices towards their students of Color and the dire consequences of those prejudices and biases for students’ learning and sense of belonging and engagement in school (Chubbuck, 2004; Marx 2006; McIntyre, 2002; Powell, 1997; Sleeter, 2008; White, 2012; Yoon 2012). However, such work limits the scope of our analysis by focusing only on White teachers’ beliefs about their students of Color -- and turning away from White teachers’ conceptions of Whiteness and the consequences of those conceptions for students of Color. In response, this dissertation relied on a collaboration between White teachers and asked White teachers to sit squarely in the discomfort of examining our own

discourses, self-understandings, and ideologies in relationship to Whiteness.

In addition to exploring biases and prejudices, much research (Hancock & Warren, 2017; Harding, 2005; Moore, Michael, & Pence-Parks, 2018; Parson, 2005; Warren, 2014) explores ways for White teachers to “transcend” (Applebaum, 2013) the constraints and harms of Whiteness in classrooms. Such research, however, creates an artificially narrow conception of Whiteness as something that can be overcome or surmounted by individuals – and does not engage the full complexity and depth of White supremacy and racism in schools. Such understandings present Whiteness as something that White people can “step outside of” enough to fully “see” or visualize Whiteness. Instead, this project engages the work of “seeing ourselves without a mirror,” as Kim put it: Working to see Whiteness even as we acknowledge that we cannot step outside of Whiteness enough to fully “see” it “at-work” (Yoon, 2012).

In working to engage Whiteness — to remain cognizant of both its reach and depth — this dissertation relies on the insights of harm reduction. Harm reduction allowed Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and me to simultaneously acknowledge that we could never step outside of, transcend, or disrupt Whiteness — even as we worked to cultivate the vocabularies and understandings that might allow us to see Whiteness and to mitigate some of its harms. In other words, harm reduction allowed us to resist the common desire to imagine ourselves outside of the very problem — Whiteness — we sought to understand and disrupt.

Audience and Participants

Without a critical analysis of Whiteness – and without the strategies that facilitate and further such analyses – White women teachers have neither the skills nor the resources to understand the workings of racism within their classrooms. As a result, students of Color are denied classrooms

that facilitate safe learning, engagement, and identity development (Delpit, 2006; Irvine, 1990; Oates, 2003; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). This project responds to urgent calls from classrooms across the country (Buehler, 2012; Delpit, 2006; Howard, 2010; Sleeter, 2008) to equip White teachers with the resources, understandings, and skills to engage racism and inequity in their classrooms.

Even the work of critically analyzing Whiteness in classrooms, however, is circumscribed and constituted by Whiteness itself. In other words, I do not imagine this critical examination of Whiteness as transcending the harmful effects of Whiteness: In choosing to focus this dissertation – however critically – on White teachers this project excludes and decenters the experiences, subjectivities, and expertise of teachers of Color. This project itself has harmful effects by returning to the same White teacher audience and research participants that have been the exclusive focus of centuries of research and attention: Yet again, educational research – in the form of this project -- is “up to its old tricks again by recentering” Whiteness (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013) and the experiences of White teachers.

Even as this dissertation harmfully “recenters” Whiteness, however, my hope is that it does so in ways that are deeply unsettling and disruptive to White teachers and teacher educators. While there are already far too many resources written for and about White women teachers, this project strives to be a profoundly uncomfortable and critical contribution to those existing resources – and in many ways rejects the foundational assumptions on which much previous research has been based. Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I imagined an audience of White women teachers as we worked on this project -- we imagined women whose racialized and gendered subjectivities and school contexts (broadly speaking) mirrored our own. However, this dissertation is not meant to mollify White women's concerns about their contributions to racism

in schools or to provide "solutions". Rather, my hope is that this dissertation makes White women teachers uncomfortable, unsettled, and provoked – and forces us to consider if White teachers should or even can be part of dismantling racism by teaching students of Color.

Throughout the process of this dissertation, Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I were often confused, lost, disturbed, guilty, concerned, shameful, or desperate. As uncomfortable and unpleasant as those feelings were, they were -- and are -- necessary. At its heart, this dissertation is about the importance of a kind of brutal and deeply necessary honesty: An honesty that forces White women teachers to ask uncomfortable and painful questions about ourselves and to consider the many consequences of our answers for our work, our subjectivities, and our relationships.

At the same time, however, this dissertation offers insights that could be useful for individuals or communities with a variety of subjectivities, experiences, and contexts. Many of the insights explored in this dissertation engage Whiteness broadly -- beyond the bodies of individual White women. Public schools in the United States are contextualized and in many ways constituted (Burkholder 2011; Castagno, 2014; Harris, 1993; Pollock, 2008) by Whiteness. Anyone who works within that schooling system in some way engages with the harms of Whiteness — and might therefore find meaning in the insights offered here.

In addition, it is important to note that this dissertation explicitly engages the harms of Whiteness. The pages that follow trace the often painful and violent inadequacies and effects of White teachers for students of Color. For many people, then — particularly people of Color who intimately know the harms of White teachers — this dissertation might serve as an unnecessary and painful reminder of that violence and harm. I have engaged in the risky and potentially hurtful work of reviving and retracing that harm in the hopes that White women teachers might

come to see themselves — to see ourselves — uncomfortably reflected in the following pages.

Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma certainly asked uncomfortable and painful questions. These women were and are -- like all of us -- at turns fallible and wise, ignorant and insightful. As White women, their humanity and goodness is rarely questioned. And yet, in the context of this writing, their words, experiences, and behaviors are laid out for analysis and critique, their every choice called into question. The process of questioning motives and critiquing ideology can lead us to forget our humanity and to conflate ideology and discourse with individuals. I strive, throughout this writing, to hold two realities at the same time: To understand that while Amy, Kim, Kylie, Emma (and myself) are subject to discourses of oppression and White supremacy, we are nonetheless agentive. This dissertation charts the trajectories of five White women working to engage that responsibility even as we acknowledge the power of discourse to shape subjectivity and reality.

Literature Review

This literature review explores the gaps and patterns in empirical research on White teachers, teacher identity or subjectivity, and Whiteness. In articulating an overview of current empirical research, I also outline an implicit theoretical stance that is “invizibilized” (Lipsitz, 1998) and embodied in much of the research on race and identity in schools: This stance positions the work of anti-racism as necessarily outside the bodies and identities of White people. In outlining and critiquing this theoretical stance, I argue that just as White supremacy -- Whiteness itself -- lives in White bodies, communities, and structures, the work of dismantling White supremacy must also largely take place within those same bodies, identities, structures, and communities.

Empirical Research on White Teachers and Schools

Broad strokes social science research exploring the demographic trends in American public schools document the increasingly non-White demographics of American public school students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015) and the stagnant demographics of the largely White, middle class, and female public school teaching force (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). While there are significant efforts to recruit more teachers of Color -- to disrupt the growing demographic divide between public school teachers and their students -- these efforts have not yet led to profound changes in teacher demographics³ (Howard, 2010). In fact, Howard claims that “U.S. public

³ Essential research – importantly lead by scholars of Color -- articulates the under-explored dynamics that emerge when educational leaders and scholars assume that teachers of Color are automatically “well matched to teach students of color” (Philip, Rocha & Olivares-Pasillas, 2017) because of a perceived “cultural synchronicity” (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Teachers of Color are not immune to participation in school-based discourses of racism. As Philip, Rocha, & Olivares-Pasillas (2017) and others (see: Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Clark & Flores, 2001; Kohli, 2014) explore, teacher education and professional development must consider the needs

schools will... continue to [be] learning spaces where an increasingly homogenous teaching population...will interact with a mostly heterogeneous student population” (p. 40).

White teachers and a racialized “other”. In response to this demographic reality — and to our growing understanding of the harmful impact of White teachers’ Whiteness on students of Color (Hancock & Warren, 2017; Pruitt, 2004) — education researchers have conducted significant qualitative research exploring the training of White teachers to work with students of Color, and the ways in which current and preservice White teachers’ Whiteness shapes how White teachers educate, interact with, and understand students of Color. This research helps us to frame and understand an important facet of how Whiteness and White supremacy work in public school classrooms.

For example, White (2012), Sleeter (2001; 2008), and Marx (2006), all explore the experiences of White pre-service teachers who engage in conversations about race, racism, and Whiteness as part of their teacher preparation. These projects offer insight into the “misconceptions, fears, and biases that White...teachers bring to the profession” (Sleeter, 2008, p. 575) – and the ways pre-service teachers’ Whiteness informs and shapes their interactions with and understandings of students of Color and communities of Color. Similarly, in Sleeter’s (2001) review of the relevant literature on teacher preparation for work in “culturally diverse schools,” Sleeter notes the recent proliferation of literature “addressing the attitudes and lack of knowledge of White preservice [teachers]” (94).

and urgencies of critically supporting teachers of Color. The focus of this project, however -- given the discursive constraints of my own subjectivity as well as the current demographic realities and urgencies of schools -- is on the fundamental and inescapable ways in which Whiteness acts through White teachers to perpetuate racism in classrooms.

Within the body of literature exploring in-service White teachers, the work of Chubbuck (2004), Powell (1997), and Yoon (2012), provide examples of the kinds of empirical research that already exist and upon which we might build. Chubbuck explores two White teachers' ideas about race and racism and the disconnects between the teachers' actions in their classrooms, and the ideas and ideologies about race that they claimed in interviews. Chubbuck explores how the White teachers behaved towards their students of Color and how those teachers' ideas about their students informed the teachers' pedagogies. Similarly, Powell explores how White teachers developed and expanded their pedagogical practices to be more inclusive of students of Color. In her research in White elementary school teachers' classrooms and in a teacher study group, Yoon explores the "discursive paradoxes" that connect and inform White female teachers' "beliefs, intentions, and actions" (p. 1) in relation to their students of Color. Powell, Chubbuck, and Yoon's work explores and begins to map White teacher' identit(ies) by examining White teachers' "beliefs, intentions, and actions" in relation to their students of Color (Powell, p. 467). In essence, Chubbuck, Powell, and Yoon -- similar to White (2012), Sleeter (2008), and Marx (2006) -- explore White teachers' relationships to a racialized "other".

White teachers and Whiteness. The work cited above might help us to imagine how "... white teachers [might] unlearn their own racial assumptions and... engage in open, anti-racist conversations [w]ith students or with colleagues" (Yoon, 2012, p. 2). However, the work outlined above also has limitations and maps only a small portion of the larger forces at work when White teachers work with (or are training to work with) students of Color. If we heed the call by researchers to explore White peoples' relationships to and with their own Whiteness (Applebaum, 2010; Morrison, 1992), then we must move beyond exploring how White teachers

make sense of and relate to their students of Color — and examine how White teachers make sense of their own Whiteness.

In many ways, McIntyre's research (1997; 2002) moves in this direction: McIntyre works to analyze White teachers' understandings of their own Whiteness — not just the ways that White teachers' Whiteness informs their stereotypes and assumptions about students and communities of Color. McIntyre's theoretical grounding, however, circumscribes her analysis in ways that limit the depth and theoretical contributions of her inquiry. While McIntyre sets out to question White teachers' conceptions of their own Whiteness, she situates herself within a post-positivist multicultural framework that prevents full engagement with the mutually constitutive complexity of power and subjectivity.

In articulating the “central thesis” of her analysis, McIntyre (1997) presents a conception of subjectivity and power that privileges individual agency. McIntyre argues that “...white educators and researchers can develop teaching strategies and research methodologies aimed at disrupting and eliminating the oppressive nature of whiteness in education” (p. 7). In other words, for McIntyre, individuals can directly influence social structures and currents of power — Whiteness, for example — in profound and absolute ways. Rather than understand individuals as subject to Whiteness — or at the very least, engaging in a dialectical relationship with Whiteness — McIntyre understands Whiteness as subject to the agency of individual actors.

For McIntyre (1997), “pulling together multicultural antiracist education, whiteness, and white racial identity” (p. 5) is “about publicizing and politicizing our whiteness — being vulnerable and ‘fessing up’ to how we contribute to the routinization of racism in our teaching practices” (p. 7). According to the above logic, White individuals are able to fully step outside their (our) Whiteness so as to completely visualize the “contributions” of Whiteness to racism.

Certainly there are ways in which White teachers might visualize the racist effects of Whiteness; however, those effects are largely articulated by existing literature analyzing White teachers' stereotypes and dangerous assumptions about their students of Color (see above).

In line with McIntyre's (1997; 2002) important work, several scholars have recently worked to explore White teachers' understandings of Whiteness in an effort to consider how White teachers can be more "successful" (Harding, 2005) when teaching students of Color. However, the majority of these scholars follow McIntyre's theoretical orientation and similarly position Whiteness as something that can be overcome or transcended via particular practices, orientations, or understandings. For instance, Parson (2005) frames "culturally relevant caring" as a solution to Whiteness in schools, while Warren (2014) offers "empathy" as a potential solution. Most recently, Moore, Michael, & Pence-Parks (2018) offer an entire tomb of recommendations — a "guide" — for White women teachers who seek "improved outcomes" (p. 12) in their teaching of Black boys.

In light of the theoretical orientations that these researchers employ — an orientation that frames Whiteness as surmountable via particular practices, orientations, or understandings — this dissertation seeks to engage the tensions between individual agency and larger systems of power: to position Whiteness as a manifestation of power so significant that White people can never fully visualize or eliminate the consequences of their Whiteness — and to simultaneously engage in the impossible yet necessary work of mapping and negotiating with Whiteness. In other words, this research explores Whiteness even as it holds that Whiteness can never be fully mapped, and works to minimize the violence of White supremacy even as it acknowledges that Whiteness is beyond any individual's control.

While the questions McIntyre (1997; 2002) and other scholars pose are deeply relevant --

and similar to the very questions that I propose to ask in this dissertation -- my relationship to and understanding of Whiteness affords a different and, I would argue, more complex engagement: My framework positions Whiteness as something that can be neither fully controlled, transcended, nor understood by White individuals (Applebaum, 2013; Foucault, 1971; 1972; Thompson, 2003). Such a stance allows me to embrace the full complexity and nuance of race, discourse, and subjectivity in schools.

Empirical Research on Teacher Identity

While this dissertation draws from a larger body of research on teacher identity, it is particularly helpful to examine the contributions of empirical research on teacher identity that directly engage with the post-structuralist conceptions of subjectivity I take up in this project. In particular, the work of Britzman (2003), Alsup (2006), and Evans (2002) are helpful in outlining these contributions.

In her seminal analysis, Britzman (2003) explores “what learning to teach ‘does’ to and for student teachers” (p. 10). In this way, Britzman adopts a post-structuralist understanding of subjectivity as constructed, contingent, and negotiated: Britzman argues that learning to teach — and teaching — necessarily affects teachers and therefore participates actively in the negotiation of teachers’ subjectivity(ies).

Britzman’s (2003) work sits at the intersection of the visible and invisible: Even as she explores the dialectic between teaching and teaching subjectivities, she analyzes the ways theoretical understandings and “cultural myths” move and shape who and how teachers become — and how teachers themselves understand that becoming. Britzman accesses subjectivity by way of theory: She examines teacher subjectivity largely by explicating the theories of teaching,

learning, and identity that are implicit — and explicit — in student teachers’ narratives about their own lives, education, and student teaching. She interrogates the ways those theories change over the course of student teaching and inform the selves and experiences that student teachers construct.

Building on Britzman’s (2003) insights, Alsup (2006) examines the discourses negotiated and constructed by teachers through the process of learning to teach. In doing so, Alsup engages with the idea of a “borderland discourse,” a discourse that bridges — “integrates” — the divide between personal and professional selves. In her study, Alsup found that “only the preservice teachers who had a strong sense of their personal identity and its connection or disconnection with their professional identity were able to successfully transition into the profession... [teachers] needed to... [demonstrate] self-awareness and reflectivity about the intersections of various aspects of self” (p. 25). For Alsup, the construction of a “borderland discourse” is a necessary prerequisite for teaching “success”.

In analyzing preservice teachers’ “borderland discourses,” Alsup (2006) builds upon Britzman’s (2003) post-structuralist understanding of subjectivity as in constant flux, continuously negotiated and re-imagined. Alsup pushes back against an all-too-common understanding of “borderland discourses” as the meeting of formerly discreet and self-contained subjectivities: a professional and a personal self, for example. Alsup imagines “borderland discourses” that engage with the full complexity of subjectivity: In order to build generative teacher subjectivities, Alsup argues teachers need to create discourses that weave together mutually constitutive pieces of themselves (and disrupt any absolute distinction between “personal” and “professional”) and are responsive to and conscious of the environments in which they come to be. In other words, Alsup argues that “an awareness of non unitary subjectivities”

(p. 181) is central to student teachers' development of "borderland discourses," and, in turn, "successful" professional identities.

At the same time, Alsup (2006) argues that "borderland discourses" facilitate a "self-knowledge" that is central to the development of teachers' subjectivities: "...the definition of teacher knowledge must be expanded to include self-knowledge[:] knowledge about how one processes, sees, or makes sense of the world" (p. 196). For Alsup, then, teachers must come to understand themselves — often via a "borderland discourse" — in order to construct a teacher subjectivity: "When engaging in borderland discourse there is an enhanced consciousness, a meta-awareness of thought and action that can incorporate the personal as well as the professional, and multifaceted, contextual, and sometimes contradictory ideologies and situated identities" (p. 125). In other words, Alsup argues teachers must construct "borderland discourses" that in turn facilitate the self-understanding and awareness necessary for teaching and teaching subjectivities.

In her analysis of the intersections of "identity, sexuality, and emotion" in the work of learning to teach, Evans (2002) explores how student teachers navigate, develop, curate, protect, and communicate queer subjectivities in teacher education contexts (student teaching and university coursework). Evans importantly calls out the "emotional work" of developing a teacher subjectivity in "a realm of historically imbued relations" in which our "roles [are] built on relations to others, and are not fully of [our] own making" (p. 32). Her analysis clearly shares post-structuralist understandings of language, power, and discourse with Alsup (2006) and Britzman (2003), yet Evans focuses on the emotions at stake in the process of constituting new "selves" out of the subjectivities and contexts we always already bring with ourselves: "[E]veryone involved in a teacher education program can be seen as a self-in-the-making" (p.

179).

Taken together, these three authors present both a profound and complex understanding of teachers' dynamic subjectivities and the recursive, power-laden, and emotional process(es) of cultivating such identities. Britzman (2003) and Evans (2002) call for and begin to analyze power as a productive force in the formulation of a teacher's subjectivity: Britzman explores the dangerous "cultural myths" that "privatize" power and position teaching as "individually determined" despite its "socially negotiated" reality, and Evans explores the ways that power informs the "qualitatively different emotional work that those on the margins" — queer teachers, for example — "engage in" (p. 32). While not engaging directly with power, Alsup (2006) explicates the necessity of post-structuralist "self-knowledge" in exploring how "...[a teacher's] subjectivity or positioned identity in the classroom affects the success of the teaching and learning that happens there" (p. 162). In conversation, these authors articulate a conception of teacher subjectivity that positions self-understanding as always already power-laden and emotional, and that explores the dialectical relationship between power and subjectivity.

While Britzman (2003), Alsup (2006), and Evans (2002) all focus on teacher education (rather than the work of in-service teachers) as a site of identity construction — and none explicitly examines Whiteness — the authors nonetheless outline a new vein of inquiry: What might it mean for teachers whose subjectivities are normalized — White teachers, for example — to know themselves as post-structuralist subjects? What might it mean for White teachers to "come to terms with [their] intentions and values, as well as [their] views of knowing, being, and acting in a setting characterized by contradictory realities, negotiation, and dependency and struggle" (Britzman, 2003, p. 31) and to consider the nature of their power-laden "emotional work," in order to engage with effects of their "positioned identity" on "teaching and learning"

(Alsup, 2006, p. 162)?

Empirical Research on Whiteness and Language

While most empirical research on White teachers resists a post-structuralist orientation, the body of work that explores the relationships between Whiteness and language more broadly often embraces the insights of post-structuralism. This research outlines the ways that Whiteness informs and constitutes both broader state-sanctioned language policies as well as classroom-based language practices and pedagogies. In other words, rather than assume that there are language policies, practices, or pedagogies that are beyond the reach of Whiteness, this body of work — lead largely by scholars of Color — seeks to trace, uncover, and render visible the workings of Whiteness within and through language.

For example, Hill's (1998; 2008) work articulates the “co-naturalization” (Rosa, 2015) of race and language in public space. Following Uriculoui's (1996) seminal analysis, Hill traces the ways that Whiteness violently limits and polices the language practices that are “licensed” for particular racialized bodies and communities. Hill outlines the workings of Whiteness to continually shield White bodies and communities regardless of language practices — even as individuals and communities of Color are criminalized, delegitimized, and exoticized for those same practices.

Flores & Rosa (2015) and Davila (2012) build on this work and consider its consequences for classrooms. For instance, Davila frames Standard Language Ideology — the belief that there are “correct” and “incorrect” forms of language — as an effect of Whiteness. Davila then considers the dire consequences of this relationship for the work of teachers who edit and comment on students' written work. Similarly, Flores and Rosa employ the concepts of

raciolinguistic ideologies and the White listening subject in order to explicate the ways that Whiteness works to conflate “certain racialized bodies” with “linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices” (150). In doing so, Flores and Rosa draw attention to the ways in which processes of Whiteness, racialization and domination are necessarily intertwined with language.

This dissertation does not focus exclusively on the language practices and pedagogies that Whiteness produces or polices in classrooms. However, this project relies heavily on such work to sketch the potential of post-structuralism to illuminate Whiteness through empirical analysis. Just as Flores & Rosa (2015), Davila (2012), and Hill (1998; 2008) illuminate the “invizibilized” (Lipsitz, 1998) effects of Whiteness and White supremacy on language, so too does this project hope to illuminate the effects of Whiteness on White teachers and their classrooms.

Empirical Research on Whiteness and Discourses of Whiteness

Whiteness itself serves as the most significant and defining backdrop of this research project; I understand Whiteness as a defining force in the subjectivities and experiences that White women teachers cultivate. While in this study I explore the ways that Whiteness manifests itself in specific school-based contexts, subjectivities, and relationships, this dissertation builds on theoretical and empirical research on Whiteness across a variety of contexts. The distinction between empirical and theoretical research on Whiteness — between what we can “document” in the observable world and what we infer and imagine about a more abstracted world — is, of course, messy and artificial. Nonetheless, I work here to share empirical insights about how Whiteness works in the world and in individual — particularly female — bodies. In doing so, I

draw largely on Frankenberg's (1993) seminal exploration of White women and Foster's (2013) analysis of "White race discourse".

In the same way that this dissertation positions Whiteness as a defining force in White women teachers' lives, identities, and work, Frankenberg (1993) argues that "race shapes white women's lives" (p. 1). In doing so, Frankenberg examines the "discursive repertoires" that White women employ: "...the clusterings of discursive elements upon which [white] women drew [and] ...the way in which strategies for thinking through race were learned, drawn upon, and enacted, repetitively but not atomically or by rote, chosen but by no means freely so" (p. 16). In working to characterize these "discursive repertoires," Frankenberg begins to map the ways that the White women she interviewed understood Whiteness as a force in their own lives and in the world.

While Frankenberg's (1993) findings are numerous and uniformly profound, her insights are most helpful here in the opportunities for future work that they call out and the approach to such work that they suggest. In particular, Frankenberg offers useful language to articulate the kind of exploration of Whiteness that I propose: Frankenberg articulates the work of "thinking through race" as a helpful step in the necessary process of exploring Whiteness. For Frankenberg, "thinking through race" implies a deliberate process of reflection on "race, race difference and racism and about the impact of all three on [oneself]" (p. 142). At the same time, "thinking through race" demands "self-questioning" and a positioning of the self as an always already racialized being situated in and "constituted" by a "field of racial relations" (p. 142). The very work in which I engaged was, in many ways, to "think through race" — to "think through" Whiteness, more specifically — with White women teachers: to engage with teaching and teaching identities as necessarily racialized and to then interrogate what the engagement did to

the White self.

In a similar vein, Foster (2013) examines “White race discourse”: the discursive moves made by White people through talk and writing about race. While Foster’s research does not explore a post-structuralist understanding of Whiteness or subjectivity — he does not position or analyze these discursive moves as simultaneously constitutive and emblematic of White subjectivities — he nonetheless offers a helpful window into the unexplored discursive practices of Whiteness. Similar to Bonilla-Silva’s (2012) analysis of “racial grammar” and its role in maintaining hegemonic organizations of power, Foster articulates a White discourse that works to maintain systems of racial inequity and segregation and to protect a White “racial apathy” and strategic ignorance.

While the specifics of “White race discourse” are helpful in pushing our understandings of Whiteness and, perhaps, in helping White people to recognize the ways they reproduce Whiteness through particular and sometimes unconscious discursive moves, Foster’s (2013) research is most helpful here in the ways that it embodies recent trends in research on Whiteness. Like much of the empirical research on White teachers (see, for example, Chubbuck, 2004; Marx, 2006; Powell, 1997; Sleeter, 2008; White, 2012; Yoon, 2012), research on Whiteness across contexts often works to understand Whiteness by examining White individuals’ relationships to and conceptions of people and communities of Color. In this case, Foster examines patterns in White individuals’ discourse around racism and people of Color. Such an analysis helps us to see how Whiteness is informed and partially defined by discourses outlining and in relation to a racialized “other”. However, we know— as Frankenberg (1993) and others (see, for example, Applebaum, 2010; Chubbuck, 2004; Schultz, 1997) have argued — that Whiteness is also constituted by a particular relationship to the racialized self and to power.

Foster's characterization of "White race discourse" does not engage with the discursive moves that position Whiteness as a relationship to power and to one's own subjectivity.

This dissertation works to engage in an analysis of discourse somewhat similar to Foster's (2013) — in my case, however, I also draw on Frankenberg's (1993) post-structuralist framing of Whiteness in order to analyze the "discursive repertoires" of White women teachers and the construction of their subjectivity. I engage in this research with an understanding that necessarily pushes beyond a conception of Whiteness as simply and only an embodiment and articulation of stereotypes, assumptions, and racism. Rather, I hope to examine Whiteness as deeper and more complex: as a "standpoint" (Frankenberg, 1993) from which we (White people) view ourselves and the world and a conception of power that violently foregrounds individual agency and control.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation draws on several bodies of theoretical literature. While these theories framed my initial understanding and organization of this research project, they also informed the collaborative analyses and understandings that Amy, Kim, Kylie, Emma, and I co-constructed. During the first few months of our project, I shared – through readings, discussions, recordings, and videos – theories of Critical Whiteness, Foucauldian power, discourse, subjectivity, and ideology with Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma. These ideas wove themselves into all aspects of our work, becoming the lenses through which analyzed, put language to, and understood Whiteness in the context of their classrooms.

The teachers and I spent months constructing, layering, and adjusting our understandings and interpretations of Whiteness, power, discourse, subjectivity, and ideology. I offer below a brief overview of these bodies of theoretical research. The framing I offer below is necessarily dialectical: Foucault’s conception of discourse informs an understanding of subjectivity and ideology, which in turns shapes an understanding of Whiteness. In what follows, I work against the tendency to artificially discretize these concepts for the sake of clarity; rather, I aim to highlight interconnectedness and to explore the theoretical perspectives that cut across, connect, and magnetize these bodies of work. I conclude this overview by introducing the concept of harm reduction – the research framework that allowed us to activate and embody many of the theoretical ideas introduced below.

Foucauldian Power and Whiteness

This study was rooted in a specific understanding of Whiteness – and therefore, in a particular framing and way of visualizing power at work in the world. The Foucauldian understanding of

power taken up here — and so often employed in critical research on Whiteness — examines how freedom and control are negotiated and mutually constitutive. Foucault’s conception of power stands in contrast to a traditional framing in which power is understood as owned and wielded by individuals and, often, institutions (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Foucault, 1972; S. Mills, 1997; Stoler, 1995). Rather, for Foucault (1972), power has a “capillary form of existence... [and] reaches in the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, and learning processes ” (p. 39). Foucault describes power as dispersed, resilient, and adaptive -- rather than concentrated, “fragile,” or static. A Foucauldian analysis of power therefore works to “...shif[t] our attention away from the grand, overall strategies of power, towards the many localized circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates...” (Hall, 2001, p. 77) and allows us to understand power as contingent and relational, constantly (re)produced and negotiated via interaction and constituting dynamic subjectivities and experiences (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Foucault, 1972; Hall, 2001; S. Mills, 1997).

While Foucault’s (1972) analysis reimagines traditional conceptions of power, it also articulates a need for further research and analysis (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Stoler, 1995). Foucault reminds us that the “Mechanisms of power ... have never been much studied by history. History has studied those who held power...But power in its strategies, at once general and detailed, and its mechanisms, has never been studied” (p. 51). This project engages directly with particular “mechanisms of power” by working to understand how White female teachers engage with and make meaning of Whiteness as a dynamic manifestation of power.

Building on Foucault’s (1972) framing of power, Frankenberg (1993) understands Whiteness as simultaneously a “set of linked advantages,” “a standpoint from which white

people look at ourselves, at others, and at society” and a “set of cultural practices that are...unmarked and unnamed” (p. 1). In other words, Whiteness is the “invisibilized” norm against which racialized difference is measured, constructed, and maintained (Leonardo, 2009; Lipsitz, 1998). This view of Whiteness rejects the claim that White people “do not know much about race”. Rather, this perspective positions White people as central to the racial construct and therefore very much “raced”. This perspective understands White people as actively reifying (whether consciously or unconsciously) the racial construct and acting to protect the invisibility of their own racial subjectivity in ways that belie their ignorance (Applebaum, 2010; Bartky, 2002; Hytten & Warren, 2003).

Importantly, this understanding positions Whiteness as always already enacted or expressed in relation to White supremacy:

...The concept of race was born out of ‘racism avant la lettre,’ that is to say, out of earlier namings of supremacy. In other words, it is not the case that an innocent racialness was corrupted by a later ranking of races, but rather that race and racism are fundamentally interwoven... From this recognition it follows that whiteness is a construct or identity almost impossible to separate from racial dominance. For the term *whiteness*, expressing the idea that there is a category of people identified and self-identifying as ‘white,’ is situated within this simultaneous operation of race and racism. White, then, corresponds to one place in racism as a system of categorization and subject formation...(Frankenberg, 1997, p. 9).

If, as Frankenberg (1993, 1997) and Applebaum (2010) argue, we understand Whiteness as an expression of White supremacy or “racial dominance”, we can also see Whiteness as a process,

rather than a static label or category (Thompson, 2010). Whiteness and White supremacy must constantly be invisibly remade in order to survive: "...Whiteness is always constructed, always in the process of being made and unmade. Indeed, its characterization as unmarked marker is itself an 'ideological' effect that seeks to cover the tracks of its constructedness, specificity, and localness, even as they appear" (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 16). As such, an important area of analysis — one that I attempt to take up here — explores and works to expose exactly how Whiteness and White supremacy (I use the two interchangeably) are "made" in White teachers' classrooms: continuously "rationalized," "legitimized," and "made ostensibly natural and normal" (Mills, C., 1997).

Morrison (1992) calls explicitly for research that makes the "process" of Whiteness and White supremacy deliberately and painfully visible: In light of the ways that Whiteness has been constructed to be "invisible" to White people, Morrison argues that research must be turned "from the racial object to the racial subject; from the described and imagined to the describers and imaginers" (Morrison, 1992, p. 90). For Morrison, Applebaum (2010) and Frankenberg (1993, 1997), not only must White people turn the gaze toward their (our) own Whiteness(es), but we must understand ourselves as performing, re-enacting, and re-inscribing the "process" of Whiteness even as we are "shape[d], affect[ed], define[d], and elevate[d]" by that Whiteness (DiAngelo, 2012, p. 3). My research with Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma works to make such a critical turn.

Subjectivity, Self-understanding, and Social Identities

This project engages with the relationship between Whiteness and teacher identit(es) and therefore relies on post-structuralist understandings of subjectivity. I take up a common post-

structuralist conception of subjectivity as in constant flux, always already discursively co-constructed: “Poststructuralist theory suggests that not only meaning, but also individual subjectivity is produced...through discursive practices...The individual is the site for competing and often contradictory modes of subjectivity which together constitute a particular person...” (Weedon, 1999, p. 104). This conception of subjectivity can help us to articulate and explore White female teachers’ Whiteness – a part of their subjectivities -- as the product of their interactions with and on the world.

Within my exploration of White female teacher subjectivity, I focus on teachers’ self-understanding -- a particular aspect of subjectivity. In their analysis, Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) begin by defining self-understanding as “People tell[ing] others who they are, but even more important...tell[ing] themselves and then try[ing] to act as though they are who they say they are.” (p. 3). In examining teachers’ “self-understandings” — the constructions of self that individual teachers understand, enact, and “tell themselves” — I work to analyze how those self-understandings in turn produce (and are produced by) Whiteness and White supremacy.

At the same time as I focus deliberately on White female teachers’ self-understandings and the dialectic between those self-understandings and White supremacy, I also understand these teachers’ subjectivities as partially produced by “social identities”— which, in turn also contribute to the “process” of Whiteness: Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, and Shuart-Faris (2010) employ the concept of “social identities” -- identities “constructed through the interactions people have with each other...and as a consequence of the evolving social structures of institutions” (p. 101) – and focus on how social identities are negotiated and (re)constructed in classrooms through discourse and language. The authors argue that “...social identities

inherently involve others”: “...social identities are claimed and assigned” through “complementary relationships, such as mother and daughter” or “manufactured through the assertion of dualisms, as in naughty and not naughty or morally appropriate or morally inappropriate” (p. 121).

While I disagree with the authors’ implication that ‘social identities’ can be static rather than dynamic – after all, a post-structuralist understanding reminds us that ‘social identities’ are necessarily fluid, interdependent, and dynamic -- the concept of ‘social identities’ is nonetheless helpful in teasing apart and articulating the connections between the many interconnected fragments of subjectivity. My understanding of social identities is intertwined with the framings of subjectivity, self-understanding, and Whiteness presented above. I understand social identities as engaged in a dialectic with self-understandings; the two necessarily inform and complicate each other. How a White female teacher sees herself — the “self-understanding” she performs for herself and others — is, of course, deeply informed by her dynamic social identities (as a teacher, as a White woman, etc.). Similarly, a White female teacher’s understanding of her social identities — the ways she is positioned and understood as a teacher and a White woman, for example — is informed by who she “tells herself” and “tells others” she is (Schultz, 1997).

In her analysis of teachers’ identities, Britzman (2003) similarly complicates and situates her analysis at the point of distinction between self-understanding and social identities: She argues that the development of a “teacher identity” is constituted by a conflict with “authority, imagination, and flurries of autobiography” (Britzman, 2003, p. 20). In other words, for Britzman, teacher identity is developed in the dialectic between how new teachers come to understand themselves and the understanding they project to others and themselves (“imagination and flurries of autobiography”) and the positions into which they are placed by

external structures and power-laden relationships (“authority”).

Similarly, Whiteness, as a part of individuals’ subjectivity, is constituted at the sites of these same dialectics: A White teacher’s Whiteness is constituted and maintained through the dialectical relationship between her social identities and self-understandings. As a result, my analysis of White female teachers’ subjectivities explores — and works to complicate the distinction between — both the teachers’ self-understandings and their social identities across multiple contexts (especially, of course, their roles as “teacher”). At the same time, I explore how Whiteness is produced and curated through and across subjectivities and the multiple and competing struggles that make up those subjectivities.

Ideology and Articulation

In analyzing the relationships between Whiteness and subjectivity, this project relies on Hall’s (1996) explication of ideology as a way to understand and put language to White female teachers’ sense making with regards to their own Whiteness and subjectivity. Hall understands ideologies as “the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works” (p. 26). The “ideolog[ies]” that White female teachers employ to “make sense of” the world include those that “make sense of” and contextualize their Whiteness and the vicissitudes of that Whiteness in classrooms. After all, ideology, according to Hall, “has especially to do with the concepts and the languages of practical thought which stabilize a particular form of power and domination” (p. 27). Within this project, the concept of ideology helps us to understand how White female teachers make sense of and, perhaps, work to “stabilize” power in their classrooms

(Fairclough, 2003; Thompson, 1984).

Similar to the dialectical relationships explored above — and so often articulated in post-structuralist theories — the conception of ideology taken up here is neither entirely “a determined and epiphenomenal superstructure” nor “an autonomous discourse with its own effectivity capable of constituting subjects” (Larrain, 1996, p. 47). Rather, ideology exists “in the minds of individuals” and constitutes those individuals, even as it exists and constitutes “material” and structural “apparatuses” and practices (Larrain, 1996, p. 47). In examining the ideological understandings of Whiteness that White women teachers take up — and that constitute their Whiteness — I necessarily work to explicate both the ideologies of Whiteness that are imposed on these White women teachers as well as the ideologies of Whiteness that they produce.

If Hall’s (1996) understanding of ideologies helps us to see how White female teachers “frame” and analyze their own Whiteness and are simultaneously constituted by that Whiteness, then Hall’s concept of “articulation” can help us to see how White female teachers might imbue those frameworks with meaning: “...ideologies do not consist of isolated and separate concepts, but in the articulation of different elements into a distinct set or chain of meanings” (Hall, 1995, p. 18). For Hall, “Articulation is the production of identity on top of differences, of unities out of fragments, of structures across practices. Articulation links this practice to that effect, this text to that meaning, this meaning to that reality” (Grossberg, 1992, p. 54). This project explores White female teachers’ articulation of their own Whiteness – the ways that they link the “fragments,” “structures,” “experience[s],” and “realit[ies]” of their Whiteness in the classroom in order to construct ideological understandings and subjectivities (Philip, 2011). After all, we know that the process of Whiteness — and White supremacy — must be constantly reproduced, or

“articulated” (Daryl Slack 1996; Frankenberg 1997; Hall, 1995). This work seeks to explicate that ideological process.

Discourse

Both the theoretical and methodological perspectives of this project are grounded in a particular understanding of discourse. I rely on Foucault’s (1971) understanding of discourse and the relationship he explores between discourse and subjectivity: According to Foucault, discourse is constituted by “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about...a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall, 2001, p. 72). At the same time, Hall (2001) reminds us that for Foucault, “discourse is not simply a ‘linguistic’ concept. It is about language *and* practice...[and] overcomes the traditional distinction between what one *says* (language) and what one *does* (practice)” (p. 71). Discourse, then, offers an unique opportunity to engage with White female teachers’ “language[s]” and “practice[s]” (within and outside of classrooms) and to understand the ideologies that govern and constitute them (Bourdieu, 1977; S. Mills, 1997).

My reliance on and use of the concept of subjectivity affords a particular understanding and use of discourse as a site of meaningful analysis in this project. As explored earlier, I frame the subject as produced through interaction with and on the world. Within this understanding of subjectivity, discourse becomes the “source of meaning in the first place” and therefore essential to any attempt at analysis (Hall, 2001). In other words, if the subject never occupies a “privileged position in relation to meaning,” if the subject does not control a stable “meaning” that they can communicate through language, then we have to understand the subject as “produced within discourse” and “subjected to discourse” (Hall, 2001, p. 79) — just as the subject is produced within, subject to, and constitutive of ideology and Whiteness (Fairclough, 2003; Merleau-Ponty,

1964).

In exploring White female teachers' discourses I necessarily work to understand the "production of knowledge through language" (Hall, 2001, p. 72). Hall reminds us that discourse "...governs the ways a topic can be meaningfully talked about and...influences how ideas are put into practice...Just as discourse 'rules in' certain ways of talking about a topic... it [also] 'rules out', limits and restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it" (p. 72). Analyzing White female teachers' discourses, then – engaging in critical discourse analysis – is an exploration of the discourses that White female teachers employ (and the discourses that employ and constitute those White female teachers) as a window into the logics and ideologies that constrain, shape, and define those White female teachers' understandings of Whiteness and discursive (re)productions of power (Fairclough, 2003).

Discourse analysis is uniquely suited to an analysis of power. According to Bloome et al. (2010), discourse analysis can "sharpen the discussion and debate of what and how power is" (p. 159) by offering insight into models of power that currently operate and shape the world. In addition to helping us reveal the model(s) of power at work, Bloome et al. argue that discourse analysis might help us to understand new ways of seeing power and create new models for understanding power at work: "...it is not sufficient to describe power relations simply as *power over* or *power with*...power relations are constituted not only by who coerces whom to do something but also by what worlds are constructed and how those worlds define people and their relationship to each other..." (p. 179-180). Bloome et al. posit that discourse analysis might help us to see the intricate webs – the "worlds" that "define people and their relationship[s]" – through which power functions.

As Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I explored White female teachers' discourses, then, we necessarily engaged in an exploration of the mutually constitutive relationship between power and knowledge. I drew on Foucault (1971) and Hall (2001) to explicate this relationship: "Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to *make itself true*. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true'..." (Hall, 2001, p. 76). I worked to understand the knowledge that powerfully "ma[de] itself true" through White female teachers' discourses – and to explore what work that knowledge-turned-truth did for White female teachers in their classrooms.

In working to articulate the kinds of understandings and analyses that critical perspectives on discourse afford, Fairclough (2003) reminds us that "The term discourse...signals [a] particular view of language as an element of social life which is colossally interconnected with other elements" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 3). In particular, an examination of discourse allows us to open up and expand the sites of meaning construction and communication: Embedded within this framing of discourse is an understanding that meaning is not made or communicated solely in the minds and words of individuals, but rather in the social spaces, interactions, and histories, at play beneath and within any interaction or exchange (Bakhtin 1986; Bourdieu, 1977; Gee 1999).

Similarly, Whiteness and the discourse(s) of Whiteness are communicated through exchanges — but also through the histories, interactions, and contexts that inform and constitute those exchanges. From a discursive perspective, then, Whiteness and White discourse permeate every aspect of the classroom in which a White teacher teaches: a White teacher's self-understanding, her interactions and exchanges with students, her body language, her personal history, etc. (Gee, 1999). An analysis of discourse in a White female teacher's classroom, then, engages with the multiple and mutually constitutive "sites" of Whiteness and White supremacy

in classrooms and within White female teachers themselves.

Harm Reduction

The understandings of Whiteness, White teacher subjectivity, Foucauldian power, discourse, and ideology explored above offered Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and me the language and nuance to articulate the workings of “domination,” “power, and the mechanisms of oppression” (Levinson et al., 2011, p. 12) at the sites of White teachers’ classrooms. The above ideas allowed us to simultaneously articulate “mechanisms of oppression” and situate ourselves within those “mechanisms”: After all, Foucault argues that “...a practitioner of interpretive analysis has no...external position. The disease he seeks to cure is part of an epidemic which has also afflicted him” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 202).

At the broadest level, then, the theories explored above allowed Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and me to both situate ourselves within the very “mechanisms” of domination we sought to understand — to understand ourselves as constituted by Whiteness -- and to begin to move beyond a mere articulation of those “mechanisms” to imagine new possibilities. Throughout our work, we relied on Foucault’s argument that even as subjectivities constituted by the very currents of power we sought to disrupt, we could still “fiction” new “politics that d[id] not yet exist” so long as we “star[t]ed] from a historical truth,” a “truth” that foregrounds power (Foucault, 1979).

A harm reduction framework allowed us to embody and put such insights into action: to acknowledge our own Whiteness and the ways that Whiteness necessarily constrained and defined our subjectivities, experiences, and insights — and to simultaneously work to visualize “Whiteness-at-work in classrooms” (Yoon, 2012), to bear witness to its effects, and to engage in

the always-insufficient and incomplete work of mitigating those harmful effects. Harm reduction allowed us to acknowledge the ways in which we could never erase or step outside the harmful effects of Whiteness – even as it also pushed us and held us responsible for finding ways to mitigate that harm. A harm reduction framework allowed us to acknowledge the harm that Whiteness inflicts on classrooms and the way that our subjectivities are constituted by discourses of Whiteness -- even as we also worked to mitigate that harm and imagine “fissures” (Applebaum, 2010, p. 191) in discourses of Whiteness. In essence, harm reduction allows us to hold complexity and contradiction.

What is harm reduction? Harm reduction has a long history and has, in various forms, been practiced for centuries by individuals and communities (Pates & Riley, 2012). At its most basic level harm reduction is about finding ways to reduce harm to individuals, families, or communities, without necessarily addressing or eliminating the root causes of that harm. Consider, for example, Pates and Riley’s (2012) example of the modern response to cars. We know that cars have the potential to harm – to kill or injure, for example, as well as to pollute – and no one disputes the fact that cars can and do inflict harm (even if they also make the world more convenient and easier to navigate). However, the response to that harm – for better or for worse – is not to rid the world of cars. Rather, the response is one of harm reduction: We create policies, structures, practices, and responses that mitigate the harm that cars can and do cause.

While the car example demonstrates some of the ways that harm reduction ideas are used throughout society, the formalization of modern harm reduction approaches emerged in the U.S. in the 1980s largely in response to HIV epidemics (Pates & Riley, 2012). Classic examples of harm reduction include needle exchange, safe injection sites, providing condoms and safer sex

education to sex workers, and methadone clinics. This formalized version of harm reduction is the subject of significant public health research, insight, discussion, and controversy. Much of that research – and controversy -- focuses on the degree to which such harm reduction practices implicitly condone behaviors like drug use and sex work that are often labeled illegal, illicit, or immoral.

There are many ways in which harm reduction is irrelevant to the ideas and perspectives I explore in this dissertation. To begin with, I in no way understand drug use, sex work, or other behaviors associated with harm reduction traditions as related to the work of White teachers who teach in schools that serve students of Color. I do not wish to draw parallels between the contexts that created the formalized tradition of harm reduction and the current state of teacher demographics and race in schools. Rather, I posit that the creative and complex response to such public health crises – harm reduction – is generative and deeply useful when applied to the current realities of public schooling and racism.

There is no agreed-upon set of guidelines that outline the principles or practices of harm reduction (Pates & Riley, 2012). In addition, the insights and principles of harm reduction are not typically applied to educational contexts — or to any contexts outside of public health. In attempting to draw on the insights and affordances of harm reduction, however, I have drawn on the clusters of ideas or principles that typically appear in public health literature on harm reduction and that are particularly relevant to this dissertation. Below I offer my own understanding of a few of those principles that are most relevant to this project:

Pragmatism: Harm reduction accepts that harm-inducing behaviors exist and that such behaviors will continue into the foreseeable future. Typically, in public health contexts this

principle is used to push beyond moralistic debates about particular behaviors -- sex work or drug use, for example -- and to allow institutions, communities, and individuals to engage in interventions that reduce the harm of those behaviors. In the case of this project, pragmatism allowed me to acknowledge the harm of the current teaching demographic as a reality and to simultaneously work toward mitigating that harm. (Pates & Riley, 2012; Riley, 1993; Riley et al., 1999)

Hierarchy of goals & focus on harms: Harm reduction prioritizes engagement with the most immediate and egregious harms to individuals and communities, even as it also acknowledges more fundamental or long-term harms that its interventions may not yet disrupt or address. In public health contexts, for example, this might mean engagement with the most harmful outcomes of drug use – death by overdose or the exchange of lethal infections via dirty needles – even as institutions also work toward reducing rates of drug addiction overall. In the context of this project, this principle allowed us to focus intently on the immediate harm of Whiteness in schools while also acknowledging the profound need for a fundamental shift in teacher demographics. (Pates & Riley, 2012; Riley, 1993; Riley et al., 1999).

Acceptance of multiple truths: Harm reduction accepts that the very behaviors that cause harm may also have other positive consequences and does not attempt to deny those consequences. In the case of public health, recent work (Race, 2008) has pushed for more acknowledgment of the ways that illicit behaviors might satisfy immediate needs even as they also do significant harm. For example, sex work might provide a necessary income and drug use might temporarily relieve anxiety or depression. In the case of this project, this principle allowed

us to acknowledge the duality of help and harm: Even as White teachers might have profoundly negative consequences and cause harm, they might also have positive effects for students. In other words, the harm of Whiteness does not necessarily negate some of the potential good – the “help” – of White teachers teaching.

Harm reduction in classrooms. I was first introduced to the concept of harm reduction when I was a new teacher. I was teaching 9th grade English at a school that did not have enough funds to offer any sexual health education for students. A non-profit sometimes offered free sex education sessions for various teachers on campus, and I invited the organization to teach a few sessions to my students. The non-profit was run through a local university and sent undergraduates majoring in biology to teach sessions on sexual health.

While I don't remember the details of the content of the first session, I do remember being shocked by some of the ideas and perspectives that the college students shared. At one point a student in my class asked a question about rape and the undergraduate facilitator replied, “Well, if you're raped you're basically finished. I mean people who are raped basically just kill themselves.” Over the course of the next twenty minutes, the college facilitators managed to communicate a series of ideas and perspectives I considered harmful and knew to be incorrect: That people who have mental illness are necessarily unintelligent, and that sex must be physically painful for women, for example. I interjected and added my own perspectives and eventually ended the session early.

I later called the program coordinator and asked if we could meet. When I voiced my concerns about the information that had been shared with my students, she apologized deeply. As if by way of explanation, the coordinator then informed me that the organization took a “harm

reduction stance” to sexual health education. At the time I didn’t understand what she meant – or the relevance of harm reduction to the situation at hand.

When I went home that evening and looked up harm reduction, however, the coordinator’s words took on a different meaning. I interpreted the coordinator’s invocation of “harm reduction” as way of evaluating and weighing the relative benefits and risks of asking young, minimally-trained college students to teach high school students about sexual health. In other words, I understood the coordinator as indicating that she knew that undergraduate facilitators might communicate incorrect information and thus perpetuate harm – but that she balanced that potential harm against the certain harm of denying high school students any sexual health education at all. This framing of harm reduction, in which the presence of individual – in this case, minimally trained college students – was framed as harmful even in the face of good intentions (on the part of the college students, organization, and teacher) set my mind abuzz.

It is important to note that the above analysis of harm reduction was most likely not what the coordinator meant to communicate when she spoke to me. I never got a chance to clarify as I asked the organization to stop sending undergraduates into my classroom. Perhaps she intended to communicate something about the approach to sexual health that the undergraduate students had meant to share: pushing safer sex as opposed to abstinence, for example.

Regardless of the coordinator’s intention, however, the idea that the presence of particular individuals in a classroom might be framed as harm – and that an organization, community, or individual would have to weigh and consider the potential harm that such individuals might inflict and as well as their potential to help and support, played in my mind for years. At first, I considered the ways in which such a framework could be applied to the presence of specific teachers at our school: Certainly some teachers at my school did harm (showing

videos every day in their classes instead of teaching, shaming students for their language practices, making students do push-ups as punishment in front of the class) but I also knew such harm had to be weighed against the alternative: no teacher at all. After all, the school at which I taught struggled to find teachers to fill positions and students were often left with long-term substitutes – or no teacher at all. As my teaching career progressed, however, I began to think more specifically about harm reduction in relationship to race – and more specifically, in relationship to Whiteness and White teachers.

Whiteness and harm. Across the arc of my own high school teaching experiences, I came to understand my own Whiteness as constraining what was possible and what happened in my classroom — and therefore having harmful effects in my classroom. My understandings of that harm – exactly how my Whiteness caused harm to students of Color and the ways that I could or could not mitigate that harm – changed over the course of my teaching. I left the high school classroom in order to return to graduate school and work to better understand and map the harm of Whiteness in classrooms.

The research I did with Emma, Kylie, Kim and Amy was built on our understanding of Whiteness and harm in schools. We spent the majority of our first meeting – as well as several ensuing meetings and interviews -- exploring the ways that we understood Whiteness as having harmful effects in schools and classrooms. Below, I provide an overview of the ways that Emma, Kylie, Kim, Amy, and I framed Whiteness as “doing harm” during our very first weeks together. To begin, I brought and shared research – as well as my own experience -- exploring the ways that Whiteness and White teachers’ subjectivities are recognized as having harmful consequences for students of Color. However, the teachers added significantly to these insights,

sharing their own experiences and reflections.

Representation. From the very beginning of our work together, Amy, Kylie, Emma and Kim spoke at length about the importance of representation for students of Color – and the ways that their own Whiteness precluded them from meeting that need as teachers. Amy, Kylie, Emma, and Kim – like many scholars (e.g. Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy 1986; Cole 1986; King 1993; Mercer and Mercer, 1986; Ochoa, 2007; Waters 1989) – pointed out that “representation matters”: When 80% (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012) of public school teachers are White, students of Color are denied the opportunity to see themselves, their communities, discourses, or epistemologies represented or reflected back at them through their teachers. As a result, students of Color may be denied the opportunity to imagine themselves – or other members of their communities -- as teachers or in positions of leadership or power. A lack of representation also serves to delegitimize students of Color, their communities, discourses, or epistemologies by framing them as unworthy of embodiment and/or space in schools or other institutions. As Amy put it during one of our first research meetings, “Representation matters. It matters that students of Color see teachers of Color. That matters on so many levels and in so many ways. I just can’t be that.”

Importantly, the harm of representation – often referred to as a lack of “role models” (Villegas & Irvine, 2010) -- is not contingent on individual White teachers’ actions, intentions, or beliefs. Individual White teachers cannot change the harmful reality of representation in schools. Certainly White teachers can work to represent and honor students of Color as well as their communities, discourses, and epistemologies through curricular or pedagogical choices: Critical Pedagogy (e.g. Freire, 1970), Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (e.g. Ladson-Billings, 1994; 2014),

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (e.g. Gay, 1975; 2013), and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (e.g. Paris, 2012) for example, explore many ways that teachers might do this. And yet, regardless of the curricular or pedagogical choices that White teachers make, their Whiteness necessarily prevents a more fundamental kind of representation.

Double consciousness. At our second meeting we discussed W. E. B. Du Bois's (1995) writing about "double consciousness" and its applications to our own understandings of Whiteness and harm. Dubois articulates the ways that people of Color – Black people in the U.S., more specifically – are forever forced to see and imagine themselves through the eyes of White people in order to (attempt to) keep themselves, their families, and communities safe from the violence of White supremacy. This violent process of having to imagine oneself through the eyes of a powerful other in an attempt to secure safety is painfully mirrored in classrooms lead by White teachers: Students of Color must constantly imagine themselves through the eyes of their White teachers because those White teachers wield significant power and police narrow ways of being (Daniels, in press; Young, 2009).

Regardless of a White teacher's desires, actions, or intentions there is no way to erase the harm of double consciousness in classrooms lead by White teachers. Even when White teachers expand the scope of acceptable "ways of being" in classrooms – to be responsive to students' needs and desires – teachers still necessarily patrol some boundaries of "acceptable" behavior, speech, or ways of being in classrooms (Bloome et al., 2010; Daniels, in press; Flores & Rosa, 2015). As a result, students of Color are forced to (re)engage in experiences of double consciousness in classrooms led by White teachers – regardless of that White teacher's intentions or desires. As Kim put it, "I'm in charge because I'm the teacher — at some level that's the way

it is, the way the school makes it be. And so, again and again, my students of Color are thinking, ‘Am I being the way this White woman in charge wants me to be?’”.

Implicit bias, stereotypes, and assumptions. Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma talked a great deal about the ways that they understood their Whiteness as perpetuating a racism that sometimes functioned beyond their conscious control. In other words, the teachers – as well as scholars (see, for example: Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Ford & Sassi, 2014) who explore the ways that racism functions in classrooms lead by White teachers – talked about the ways that they often found themselves perpetuating stereotypes about their students of Color or failing to disrupt their own assumptions about the ways their students of Color should or would behave in class.

Often, the teachers talked about working to notice these moments or making space for the students to engage in the process of pointing out such moments -- even if such a process put an undo or painful responsibility on students of Color. For example, the teachers talked about noticing moments when they built on racist stereotypes by assuming a Latino student was undocumented or asking an African-American girl to play the female housekeeper in a school play. Numerous scholars (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Sue, 2013; Vaught & Castagno, 2008) have written about the ways that White teachers often unconsciously – or consciously – perpetuate racism via their implicit biases, stereotypes, and assumptions about students of Color.

“Help” and harm. Amy, Emma, Kylie, and Kim initially expressed skepticism about adopting harm reduction as a framing concept of our project. When we discussed the nature of their resistance to and discomfort with harm reduction, all four teachers talked about the pain of

acknowledging that they did in fact perpetuate harm – even in the face of their own intense desires not to do so. As Kim often said when we discussed the consequences of Whiteness in classrooms, “Oh that hurts so bad! I try hard and realizing that doesn’t matter, it still harms kids. That just hurts so bad.”

One of the tenets of harm reduction, however, is that harm is often not the only consequence of “risky” or illicit behavior. Harm reduction holds that it is possible to acknowledge harmful effects without ignoring or erasing other, positive effects. In line with the tenet of “accepting multiple truths,” then, we talked about the ways that acknowledging the necessary harm of Whiteness did not mean negating the potential positive effects that White teachers might also have in classrooms. In other words, we talked about the ways that help and harm are not mutually exclusive and that it is possible to acknowledge the reality of both at the same time: White teachers can do “good” – can help students of Color to get much of what they might need and want out of schooling experiences – even as they also do “harm”.

The teachers and I talked about the need to acknowledge the duality of help and harm for multiple reasons and from multiple perspectives. Certainly, this acknowledgment is rooted in a tenet of harm reduction – however, many harm reduction programs and traditions prefer not to focus on this particular aspect of harm reduction (Race, 2008). At the same time, this acknowledgment is rooted in the post-structuralist understandings and concepts that situate and guide this project – and that the teachers and I explored together.

In our initial research meetings, the teachers and I talked about Foucauldian conceptions of power as well as the concept of discourse. In doing so, we articulated the ways that both of those concepts problematize the very idea of “intent” – and therefore the binary between “help” and harm: For Foucault (1971; 1972), there is no “intent,” but rather the workings of power and

discourse that constitute available practices. In this study then, we acknowledged that there are certainly harmful and violent effects – the effects of Whiteness on students of Color in classrooms -- but we did not assume that those effects stemmed from harmful “intent”. Rather, we worked to separate intention from effect, to acknowledge that intent is often opaque and that our very experiences of “harm” or “help” are defined by available discourses.

Harm reduction and Whiteness. After our initial research group meetings, the teachers and I moved our conversations beyond acknowledging the basic ways that we already understood and that research acknowledges Whiteness as having harmful effects in classrooms: harms produced via a lack of representation (Cole, 1986; King, 1993; Mercer & Mercer, 1986; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Waters, 1989), the perpetuation of double consciousness (Daniels, in press; Dubois, 1995; Young, 2009), and White teachers’ prejudices, assumptions, and implicit biases (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Ford & Sassi, 2014). Rather, as the teachers and I deepened our understandings of Foucauldian power, discourse, and Critical Whiteness, we considered the many other ways that Whiteness perpetuates harm by constituting and limiting our understandings and embodiment of even the most basic and fundamental components of teaching.

It is important to note that the following chapters do not to quantify or prove the harm of Whiteness for students of Color. The very theories of Whiteness that frame this project demonstrate the ways that Whiteness is necessarily harmful: Whiteness always works to violently protect current constellations of power and thus domination, and Whiteness always works to render itself invisible and “cover its tracks” (Frankenberg, 1997). Rather, my goal is to reveal the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness embedded within all

parts of Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma’s teaching and discourse: to trace our process of coming to see the workings of Whiteness — even as we also grappled with the ways that Whiteness constituted our very beings and thus the insights we could glean. Seeing Whiteness “at-work” (Yoon, 2012) — witnessing the “process” of Whiteness — necessarily reveals and highlights its harm.

Our use of the concept of harm reduction allowed us to foreground the ways in which all White people – regardless of our intentional affiliations and allegiances -- are necessarily complicit in the workings of racism and White supremacy: We all have harmful effects. Rather than work only to develop strategies aimed at abolishing Whiteness (a worthy task), harm reduction allowed us to work toward visualizing Whiteness and naming its effects. Harm reduction allowed us to acknowledge the ways we could never move outside of the discourses that constitute us -- that as White people we cannot move outside of the ways in which our Whiteness perpetuates harm.

In many ways, a harm reduction framework forced and allowed us to sit in the “anxiety” of acknowledging and critiquing Whiteness, as well as a willingness to be vulnerable and “stay in trouble” (Applebaum 2013, p. 25). In other words, harm reduction required that we work doggedly to see discourses of power and domination at work even as we were made profoundly uncomfortable and vulnerable by our ongoing complicity in and responsibility for those discourses. Harm reduction demanded the uncomfortable work of presuming that we were always within and constituted by -- rather than outside of or superior to -- discourses of Whiteness.

Methods

This dissertation chronicles the insights gleaned from a yearlong Participatory Action Research (PAR) project conducted during the 2016-2017 school year. I had the privilege of engaging in this research with four White women teachers who worked in public secondary schools on the West Coast of the United States that serve predominately (or exclusively) students of Color. This project allowed me to be a participant observer in their classrooms over the course of six months. I met regularly with this group of four White women teachers to co-construct insights into the affordances of a harm reduction framework to our embodied understandings of critical Whiteness and White teacher subjectivity.

The design of this project built on a three-month pilot study I conducted during the 2014-2015 school year. That qualitative case study allowed me to collect data in one White female teacher's majority-student-of-Color classroom and to conduct multiple semi-structured interviews with that teacher (Merriam, 2009). The traditional qualitative structure of that study helped me to develop an emergent understanding of one White female teacher's interpretation and enactment of Whiteness, and to develop an initial theoretical framework in which to situate further studies. In particular, I articulated the connections between that teacher's developing understanding of Whiteness and her framework for understanding power within her classroom (Daniels, under review).

However, the traditional design of that pilot study did not allow me to collaborate with the teacher participant in exploring alternative or critical engagements with Whiteness. In many ways, such a project felt both unethical and profoundly inadequate in that it allowed me to map and better understand a situation without working to explore alternatives or attempt to mitigate that situation. The design of this project, then – it's participatory, collaborative, and longitudinal

structure – built on the insights gleaned from my pilot study and uniquely allowed me to collaborate with teachers in imagining and exploring alternatives to the ways Whiteness is currently framed and understood in White teachers’ classrooms.

Traditions of Research

While this project drew on several traditions of qualitative research, it was most firmly rooted in a rich tradition of PAR and was therefore a deeply collaborative effort with current White female teachers. At its root, PAR is committed to “systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, [and] critical” and seeks to articulate new “philosoph[ies] of practice” (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990, p. 148); this commitment reflects the ethical and ideological roots of this study. While there are numerous approaches to collaborative or “action research,” the approach to PAR engaged here followed a tradition of critical educational research that promotes and builds upon “self- and critical awareness about researchers’ and participants’ lived experiences” and “alliances between researchers and participants” (McIntyre, 2003, p. 28-9) and therefore reflects a tenet of this project: Teacher self-reflection and self-understanding are fundamental to constructing new and generative understandings of Whiteness.

In many ways, however, the design of this study stood in contrast to traditional conceptions of PAR. PAR studies often emerge from within marginalized communities and are led by community “insiders” who seek to collaboratively transform or better understand some part of the communit(ies) to which they belong (Herr & Anderson, 2015). This particular project differed from that norm in two significant ways:

First, I did not position the community of White teachers with whom I collaborated as marginalized. Certainly I understand the subjectivities of the White women teachers with whom I

worked as complex and intersectional. White women teachers may experience marginalization even as they wield privilege — however, while Whiteness does not preclude identities that are marginalized or oppressed, it does always complicate and inform those identities (Frankenberg, 1993; McRae, 2018). I focused my work with the White female teachers in this project on their relationships to and engagement with Whiteness and the power that thus moves through them.

Second, this research project did not emerge organically from within a community of White women teachers. Rather, I brought initial research questions and a suggested research structure to a group of White women teachers. At the same time, however, my own professional history (as a former teacher and as a White woman), my previous anti-racist professional development work with White teachers at the schools at which I taught, and my ongoing work with (mostly White) pre-service teachers spurred this project into action. The urgency I felt as a White woman teacher to better understand Whiteness — and the effects of my own developing understanding of that Whiteness on my classroom — is mirrored in the urgency I witness in many of the White teachers with whom I work.

While I brought a set of initial research questions to this project, I nonetheless understand those questions as a reflection of the needs of the many White women teachers with whom I have worked. The same questions the teachers and I pose in this study (albeit, using different language) are often asked of me by the White women teachers with whom I work: How can I better understand my Whiteness and its impact in my classroom? How does my Whiteness affect my teaching? What should I do about the ways that my Whiteness affects my teaching? At the same time, many White teachers who are not yet able to articulate the above questions struggle with the consequences of their unexamined Whiteness in their classrooms.

In many ways then, the methodological approach to this project sits at the intersection of

numerous methodologies and traditions of research. However, I relied most fundamentally on PAR because of its unique commitment to understanding the potential of researchers' and the participants' collective exploration of shared a reality (Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Erickson, 2006; Kelly, 2005; Kindon, Pain & Kesby, 2007) – in this case, of Whiteness. My own position as a White woman – and a former White teacher of students of Color – was fundamental to my methodology, to the relationships I was able to develop with Amy, Kylie, Emma, and Kim and therefore, to the insights that we collectively developed.

In addition, this project is rooted in several complementary (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) traditions of research -- teacher inquiry (Campano, Ghiso, Yee & Pantoja, 2013; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992; Lytle, 2008), critical qualitative research (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002), and post-structuralism (Lather, 1992; Merriam, 2009; Sondergaard, 2002) -- that served to deepen the approaches and perspectives that PAR offered. The research tradition of teacher inquiry allowed me to frame the teachers in this project as “knowers” and to center their processes of reflection and analysis (Campano, Ghiso, Yee & Pantoja, 2013; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992; Lytle, 2008). At the same time, the traditions of post-structuralist and critical qualitative research allowed us to examine and engage with the complexities and impossibilities of “knowing” Whiteness and subjectivity (Utt & Tochluck, 2016).

Researcher Positionality

At its root, this dissertation asks fundamental questions about the consequences of who a person is – their racialized identities, in particular – for what they do. As a researcher, my own subjectivity was central to the ways that I thought and went about gathering, analyzing, and

drawing insights from data⁴. My perspectives and subjectivities (as a White person, a former White teacher, a woman, a graduate student -- and all of the many other subjectivities that hail me) complicated and shaped all of my perceptions, understandings, and interpretations of what happened in classrooms as well as during interviews and research meetings (Eisenhardt, 2001; Rosenau, 1991).

In line with the critical and post-structuralist frameworks that situate this dissertation, I make no attempt to avoid or erase the ways that my subjectivity shaped all parts of this dissertation. In response to the reality of my own influence, I developed a practice of ongoing self-reflection throughout the process of this dissertation. Every day, after observing one of the teachers, I would sit in my car and write. Through that writing, I grappled with a range of questions: Was I pushing a teacher too hard and might she decide to quit the project? Or was my concern about that teacher entirely shaped by my own Whiteness and desire to avoid conflict? How was my presence – yet another White woman! -- impacting students of Color and the learning they were able to engage in? Was I positioning myself as a person who had “answers” or as someone who was fallible, ignorant, and curious just like the other White teachers? What was the effect of that positioning?

At the same time, I also posed many of these questions to the teachers themselves during our research group meetings. For example, we explored the ways that my subjectivity (as a White woman and a former White high school English teacher in a school that served predominately students of Color) positioned me as a partial “insider” in this research. In many

⁴ While the word “data” often has cold, distancing, and impersonal connotations, I use the word here for ease, clarity, and brevity — not to invoke it’s more detached meaning. I understand the “data” gathered in critical qualitative research to be intimate, complex, often emotional, relational, and fundamentally subjective.

ways I understood myself as a member of the larger community of White women teachers to which Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma belonged. At the same time, however, my position as a doctoral student, a researcher exploring Critical Whiteness, and an outsider to particular school communities, located me as an “outsider”. The teachers and I talked about how my position as both an insider and an outsider shaped the nature of our relationships, both constituting and constraining what was possible.

Throughout this project, the teachers and I struggled with canonical questions that post-structuralist approaches to qualitative research pose: What understandings and perspectives did our positions of power (as White people, as adults, etc.) privilege and how did that necessarily shape the insights we articulated? How was power functioning through me as a researcher? Through the other participants? We posed these questions not because we imagined ourselves able to answer them, but because the process of asking them helped us to remain cognizant of the centrality of our own subjectivities.

Participants and Context

When I initially began this project I sent out emails to my teacher networks on the West Coast of the United States, asking friends, colleagues, and acquaintances to pass along the project description and request for White women teacher participants. While there was tremendous interest in the project – I received scores of emails from interested White women teachers -- most teachers understandably felt that they simply did not have the time to engage in a such a time-intensive project.

Below I offer brief descriptions of the four teachers who decided to participate -- Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma -- and their teaching contexts. Descriptions of research participants often

strive for objectivity and complete accuracy; however, the descriptions I offer below are neither. The intensity and complexity of my relationships and work with Amy, Kylie, Emma, and Kim make it impossible for me to represent them fully or completely. My experiences with and representations of each of them are of course filtered through the lens of my own subjectivity and the particularities our work together. The descriptions below are therefore narrations of my own experience of each White woman, their teaching contexts, and their relationships to those teaching contexts. My goal in offering these short (and inadequate) descriptions is to animate the insights that we collectively constructed – to bring to life the ideas and experiences that I offer through this dissertation.

I also offer a table (see Table 1) with information drawn from the relevant school districts' websites. Upon entering each district school system, students' guardians are required to fill out paperwork and indicate their student's racial identity (guardians select from a list of pre-determined racial identity boxes). The demographic information provided below is therefore a contested, overly simplistic, and artificially static representation. Students' racial identities cannot be captured in a series of percentages nor can these percentages represent any of the complex and dynamic ways in which race was reproduced and contested in Amy, Emma, Kylie, and Kim's classrooms. I chose to document the schools' demographic information in an attempt to draw parallels between Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma's classrooms and national trends in teacher and student demographics (Howard, 2010).

Amy. The first time I spoke to Amy on the phone she was breathlessly walking back from a late-night spoken word competition at which her students had performed. I could hear Amy smiling through the phone as she talked about her students' poetry and exuberance. Amy

was immediately excited about this research project – she asked thoughtful and provocative questions that foreshadowed the kind of engagement and openness I came to expect and admire: “This sounds like it could get really hard and really emotional – are you ready to support us through that?” she asked during our first conversation. “I don’t want you to just drop into my classroom and then disappear. Are you going to develop and be willing to sustain relationships with my students?”.

Amy was tall and athletic with brown hair that she sometimes dyed so that it tinged red. Amy grew up in an upper-middle class and highly educated family and immigrated to the US from Canada for her father’s work at the age of eight. Amy’s sister had chosen a career in finance and Amy’s parents had jobs that afforded both wealth and opportunities to travel. As a result, Amy often felt like the odd one out, somehow both revered and denigrated for her choice to teach – and to teach in the City of Township, more specifically. Her parents often expressed concerns about visiting Amy in her City of Township apartment, worried that their car might be broken into. Amy often talked about her own conflicted feelings about teaching in the City of Township, wondering if she should move to a wealthier district that might pay her more.

Amy had received her teaching credential from a local liberal arts school. She was working on her master’s degree during our project and often talked about the tensions she felt between the perspectives we explored and the ideologies toward which she was propelled through her master’s program. When I originally approached Amy about this project, I was deeply impressed to learn about her numerous commitments: in addition to working on her master’s degree, Amy volunteered in restorative justice work in local prisons, wrote and analyzed education policy through fellowships with local organizations, and lead professional development work through local educational non-profits. Amy – like so many teachers – was

incredibly busy and I never saw her work on only one thing at a time.

Amy's life very much centered around her identity as an educator. Amy taught at a school called Windmill Charter School and she lived in a nearby apartment with another teacher at Windmill. In addition, Amy spent most evenings and at least one of her weekend days at the Windmill campus. Somehow Amy also managed to maintain a social life, often attending concerts, taking weekend trips, or going out dancing with friends. Many of Amy's friends were teachers and she often talked about her friends' response when she relayed conversations or insights from our research project.

Amy was curious, deeply reflective, and energetic. She was often the first person to volunteer or offer herself and her teaching up for analysis during our research. In my months working with Amy, I never heard her reject an idea out of hand, turn down an opportunity to receive feedback, or resist questioning her own motives or approaches to teaching. I once asked Amy how she thought she came to be so open. I noted that most people – myself included – were often defensive when their teaching was questioned. Amy smiled: “I really am willing to engage with other people's perspectives. That stems from a desire to improve. I really don't believe I have the answers and I really want to learn. I think it can also come off like lack of confidence to somebody. But really it's just that I'm always willing to try.”

Windmill Charter School. Amy taught at Windmill Charter School, a K-12 charter school near the City of Township airport where she had worked since she began teaching four years prior. The school, an independent and explicitly social justice-oriented charter, served almost 500 students and had a beautiful, airy building with wide windows and soft green carpet. As a K-12 school, Windmill was always filled groups of young children — running around the

Windmill campus, mingling with teenagers -- dressed in neatly pressed blue and white school uniforms.

Windmill had a looping model, which meant that Amy had also taught her current students the previous year. As a 9th/10th grade humanities teacher, Amy's classroom included a focus on both literature and world history. She followed the school's mandated curriculum and often expressed frustration that she did not have more freedom in her curriculum and planning — particularly with regard to the novels she was permitted to use and analyze in her classroom.

Amy had intense and long-lasting relationships with students. She often gave students rides home, met up with them on the weekends or after school, and regularly texted with former students. Over the year that Amy and I worked together, I witnessed her advocate for multiple students with Windmill's sometimes strict administration. Amy's advocacy prevented at least two students from being expelled from Windmill during the year we worked together.

Amy's classroom – like her house, where the group met for almost all of our research group meetings – was always clean and meticulously arranged. When I observed Amy, I sat in a soft chair in the corner of the room and often chatted with the group of five students who sat in nearby desks. Amy, more than any of the other teachers in the project, asked me to actively participate in the life of her classroom: I lead small groups of students, often helped individual students, and regularly contributed to or facilitated whole-class discussions.

Kim. The first time I met Kim she was sitting in a café, scarves and jewelry wound around her neck and shoulders, and papers spread out across a table. Kim laughed loudly and openly, and I remember being surprised by the husky and musical sound of her voice. During our first conversation, Kim expressed a concern that she could not participate in the project

because she was no longer a “regular classroom” teacher. The year we worked together – Kim’s 5th year teaching at Wealton High School – Kim had taken on a new position as Wealton’s Activities Director: Kim taught the 60-student Leadership class, ran the school’s thriving student-to-student mentorship program, served as the advisor for the senior class, coordinated all afterschool programs at Wealton, and directed all of the school plays. In years past Kim had taught 9th and 10th grade History at Wealton and this was her first year out of a traditional “teacher role”.

Born and raised in small towns across the American Southeast, Kim came to Wealton through the Teach for America (TFA) program. Kim often talked about her conflicted feelings about TFA, focusing on all of the ways in which she had felt — and still felt — ill-prepared and under-supported as a new teacher:

I finally understand what [TFA's] model was it -- it wasn't to support teachers so we could be the best teachers and support students. Originally I kinda thought the mission was, you know, one day all children will become presidents or senators and go enact change in their communities. But no! The mission is that one day *I, the teacher*, will be president or a senator. And I was like “Ohhh.” That was not made clear to me. They're doin a really good job of doing that and that's why they don't invest in curriculum planning. Cause it was me- my first year they're like, "You're a superstar, you're amazing, you've got great behavior management, great relationships!" I'm like "Nobody is learning anything! Can somebody help me plan how to teach cause I'm very much struggling here." And they're like "Yeah, but think about how much stronger of a leader *you* are!". And then I'm like "Oh!". Okay, well then you're killin' it as far as making me grow as a person and developing my leadership skills. But they don't care about you being a teacher.

For Kim, TFA had served to help her develop her own "leadership skills" -- but not necessarily to make her a successful teacher. Throughout our collaboration, Kim often talked to me about the teaching skills she felt she lacked as a result of TFA. In fact, Kim told me that one of the main reasons she agreed to participate in our research project was because she imagined me able to help her "learn how to actually teach" and "give [her] feedback".

Kim had grown up in a working class home and often struggled with her family's conservative perspectives. Especially in the weeks directly following Trump's 2016 election, Kim talked a great deal about her simultaneous compassion for and frustration with her own family and with conservative White working class communities across the country. Kim and I talked about her discomfort the few times that a family member had come to visit her classroom at Wealton. She mentioned that a former boyfriend – a White man who worked in finance -- had come to visit her classroom. When the boyfriend later told Kim that he had felt "unsafe" at Wealton, Kim promptly broke up with him.

In addition to being a teacher, Kim was also a talented singer and actress. In college Kim had been deeply involved in the theater world and had worked as an impersonator to make money. Over the course of our project, Kim auditioned for and performed in several major theater productions in a nearby large city — even as she also directed productions of "Anne Frank" and "High School Musical" at Wealton. Often when transcribing the day's recordings, I would hear Kim singing softly to herself as she walked down Wealton's halls.

Kim's intensity and powerful intellect were remarkable to witness. She took copious notes during every one of our meetings, filling an entire journal with sticky notes and scribbled ideas. Kim would often start writing furiously in the middle of a conversation. "Hang on," she

would say. “I just have to get this idea down or I’ll forget it.” Kim also talked freely about her feelings and emotional reactions to our conversations. She openly shared feelings of fear or resentment and expressed both curiosity about and insight into her own emotional vicissitudes.

Kim’s intensity was mirrored in her relationships with students. Kim laughed a great deal with students, often poking fun at herself and framing her students as far more competent and knowledgeable than she could ever be. In all of her relationships and work with students, Kim worked to facilitate students’ leadership and ownership: “Over time I’ve learned that I could help organize or lead them in organizing an event and it could go okay. Or I could have the kids organize an event and they will learn a ton! That’s what I care about. Not if the event is okay.”

Wealton High School. Wealton High School had approximately 2000 students and was one of two comprehensive public high schools in the City of Wealton. The school, like so many public schools, embodied many competing currents and realities in public education. The building was old, ugly, and crumbling – although it had been a state-of-the-art facility when it was built 70 years prior. Wealton had numerous after-school clubs and activities: A robotics club that received funding from local businesses and often won state and national competitions, and thriving dance and theater programs. At the same time, however, Wealton had a reputation as a violent and dysfunctional school. The school had 7 full-time vacancies during the year I spent there – which meant that several students had substitutes for five of their seven daily classes. A few years prior, the school had made national news headlines for a variety of violent incidents and the school’s administration had changed almost every year over the past decade.

For all its complexities, Wealton had a remarkable and powerful sense of community. Numerous Wealton graduates worked on the campus as teachers, administrative staff, or

counselors and almost all of the teachers lived in the Wealton community. Unlike the other schools at which I observed – and most other schools in the country (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012) – the majority of Wealton teachers were people of Color. In fact, Kim was one of the only White women teachers at Wealton.

The particularities of Kim’s job as Activities Director meant that my observations at Wealton were quite different from my experiences at the other schools. I observed Kim in her work as a teacher, facilitator, director, and administrator: I sat in on meetings as Kim talked to school counselors and administration, crouched in the auditorium as Kim lead school assemblies or trainings for student-to-student mentors, listened as Kim supervised Leadership students while they planned assemblies and school dances, and folded programs for the school play while Kim directed after school rehearsals in empty classrooms.

Kim and I often talked as she walked up and down the school’s windowless halls, dropping off papers or picking up surveys from various teachers’ classrooms. On several occasions, I drove Kim to nearby stores when she had to pick up supplies for a school dance or assembly. On one particular day in September, I remember driving Kim to a nearby grocery store and helping her load 300 ice cream sandwiches into a shopping cart. “What kind of job do I have that this is what I do?!” Kim exclaimed.

Kim’s classroom was a large, cavernous room that she shared with the woodshop class. Large saws and planks leaned against the walls and voices echoed loudly under the vaulted ceiling. The classroom served as an office for the scores of students involved in the school leadership program, student-to-student mentorship program, and theater program. Students were always moving in and out of the room, retrieving materials, making posters and working in rapt collaboration. Kim typically sat at her desk, moving back and forth between her computer and

the colorful sticky notes on which she listed out each day's tasks.

Kylie. Kylie was in her first year teaching during our work together. Fresh out of a prestigious master's and credential program, Kylie had accepted a job teaching 9th grade English at LEARN, a relatively new charter high school in the City of Wealton (only a few miles away from where Kim worked at Wealton High School). When I first met Kylie and introduced her to the project I was surprised that she agreed to participate – I had assumed that participating in such a project might be too overwhelming during a teacher's first year in the classroom. Kylie, however, was eager and excited to participate: "If I say I want to be an anti-racist teacher, then I shouldn't turn down opportunities to work on that, right?"

For all of her remarkable courage, Kylie often seemed daunted — as so many first-year teachers do — by the task of teaching. Kylie and I met for the first time in a local café in August, about a week before the school year started. Whenever I pressed for specifics about the school's schedule or about the classes Kylie might teach her eyes widened and she shook her head. "I just don't know yet," she said. "I don't completely know what I'm getting myself into."

Kylie had grown up a few hours away in a beachside city and had moved to the area for college -- where she said she had learned for the first time about the possibilities of social justice education. Kylie had graduated from college and moved directly into her credential and master's program. She lived with her boyfriend, a firefighter, and often escaped to the gym after school to destress and "keep sane" – even on days when she was sick or exhausted. Kylie was relatively short and muscular -- the result of a few years spent weight-lifting -- with round blue eyes and long sandy hair.

Kylie was often quiet during our meetings, clearly engaged and silently thoughtful. On a

few occasions Kylie's reserved and calm exterior cracked: She broke down crying, questioning her choice to teach at LEARN, to participate in this project, and wondering if she was giving her students what they needed. As it was her first year teaching, Kylie was often sick and her hoarse voice betrayed both her exhaustion and frustration with the challenges of first-year teaching.

Learn Charter Academy. Kylie had chosen to begin her teaching career at LEARN Charter Academy because she wanted a school that would provide significant supports for new teachers. The year that Kylie began teaching at LEARN there were 10 other first-year teachers at the school. LEARN had a mandated English curriculum, offered regular teacher observations, and allowed Kylie to teach only three periods a day during her first year. As a result, however, each of Kylie's classes was extremely large: 38 students packed into neat rows of desks. Kylie taught freshmen English as well as an all-girls' advisory class that met a few times each week. Kylie's classroom was large and quite sparsely decorated. As the year progressed, however, she put up a few posters, quotes from famous thinkers and displays of student work, all outlined in yellow and gold (the school's colors).

LEARN is part of a chain of charter schools in the area and was housed in a window-filled new building. In many ways, the school appeared to run like clockwork: The school's hallways were always empty of students even before the bell rang and all of the students – dressed in pressed uniforms – seemed to arrive at school precisely on time every day. Kylie often attributed the school's organization to its “systems and consistency”:

LEARN is very structured. And I actually really love it, like I love it so much 'cause it gives me so much support as a new teacher. But it's very structured and we- we're supposed to use very specific classroom

management techniques and I felt a lot better about my teaching since I found this school and I felt like it finally gave me something to kinda latch onto as far as classroom management, 'cause that was something that I struggled with. It's great. The administration has consistent systems for how to do everything and they follow up on everything. They are so on top of it.

Perhaps as part of these “consistent” systems, I often witnessed students butt up against LEARN’s strict rules. For instance, students were required to enter every classroom silently, to sit straight in their desks, to put their homework in the right corners of their desks, never to sit in the school’s halls, and to return home if they arrived at school even slightly “out of uniform”. On one occasion, I witnessed Kylie ask her students to leave the classroom and “practice re-entering the room in silence” three times before she started class. As a first-year teacher Kylie talked about the ways she felt that she depended on the structures that LEARN offered to support her teaching – even as she also questioned the impact of those structures and the ways that such structures might be rooted in racism and White supremacy.

When I observed Kylie I usually sat in the back of the classroom, tucked behind her smooth metal desk. While I had originally planned to sit at a desk next to students, there were no spare desks or chairs to be had in Kylie’s 38-student classes. In addition, unlike my observations at other schools, I did not often wander around or talk to students during observations in Kylie’s classes. Kylie’s students were often engaged in solitary work or in whole-class discussions or lectures that Kylie facilitated and lead.

In addition, while Kylie and I often discussed or worked on planning lessons together, she never asked me to engage directly with students during her teaching. When I asked Kylie about this, she talked about the need to maintain ownership of her own classroom – to secure her own position as the “real teacher” in the room – during her first year teaching.

Emma. I met Emma for the first time at our very first group research meeting. We had spoken several times on the phone, and each time I could hear Emma's young daughter laughing or playing in the background. In the weeks leading up to the start of the school year, however, Emma had been traveling and participating in professional development and we hadn't been able to find a time to meet.

Throughout our work together, Emma was always busy and multi-tasking – she often brought her 4-year-old daughter to our meetings, never sat still during our conversations in her classroom, and always had to run off to other events or commitments as soon as our research meetings ended. When I first talked to Emma about the project she expressed significant concern that she wouldn't have time to participate in the way that she wanted, as she was teaching four brand-new courses. “When I do things, I like to do them well,” she said.

Emma lived in the City of Township with her husband and young daughter. Her husband was a musician and the two had bought a house in a newly-gentrifying neighborhood a few years before. Emma had grown up in a small, majority-White rural town a few miles north and had moved to the area for college where she had discovered social justice activism. Emma strongly identified as an anti-racist activist, a political radical, and a mother. She often referenced her daughter when teaching and talked on several occasions about how having a child had in many ways shifted her relationship to her students and her thoughts about teaching. “I could be my students' mom and I really think about that now,” she said.

Emma was an experienced and beloved teacher at Township High School. When I first asked if she thought her school principal would be open to her participating in the project, Emma laughed. “He really likes me so I pretty much get to do whatever I want,” she said. Emma was in

her 9th year teaching at Township during our collaboration and talked about how valuable it was to have a positive reputation throughout the school. “Students know me when they see me on their schedule at the beginning of the year. I taught their older brother or sister or friend so they know I’m kind and that I care.”

Emma was a quiet and intense listener. She spoke slowly and deliberately and always sounded as if she had planned out her thoughts and ideas before deciding to speak. Throughout our group meetings, Emma often took the long view, pushing the group to think about what it meant to take up considerations of Whiteness over the course of a teaching career or a life.

Township High School. Township was one of six large comprehensive high schools in the City of Township – along with countless charter schools (including Windmill). Township was located in the heart of the city and was the oldest and most racially heterogeneous school in the district. Township stood at the top of winding hill, a scattering of old and new buildings. Every time I walked through Township’s halls or wound through the alleys between buildings, I saw clusters of students laughing and talking, no matter what time of day.

Within the larger Township community, Emma was the coordinator of the school’s Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program. AVID is a national program aimed at college preparedness for first generation college students. Students elect to enroll in the AVID program at the beginning of their 10th grade year and remain until they graduate. The year I worked with Emma, she had just started working with a new group of 10th graders – whom she would then follow through graduation. Emma taught a special course for 10th grade AVID students focused on study skills as well as an elective course on social justice. The students in Emma’s AVID courses mirrored the demographics of the larger school and were therefore quite

racially heterogeneous.

Emma’s classroom had large windows that looked out on the city and rows of desks neatly arranged in a U-shape. I typically sat in a desk at the back of the classroom and often chatted with the students seated nearby or joined their groups during small groups discussions or projects. Emma’s relationships with students were marked by affection. She often referred to her students as “beautiful people” or “sweethearts” and talked openly about how close they would become over their three years together.

Name	School name/type	Schools Demographics	Subject & Grade	# of years taught
Emma	Township High School: 9-12 th grade public high school	32.3% Black 31.2% Asian 29.5% Hispanic/Latino .9% Two or more races 1.9% White 1562 students enrolled	87.4% Free/Reduced Lunch 24.9% English Language Learner 10 th Grade Social Studies	9 years
Kim	Wealton High School: 9-12 th grade public high school	85.1% Hispanic 5.5 % Black 6.7% Asian 1.1% White .7% Two or more races .7% Pacific Islander 1486 students enrolled	93.1% Free/Reduced Lunch 41% English Language Learner 11 th and 12 th grade Leadership & Activities Director	6 years
Amy	Windmill Academy: K-12 th grade public charter school	81.1% Hispanic 11.7% Black 4.3% Asian 1.6% White .8% Two or more races .4% Pacific Islander 488 students enrolled	83.6 % Free/Reduced Lunch 45.5% English Language Learner 10 th grade Humanities	4 years
Kylie	LEARN School:	91% Hispanic 6% Black	94.8% Free/Reduced Lunch 22% English Language Learner	9 th grade English 1 year

want to spend our entire interview discussing a particular teaching moment or experience. On other days, we spent interviews talking about the ways that our research project was affecting the teacher's relationships with colleagues or her plans for the future and thoughts about her career. While I made agendas for all of our research meetings, I also often put aside those agendas when teachers raised new questions or expressed a desire to analyze a particular teaching transcript, experience, or article.

Throughout data collection, I relied on what Merriam (2009) calls "romantic" and "postmodern" approaches to my interviews, observations, and facilitation of collaborative research meetings. While I attempted to understand the role of my own subjectivity in my interviews, observations, and facilitation, I made no attempt to be "objective"; instead, I worked to "reveal" and explore "my own subjectivities" across contexts (Merriam, 2009): I talked about my own facilitation moves and wonderings, named the questions I asked myself about how I was pushing the teachers or supporting their exploration, and the tension I felt when supporting the teachers in thinking or teaching in ways not necessarily condoned by their school contexts.

In collaborating and thinking with Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma throughout our observations, interviews, and research meetings, I tried not to push the teachers toward articulating a "single perception of the [themselves]". Rather, my goal was to co-construct understandings of Whiteness and to allow for a plurality of diffuse and perhaps contradictory understandings, subjectivities, and selves (Merriam, 2009, p. 92).

I audio recorded all classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with each teacher, individual planning meetings with each teacher, and monthly collaborative research meetings with all teachers. In addition, I collected artifacts from Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma's classrooms that spoke to the teachers' understandings of Whiteness and teacher subjectivity

(teachers' writing about themselves, teachers' written comments on student work, etc.) as well as the teachers' own reflective and analytic writing and journaling throughout our research process.

Data Analysis

PAR allows researchers to work in collaboration with research participants to engage in analysis — and, in many ways blurs the traditionally rigid lines between data collection and data analysis. In this study, regular group meetings allowed us to both generate new “data” (the transcripts of our group research meetings served as data and a source of new insight and exploration), even as we collaboratively analyzed data from classrooms (transcripts or anecdotes from the teachers' classrooms). In PAR, data analysis is in a recursive relationship with data collection: “The process is neither static nor completely under the researcher's control” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 129). As a PAR researcher, then, my commitment was to the “spiraling synergism of action and understanding” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 87).

The data gathered in this project was analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA), an approach that is uniquely suited to an analysis of power (S. Mills, 1997) and deeply intertwined with the sociocultural theories that situate this project. As explored earlier, discourse analysis (DA) is concerned with discourse: “A group of statements which provide a language for talking about... a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall, 2001, p. 72). DA explores the relationship between an individual's talk, practice, and talk about that practice (Foucault, 1971; Gee, 1999; S. Mills, 1997). In addition, DA looks at the language(s) or ways of being that individuals avoid or experience as prohibited (Foucault, 1971; S. Mills, 1997). CDA builds on the work of DA by paying particular attention to the ways in which power is negotiated through individuals' and communities' talk and practice (Rogers, 2004).

The extent to which the teachers and I chose to collaboratively formally analyze data using CDA methods varied with each research meeting and depended largely on the teachers' interest and availability. Often, the teachers chose to spend our group research meetings analyzing transcripts of their teaching, drawing out particular exchanges or segments of talk and discussing the ways that their discourse offered a window into the workings or harmful effects of Whiteness. At other meetings, the teachers elected to spend our time developing new questions to ask themselves and new ways to talk about Whiteness with White colleagues. In many ways, either use of our time engaged with CDA in that we explored the themes and relationships that emerged across our talk about Whiteness and teacher subjectivity, our embodiment of Whiteness, and our talk about that embodiment. Regardless of whether or not we formally engaged in CDA, our conversations explored the ways of talking about and embodying Whiteness that were present in — and absent from — our conversations and collaborative work.

In addition to collaborative analyses I also individually analyzed transcripts of our interviews, individual planning meetings, monthly collaborative meetings, and classroom observations, and collected and analyzed artifacts from the teachers' classrooms and from our collaborative meetings. CDA focused my analysis on the links and discrepancies between language and the daily realities of teaching and Whiteness -- and allow me to analyze how power informed those links and discrepancies. As with many PAR studies, I presented whatever data I analyzed independently to Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma in an effort to deepen, clarify, and complicate whatever insights I developed. This form of "member checking...is commonly done as an ongoing process throughout the research, based on an ongoing analysis that can help guide future actions and research decisions. It is easily folded into the ongoing reflective component of action research...it recognizes that the process is a collective endeavor" (Herr & Anderson,

2015, p. 106).

The coding scheme(s) on which we will relied — across both our collaborative analyses and my independent analyses — drew largely from Fairclough’s (2003) work and framing of discourse as an important site of analysis for social critique. Fairclough argues that CDA is most powerfully paired with ethnographic work that engages in an analysis of power and works to reveal the ways that power works through discourse. To begin, the teachers and I open coded (Charmaz, 2006; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) transcripts of their teaching and of our interviews — and later, our research meetings themselves. While the teachers relied heavily on the four codes that initially emerged from our analysis — “difference,” “connection,” “control,” and “power” — we later worked to refine and deepen those codes. For instance, the teachers developed codes that indicated instances of evaluation, and nominalization, drawing explicitly from texts we had read by Fairclough (2003).

The coding scheme on which I relied for my individual analyses drew from and expanded upon the codes that the teachers and I used during our research meetings. I drew on both CDA and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Fairclough, 2003, p. 5) to inform that coding scheme. I relied particularly on Fairclough’s work on grammatical and semantic analysis (Titscher et al., 2000; Fairclough 2003) to develop a coding scheme that moved across and highlighted issues of hybridity, ideology, authorship, modality, evaluation, and mood.

For example, I developed codes indicating whether teachers were making evaluations through adjectives, noun phrases, processes, exclamations, and/or discourse-relative statements. Such codes helped me to mark the implicit values that teachers communicated when engaging in evaluative statements about their own or others’ teaching. Similarly, I developed codes to mark teachers’ choices of modal verbs or modal adverbials in their talk about their teaching or during

teaching. An analysis of modality allowed me to better highlight teachers' commitments to and assumptions about themselves and their classrooms (Fairclough 2003). At times, I also chose to broaden my focus to a more conversation-level analysis — to look, for instance for evidence of “White talk” in our collaborative meetings (McIntyre, 1997). See Appendix A-1 for an example of the codes used for my individual analyses as well as my collaborative analysis with Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma.

Ethical Considerations

This dissertation posed numerous ethical questions. In the spirit of PAR and of the post-structuralist theories that framed this research, I worked to reveal and engage those ethical questions, explicitly asking Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma to join me in considering the ethical consequences of our work. For example, from the very beginning of our collaboration, the teachers and I considered the effects of our research on their high school students of Color. While our long-term goal was to deepen our own understanding of Whiteness and the harmful effects of Whiteness in classrooms, we never considered such a process to be linear or to be marked by uniform “progress”. In other words, the teachers and I talked about the ways that a commitment to long-term growth and change did not necessarily prioritize students' most immediate needs.

Throughout our work together, therefore, Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I struggled with the harm that this research brought to students of Color. I understand the teenage students of Color with whom Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma worked as vulnerable -- albeit complex, resilient, strategic, and agentic -- people whose experiences and needs had been largely exploited and ignored by a public school system intended to serve (and control) them. My own commitment to

engage in research with White women teachers was a commitment to White female teachers' long-term development and the growth of a critical self-consciousness informed by understandings of power and Whiteness. I framed my work as — uncomfortably — more responsible to the consciousness that these teachers might cultivate over time than to mitigating the immediate violence that their Whiteness brought to classrooms and students of Color.

For example, early in our work together Amy expressed a desire to “have a conversation with [her] students about what it feels like for them to have a White teacher.” Amy talked about the ways this research project was pushing her to think differently about her own identity — and said that she thought her students' insights would “help her in that thinking”. While I was uncomfortable with the idea of such a discussion, I did not (at first) explicitly share the extent of my discomfort with Amy. I initially talked vaguely about my concerns regarding such a meeting and asked questions that I hoped would push Amy to reconsider: “What's your goal in that conversation? Who would benefit?” I asked. “What do you think that might be like for your students? What kind of position might that put them in?”

It was not until Amy began officially organizing such a conversation that I explicitly voiced my concerns and opinion. I told Amy that I was deeply worried that such a conversation would put an undo and painful burden on Amy's students of Color. Rather than take responsibility for the complex and challenging task of examining her own Whiteness and the consequences of that Whiteness, Amy effectively wanted to ask her students to do that work and analysis for her. While I agreed that it was deeply important for students to have the chance talk about their experiences and to share their invaluable insights with each other, it seemed unfair to ask students of Color to do so in the presence of their White teacher. “Is there a way for students to do this with a teacher of Color?” I asked. “It seems like this conversation is intended to benefit

you. Is there a way where this conversation could be for students' benefit?". Amy was open to my questions and eventually decided not to lead such a conversation with her students.

While the above example demonstrates an instance in which I felt — in some ways — able to mitigate and disrupt the potential effects of this project on students of Color, there were numerous instances when I was not able to do this. There were also, of course, instances when I was not (or am still not) aware of the harm that this project inflicted on students of Color. I look back on conversations, comments, and teaching choices in which I participated and cringe: I remain deeply regretful and profoundly unsettled by many of the choices that the teachers and I made. However, I did not enter this dissertation with the illusion that our work would somehow magically exist outside of the discourses of White supremacy and racism. I knew we would cause harm — and yet I also knew that critical engagement might be one of the only ways to disrupt or seek out “fissures” (Applebaum, 2010, p. 191) in the workings of Whiteness.

Throughout this project, I also struggled with my own ethical allegiances to Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma as research participants. The incarnation of PAR that I cultivated in this dissertation is necessarily specific to the work of researching “up” (Nader, 1969) — and therefore proposes a unique ethical question that demands a nuanced engagement with and understanding of power: If the communities we study are not marginalized — but are in fact marginalizing, as in the case of this study — where does our ethical responsibility lie? My engagement with this question led me back to my own motivations for initiating in this study: I wanted to explore White teachers' subjectivities and understandings of Whiteness because of the kinds of violence that I understood my own and other White teachers' Whiteness as doing on and to students of Color. At the broadest level, then, I understood my ethical responsibility throughout this dissertation as most fundamentally tied to reducing that violence.

I understand many of the cultural norms of the White women with whom I conducted this research to be deeply violent and harmful— after all, the racialized norms according to which Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma conduct their lives are embedded within and fundamental to Whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993). As a result, I understood the disruption of those norms as essential to my work: Working to violate the “codes of Whiteness” was necessary to critically understanding and visualizing the effects of Whiteness in classrooms. While LeCompte (2015) -- and numerous post-positivist scholars of research ethics (e.g. Scheper-Hughes, 1995; Whiteford & Trotter, 2008) -- argue that researchers should “privilege the sensibilities of community participants over their own customary practices and scientific or academic needs,” (p. 52) I understood my own research context and goal as demanding violations of the “sensibilities” of my White participants. Many if not all of Emma, Kylie, Kim, and Amy’s “sensibilities” are reflected in my own experiences and cultural norms as a White woman and former teacher; the very “sensibilities” I sought to violate were often my “own”. Together, we worked to violate our “sensibilities of Whiteness” by engaging in explicit — and often uncomfortable — conversations that critiqued Whiteness itself.

At the same time, I also grappled with the ways that I was – and in many ways continue to be – responsible for the wellbeing of the White women teachers with whom I conducted this research. Certainly Amy, Emma, Kylie, and Kim’s Whiteness positions them in fundamentally powerful and safe ways; the world is already committed to White women’s safety and wellbeing. However, this dissertation also provoked profound turmoil in each teacher’s life: Over the course of our year together and in light of the insights and conclusions we drew all of the teachers considered leaving their current teaching contexts. By the end of the year, two of the four teachers decided to leave their schools in order to seek out classrooms in which they felt

their Whiteness might do less harm. My relationships with Emma, Kylie, Kim, and Amy are ongoing and I continue to feel responsible for the significant changes and disruptions – no matter how necessary or generative – that our work provoked. I work to balance my sense of responsibility for Emma, Kylie, Kim, and Amy’s individual lives and choices with my foremost responsibility to engage the violent effects and consequences of Whiteness.

Research Questions

This dissertation works to connect disparate bodies of empirical and theoretical work in an effort to explicate new understandings of Whiteness in classrooms. This research is a challenge to most empirical research on Whiteness that either enacts a narrow conception of Whiteness as little more than a collection of stereotypes, assumptions, biases, and unconscious beliefs about people of Color, or assumes that Whiteness is something that can be overcome or surmounted via particular steps, practices, or insights. Through this dissertation, I offer the framework of harm reduction as a generative re-imagining of the possibilities of White teachers teaching students of Color.

This study pushes back against these simplistic framings of Whiteness by drawing on Britzman (2003), Alsup (2006), and Evans' (2002) post-structuralist framing of subjectivity and teacher identity — and working to apply such a post-structuralist frame to an analysis of Whiteness and White teachers. In doing so, I position the work of critically negotiating Whiteness at the site of collaborative analysis: Rather than centering the work of challenging Whiteness and White supremacy on a teacher's perception of a racialized "other," this research re-centers White teachers' understandings of Whiteness and our shared discourses of Whiteness.

In an effort to explore White female teachers' understanding of Whiteness and the consequences of those understandings, I -- in collaboration with Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma -- launched this research project from the seed of the following research questions:

How do White female teachers understand, enact, and negotiate Whiteness in their majority-student-of-color classrooms? What are White female teachers' ideological frameworks for understanding power and Whiteness in their classrooms? How are those frameworks

discursively enacted and sustained their classrooms? How might a harm reduction framework reorganize White teachers' understandings of and relationship to Whiteness?

How can we support White female teachers in critically engaging with Whiteness and what are the markers of that critical engagement? What is the role of harm reduction in supporting critical engagement with Whiteness? What ways of understanding power and Whiteness offer White female teachers opportunities to critically engage with Whiteness?

Findings Overview

At the end of our first research meeting, I asked Amy, Emma, Kylie, and Kim how they wanted me to document our meeting. I had audio recorded the meeting but knew that sending out a 90-page transcript of our conversation would be overwhelming and would not help the teachers to reflect on the ideas we surfaced in our initial meeting. Emma suggested that I send out a list of questions: “It seems like most of what we did is surface the things we want to think and learn more about,” she said. “Maybe synthesize those into a list of questions and send those out to us?”.

I followed Emma’s suggestion. After our first meeting, I sat at a cafe with a pair of bulky headphones and listened back to the audio recording of our first meeting. I wrote down — sometimes verbatim and sometimes synthesizing ideas and putting them into my own words — a list of questions that the teachers and I had generated and sent them out in an email to Amy, Emma, Kylie, and Kim.

At our second meeting, the teachers and I returned to this — rather overwhelming — list of questions and began to sort them into categories. The upcoming four title chapters mirror those initial categories: **difference**, **connection**, **control**, and **power**. As the teachers and I progressed in our work and moved on to more nuanced approaches to coding and analyzing transcripts, we continued to rely on these four categories or “buckets” to organize and guide our thinking.

Although I have organized the following chapters into these four categories it is important to note that these four categories are not discrete: Ideas and insights bleed and build across chapters. At the same time, this organization does not represent the full complexity of the ideas that Amy, Emma, Kylie, Kim, and I explored. Woven throughout these four chapters are

other themes, insights, and frameworks: Critical Whiteness and the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness, of course, but also critical understandings of discourse and subjectivity, and the interconnected and mutually constitutive relationships between language and race as well as race and gender.

I could have organized these chapters — “sliced” or represented our analysis — in any number of different ways. However, I chose to represent these chapters in ways that acknowledge the organization and structure of our collaborative analysis. Similarly, I have chosen to organize each chapter in ways that represent the arc and trajectory of our collaborative work. I begin each chapter with an overview of the teachers’ — and my own — initial discourse regarding a particular concept: For example, our initial talk about the concept of control in teachers’ classrooms, the ways we embodied and animated that understanding of control in classrooms, and the ways we initially reflected on and justified those understandings and actions. I then explore the ways that the teachers and I cultivated a suspicion of that discourse and worked to see Whiteness embedded and “at-work” (Yoon, 2012) within that discourse: the ways that our discourses sustained the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness.

In tracing the arc of our collaborative analysis, I focus primarily on the changing insights, discourses, and perspectives that that Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I embody, and less on the nuances of our collaborative process — on *how* Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I shifted our thinking. Our collaborative process was deeply complex and tangled, filled with “fits and starts,” (Martin & Mohanty, 1986, p. 206) contradictions and frustrations. The details of our collective process are largely impossible for me to represent as a single author — rather, that is a story that I hope Amy, Kylie, Kim, and I tell together. It is a story that demands each of our own voices and perspectives in equal measure and it is a narrative that is still unfolding — one I hope we will

work together to share one day.

It is important to note that I frequently use the pronoun “we” in the following chapters. I do this for a variety of reasons: First, rather than refer to the insights or experiences that the teachers’ explored as “theirs” or as belonging exclusively to any individual teacher, I work to frame our insights and experiences as simultaneously individual and collective. This is not because the teachers did not have unique or differing experiences, insights, or opinions. Rather, I often use “we” in order to highlight a fundamental orientation of this project: We framed the discourses of Whiteness as reaching across and constituting individual experiences and subjectivities. In other words, each of us — as White women teachers, or in my case, a former White woman teacher — were and are constituted by the discourses of Whiteness. In organizing the following chapters, I focused on the insights that were consistent across our subjectivities and experiences, and that helped all of us to think more deeply and critically about the consequences and effects of Whiteness across individual bodies or contexts.

My use of “we” also mirrors one of the fundamental agreements that the teachers and I made at the beginning of our work together: We agreed to acknowledge and highlight the ways that any one of our experiences or insights reflected and offered insight into all of our subjectivities and experiences. Rather than individualize our discourses — attribute our ways of being to “individuality” or the specificity of our lives or contexts — we choose to focus on the ways that we were all constituted by the same discourses. Any individual insight, then, could shed light on all of our experiences, discourses, and subjectivities. This allowed us to learn from each other’s insights and to take collective responsibility for each other’s behaviors and discourses. In other words, this allowed us to be vulnerable and to work together.

Lastly, my frequent use of “we” reflects the participatory and collaborative organization

of this project. I made no attempt to remain objective or “outside of” the insights we developed. I thought with Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma. However, while I use the word “we” I do rely mainly on quotes of the teachers’ talk and teaching — rather than quotes of my own talk during our meetings, interviews or in the teachers’ classrooms. After all, my own voice and experiences are already (overly) represented and embedded throughout this text.

Findings Part 1: Difference

“And what does it mean to be different? Because all difference doesn’t matter the same way. Some difference is injustice. And do I have the- something- I don’t know what, to say that in my classroom and to let that be true in my classroom?”

- Kylie

One of the main themes that emerged in our research focused on difference — and the ways Amy, Kylie, Emma, and Kim embodied and understood the relationships between difference, Whiteness, connection, and power in their classrooms and, as part of that, within themselves. Early in our research, all four teachers acknowledged that they were “different” from their students of Color: The teachers talked about differences in their racialized and classed subjectivities, as well as their age and gender. All four teachers acknowledged that such differences meant they often struggled to understand their students’ experiences and were therefore sometimes ill-equipped to respond to students’ needs.

Over the course of our research, however, the teachers moved to deeper analyses and critiques of their discourse regarding difference. Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I worked to see Whiteness embedded within and constitutive of our very conceptions of difference and the consequences of those conceptions for teaching. The teachers and I focused on two particular facets of our discourse regarding difference in classrooms: 1) The ways that Amy, Emma, Kylie, and Kim worked to divorce difference from power and therefore harmful consequence; and 2) the ways that Amy, Emma, Kylie, and Kim framed difference as a temporary and therefore surmountable barrier to connection with students of Color. I examine each of these insights below.

Initial Understandings: Difference Divorced from Whiteness and Power

Throughout our research, Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma and I spent a great deal of time analyzing the ways and degree to which each teacher talked about her own life and subjectivity with her students. For instance, at one of our first research meetings, I asked Emma, Amy, Kylie, and Kim how — and if — they talked about their own schooling experiences with their students: “Do you talk about your high school experiences and what your high school was like?” I asked. “Do you talk about the ways that the high school you went to was different from where you teach now?”.

Similarly, I asked all four teachers about the degree to which they shared or revealed parts of their current personal lives to their students — particularly those parts that indexed the differences between their own subjectivities and experiences and their students’. On various occasions, Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma and I explored the ways that they each talked about the cars they drove, their neighborhoods, family histories, travel experiences, romantic relationships, and food preferences and habits with their students. At the root of this focus was a desire to examine how and if the teachers acknowledged – or resisted acknowledging – the power-laden differences between our own lives and subjectivities and those of their students.

Over the course of our research, the teachers and I came to acknowledge the nuanced discursive moves they often made to simultaneously acknowledge difference even as they denied the power-laden consequences and causes of those differences. The teachers noted the ways that they were willing to acknowledge certain differences (color preferences or height, for example) but resistant to acknowledging differences that indexed injustice or inequity — in other words, power.

For instance, in the extended exchange below which took place in early November 2016, Amy led a whole-class conversation about the impending presidential election. Amy and her

students sat in chairs loosely clustered into a circle. The conversation was quite open-ended and took place during an advisory period when Amy encouraged students to speak frankly and share their concerns and feelings about the election. At one point, students began talking about their own and their families' experiences with the U.S. immigration systems. Many students talked about their struggles and fears as undocumented students. Students began asking questions about the process and cost of obtaining legal documentation to live and work in the United States — a process that weighed heavily on many students' minds. Amy responded to the students' questions and invoked her own experiences as an immigrant from Canada. In what follows, she speaks with three students, Santiago, Carlos, and Jabree as the rest of the class listens:

Amy: So I think that's a excellent point. So to become a citizen you have to pay I think it's almost 700 dollars-

Carlos: Yup.

Amy: You have to take time off work to go take a test. Like a citizenship exam.

Carlos: It took years.

Amy: You have to pay that money. A lot of people pay a lawyer- like about 1000 dollars to fill out all the information because the information itself is really complicated. I started the process for filling that stuff out and then realized that that was a lot of money for me and I was like 'Uh I'm gonna have to do this next year'. Right? [I'm] doing my master's right now. Costs money. I just don't have that [money] to throw around very easily even though originally I was like 'Oh I wanna be able to to vote for a woman president in this election'. But it's also a really long process.

Santiago: We know you're really good.

Amy: It's- it's all- hmmm. I think by some- by some standards I would definitely say yup I am well off. I would- I don't- I personally don't consider myself rich but I can see how other people would think that.

Santiago: You drive a Subaru.

Amy: No I don't. I sold it.

Santiago: You sold it? Why you sell it?

Amy: I got my dad's old car now. Yeah.

Santiago: Why?

Amy: Cause it didn't cost me money. I didn't have to pay it off.

Santiago: How much did you sell it for? You probably sell it for hella cheap.

Amy: Yeah, somebody had a comment?

Jabree: So you have papers?

Amy: I do- I got a green card. That's a great question. I got my green card after 7 years of fighting for it through my dad. So my dad's company they're the one that hired and moved my family here. It took 7 years to get the papers cause at that time it was immigration- they weren't letting a ton of people immigrate for work.

The above exchange reveals a series of discursive moves on Amy's part — moves that seemingly sidestep the workings of power to shape her own and her students' differing experiences and subjectivities. Amy initially acknowledges the ways that class shapes individuals' immigration experiences: Those with money and the freedom to “take time off of work” are more able to engage in the process of gaining citizenship. Immediately, however, Amy reflects on her own immigration experience and references her own financial situation as a barrier to the process of obtaining citizenship. Amy claims that she “just d[oesn't] have that [money] to throw around very easily” because she is currently paying for enrollment in a master's program.

Certainly the picture that Amy paints of her own financial situation and immigration status reflects her own experience: Amy talked to me on several occasions about the financial

strain she felt as a teacher in the City of Township — the city has quite a high cost of living and pays its teachers relatively little — and the ways that her financial situation painted an uncomfortably stark contrast with that of her parents and sister.

At the same time, however, the representation that Amy offers her students is deeply curated and reflects only fragments of a larger, more complex and power-laden story. Not only is Amy's financial situation significantly more privileged than that of her students (as Santiago immediately points out), but her Whiteness has and will continue to serve as a buffer, uniquely protecting Amy from the consequences of not being a US "citizen" (Martinot, 2010). Amy frames her desire to spend the money necessary to becoming a citizen as rooted in a desire to "vote for a woman president". For Amy, the work of becoming a citizen is not propelled by a need for immediate safety or basic security. Rather, becoming a citizen — which Amy flippantly frames as "throwing money around" — is about a desire to vote for a woman.

Santiago pushes back against Amy's framing of her own financial situation — and, implicitly, the parallels she has drawn between her own experience and that of her students. In a sense, Santiago rejects the propositional assumption (Fairclough, 2003) or interpretation Amy has offered of her own experience: "We know you're really good," he says, holding up a two fingers and rubbing them together as if to indicate money. We might understand Santiago's comment as referring only to Amy's financial situation — rejecting her claim that she does not have the money necessary to become a citizen. However, we can also understand Santiago's statement as a rejection of Amy's claim of broader similarity: She frames her own immigration situation as in some ways relevant or similar to the stories and struggles that students share. Santiago's interjection, however, served to push Amy to acknowledge difference — as opposed to equivalence (Fairclough, 2003) — rooted in her financial security and in Whiteness.

Amy responds by equivocating: Simultaneously acknowledging that “others” might understand her as “well off” but that she doesn’t consider herself “rich”. In this moment Amy acknowledges the potential for difference between her own reality and that of her students, but does not claim that difference as constitutive of experience or subjectivity — as framing how she understands and experiences herself and her students and as well as how students understand and experience themselves and Amy. Santiago responds by immediately referencing Amy’s car as evidence of her financial privilege, and thus, difference. He refuses to legitimate (Fairclough, 2003) Amy’s experience of herself: “You drive a Subaru,” he says, pointing out the ways that her very car indexes a class stability and privilege that her students do not have.

The ensuing exchange — in which Amy says that she sold her Subaru and now drives her father’s car and Santiago responds by assuming that Amy sold her Subaru for an insufficient amount of money — serves only to underscore Santiago’s point and Amy’s resistance to claiming or naming the power-laden roots and consequences of difference. Amy responds superficially to Santiago’s comment about her car. She does not address his fundamental point — that Amy’s class privilege and Whiteness shape the nature of her immigration experience in profound ways that differ from the experiences and subjectivities of her students. Rather, Amy points out that she no longer drives a Subaru but instead drives her “dad’s old car” — which, interestingly, further indexes a family-based class privilege.

Santiago eventually makes a statement assuming that Amy sold her Subaru for “hella cheap”. In this moment, Santiago seems to build on his previous claims that Amy’s financial situation is “really good” because she is able to sell the car for “hella cheap”. Santiago looks Amy right in the eye when he makes this claim, putting emphasis on the word “you”: “*You* probably sell it for hella cheap” he says accusatorially, implying that he or his fellow students

would have — perhaps as a result of necessity — sold the car for more.

Thus far, Amy's exchange with students focused on the ways that she resisted acknowledging and naming difference and more specifically, the ways that her own Whiteness and related class privilege shaped the nature of her immigration experience. The end of the above exchange, however, exemplifies the limited ways that Amy does acknowledge and name difference — even as she avoids acknowledging or naming the ways that such difference is rooted in power and Whiteness.

Seemingly uncomfortable in her exchange with Santiago, Amy asked for other comments. Jabree responds by clarifying one of the most concrete differences between Amy's immigration experience and that of many students in the room. Amy has “papers”: She has always been a documented immigrant and currently has a green card. Amy willingly acknowledges this difference, pointing out that Jabree's question is important. Immediately, however, Amy qualifies this acknowledgment of difference by invoking her own “fight” to get a green card.

Interestingly, the very mechanisms that allowed Amy to “fight” for a green card are rooted in her subjectivity: Both Whiteness and class privilege shaped and continue to shape the nature of her immigration. Amy was able to immigrate legally and obtain a green card because of her father's high-paying job and Canadian citizenship — and of course, Whiteness was fundamental to both her father's ability to secure and maintain such a position as well as the laws that structure immigration policy from Canada (Martinot, 2010).

Throughout her exchange with Santiago and Carlos, Amy works to represent a kind of equivalence between her own and her students' experiences — particularly with regard to experiences that index power or Whiteness. While Amy is willing to acknowledge some

difference between her own and her students' experiences, she nonetheless works to qualify those differences by invoking her own struggles and challenges.

This exchange demonstrates an ongoing tension that existed in Amy's classroom — as well as Kylie, Kim, and Emma's classrooms: Students regularly pushed their teachers to acknowledge difference — and more specifically, to name power or Whiteness as a part of that difference — and the teachers typically resisted this pressure. Just as Amy resisted acknowledging difference in the above example, Kim resisted naming the ways that her own hobbies (Kim often went to a rock climbing gym) and eating habits (Kim was a vegetarian and had previously been a vegan) were different from her students' and indexed power, privilege, and Whiteness.

Even as students often implicitly asked Emma, Kylie, Kim, or Amy to connect their subjectivity and Whiteness to the construction of that difference — to name the how such difference came to be and how it was sustained — the teachers often resisted such requests by focusing on relatively power-neutral manifestations of difference or by pointedly resisting the request to frame their Whiteness as constitutive of difference. As our work progressed, the teachers and I began to analyze this pattern and as well as their responses to students' implicit requests — or insistence — that they name difference in ways that acknowledged Whiteness and power.

Acknowledging difference is “salt in the wound”. In response to our analyses of our discourse regarding difference – we collectively analyzed the extended exchange between Amy, Jabree, and Santiago as well as other similar exchanges -- Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma voiced concerns about the potential effects of naming difference in their classrooms. More specifically,

the teachers questioned the effects that acknowledging power-laden difference marked by inequity and injustice might have on students of Color.

One of the main tensions at work in our conversations centered in the teachers' concern that they would, as Kim put it, "rub inequity in students' faces". The teachers often discussed how they wanted to relate to difference when students did not explicitly request that they do so — or when students did not push the teachers to acknowledge the connection between Whiteness and the construction of difference. In these instances, like the example below, the teachers often wondered if, by pointing out power-laden difference — essentially pointing out injustice and inequity — they were forcing students to explicitly engage with a painful reality in ways that were unhelpful or harmful.

For example, at various points in my classroom observations, Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma each talked to their students about their own schooling experiences. During our debrief, each teacher later wondered how to represent the significant differences between and injustices inherent in their own high school experiences and those of their students. In talking about their high school experiences to students, each teacher acknowledged the fact of difference — that they had attended a well-resourced school that served almost exclusively White students — but often ignored the reasons behind or consequences of that difference: the ways that Whiteness affected schools' financial resources (Vaught, 2008) and in turn shaped the opportunities that their high schools afforded them.

During one of my first observations in Kim's classroom, Kim introduced me to her leadership class of 60 students and asked me to provide an overview of our research project. Students were curious and immediately asked Kim to talk about why she had decided to participate in the project. Kim's response is wide-ranging. She talked about how easy it is as a

White person to succumb to a desire for comfort and assume that “I’m not racist” and how she wanted to “feel uncomfortable” and “challenge herself” so that she could be a better teacher. Eventually, Kim starts talking about her own high school experiences and the ways that the research project brought those experiences into stark contrast with those of her students:

And it comes into play in leadership class sometimes cause you guys just asked me, “What event did you do at your high school that you want to do at this one?”. And for me, at a high school that was almost all White- like 100% of the students were White and then Hurricane Katrina happened in New Orleans and we got like ten African-American students and it was huge. It was like a school of about as many people as you guys have, 1600, and now we have ten African-American students and we're like “Whoa, that's different!”. Cause it was all White. So some events that we did at my school wouldn't work at this school. Like you guys would think that they were really pathetic. And then some of the events that you guys do, like just putting on a boom box and having you guys dance, that would never happen at my school. And it's because you guys are like- the cultures are different, right? It's just like you guys have more spirit and like you don't care- not everybody- but you're like “Whatever, I don't care about embarrassing myself! I dance awesome!”. Whereas I'd have been like “Oh my god I'd rather die than go in that circle!”. I'm looking at Sara and Ana cause they're always the ones starting the dance circle.

In working to explain why she chose to participate in a research project exploring Whiteness and teacher subjectivity, Kim chose to focus partially on the reality of difference between her own schooling experiences and those of her students — and the consequences of that difference for her teaching at Wealton. Kim acknowledges that the school she went to was “almost all White.” However, Kim does not name or address how that came to be or the consequences of the White

student demographics for the school's budget, course offerings, community standing, or reputation — all fundamental aspects of a school's identity that are often tied to student and community demographics and, more specifically, to Whiteness (Gilborn, 2005; Harris, 1993; Vaught, 2008).

Kim then briefly mentions that, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, “ten African-American students” began attending her school. In narrating her own and other White students' responses to those “ten African-American students” Kim merely notes that White students acknowledged racial difference — “Whoa that's different!” — but does not explore the deeply harmful and racialized consequences of that difference. At other times, Kim spoke to me about how the influx of ten African-American students in the wake of Katrina had surfaced the entrenched racism at her high school — and pushed Kim to think differently about racism at her high school and to question why and how her school had previously been so White.

Kim immediately moves on to address some of the ways that her own school “culture” was different than the “culture” at Wealton. The nature of the difference that Kim acknowledges — that students relate “differently” to school “events” and to “dancing”, in particular — are relatively power-neutral. Those differences do not index any of the deeply consequential and potentially painful differences between Kim's well-resourced, high-achieving, reputable, and all-White high school and Wealton — differences that are constituted by Whiteness (Gilborn, 2005; Harris, 1993; Vaught, 2008). In other words, even as Kim acknowledges difference, she avoids invoking the many power-laden and inequitable differences that were the focus of many of Kim's questions and struggles as a White teacher (and in many ways propelled her to participate in our research project).

Just as Amy worked to avoid acknowledging power-laden difference in her exchange

about her own immigration experiences, so too did Kim work to avoid acknowledging difference in talking about her own schooling experiences. In reflecting on and analyzing these exchanges — and the logics and ideologies behind their choices — Kim, Amy, Kylie, and Emma often talked about the ways that students of color “already know about injustice”. The teachers often claimed that calling out or naming the power-laden consequences and roots of difference would cause further harm to students of Color. In reflecting on the example above, Kim wondered: “Wouldn’t it just be more painful and harmful if I talked about all the things that my school had like a swimming pool and tons of AP classes that they don’t have here? Would that really be helpful? Wouldn’t that just be salt on the wound?”.

Throughout our initial conversations, the teachers relied on this reasoning to justify their decisions not to acknowledge or name power-laden differences in their exchanges with students of Color. Kim chose not to name or acknowledge the injustices that separated her own high school experiences from those of her students — because she did not want to put “salt on the wound” of that injustice. Even as students of Color often — explicitly or implicitly — requested such acknowledgement, the teachers typically did not name such differences in the context of their classrooms. In justifying these choices to themselves, to each other, and to me the teachers regularly invoked their concern that naming difference would be needlessly painful for students of Color.

Cultivating Suspicion: Difference and Connection

Through our discourse analyses and collective reflection, the teachers came to question their discourse regarding difference: to critique their resistance to naming the realities of power-laden difference in classrooms as well as the justifications they offered for that choice. More

specifically, the teachers and I came to name and question the underlying ideologies that allowed and facilitated their discourse regarding difference. The teachers acknowledged that they framed difference as something to be erased, avoided, or overcome — and as something that *could be* erase, avoided, or overcome in ways that they imagined would protect students of Color from the pain of injustice.

Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma came to acknowledge that their discourse framed the avoidances or erasure of difference as necessary to the work of teaching and “connecting” with students: In order to build relationships with students, the teachers felt the need to erase or obscure the power-laden differences that constituted their classrooms. Rather than understand power-laden difference as a fundamental reality that constituted their classrooms and connections with students, the teachers acknowledged that they often sought to avoid engagement with difference in and through their classroom discourse.

For example, as the teachers began to analyze and critique their discourse regarding difference, Amy recalled an experience from early in her teaching career when she “struggled to make a relationship” with a particular student. Amy referenced this experience as an example of her discourse regarding difference — and more specifically as exemplifying her own assumption that it was possible and necessary to erase difference in order to create connections with students of Color. In what follows, Amy narrates her experience of working to develop a relationship with Andrew, a 7th grade African-American student:

I remember I just cried and I felt very powerless because I couldn't build a relationship with this kid. And like I remember- I went home and I scoured my bookshelves for something that I could bring to him to be like, "Let's build a bridge. Like anything..." But it was that fear that if I can't connect

to you, an African-American student, I don't have any power. Like if I have no relationship with your family, which I didn't, I had very little relationship with his family, there was nothing that I could pull. Like I had no pull. I felt no similarity to draw on. And as a teacher I rely- or I relied on relationships built on similarity.

Amy's narration of her struggles to support Andrew reflect an acknowledgement of her own discourse regarding difference and connection. Amy names that she saw the ways in which she was different from Andrew as an impediment to relationship-building. Amy assumed that difference meant that she had no "control" over Andrew and therefore had "nothing that [she could] pull". As result, Amy sought similarities — "bridges" — so that she could "connect" to Andrew and build a relationship. According to this understanding, difference was something that needed to and could be overcome or eased — via "bridges" and a focus on "similarity" — in order to build a relationship. Just like Amy, each of the teachers shared a similar analysis of their initial relationship to difference: They acknowledged seeing difference as something that should — and could — be overcome in the pursuit of necessary relationship-building.

Within our analysis of our discourse regarding difference, the teachers talked specifically about their resistance to acknowledging Whiteness as constitutive of difference. The teachers discussed the ways that they often noticed themselves trying to avoid talking about Whiteness in an effort to build a "bridge" of "similarity" and thus a relationship with a student of Color. For instance, in the exchange below Emma talked to me about the ways she noticed herself communicating with students and the degree to which she relied on constructing and naming similarity — particularly with regard to personal struggles or "bad experiences" — as a way to avoid acknowledging Whiteness and the realities of power:

Emma: I think... I noticed how many times I like would say something [to students] to try to establish a connection.

Julia: What do you mean by that?

Emma: And sometimes it's actually just establishing like I've experienced hardship too.

Julia: Uh huh. So by 'connection' you mean like shared something?

Emma: Yeah. And often I realize- I'm starting to be more aware of how often I do it when it's not the greatest thing.

Julia: Would that-

Emma: Like "I eat at home with my family too!!!" You know-

Julia: Interesting. So I have some shared knowledge of some bad thing?

Emma: Or bad experience, yeah.

Julia: Yeah.

Emma: So, how do I- or how am I portraying Whiteness in my classroom? Which came up really strong in one of our research meetings through a conversation that you and I had. I play down my experiences as a White person with students. I was like, why was I doing that? Cause I believed that I needed to connect with my students, and so you know, when you try to connect with people, you try to play down- or at the time I was thinking I need to play down our differences. When really in actuality a much more honest relationship is like no, we are different. Yeah maybe I don't want to name it because I think it will hurt students but I think really it's for me.

In this exchange, Emma expresses suspicion regarding her desire to establish similarity with students. She states that such a desire was “not the greatest thing” — specifically because Emma imagined centering similarity as a strategy meant to obscure and “invizibilize” the realities of Whiteness and difference. Emma explicitly noted that she tried to “play down” differences by avoiding conversations about her experiences “as a White person”. Emma goes on to acknowledge that while she told herself that she “didn't want to name [difference]” because she

was afraid of “hurting students,” she now questions the validity of this reasoning: Emma acknowledges that obscuring and ignoring difference served first and foremost to protect and preserve Whiteness by rendering Whiteness invisible or “unsayable” (Foucault, 1997) in the context of her classroom.

All four teachers cultivated a similar suspicion of their discourse regarding difference. Rather than trust their initial reasoning — that naming difference would only further harm students of Color — the teachers questioned the ways that avoiding difference in fact served to protect themselves and Whiteness more broadly: Avoiding difference allowed Whiteness to remain unnamed even as it constituted the realities of their classrooms. Put another way, the teachers acknowledged and critiqued the ways that they had previously understood Whiteness as something that could be rendered invisible — or less visible — via an avoidance of difference.

Difference and Whiteness

Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma struggled to consider how they wanted to represent and think about power-laden and inequitable differences between themselves and their students. As we continued our analyses, the teachers lost confidence in their own understandings of and tendencies with regard to difference. Even as they worried that acknowledging difference might be “salt in the wound” they also acknowledged the ways in which obscuring difference served to further “invizibilize” (Lipsitz, 1998) Whiteness in ways that only solidified and furthered inequity (Applebaum, 2010; Leonardo, 2009; Thompson, 2010). In addition to these competing concerns, all four teachers regularly voiced a distrust of themselves and their own sense-making as a result of Whiteness. This distrust seemed deeply connected to the teachers’ understandings of Whiteness and the ways in which they acknowledged that Whiteness shaped the nature of their

subjectivity and thus, their sense-making with regard to difference in the world and in their classrooms.

In the exchange below, Kylie talked about her own struggles as she reflected on her discourse with regard to difference in her classroom:

Kylie: I've been starting to think about this more especially in light of spirit week last week, where I'm like, "I wear pajamas and like I can dress up and be silly." Like a lot of the students are always like, "How do you got all these costumes? You're like a teenager!" And like I just was making jokes about having my dinosaur pajamas before building up to the day. And I- In a similar way that I want to give students license to be silly and play. Like I was trying to be like, "Oh, you guys be silly too. You guys be kids too. I can be silly too."

Julia: Yeah.

Kylie: But really I'm struggling now with this connect. Like why do I want to have these connections? Is it for me to feel good? Or is it for the purpose of I think you can't teach people without a connection?

Kylie narrates a complex process in which she works to construct and name similarity. Kylie dressed up in "dinosaur pajamas" and tried to be "silly" in an effort to be "similar" to the way her students might "be silly and play". Immediately, however, Kylie notes that she is "struggling" as she reflects on this desire to construct similarity. Kylie wonders what such a constructed similarity — and the "connection" that she imagines such similarity facilitates — serves to do: Kylie wonders if this construction might not actually serve to benefit her students and might in fact serve only to make herself "feel good" by "invizibilizing" (Lipsitz, 1998) difference and thus Whiteness.

The questions that Kylie asked herself at the end of this exchange exemplify many of the

questions that I heard each teacher voice over the course of our collaboration. Particularly as the teachers analyzed their own discourse with regard to difference – pointing instances in which they used passive sentence constructions in order to erase or avoid their own role as social actors (Fairclough, 2003), for example -- they began to question the motives behind and the effects of that discourse, rarely trusting that any one claim or conclusion could be “true” or complete. In other words, just as Kylie questioned whether or not her desire to for a certain kind of “connection” in fact served students, so did other teachers wonder if their resistance to acknowledging difference — or assumption that not acknowledging difference would in some way protect students of Color — was rooted in Whiteness. The teachers questioned the ways that their discourse regarding difference in fact sustained and facilitated the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness by protecting or sustaining the constructed invisibility (Applebaum, 2010; Leonardo, 2009; Lipsitz, 1998; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness and power-laden difference.

As we continued our analyses, the teachers reflected on the ways that Whiteness was “at-work” (Yoon, 2012) within their discourse regarding difference: working to render Whiteness itself invisible or “unsayable” (Foucault, 1997) within their classrooms. During one of our final research meetings, the teachers and I talked about the effects of their resistance to acknowledging Whiteness and power: The ways that such a discourse denied the existence of forces that perpetuated injustice and shaped their own and their students’ lives. “I’m denying a truth,” Amy said. “I’m basically saying to students ‘You can’t- I won’t let you and I refuse to name this thing that this is real and that makes me different from you and shapes our lives.’ That is a violence.” In effect, Amy names the ways that preserving and sustaining the process of Whiteness violently denies the realities of students’ experiences.

In critiquing and analyzing the arc of our discourse regarding difference, Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma came to acknowledge and to name a(nother) harmful effect of their Whiteness — beyond their earlier acknowledgment that Whiteness produced harms related to representation, stereotypes, and double consciousness. The teachers acknowledged that their discourse preserved Whiteness and “stabilized” (Hall, 1996) existing constellations of power even as it also refused to engage with the consequences of those constellations of power for students’ lives: the ways that Whiteness produced inequity and injustice. In other words, in refusing to acknowledge and to name — to make “sayable” (Foucault, 1997) — the realities of Whiteness, the teachers preserved the constructed invisibility (Applebaum, 2010; Leonardo, 2009; Lipsitz, 1998; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness itself and denied students of Color the opportunity to have their realities engaged, legitimized, and named in classrooms.

Findings Part 2: Connection

“I’m wondering what our ideas about connection and connecting with students are hiding. Because it’s never simple. It has to serve us. It always does. I’m seeing that that’s the way Whiteness works.”

— Amy

As the teachers and I engaged in ongoing conversations about difference, we began to talk explicitly about the kinds of relationships — what the teachers called “connections” — that Amy, Kylie, Kim and Emma built with students of Color in their classrooms. The teachers often spoke about cultivating or expanding their connections with particular students or about the effects of those connections on their teaching. Initially, the teachers framed their understanding and experience of these connections in entirely positive terms: Like so many teachers, Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma considered their connections with students a fundamental part of their work as teachers and a source of tremendous joy and professional satisfaction.

As a participant observer in Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma’s classrooms I regularly witnessed each teacher’s connections with students: The ways each teacher expressed affection for students — Emma always called her students “sweethearts” and “beautiful people” — and acknowledged and appreciated students’ affection and kindness, for example. Kim laughed and joked constantly with her students, letting them tease her and often talking telling them how “brilliant” or “talented” they were. Amy ate lunch with students every day, talking and sharing food. I watched Kylie sit with a student as she cried about a recent break-up, listened as Amy talked to a student about navigating family conflicts, and helped Kim blow up balloons as a surprise for another student’s birthday. “Connections” or relationships with students textured and structured each teacher’s day.

In what follows, I outline the trajectory of our collaborative analysis of the teachers' discourse with regard to connections or relationships with students: the ways Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I initially talked about and understood their connections with students, and the ways that we cultivated suspicion about and came to see the harmful workings of Whiteness as embedded within and constitutive of their connections discourse.

Initial Understandings: Connections, Effort, and Intent

In the initial weeks and months of our research, Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I worked to examine their discourse regarding connections with students of Color. More specifically, we worked to map the ways that the teachers understood their connections with students of Color as contingent on the teachers' own "effort" and "intent".

For instance, early in our work together Kylie showed me a survey that she had developed and asked her students to fill out at the end of the first month of school. Kylie told me that the goal of the multiple-choice survey was for students to give her "feedback on [her] teaching". The survey contained a series of statements which students were asked to rank as "strongly agree," "agree", "neutral", "disagree," and "strongly disagree". I noted that the very first question read: "Ms. R [Kylie] puts in sincere effort".

Julia: I think that first- tell me about that first question. "Puts in sincere effort."

Kylie: Uh huh.

Julia: That question- I've never seen before-

Kylie: Oh.

Julia: So I'm interested in it.

Kylie: Yeah well I guess like that's- I don't know as a teacher I know that I

can't do everything. But I know that I can put effort in. And that's what I want my students- or that's what I want to assess. If I know that I can at least put effort in, I wanna assess if they're-

Julia: Are you- do they see that?

Kylie: Are they seeing that? Am I doing that in a way that's showing up? And like I know, I guess I know I'm not the most effective teacher-

Julia: Yeah-

Kylie: And I know that I can be putting in a maximum amount of effort because that's something I can be putting-

Julia: And that's within your control?

Kylie: Right.

Julia: How much effort you put in is totally within your control.

Kylie: Yeah and like other things I'm- I just have to accept like I won't get this or I won't be able to do that.

Julia: Right right right right right.

Kylie: But I can control that. I can feel good about that. I want to know if they see that.

Julia: Uh huh so you wanna know if they're seeing that.

Kylie: Yeah. Because that matters for our, for how they see me. That is what allows us to build connections.

The above exchange with Kylie exemplifies many of the early conversations and initial insights that the teachers and I developed into how they understood themselves as both “building” and “deserving” connection with students. Kylie talks about her desire to know how her students perceived her — and more specifically, the degree to which students perceived her putting “sincere effort” into teaching. Kylie notes that it “matters” to her that students acknowledge that she is putting tremendous “effort” into teaching — even if she is not the “most effective teacher” for those students.

Kylie goes on to acknowledge that she wants students to “see” her “effort” so that she can “connect” with them and build relationships. In other words, Kylie understands her connections with students as contingent (at least partially) on her effort and students’ perceptions of that effort — rather than her effectiveness as a teacher in relationship to students’ own subjectivities, needs, and desires. In a future research meeting during which we analyzed the transcript of our conversation about Kylie’s student survey, Kylie talked about the ways she sometimes found herself feeling “entitled” to or “deserving” a connection or relationship with a student — so long as she “works hard and I know they [students] know it”. In other words, so long as Kylie put in “effort” and students recognized that “effort,” then Kylie understood their connection as “inevitable” and “deserved”.

In a similar way, Amy reflected on her own understanding of the relationship between effort and connection. Amy talked about how she often felt a desire to tell students “about how late” she often stayed at Windmill in the evenings, or how she often came into Windmill on the weekends to grade, plan, and attend meetings. Amy noted that she felt such desire to tell students about her “hard work” most acutely during conflicts with students or at times when her sense of connection with particular students was strained. In reflecting on a particularly difficult conflict with a student, Amy mused:

You [student] are being so disrespectful cause you called me a “bitch”...
And as a White person of privilege I'm not used to being treated in a rude way. I want to say like, “Do you know how long I stayed last night? You wanna call me a bitch? Why don't you come tomorrow at 8pm.” And not even to guilt trip them but just to make it clear like it's not easy, this is hard. Then we could be okay.

In her reflection Amy acknowledges that she wants her student to know how hard she works. This desire came in response to a conflict during which a student called Amy a “bitch”. As part of her reflection on this conflict, Amy imagines that forcing the student to see how hard she works as a teacher — her long hours, for example — will in some way clarify her effort and thus reestablish their connection. Amy says that she does not want to “guilt trip” the student. Rather she imagines that if the student knew how hard she works, that knowledge would ameliorate the conflict, reestablish their connection, and make everything “okay”.

In addition to initially understanding connections as contingent on their own “effort” — and students’ acknowledgment of that “effort” — the teachers also framed connections as contingent on their “intentions”. For instance, during one of our research meetings, Kim talked explicitly about her desire for students to acknowledge that much of what she did as a teacher — particularly her failings or struggles — was “unintentional” and beyond her control. In other words, Kim wanted students to understand that, despite her “hard work,” much of what happened in her classroom was not as she imagined, wanted, or “intended” it to be:

It's like, because [students] see everything that you're doing as intentional and that you have all the time in the world. And like, "She must've thought about this because she's my teacher and she's a professional, and like she's an adult." And all these things but like, they don't- kids don't see that we have one minute to prep. If something fell on the floor and now I have four minutes to, you know, whatever! And so, that intentionality versus like, seeing us as human beings who also have a million other things on our mind going and a million things that limit what we can do or how effective we can be. I want them see that.

Kim’s reflection indexes the ways that the work of teaching is constrained by challenging

logistics: Having “one minutes to prep” a lesson, for example. However, Kim also references all of the “million things that limit what we can do or how effective we can be” — and we might understand these references as indexing the aspects of teacher subjectivity that constrain what is possible in classrooms: the ways, for instance, that Whiteness might limit Kim’s “efficacy” in ways that ignore her “intentions”. Implicitly then, Kim names her desire for her students to forgive the constraints of her own subjectivity — her Whiteness, for example — and to focus instead on her “intentions” as a teacher. In reflecting on all of these examples through coding and analyzing transcripts, the teachers acknowledged the ways that their discourse regarding connections revealed a fundamental desire to obscure the realities of effect — the constraints of subjectivity — and focus instead on intentions and “hard work”.

In essence the teachers initially understood connections with students in relatively narrow and restricted ways: Connections or relationships with students were neither mutual, dynamic, nor contingent — requiring both teacher and student, changing and growing in response to needs and desires, conflict and harm, control, power and difference. In many ways, the teachers' discourse regarding connections -- the way they initially talked about connections during our research and the ways they embodied those understandings with students -- framed themselves as “in charge” of connections with students: As long as the teachers “worked” hard and had good “intentions” — and students “knew it” — then Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma imagined themselves entitled to a connection and relationship with students.

Cultivating Suspicion: “Connection is Self-Serving”

The teachers and I quickly became suspicious of their discourse regarding connections with students. Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma began to acknowledge and reflect on the ways they

assumed that their connections with students of Color should bolster a sense of themselves as people who “try hard” and are therefore “good teacher[s]” and “good people”. Certainly neither Amy, Kim, Kylie, nor Emma ever claimed that their connections with students were unnecessary or unimportant. Rather, our analysis served to complicate their understanding of their own discourse with regard to connections and to consider the consequences of that discourse for their teaching.

For instance, during one of our interviews toward the end of our collaboration Amy reflected on the assumptions and desires that undergirded her discourse regarding connections. In what follows, Amy reflects on her desire — and “expectation” — that students “appreciate” and acknowledge that she is “doing good” and “working hard” regardless of her effectiveness as a teacher:

And then, my second thing is, as a White woman, and a teacher, I think I had this expectation, like you- students should see I'm doing good, working hard, and appreciate me. And even when it wasn't right. And like the deadlines things. Like, I need the deadlines so I can be a good teacher. But like, it wasn't actually being a good teacher. But students should still see that or acknowledge that?

The above quote addresses many of the complexities with which the teachers grappled as they explored the relationship between their connections discourse, classroom practice, and Whiteness. Amy references a change that she made in her classroom — a revised policy regarding deadlines for student work — for which students had advocated. Amy acknowledges that despite her knowledge that her previous deadlines policy was not “good” for students’ learning, she nonetheless clung to that policy — and expected students to see her as “doing

good” and “appreciate” her. Amy explicitly frames her Whiteness as a part of this expectation: She is a “White woman” and thus she expects her to be seen by students of Color as “doing good” and expects to be “appreciated”. Amy articulates many of the suspicions that Kylie, Emma, Kim, Amy, and I cultivated: a sense that the teachers’ expectations and assumptions about their connections were deeply connected to the workings of Whiteness within themselves and their classrooms.

As the teachers and I talked about their discourse regarding connections, Kylie, Emma, Kim, and Amy began to name the consequences of feeling “entitled” to and “in charge of” (so long as they “worked hard” and had “good intentions”) a sense of connection with students of Color. In other words, we explored the ways that the teachers’ discourses regarding connection worked to obscure the consequences of Whiteness.

Amy explained her burgeoning suspicion of her discourse regarding conventions during one of our research meetings:

There's this tension for me of going to students of Color- And I am struggling with the, the whole idea of like- why do I build relationships with my students? Like this whole idea of why do I work to connect with you? And like what do I think is the purpose of my connection? Or the connection I think I build. And I wonder if and how that connection is self-serving.

Amy voiced an important and ever-present concern and suspicion that the teachers and I cultivated over the course of work together: rather than assume that parts of their work or discourse as White teachers — relationships or connections with students, for example — could exist outside of Whiteness, the teachers looked to see Whiteness painfully “at-work” (Yoon, 2012) in every part of their teaching, including their discourse regarding “connections”. In other

words, Amy cultivated a suspicion toward her ideas about connecting with students and wondered “how” her discourse regarding connections was in fact “self-serving” -- in other words, serving to preserve and invisibilize the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness.

Connection and Whiteness

Framing connection as contingent on teacher “effort” or “intent” served to invisibilize the ways that Whiteness constrained and shaped the realities of teaching and Whiteness. So long as Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma focused exclusively on their own “effort,” “hard work,” or “intentions” as teachers, they could ignore — and ask to students to ignore — the ways in which their “significant effort” might be insufficient to the task of constructing meaningful and mutual relationships with students of Color. Similarly, the teachers could avoid acknowledging the ways that Whiteness might even limit or shape the nature of those connections.

After reflecting on her desire to tell students how “hard” she worked, Kim talked explicitly about the consequences of framing connection with students in terms of a her “effort” as a White teacher: “Cause focus on how hard I work, how much I come in [after school]— and then it’s not about my being or how that shapes what happens or what I can do or how effective a teacher I can be. Effort isn’t about being White.” In effect, the teachers linked — “articulated” (Hall, 1995) — their “intentions” and “effort” with “effective teaching” and with an expectation that they be recognized as “effective teachers” by students of Color.

For Kim — and for Emma, Kylie, and Amy — a focus on effort or intent allowed the teachers to sidestep the ways that Whiteness shaped the nature their relationships or connections with students of Color. When teachers focused on concrete measures of “hard work” or “intent”

— sharing the number of hours they worked, for example — the teachers invoked an aspect of their teaching that they could consider “outside” of the constraints and effects of their Whiteness because, as Kim put it, “effort isn’t about being White”. In other words, the teachers’ discourse regarding connections allowed them to resist acknowledging the realities and effects of Whiteness for their relationship and connections with students of Color.

As Emma explained during one of our interviews, “part of being a White teacher means seeing ourselves as the embodiment of the lesser of two evils. Maybe we’re better than the other White teacher or maybe we’re not. But either way being White is part of the relationship I can make with my students and it’s not the best thing.” Focusing on effort, however, allowed Emma, Kylie, Kim, and Amy to sidestep the ways that their Whiteness was “not the best thing” — even an “evil” — in developing connections with students of Color.

As the teachers worked to acknowledge the assumptions embedded within and the effects of their discourse regarding connections, their approach to analyzing their own interactions with students shifted. The teachers moved beyond acknowledging that they felt entitled to connections with students and wanted students to legitimate (Fairclough, 2003) their intent and hard work — and that such feelings and desires served to invisibilize the consequences of Whiteness for their connections. Rather, Amy, Kylie, Kim and Emma, began pushing each other to notice and name the ways Whiteness constrained and shaped their connections and interactions with students. As the teachers coded classroom transcripts, for example, they began posing the following questions: “How is Whiteness shaping my connection or relationship with students? How is Whiteness shaping what I can see or understand or do?”

For example, during one of our meetings, Amy, Kylie, and Kim coded and analyzed a transcript from Amy’s classroom. Amy had originally witnessed a conversation between two of

her African-American students, Tom and Malcolm. She acknowledged that she had felt “nervous” when she witnessed Tom and Malcolm’s conversation: Amy interpreted the conversation as a conflict — centering on Tom calling Malcolm a “negro” — and had interjected and sent the two students to the vice principal’s office. The transcript on which Amy, Kylie, and Kim focused their analysis, however, chronicled a later conversation that Amy had with Tom, Malcom, and the school vice principal (an African-American woman). During this conversation Tom and Malcolm expressed frustration with Amy and explained that she had misinterpreted their initial interaction. Tom and Malcolm said that their conversation had been entirely friendly and that they had been joking around. In response, however, Amy questioned whether or not Tom and Malcolm were being “truthful” and insisted that she had correctly interpreted their initial interaction as a conflict worthy of intervention.

As part of our analysis, however, Kim presented the idea that Amy had been unable to interpret or understand Tom and Malcolm’s interaction as a result of her Whiteness: “What if you couldn’t accurately read or interpret their conversation?” Kim asked. In what follows, Amy, Kim, and Kylie discuss the effects of Whiteness on their ability to build relationships or connections with students of Color:

Kim: When you were telling that story [about Malcolm and Tom], I was just thinking like maybe we're having that physical response because we're scared, either subconsciously or consciously, that a fight is going to ensue. We feel uncomfortable. I know that I feel that way in the classroom when the kids will call each other racist or if there's like a racial dynamic-

Julia: Yeah.

Kim: Of the "N" word or something. I'm like, “Oh God, a fight is about to break out!” So we can't squash it. You know what I mean?

Kylie: Well and it also reminds me of that transcript of yours [Amy's] we read, right. Where, I also think that, like sometimes, when things happen between students, that I don't feel like I can effectively mediate, I get scared as a teacher. Right, like if students are talking about something that happened outside of school, I also get nervous because I feel like, I wasn't there. I can't help you navigate the situation. Right? And in some ways it feels similar to me when there's racial tensions between students of Color. I always feel like I don't know what my place is in this conversation. Like, what do I do? Guess?

Amy: I think that's the key part. It's like we don't know what our place is or we don't have the information or insights we need and we have power anyway!

Kylie: (laughs)

Amy: Like, I know, so I can maintain my position as, like, the all-knowing enforcer of goodness, like-

Kylie: Yeah.

Amy: You know. And I don't think we even are really aware of it. Right. Like, in a lot of these times where you're like, but "Amy, Tom didn't say he felt uncomfortable!" Right? Or Tom and Malcolm weren't actually fighting. And yet, I come in as like, White shining armor. Like ... Let me save the day and like protect these poor like students of Color that don't know their use of language or action or whatever. It's like, it just needs to be questioned, really.

Throughout the above exchange, Amy, Kylie, and Kim reference a variety of ways that they understand their Whiteness as shaping — limiting and constraining — their relationships, connections, and interactions with students of Color and as having harmful consequences. To begin, Kim references the ways that their subjectivities as White women condition them to respond with fear to interactions between students of Color — and particularly to interactions

between African-American teenage boys (Noguera, 2008). Kylie continues to reference the ways that Whiteness prevents an understanding of the interactions between students of Color — White teachers are conditioned to respond with fear and therefore do not “understand” students’ interactions. As a result, White teachers make dangerous “guesses” — that often result in disciplinary actions toward students (Noguera, 2008) — about how to respond or interpret students’ interactions.

Amy builds off of this idea to point out the ways that, despite the fact that White teachers do not — and cannot, by virtue of their Whiteness — have the necessary “insights” or “understandings,” they are nonetheless in positions of tremendous power: White teachers’ interpretations of students’ interactions have tremendous consequence for students of Color. Amy concludes by pointing out another way that her Whiteness shaped her choice to interpret and intervene in the ways that she did: Amy wanted to be seen as “doing good” and “protecting” students of Color — regardless of whether or not they needed or wanted such protection.

In essence, Amy, Kylie, and Kim explore the variety of harms that Whiteness perpetuates in classrooms: Whiteness informs their understandings, interpretations of, and therefore reactions to students’ interactions, behavior, and language. As teachers, however, Amy, Kylie, and Kim point out that their positions of power serve only to make students of Color even more vulnerable to the effects of their Whiteness: Amy, Kylie, and Kim make choices that have profound consequences for students’ lives and learning — even as their very interpretations of students’ needs and behaviors are (mis)interpreted via Whiteness. At the same time, Amy points out that she expects to be recognized by students as a “savior” or “protector” — despite the harmful effects of Whiteness. In effect, Amy expects connection to remain because of her “effort” and despite the harmful effects of Whiteness.

In a related analysis, Emma reflected on the ways that her Whiteness shaped — and constrained — her ability to “connect” and develop a relationship with her students. Emma and I discussed a conversation she had recently completed with a student, Santiago, who was considering leaving high school before graduating (sometimes referred to “dropping out” or being “pushed out” [Doll, Eslami, & Walters, 2013; Jordan, Lara, & McPartland, 1994; Watt & Roessingh, 1994]). Santiago had initiated a conversation with Emma about this possibility and, in what follows, Emma and I reflect on that conversation:

Emma: It just feels painful because to me, that is partially what systemic oppression is. It's thinking that [two years of high school] is good enough and I don't know if that's my White idea of what systemic oppression is versus when I ask Santiago like, "What's your idea of systemic oppression?" I think we see it from a different perspective because in a lot of ways, we [White people] see it from this privileged vantage point where we're like looking down. It's kind of like people in the hills looking down on the flats being like, "I wouldn't want to live there," whereas the people in the flats are like, "I want to live two blocks that way." Cause that's where it's safer, but they're-

Julia: Or I want to live exactly where I'm living maybe.

Emma: Yeah.

Julia: Right? Which is an interesting, right?

Emma: Yeah.

Julia: Could be one, or both, or all of those.

Emma: Yeah. I don't know what to say anymore. I used to be blindly like, “College, blah, blah, blah.” And then now I started to question it and then this year, or like a couple of years ago, I started to question it, and then now I'm like, "Maybe I shouldn't say anything here."

Julia: "What's been the outcome of your project?" "Oh, the White teachers,

they don't speak anymore."

Emma: "Keep your mouth shut."

Julia: "They go to the meetings and they sit in there silent."

Emma: Yeah. "They've become better listeners." There are things they don't know.

In the above exchange, Emma and I talk — sometimes rather flippantly — about the ways that Whiteness limits what White teachers can “know,” and therefore what they can and should do in relationship to their students of Color. Emma initially considers the possibility that Santiago’s decision to leave high school after two years might be rooted in his internalized “oppression” — but she then immediately questions her own conclusion. Emma importantly wonders about the ways that her own interpretation of Santiago’s decision is in fact shaped by her own Whiteness and subjectivity. Emma points out that she understands Santiago’s decision through the lens of her own Whiteness and “privileged vantage point”.

Emma and I conclude by talking about the consequences of acknowledging the limitations of Whiteness: Because there are “things [we] don’t know” Emma points out that perhaps White teachers “shouldn’t say anything” and should instead be “better listeners”. In this moment, Emma indexes one of the many potential harms of Whiteness and, more specifically, White discourse with regard to “connections”: White teachers might assume that such connections are within their own control, contingent on “hard work” and “good intentions”. In fact, however, connections are painfully marked by the teachers’ own Whiteness and the ways that Whiteness provokes dangerous and harmful assumptions about and reactions to students of Color. In acknowledging the harm of this reality, Emma, concluded that perhaps the best way to reduce this harm might be to remain “silent” — rather than act on the dangerous understandings and interpretations that Whiteness constructed.

Amy, Emma, Kylie, Kim, and I came to see Whiteness embedded within and constitutive of our discourse with regard to “connections” with students. In the previous two examples, Emma and Amy acknowledged the ways that Whiteness shaped their relationships with students of Color. Whiteness shaped the nature of Amy’s interpretation of and response to her students’ conversation. Whiteness shaped Emma’s understanding of Santiago’s desires. Emma, Amy, Kylie, Kim, and I came to understand Whiteness as dangerously and harmfully limiting and shaping the connections they developed with students of Color — regardless of the teachers’ “intentions” or “hard work”.

Findings Part 3: Control

“I’m like the stage manager and the actor and the director all at once. And then I try to be like

‘I’m not in that play.’”

— Amy

In the same way that teachers came to question the motivates behind and effects of their discourse regarding both difference and connection, the teachers also cultivated a profound distrust of their discourse with regard to the concept of control in their classrooms. In what follows, I outline the arc of our collaborative analysis and developing understanding of our discourse regarding control: the ways the Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma initially talked about and understood control as uniformly necessary for teaching and learning — and the ways they embodied those understandings. I then explore suspicion and critique that the teachers and I cultivated toward this discourse: an understanding of this discourse as working to “invizibilize” (Lipsitz, 1998) Whiteness by obscuring the true beneficiaries of the teachers’ commitment to control. I conclude by sharing the ways that Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I came to see — and map the harmful effects of — Whiteness embedded and “at-work” (Yoon, 2012) within their discourse regarding control.

Initial Understandings: Control as Necessary

In the beginning of our work together, the teachers talked about control as something that was necessary to their work — as something that facilitated both their teaching and students’ learning. When initially looking at transcripts of the teachers’ classrooms as well as the transcripts of our research meetings, Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma framed their moves to prescribe, dictate, maintain, and police particular ways of being — broadly speaking, to control

their students and classrooms — as necessary and generative of classroom community and of the environment and conditions necessary for teaching and learning.

For instance, when we coded transcripts during our research meetings, the teachers coded instances of monitoring or correcting students' language use during class discussions or in writing, teachers' evaluations (Fairclough, 2003) of students' behavior or actions, as well as teachers' enforcement of rules regarding students' physical treatment of school materials (paper, binders, markers, etc.) as "control". For Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma these instances initially signaled examples of teachers engaging in necessary work that was central to the task of creating functioning classroom communities and thus, teaching.

Amy talked initially about her understanding of control as central to the work of relationship-building with students of Color — and thus good teaching. For Amy, "control" was a necessary prerequisite to building generative relationships and connections with students and thus, classroom community. In the quote below, Amy explains her fears and insecurities as a teacher and the aspects of teaching that most challenged and concerned her. In particular, she references her concerns about control in relationship to two students in her class, Jabree and Carlos:

My fear is that I'm just not good enough at controlling...Cause I'm not good enough at controlling all the aspects of a classroom and because of that I fail my students. That's my fear. Is like I can't control Jabree. I can't figure out Jabree enough to make him function in a classroom setting enough that the rest of the students equally benefit and so does Jabree. Or Carlos. It's just not possible. And I know that logically in my head. That it's- there's only so much I can do. And I can try really hard to make that. And I think that that's the fictitious Shangri-La of teaching. Is like that one person could

build such strong relationships with all students. To keep them all the time safe. And all the time engaged. And like yes, I would love to do that.

Amy's narration reveals a great deal about both how she conceptualized control and about all of the teachers' discourse with regard to control. For Amy, the ability to "control" students was necessary to the work of helping those students "function in a classroom". Amy implicitly frames "strong relationships with students" as facilitating control and thus, students' sense of safety and engagement. Even as Amy understands this kind of control as unattainable — a "fictitious Shangri-La" — she nonetheless frames such control as highly desirable: Amy would "love to" have such "control" in her classroom.

Similarly, during one of our initial conversations, Kim talked about the ways that she typically thought about and worked to control students' language use in her classroom. At the beginning of the school year, Kim would guide the students in establishing rules and agreements — "norms" — regarding language use in their classrooms. In what follows, Kim talks with Amy about how she facilitated and thought about these "language norm" conversations:

Kim: I had students come up with the rules they wanted about how we could use language. I think maybe my fear in having that conversation was like, what if they all said-

Amy: "We want cussing!"

Kim: Yeah. Banded against me and came up with a rule that was like, "No. We're all cool with having academic conversations but also cursing." And I would be like, "Wait, that's not the road I was leading you down as an instructor. I thought we were gonna come up with this rule I already laminated." So yeah I had those conversations but I was really driving the norms they were ever gonna come up with.

In this instance, Kim acknowledged that even as she allowed her students to develop their own “norms” regarding classroom language use, she nonetheless maintained control over the conclusions drawn during such norm-setting conversations. As Kim pointed out, she typically had already written up and “laminated” a list of language norms for the classroom even before the students engaged in their norm-setting conversation. In this instance, Kim acknowledges that even if she framed students as developing their own approaches to language use in the classroom, she curated the experience and thus controlled the guidelines that dictated students’ language use. In other words, Kim articulates her own fear that students would not succumb to or follow the ways of using language that Kim has sanctioned: Kim was afraid that students would resist or challenge her control over their language practices.

Amy, Kylie, and Kim often echoed this same understanding and feeling: They acknowledged that “control” served to quell their own fear. As Amy said, “We’re afraid and the control keeps the fear at bay”. In acknowledging that “control” served to meet their own needs — to quell their own fear that students might develop their own language norms or choose to “function” in unsanctioned ways — Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma began to question their previous justifications for control in their classroom. While the teachers had previously claimed that “control” was necessary for students — that they exerted control over students’ language practices for students’ benefit, for example — Amy, Kylie, Kim and Emma began (after much analysis, coding, discussion, and reflection) to explore the idea that “control” might in fact serve their own needs, concerns, fears, and desires.

Cultivating Suspicion: Control for Whom?

As our work together progressed the teachers and I came to think differently — and with great

suspicion — about the effects and origins of their discourse regarding control in their classrooms. More specifically, the teachers and I questioned the degree to which control, rather than a means to facilitate students' learning and development, became an end in and of itself and a strategy for obscuring the workings of Whiteness in their classroom. We continued to code transcripts, reflect on the teachers' classroom discourse, and look back at transcripts of previous research meetings and interviews. As we did so, each teacher called into question both their choices to impose particular types of control as well as the logics and ideologies that employed to justify — to themselves, to each other, and to me — such choices.

For instance, during one of our research meetings, Emma voiced a series of questions she had begun to ask herself regarding her own teaching and relationship to control:

I've been asking myself, "Who's this benefiting? Students? How is it benefiting them?" These are the questions I've been thinking a lot about in my classroom. When I tell a student, "Please, go wait in the hall," these are now starting to be just on repeat in my head. I'm like, "Who is benefiting from the fact that I'm asking you to go in the hall?" There are some times where I'm like, "Them. They need a moment. They need a moment away from me and the rest of the class because they're riled". And then sometimes I'm like, "Me! Because I've had enough of them. I can't deal with it anymore." But yeah I just think that whole concept of like control and- what we've been conditioned to think good teaching is. It's all been White teachers that told me to think that way and this is what good teaching looks like for students of Color. It looks like safety and order. Making sure they're [students are] being a certain way. And because if it's not feeling safe, it's because those five kids aren't learning because there's not enough control. But it's safety for who?

Emma's words reveal both her burgeoning suspicion of control as a necessary component of

teaching as well as a distrust of her own assumptions about the beneficiaries of control in a classroom. For Emma, the work of detangling — or trying to detangle — “who benefits” became a necessary component of imposing control. Rather than assume that asking students to “wait in the hall” — or any other manifestation of classroom-based control of students’ bodies, language or behavior — served exclusively to benefit students or serve students’ needs, Emma considers that such expressions of control might in fact serve her own needs or desires. Importantly, Emma does not frame such a possibility as necessarily bad — Emma acknowledged that imposing control in order to feel able to teach a classroom might be necessary. Regardless, however, Emma frames questioning “who benefits” as worthy of note and acknowledgement.

Emma also acknowledges that she — and other White teachers — have been taught (largely by White colleagues and teacher educators) that control is a necessary part of “good teaching... for students of Color”. In cultivating a practice of questioning the beneficiaries of such control, however, Emma came to acknowledge that perhaps she, as a White teacher, benefitted from that sense of control. More specifically, Emma talked about the connection between control and her own perception of “safety”. Rather than assume that control facilitated students’ learning because it allowed students to feel “safe,” Emma entertains the possibility that “control” allowed her — and other White teachers — to feel “safe”.

As part of her own reflection, Emma implicitly opened up the possibility that her desire for control was connected to her own subjectivity and a profoundly racialized experience of “safety”. Emma acknowledges the ways that her experience of “safety” as a White teacher might be contingent on her ability to control the physical bodies and language practices of students of Color. Such an acknowledgement indexes an entire history of White people — and White woman in particular — framing their own “safety” as contingent on the violent policing of Black

and Brown bodies (Meier, Stewar, & England, 1989; Noguera, 2008). In effect, Emma acknowledged that even as she might have previously claimed that control served to make a classroom “safe” for students of Color, she increasingly saw such control as serving a constructed sense of “safety” rooted in Whiteness.

In the same way that Kim expressed fear that students would resist her control over their language practices — that students would push back against the “language norms” that she offered and sanctioned — Emma shared the ways her own moves to control students served to satisfy her own sense of “safety”. Kylie and Amy also shared insights into the ways their commitments to control belied their fragile and racialized sense of “safety”. As Kylie noted, “It may not be true, but I feel like I need some control, some way to say ‘this is how you need to be’. I’m afraid to be without it. Teaching without that would scare me.”

Control and Whiteness

As the teachers and I continued to analyze the concept of — and their discourse regarding — control, we began to focus on the consequences of control for the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness in their classrooms. The teachers came to acknowledge the ways that they worked to impose control — to monitor and police ways of being in the classroom — in ways that served to obscure and “invizibilize” (Lipsitz, 1998) their own subjectivities. The teachers came to see the ways that their enforcement of control served to satisfy their own sense of “safety” even as it also protected the teachers from visualizing the ways that Whiteness was “at-work” (Yoon, 2012) within their very experience “fear”.

For instance, Amy and I spent a great deal of time analyzing the extended exchange excerpted below. In the exchange, Amy spoke with two students, Jose and Antonio, in the hall

during class. Antonio and Jose were friends and typically sat next to each other during Amy's class. The two had each been working on their own assignments when Amy witnessed Jose and Antonio "playing" and then saw Jose "wrinkle up Antonio's paper". Amy immediately asked Antonio and Jose to step into the hall and informed them that she would not accept Antonio's "wrinkled" work. In what follows, Amy, Jose, and Antonio engage in a heated conversation. At one point Amy references "Ms. D," one of the school's assistant principals who typically dealt with discipline at Windmill.

Amy: So Jose, Jose, it affects people's grade! Cause I'm not gonna accept work that's wrinkled. It does actually affect people.

Jose: Oh.

Amy: I need you to start-

Jose: Well, that's on you for not accepting it, I mean-

Amy: It's actually on you for wrinkling it

Jose: It just material nothing. Just because the paper was ripped doesn't mean he shouldn't receive credit for it. He put work into it.

Amy: Actually it, it does. It shows that I want high quality work and that's what I expect. Antonio, next time someone takes your work, you gotta say something about it.

Antonio: Will I get credit?

Amy: No. You have to redo it. It's kind of on Jose. Like, you guys need to figure out. This kind of behavior has to stop. I'm gonna have some high expectations. How can Jose make this right? You wrote it out, what do you think could be a good solution to this problem?

Jose: You just accept it.

Amy: No, cause this is your problem that you created, Jose. So you're gonna have to figure out the solution. Right now Antonio doesn't look very happy cause his grade's being affected. So figure out how you can solve it-

Jose: I just said a solution!

Amy: What's the solution?

Jose: That you just accept the work! Is that really that hard-

Amy: No, that's not a solution. How are you gonna make it right? Cause right now Antonio's paper is scrunched up and that's not right.

Jose: I could apologize.

Amy: I'm gonna- the apology I don't think is gonna cut it cause he's still affected. You don't just get to say you're sorry after you do something that bugs somebody. That's not what fixes-

Jose: So okay, I need you to tell me though what do you want me to do, like-

Amy: You're sorry you made that choice but what's your choice on how to fix it?

Antonio: Why don't I just redo it

Amy: No.

Jose: Why not?

Amy: Because you [Jose] messed it up.

Jose: You keep telling us to make an idea-

Amy: Okay, I'm gonna-

Jose: And then when we make our ideas you shut 'em down. What the hell is that? Could you just tell us what you want us to do? Or not shut down my idea?

Amy: Mmmm, I'm actually just not happy with how this is being handled.

Jose: But this is not about whether you're happy or not-

Amy: You're right, it's that somebody did work in my class and they are not being given credit for the work because it's not up to par. It's wrinkled. I don't accept sloppy work in general, but you made the decision to do that. And so I want you to also figure out how you can fix the problem.

Jose: Okay I can help him do the work when he gets it, I mean I-

Amy: So I'm gonna- you can come back to class. I'm gonna have Ms. D come in and pull both of you guys to discuss the strategy-

Jose: Nah, I'm not going there, I'm not goin' there.

Amy: That's up to her.

When Amy and I discussed the above exchange we talked a great deal about the details of her conflict with Jose, in particular. We both noted the repeated ways that Jose works to place the onus for the situation on Amy: She was at fault for “not accepting” wrinkled work and the solution to the situation lay in her choosing to simply “accept it”. In other words, in the language of our coding scheme, we noted that Jose frames Amy as the “social actor” (Fairclough, 2003). Similarly, we also noted Amy’s consistent refusal to accept any of that onus or responsibility. She repeatedly refuses to claim her position as the person imposing a rule about “high expectations” and “wrinkled work”. For instance, in the beginning of the exchange, Jose points out that it is “on [Amy] for not accepting it” and Amy immediately responds by claiming that “It's actually on you [Jose] for wrinkling it”.

Amy and I both found it remarkable that she consistently refuses to acknowledge her relationship to the “no wrinkled work” rule: As the teacher, Amy both developed, maintained, and imposed the “no wrinkled work” rule. In imposing the “no wrinkled work” rule, Amy consistently made the choice to control and police how students were permitted to relate to their papers and physical assignments — and yet she refused to acknowledge this ongoing choice in her exchange with Jose. Throughout her exchange with Antonio and Jose, Amy consistently worked to obscure and deny her own position relative to “no wrinkled” rule. Together Amy and I wondered: Why not claim her position as the person imposing such a rule and controlling students’ relationships to their physical assignments — especially if she felt proud of “holding high expectations” and saw such a rule as indicative of “high expectations”?

This pattern of obscuring one’s relationship to a “rule” emerged across all four teachers — and we discussed this pattern at great length during our research meetings. We observed the

pattern across a variety of classroom-based contexts: For example, Kylie noted that she often resisted claiming her decision to control and monitor students' language-based choices: "I say 'that's the way you have to speak because that's what you have to do in the world in order to be successful'. But I don't admit that yes, I am the one making you speak this way right now. In this classroom, I'm the one doing that and controlling that." In other words, Kylie admits supporting a classroom rule about language use — but acknowledges that she resists claiming her position relative to that rule.

As we considered the potential roots and consequences of this pattern, Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I made connections between their suspicions about the beneficiaries of control, the choice to obscure their positions relative to control, and the workings of Whiteness and power in their classrooms. Amy succinctly described the teachers' insights during one of our research meetings:

If we convince ourselves control is for the students of Color— but really it's for us, to make us feel better or safer — but then we also don't acknowledge that we're the ones doing the controlling, we're the ones saying "You have to be this way," that's us, then we can pretend we're not afraid because we're White and you're kids of Color." We don't have a race-based need to control you and we can also tell ourselves and lie to our kids by saying "No I'm not controlling you. That's just the way it is. I'm not one of those White people who need to control kids of Color." I'm not like those White people. I'm not part of the problem. There's this lie that White teachers tell ourselves. We rationalize teaching White speak to students of Color and controlling the way students of Color behave in classrooms because we think "Well we have to teach them something, we can't just let everything be whatever so we need like some sort of direct thing, kind of like this behavior line, these management plans.

As Amy points out, obscuring both whom the control is “for” as well as the teacher’s position relative to that “control,” allowed the Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma to avoid engaging with Whiteness and the ways they sustained the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness. The teachers could ignore the ways that control allowed them to feel a sense of “safety” as White women, and the ways that Whiteness constructed their very experience of “safety”. At the same time, the teachers could pretend that they were not engaging in a practice of “controlling” students of Color by refusing to claim their positionality relative to classroom “rules”. In so doing, the teachers could sidestep students’ observations that the teachers were in fact enforcers of control — as Mauricio said to Amy, “It’s on you for having that rule” — and in positions of tremendous power. The teachers could thus tell themselves a “lie” and avoid seeing themselves as White people who “need” to control students of Color. In essence, the teachers’ very logic with regard to control served to elevate their sense of themselves: Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma were not like “those White people” who need to control students of Color or enact control for their own benefit. Rather the teachers understood themselves as enacting control for students’ benefit.

In reflecting on our conversation about control, Kim voiced her own insights into the roots and effects of control in White teachers’ classrooms:

Kim: Because we [White teachers] don't go around wondering like, why did I just jump in there? Or, why do I have these deadlines set? Or, why ... All the kids say that they hate uniforms and they can't express themselves, but we do it anyway. We tell ourselves we are trying to help everyone. It's not really in service of our students of Color.

Julia: Yeah?

Kim: It's like in service of our sense of control and like maintaining that we are the top of the pyramid, to enforce good and keep the way of the “learned” White people.

For Kim — as well as for Amy, Kylie, and Emma — control became a way that they understood themselves obscuring their own Whiteness from themselves and maintaining their position “at the top”. The teachers understood their moves to control students of Color — to police narrow ways of speaking, being, relating, and moving — as maintaining a particular class and race-based “way” of being in their classroom that followed that of “learned White people”. The teachers effectively preserved the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness by both securing their positions and further “invizibilizing” (Lipsitz, 1998) Whiteness itself.

In essence, the teachers came to see their Whiteness “at-work” (Yoon, 2012) within their discourse regarding control — the ways that they chose to control students’ ways of being in classrooms and the ways they then talked about and justified those choices. The teachers’ control in their classrooms served to preserve the ways of being that elevated Whiteness and obscure the White supremacist roots of the teachers’ “fear”. At the same time, however, the teachers acknowledged that they had justified their control by framing it as necessary for and beneficial to students of Color — and thus further “inviziblized” (Lipsitz, 1998) and normalized the workings of Whiteness. As Amy acknowledged above, control is a harmful “lie” that White teachers “tell ourselves”.

Findings Part 4: Power

“Being a White teacher is sort of like the Marines. They convince themselves that there aren't any civilians in the building.”

-- Amy

Many of the initial conversations that Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I had in our interviews and research meetings centered on the teachers' relationship to power in their classrooms. The teachers initially expressed tremendous discomfort with the power that came with their position as teachers — as well as the power that moved through them as a result of their Whiteness. In other words, not only were Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma in positions of power as teachers of young adults and teenagers, but they experienced such power as compounded by the dynamic between their own and their students' racialized subjectivities: White teachers teaching students of Color.

It is important to note while the terms “power” and “control” might be related in their colloquial uses, the teachers and I used the codes “control” and “power” quite differently. The teachers understood their own work to monitor or police students' ways of being as a form of control. As I explored in the previous chapter, the teachers initially claimed and even clung to their sense of control in their classrooms. In contrast, the teachers and I used the code “power,” to signal the ways in which they felt that their relationship and positioning relative to their students were “unequal”. In what follows, I outline the arc of our analysis of the teachers' discourse with regard to power: The ways that Amy, Kylie, Emma, and Kim initially worked to ignore or erase the realities of power, and eventually took up the task of acknowledging and engaging with the consequences of power in their classrooms. I conclude by acknowledging the profound ways that this engagement reshaped the teachers' professional and personal trajectories.

Initial understandings: Resisting or “equalizing” power

During our initial research meetings, interviews, and observations, Amy, Emma, Kylie, Kim, and I spent a great deal of time analyzing the ways they related to power in the context of their classrooms and interactions with students of Color. For instance, Amy pointed out that she observed herself “resisting power, trying to run away from it”: Amy often worked hard in her classroom to “equalize power” and try to make herself seem “equal to” her students.

Similarly, Kylie often worked to position herself as “equal” to her students, going out of her way to manifest such “equality” in relatively concrete ways. For example, in the exchange below Kylie speaks with a student, Luis. Kylie had asked the class to arrange their chairs in a large circle in preparation for a whole-class discussion about “wellness”. Luis, however, sat on a table instead of a chair. Although he was “in the circle,” sitting on top of a table made him much higher than Kylie and the rest of the class. In what follows, Kylie talks with Luis — as well as several other students — about the importance of being physically “at the same level” during class discussions:

Kylie: Shhhh. So I'm gonna ask that you're not speaking over other people.

And Luis, hang on, I need you to be in a chair.

Luis: Bruh, I'm inside the circle!

Kylie: I still need you in a chair.

Luis: No.

Kylie: Yup. Everyone's in a chair. I'm gonna jump in a chair as well.

Luis: I'm inside.

Kylie: I'm gonna invite you to join us in a chair.

Luis: What happens if I don't want to be invited?

Kylie: Um then I ask you to talk about wellness with Mr. Smith if you want.

Luis: That's a good deal.

Kylie: You wanna do that? Okay. I can ask him. I would encourage you to be here with us.

Luis: I'm inside! What do you expect me to do?

Kylie: In a chair. So why- why do we all sit in a chair?

Luis: Cause you tell us to sit in a chair.

Kylie: No- in the physical space. Why would I ask you to not- why would I not stand on a desk and talk to you right now? Why also am I about to sit in a chair?... Why? Anybody? Why do I ask us- we talked about this at the beginning of the year. Why a circle? Or why a u-shape? Why all in chairs?...Why not have some of you laying on the floor?

Maria: So we're at the same level?

Amy: So we're at the same level. Why, Maria?

Maria: The same level.

Santiago: Everyone can be heard.

Kylie: Everyone can be heard. Everyone can be seen?

Luis: I can be heard loud and clear, too.

Kylie: Yeah. But it's also a different- if I talk over you right, if I'm helping Maria and I'm talking to her like this [*stands up and talks to Maria who is seated in chair*] it's a very different feeling than if I'm talking to her at the same level. Do you notice this sometimes when I'm crouching down?

Luis: Oh my goodness now. Only you would say that. Really.

Kylie: I do think it's different. I think if we're all talking to each other this way then we're all on the same level. No one is oh-so-powerful.

Luis: Hey Carlos. Talk to me at this level. So when Jackie's talking to me I'm gonna have to be like [*crouches down*] this because Jackie's short?

Kylie: No.

Luis: If Walter's talking to me I have to go like that [*stretches body upward to appear taller*]?

In the above exchange, Kylie reveals her commitment to constructing interactions in ways that

make her and her students physically appear “on the same level” so that no one “is oh-so-powerful”. Luis, however, resists this idea by framing such a desire as both futile and pointless: He claims that “only [Kylie]” would care about being physically “on the same level” as students, positioning such a desire as both pointless and unique. In resisting Kylie’s request that he move to sit in a chair, Luis invokes the reality of Kylie’s position in the class: She is the teacher and is therefore in a position of tremendous power. Luis points out that students sit in chairs “because you [Kylie] tell us to” and in that moment indexes the reality of power in Kylie’s classroom: Regardless of how students want to sit, Kylie is in a position of power as the teacher and can dictate where students sit. No physical arrangement can obscure or erase such a reality. Luis continues to frame Amy’s desire that no one be “oh-so-powerful” as futile, asking hypothetical and sarcastic questions about how he should stand tall or crouch down when speaking with taller or shorter peers.

Interestingly, in the face of Luis’s resistance to her desire for everyone to be “on the same level,” Kylie goes out of her way to explain her choices with regard to the physical arrangement of the classroom. She points out that not only does she request all students sit in chairs “on the same level,” but she also arranges the chairs in a circle so that “everyone can be heard” and “everyone can be seen.” In other words, Kylie publicizes and highlights her strong desire for everyone to be, in a variety of ways, “on the same level” and to prevent anyone from being “oh-so-powerful”. As Kylie later pointed out, it was important to her that students knew she “wanted everyone to be equal and that I don’t want to be the powerful one”.

The above exchange — as well as Kylie’s reflection on and analysis of this exchange — mirrored the original tendencies of all four teachers: Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma all found themselves working to “equalize or ignore” the realities of power in their classrooms. Rather

than acknowledge their positions of power as teachers — and as White teachers — each teacher in her own way worked to ignore or erase that reality (or at least the appearance of that reality). In other words, the teachers all worked to obscure concrete manifestations of the organization of power within their classrooms.

Cultivating Suspicion: “Running Away from Power”

In considering why the teachers worked to ignore or erase the organizations of power in their classrooms, Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I asked a variety of questions in our discussions and analyses: Why did they resist acknowledging the reality of their positions of power as teachers and the power that moved through them as White people? Would acknowledging the realities of power -- that no matter how Kylie arranged the chairs in her classroom she could not erase the power of being a teacher or of being White and leading a class of students of Color — mean that the teachers were racist or "bad"? As Kim put it, "Sometimes I think that running away from our power, trying to make it go away when we're teaching, is the way that we keep ourselves from seeing what's happening. It's how we say 'Oh that's not because of me, that's not because I'm White'". In other words, Kim pointed out that when working to obscure the ways that she and her students "were never on the same level, were never really equal in a classroom," Kim avoided acknowledging the reality of her Whiteness as part of that power and as a permanent fixture in her classroom.

Particularly in the weeks following the 2016 presidential election, Amy, Kim, Kylie, Emma, and I questioned and critiqued our discourse with regard to power in classrooms. All four teachers talked about conversations that took place in their classrooms in the immediate wake of the election — and the questions and comments that students offered during those conversations.

As in Kim's example below, the teachers often referenced students' questions and comments about the White people who "voted for Trump":

Students ask me why White people voted for Trump. And then I think they get scared that they're offending me so they say, 'You're not like those White people. You're not a real White person.' And I accept that. I take it as a compliment. But I think really, who is that for? What would it mean if I said- even more than saying it- if I knew that I am like those White people. Not because I voted for Trump but because I am White. And that's true but I'm uncomfortable saying it.

As Kim articulates, she is "uncomfortable" acknowledging, naming, or even "knowing" the ways in which she is "White" and therefore "like those White people". All four teachers reflected on exchanges similar to the one Kim outlines above: They acknowledged their own fear, apprehension, or discomfort in moments when they considered naming or acknowledging their own Whiteness and the power that thus moved through them in their classrooms and throughout their lives.

Power and Whiteness

In response to our conversations about power -- and the ways that all four teachers worked to avoid acknowledging the organizations of power in their classrooms -- the teachers and I began to consider the work of "claiming power". As Amy put it, " As White teachers, we do have this power. And I'm starting to think that we really need to own it". For Amy, "owning it," meant resisting the urge to ignore the realities of power and claiming the ways that power necessarily positioned her in the classroom and in the world: Acknowledging that no matter way she did, she

and her students of Color were never "on the same level".

As we continued our exploration of what it might mean to "claim power," Kim referenced the ways that such work would push her to reframe conversations about race with her students. For instance, in the exchange below Kim talked about how she had previously positioned herself in relationship to conversations about race with her students of Color and how she might imagine doing so differently in the future:

Kim: In schools White people so often talk about race as 'culture'. And nobody goes 'power'. Well, some people don't go 'power'. So, if you say, "I don't know much about power," then that's like ridiculous and those words should not come out of a White person's mouth.

Julia: (Laughs) Right, right.

Kim: Like because if I was- If I was having a Socratic seminar about race. Usually what I would ... What I did was I framed race as culture. And so I would sit on the outside of the circle, and then I would ask clarifying questions maybe like once or twice in the 100 minutes, but the kids would do everything themselves, and I would pipe in and be like, "I don't really understand what that means." And they're like, "Oh, you're so White, dah dah dah dah." And they would like educate me on that. But if we were instead having a conversation of power, I don't think the words would ever come out of my mouth like, "I don't really understand power. Can you guys tell me about that?" Because they'd be like, "What? But you're the one with it."

As Kim reflected on her previous framing of "race as culture" she acknowledges the ways that such a framing served to obscure her own positionality relative to conversations about racism: When Kim framed race as "culture" she felt able to remain outside her students' conversations

and experiences. Kim's framing of "race as culture" served to obscure the ways in which, as a White person, Kim knows a great deal about racism because she is of course "the one with [power]". Kim went on to imagine what it might have been like to engage in a conversation about race that explicitly foregrounded and acknowledged power: When Kim imagines this alternate scenario, she realizes that her own experience as a White person would have to be a part of that conversation — Kim could no longer simply ask students of Color to "tell her" about power.

The teachers' reframing of their own relationship to power and Whiteness proved deeply generative and the teachers and I grappled for months as we considered what exactly it might mean for them to "own" or acknowledge — rather than work to obscure — the realities of power. Amy, Kylie, Emma, Kim, and I talked about what it might look like for them to acknowledge the realities of Whiteness and the prominence, harm, and overrepresentation of White subjectivities in schools. Rather than ignoring or working to avoid the realities of Whiteness in schools, what might it mean to engage such a reality? In the following exchange, Amy and Emma considered the ways that being a White teacher -- and accepting or "running toward" that reality -- meant acknowledging their subjectivity as always situated in and experienced through a broader context:

Amy: It makes me just think so much about how even if we, you know, become like the best White teacher we could possibly be -- and who even knows what that is -- there will inevitably be so many White teachers before us or after and that inevitably cause[s] serious harm.

Emma: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Amy: And our students will be walking in with those scars into our classrooms so it's like engaging with that reality has to be part of the job.

Emma: Yes. And that has to be part of the job forever. We have to run toward that reality.

In the above exchange, Amy and Emma discuss what it might mean to acknowledge the broader reality of White teachers in schools and to acknowledge the ways that they are inevitably embedded in — and constituted by — such a reality. Rather than ignore or "run away" from the harmful consequences of that reality, the teachers considered what it might mean to understand the acknowledgement of that reality as part of their "job" as White teachers.

In what follows, Amy and Emma continued to discuss what it might mean to claim and acknowledge Whiteness and power in classrooms:

Amy: As a White teacher I think I have to be in it to use power.

Emma: See I think that last part- like you have to be in the system and I think you have to see yourself as part of the system. Like you have to see yourself as part of the problem even if you also could be part of the solution.

Amy: Yeah.

Emma: Because otherwise you go in there thinking-

Amy: I could be a savior! I could be different!

Emma: As opposed to-

Amy: I feel as White teachers we are often absent an awareness that we are benefitting from the system itself. We are that system.

For Amy and Emma -- as well as for Kim and Kylie -- acknowledging the realities of power meant seeing and the ways they are always a part of and "benefitting from" the broader system of Whiteness. In other words, acknowledging power meant seeing themselves as necessarily situated within and constituted by Whiteness — necessarily no "different" from other White

teachers. Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I grappled with the ways in which we were necessarily unable to step outside of or obscure the effects of Whiteness. This insight -- that acknowledging power and Whiteness means seeing yourself as "part of the problem" even if you are also working toward a "solution" — resonated with all four teachers. In cultivating this insight, the teachers and I drew heavily from the principles and insights of harm reduction. Harm reduction effectively allowed us to acknowledge that we could work toward change, even if our subjectivities also positioned us as “part of the problem”.

All four teachers talked about the ways that acknowledging Whiteness and power might in some ways "be freeing" in that it might encourage them to accept and engage with reality -- rather than spend their energy and language fighting against or working to ignore reality. In what follows, Amy, Kim, and I discussed the effects of understanding ourselves as constituted by discourses of Whiteness:

Kim: What happens when I realize I can't step outside my own racism? And I've just been thinking a lot recently, I think that goes along with the question of, “Well I'm not racist”. What happens if you recognize that everybody is? Just take away the loadedness of the word for White people. It's impossible to not be.

Julia: Yep.

Kim: So, what happens when you realize you can't get out of it, you can't not do it? I'm really starting to- I feel a little free when I realize if you-

Amy: Yeah.

Kim: Look at it, acknowledge it, yeah absolutely try to undo it. But you've got to sit in it first. There's a freedom to go- I can't step outside my racism as a White teacher. I can't not do harm, and in acknowledging that, then we can move forward, instead of sitting in the harm of pushing it forward and being like, "I'm not doing that"! Which a lot of teachers do- a lot of White

teachers do.

In many ways, the above exchange exemplifies the affordances of disrupting a "colorblind" (Frankenberg, 1993) -- or rather, "powerblind" -- ideology as a White teacher. Rather than work to ignore or obscure the effects of Whiteness and power, Kim points out that "sitting in" the reality that there is no way to "step outside" of Whiteness is in some ways "freeing". Kim notes that such "freeing" is not a release from responsibility. Acknowledging Whiteness does not mean she no longer struggles against racism. Rather, the work of first "sitting" with and accepting the consequences and harm of Whiteness is a part of her broader responsibility and way of engaging more deeply and honestly with Whiteness and racism.

As our research group progressed, the teachers and I began to consider the long-term consequences of "claiming power and Whiteness" -- beyond the context of their choices and discourse within their current classrooms. By the end of our collaborative work, two of the four teachers decided to quit their jobs as teachers in schools that served predominately students of Color: For Amy and Kim, "claiming Whiteness" came to mean shifting their work teach in schools that served predominately White students.

For Kim and Amy, "claiming power" meant acknowledging the consequences of Whiteness for the kind of work that they could effectively do as teachers. "White kids and families will listen to me in a way they won't listen to teachers of Color," Kim pointed out. As she and Amy struggled with their own thoughts and feelings about quitting their jobs, Amy pointed out that working in predominately White communities -- and accepting the ways that her Whiteness uniquely positioned her to do so -- meant "claiming" her Whiteness and "being willing to be identified as White, to accept that and that I'm a part of Whiteness."

Kim and Amy spent months developing and considering their decisions to leave Wealton

and Windmill. During one of our last conversations, Amy talked about the what we came to call the “mental and heart gymnastics” required to be a White teacher of students of Color.

Amy: Being a White teacher is sort of like the Marines. They convince themselves that there aren't any civilians in the building.

Julia: Is that true?

Amy: No, but that's a mentality I imagine. They have to do that in order to do their jobs.

Julia: Oh, yeah. You have to do that in order to-

Amy: Right?

Julia: Interesting.

Amy: Yeah, you have to like disassociate. I have to disassociate. I can't do that anymore.

For Amy and Kim, the work of “pretending there aren't any civilians in the building” — engaging in the “gymnastics” necessary to avoid accepting and seeing the harmful impact of Whiteness — was simply something they could not do “anymore”. As Amy and Kim worked to imagine what it might mean to “claim” Whiteness they realized such “claiming” would not permit them to stay in their current teaching contexts.

At the same time, however, Kylie and Emma, shared many of the sentiments and perspectives that pushed Amy and Kim toward their eventual decisions. At various points in the course of our work together, all four teachers entertained the possibility of leaving their current teaching contexts to teach in schools that served White students. Although their shared insights lead to different actions, all four teachers talked about the ways that they saw their own discourse with regard to power as harmful. Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I all struggled to imagine how we might disrupt that harm by “run[ning] toward” the realities of power and Whiteness.

Findings: Concluding Remarks

The Reach of Whiteness

At the beginning of our final research meeting, I asked Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma to return to the transcript of our very first research meeting. I gave them each a print-out of the transcript and watched as each teacher laughed and grimaced, reflecting back on the work we had done together and the ways that our project shifted and reframed their thinking and teaching — and their broader understandings of themselves. “I was so uncomfortable!” Amy exclaimed as she read the transcript of her own words. “Look at how much I stumble over my words whenever I say anything about race or about being White!”.

As the teachers reflected on our collective growth, I asked them how they thought their understandings of Whiteness — and, more specifically their understandings of their White subjectivities and the consequences of those subjectivities for teaching — had changed. More than any one insight or shift, the teachers talked about an underlying reorganization of their relationship to Whiteness. Amy said it quite clearly: “I can say now, I can admit to myself that Whiteness is a constraint, a limit, a harm and that there’s nothing outside of that. I used to think yes, it’s a harm, a constraint, but there were sacred things, special things that were outside my being White. But nothing is outside of it.” The teachers and I began this project understanding that Whiteness effected racialized harms in classrooms. While the teachers had entered the project articulating many of those harms, they nonetheless all imagined that there were parts of their teaching — their beings — that Whiteness “couldn’t reach” and that were thus outside of such harm.

In the same way that Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma had imagined some parts of their teaching as “outside” of Whiteness, so too did I initially imagine parts of myself as able to “step

outside” of Whiteness through my work in this project. Although I theoretically knew that Whiteness constituted my subjectivity — my interpretations of the world, my interactions, my language, my relationships — I imagined myself able to “step outside” of Whiteness just enough to “see it” as part of this research. In some instances, I felt myself able to do so through our collaborative analyses — together, Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I “saw” Whiteness within and sustained through our discourses within their classrooms.

However, I also came to acknowledge the many ways that I could never step outside my Whiteness enough to “see” Whiteness. After one of my last visits to Kylie’s classroom at LEARN, I wrote the following reflection. In a small and very concrete way, I named and noticed my inability to “see” Whiteness:

This morning I tried to make myself see how weird it is. How bizarre it is that these classrooms look the way they do. I was walking down the hall at LEARN, my heels clicking. I had just spoken to the White woman who works at the front desk. And then I walk down the halls and peek into the classrooms: One room after another filled with Black and Latino students and a White woman standing at the front. Room after room. One room alone is perhaps not so strange, not so striking. But somehow the world has normalized this strikingly asymmetric demographic reality. And so I cannot get myself to see it as weird. The way, when you say a word over and over again you expect it to lose its meaning, to start sounding strange and maybe foreign on your tongue? The word becomes strange and weird and you can step outside of its meaning for a second. And yet I cannot make these classrooms strange. It still looks normal to me. Room after room. It always looks to me like it “fits” and I can’t get over how strange — or how awful —that is. Oh, how horrible it is that I’ve internalized that this is normal and okay. That these classrooms don’t look weird to me. I can’t get myself

outside of it.

My reflection brought into focus the ways that I could not step outside of Whiteness: I could not step beyond the discourses of White supremacy that constituted my expectations and sense of what might be “normal” and what classrooms should and could look like. As I tried to see classrooms differently, however — to “make the familiar strange”— I glimpsed the impressive scope of Whiteness. In the same way that the teachers came to see there was nothing “sacred” or “outside of Whiteness,” I noted the scope of Whiteness and saw myself — saw us — squarely within it.

Later that same day, after coming home from my last observation in Kylie’s classroom, I reflected on the broader project and the tensions and contradictions of having engaged in this project from “within” Whiteness. I continued the reflection I had begun earlier that day:

I do think this project has something to offer: Not a panacea, not a solution to racism within schools, and certainly not a prescription for how to be “not racist” or be a “good teacher for kids of Color” for White teachers. I think this project offers insight into a horrible situation, a particular way that racism has manifested within schools: The fact that 80% of teachers are White women despite the fact that schools are increasingly racially heterogeneous. This project, at its best, offers insight into the ways that Whiteness works through White people in classrooms and through our positions as teachers. We’re trying to come up with a beginning vocabulary for talking about the consequences of our Whiteness for the work we do as teachers when we teach students of Color. This project is very much a beginning and very much NOT a solution. White people talking with other White people about race and racism is dangerous. And I also believe — I guess I have to believe — that it can be useful, generative, and sometimes

even necessary.

In some ways, I guess this project is all about the task of sitting with tension, conflict, and contradiction. As I write this, I'm struggling with two contradictory truths: The knowledge that a White person writing and thinking about Whiteness has the potential to be deeply violent and might even necessarily be harmful and violent. At the same time, though, I believe there are necessary insights that can be gained from talking and reflecting amongst and with White people about Whiteness and racism. I think sharing those insights is important and could be deeply useful and important for our (who is the "our"?) ability to engage with the many incarnations of racism in schools. Both are true.

For myself, the task has been to sit with the knowledge that both are true and that neither is complete or sufficient: To not ask every question to a White teacher because I don't want them to get angry and leave the project, but to ask enough questions that I can push their thinking. To know that White people talking about race and racism without people of Color is deeply dangerous and maybe in not asking a White teacher the hard question I totally totally did the wrong thing.

My reflection articulates the consequences of acknowledging the tremendous "scope" of Whiteness: There was not — nor will there ever be — a way that Emma, Kylie, Kim, Amy, and I could assure ourselves that we were doing the "right" thing or that we were not *only* perpetuating the harms of Whiteness through this project and through our collaboration as White people. Rather, our task was to sit in the tension of knowing Whiteness made our efforts inadequate. The task of trying — despite inadequacy — seems the only way to move forward, the only way to cultivate the skills and vocabulary we need to ask questions about and remain suspicious of ourselves and of Whiteness.

As I stated in my reflection, this dissertation in no way offers a "solution" to racism and

White supremacy and it challenges the idea that there is such a solution — or at least that White teachers can be a part of that “solution” by working with students of Color. Schools are constituted by discourses of Whiteness and White supremacy (their history clearly traces that reality [Burkholder 2011; Castagno, 2014; Pollock, 2008]). White teachers are constituted by those same discourses. There is no way to step outside such reality — and yet, the work of asking questions, of cultivating suspicion, of interrogating our logics and ideologies is a tiny step toward cultivating the vocabularies necessary to talk about and critique Whiteness in schools.

Whiteness and the Body: “Not If, But How”

More than any of the other teachers, Kim talked about and referenced her body. While other teachers often communicated their feelings or responses via body language — crying, laughing, rolling their eyes, putting their heads down on a table, sighing or slumping over — Kim talked about her body and about the way “it” responded to the ideas we explored. In many ways, Kim talked about her body as if it were another research participant — perhaps a more honest and insightful member of our research group: “Why does my body respond that way?” Kim would ask. “What is it doing? How does my body know that?”

On numerous occasions, Kim shared experiences that were deeply uncomfortable — moments when she saw, starkly and undeniably, the harmful consequences of her Whiteness. In recounting these moments Kim would often refer to herself in the third person: Rather than ask, “Why did *I* do that?” Kim would say, “Why did my *body* do that?”. At various points, Emma, Kylie, Kim, Amy, and I discussed this language choice and its potential consequences: “It’s a way of saying *I* didn’t do that, *my body* did that,” Kim pointed out. “I can think that the White part of me is only my *body* and so that’s the only part that’s culpable.”

Similarly, Kim would regularly talk about her bodily reactions during our research meetings. Often, when Amy, Kylie, Emma, or I would name the harm of Whiteness in an overt and unqualified way — reference the reality of our need for control or our refusal to name injustice, for example — Kim would take a deep breath. “Why is that so hard to know, to feel?” She asked. “It’s like a tiger on my back, inside. My body feels like it’s going to die when I hear that. Why does my body react this way? I’m not going to die”. Certainly DiAngelo’s (2011) analysis of White fragility — the idea that White people experience all "racial stress" as "intolerable" — is relevant here. In many ways, the intensity of Kim’s bodily response was an embodied expression of White fragility.

Inspired and provoked by Kim's references to her body, however, the teachers and I came to talk about the body as a useful metaphor for our larger research project. At one point Kim pointed out that this very project was “like trying to see your own body, your own face without a mirror”. The work of this project reflected the task of coming to see one’s own body without ever being able to step outside of oneself or see one's self from the outside -- without having a mirror. The task of coming to know one's own body is impossible: We are inseparable from our bodies and we cannot step outside them enough to glimpse their full scope or reality. This metaphor offered a basic parallel to the task of coming to see Whiteness painfully “at-work” (Yoon, 2012) within our classrooms -- even as we could never fully step outside of Whiteness or visualize its scope.

In using the body as a kind of metaphor for Whiteness, Kim shared the following insight:

I never ask myself the question “Is my body here? Is it having an impact on the world, on how people are in relationship to me?” The question is *how* is my body shaping those interactions. How people shake my hand or move

around me. Not if, but *how*. I guess the difference is that I think Whiteness pretty much always has harmful effects. But that's the deal. So the question isn't "Is my Whiteness shaping this in a negative way?". But "*How* is my Whiteness shaping this in a negative way?".

Kim's parallels between her relationship to and knowledge of her body — as a physical reality that interacts with and affects the world around her — and her relationship to Whiteness are provocative. For Kim, knowledge and awareness of her body is implicit, a part of what it means to be human and to interact with the world. Kim expands the parallels we had drawn between the body and our larger exploration of Whiteness. Kim effectively proposes the idea of cultivating a relationship with and an awareness of Whiteness — just as one might cultivate an awareness of the body — as a force that and harmfully necessarily affects and shapes interactions with and on the world.

As our work together drew to a close — and as I reflect back on that work — Kim's insights remain particularly salient. So much of the work that engages Whiteness and subjectivities in classrooms denies the reality of Whiteness as something that necessary has harmful effects and cannot be transcended. The idea of cultivating a relationship with Whiteness — in the same way that we all have relationships with our bodies — offers a way to build the skills to negotiate and honestly engage with that Whiteness.

Discussion

The Process of Whiteness: Difference, Connection, Control, and Power

In many ways, each of the previous chapters offered various incarnations of the same insight: Whiteness necessarily and harmfully constrains what is possible when White teachers teach students of Color. Whiteness constituted — and is sustained — by even the most fundamental of White teachers' discourses regarding difference, connection, control, and power.

Whiteness shapes White teachers' relationships with students of Color: the ways we understand the process of constructing connections with students of Color and our willingness to engage or accept power-laden difference — injustice — as part of students' realities or experiences. Whiteness shapes White teachers' need for control and helps teachers to construct powerful logics and “articulate” (Hall, 1995) complex ideologies that justify that control. Such ideologies tell White teachers that our control benefits and is necessary for students of Color. In fact, however, such control helps White (women) teachers to obscure the ways in which we are so often afraid of students of Color and threatened by the “ways of being” that students of Color bring to classrooms.

Whiteness shapes White teachers' discourses regarding power: our resistance to acknowledging and engaging with the ways that Whiteness and power position us in classrooms. As a result, rather than struggle against the harmful consequences of Whiteness, White teachers work to obscure Whiteness, attempting to hide the realities of power even as we rely on that power to exert control over students of Color. In effect our discourses sustain the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness and thus preserve and maintain the harms that Whiteness effects.

These consequences of Whiteness — the ways that Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I saw

Whiteness infiltrating and constituting every corner of their classrooms — are inseparable and in no way discrete. Rather, they are repetitive, cumulative, and deeply intertwined. Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma’s discourse with regard to power in many ways served and facilitated their discourse with regard to control. Similarly, the teachers’ understandings of difference constrained and constituted their relationships or connections with students of Color. Together, the teachers’ discourses — their embodied practices, ideologies, logics, and assumptions — stabilized and “articulated” (Hall, 1995) the “process” (Frankenberg, 1997; Thompson, 2010) of Whiteness.

“Needing Not to Know”: Discourse and Harm Reduction

In her provocative exploration of White ignorance, Applebaum (2015) draws on the work of Medina (2013) to explicate the ways that White people protect and curate our own constructed “ignorance” with regard to race and power. Applebaum shares Medina’s concept of “needing not to know” as a frame for understanding the ideas, perspectives, and insights from which White people – collectively, institutionally, and individually – run and hide in order to maintain and preserve existing organizations of racialized power. Applebaum reviews a variety of approaches to disrupting this “meta-ignorance” (Medina, 2013) and explores how social justice education might disturb White students’ commitment to “not knowing” ideas that would otherwise reorganize and restructure our thinking about racism and White supremacy.

In the context of my collaborative work with Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma, the concept of “needing not to know” was deeply salient and constitutive of much of our reflection and analysis. On numerous occasions, we talked about how Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I had all protected – and continue to protect -- our “need not to know” or see the harmful effects of

Whiteness in our classes. In other words, in order to continue teaching in the same ways and within the same contexts, Amy, Kylie, Kim, and Emma “needed” to protect themselves from certain insights, perspectives, and ideologies: They “needed not to know”. During one of our first meetings, I asked Amy, Kim, and Emma what was “at stake” for them through our project: “What are you risking?” I asked. “What do you imagine potentially losing as a result of this project? If you learn and grow through our work, what could you also lose?”.

Certainly all five of us “lost” things as we came to “know” in disruptive and important ways: a belief that there were no parts of ourselves or our teaching outside of Whiteness, for example or -- for some of us -- our commitment to teach in schools that served exclusively students of Color. This project pushed all of us to “know differently” and to see ourselves and Whiteness differently in classrooms. This is certainly not to say that – for any of us – we are not still committed to “not knowing”: The process of coming to “know” and see Whiteness as White people is ongoing and perpetually incomplete and inadequate.

In her exploration of “needing not to know,” Applebaum (2015) positions an education focused on Foucault’s (1971; 1972) understanding of discourse as a way to disrupt both White students’ ignorance as well as their commitment to maintaining and protecting that ignorance. As Applebaum argues, an understanding of and engagement with discourse draws attention away from narrow understandings of “truth” and toward how the “present got to be as it is,” how that present is maintained, and what has been “excluded along the way”:

Shifting our attention from language as representation to language as discourse entails asking different questions. For example, instead of being engrossed in asking whether an utterance is true, language as discourse encourages us to ask

questions such as, Who benefits from this utterance? How am I constituted by this utterance and how are others constituted by it? This is an important tool for disrupting meta-ignorance and helping white students confront their complicity in racism. (Applebaum, 2015, p. 453).

For Applebaum, explicit engagement with discourse can force White students to consider the effects of their discourse and its relationship to the subjectivities and organizations of power within their classrooms, schools, communities, and worlds.

Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I engaged with many of the ideas that Applebaum (2015) offers: Our entire project was grounded in an understanding of discourse and the “truths” and subjectivities that discourse constitutes in classrooms and through us as White teachers. Our analysis and collaboration was most fundamentally marked by a critical discourse analysis: We looked closely at the links between the teachers’ talk, their embodied practices, and their talk about those practices across their teaching and our reflections on that teaching. In engaging with the post-structuralist theories that situated and defined this project – discourse, subjectivity, and power -- we paid little attention to the “truth” of what each teacher said or did. Rather, we focused our analysis on the effects and consequences of the teachers’ talk and practice: the experiences, subjectivities, or organizations of power that were constituted or rendered invisible through their discourse.

In reflecting back on our collaboration, the connections between harm reduction, discourse, and “needing not to know” fall into sharp relief. Our framing of harm reduction in many ways forced our engagement with discourse and with the ideas and perspectives we needed “not to know”. From the very beginning, our collaboration fore-grounded an effect – harm – rather than beginning with any intention or “truth”. In other words, before turning our attention

to a “truth” -- to the teachers’ perceptions of “what happened” in their classrooms -- we premised our analysis on an assumption of harmful effect. Beginning with an engagement with effect – with harm – forced us to engage with discourse.

Starting with harm, facilitated both a different kind of learning and a different kind of pedagogy. Our collective work blurred the lines between teaching and learning. We learned from and through each other’s growth and inadequacies: Amy, Kylie, Kim, Emma, and I could see and learn things in and through each other that we were not yet ready to acknowledge within ourselves. We collectively grappled with the inevitable harms of Whiteness, imagining – through each other – what it might mean to see and acknowledge that harm in the various possible contexts of our work as White teachers.

Our growth was simultaneously collective and individual: When we premised our work on harm and rooted our analysis in discourse, we encouraged ourselves to broaden our commitments beyond the scope of our own bodies or even our own classrooms. We framed discourse as constituting all of our subjectivities – and so our commitment was necessarily collective. And yet we simultaneously engaged the inadequacies and impossibilities of our collective commitment to know and see what we “needed not to know” or see: As a group of White women our discourse necessarily “reinscribed” (Thompson, 2003) and “recentered” (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013) Whiteness. In a way, our collective work toward harm reduction mirrored the hopeful possibility – and simultaneous acknowledgement of inadequacy -- that Thompson (2003) offers in her seminal analysis and reflection: “Perhaps in a few years we will know better how to talk about whiteness... without reinscribing [it]... but for the moment, we are still building the tools we need to build antiracist tools” (Thompson, 2003, p. 9).

White Teachers: What Does It Take *Not* to Know?

In many ways, a simultaneous focus on discourse and harm reduction has the potential to reframe the broader work of teacher education or professional development for White teachers. Rather than begin a conversation about Whiteness, racism, or White supremacy by asking about “truth,” or intention – Did you mean to be racist? Do you think that Whiteness has a harmful effect in your classroom? – beginning with an assumption of harm and a focus on the mechanisms of effect (how harm happens) reframes the possibilities of learning and growth.

Instead of focusing on *if* harm occurs we can instead attend to the numerous *processes* through which harm is effected: discourse regarding power, control, connection, or difference, for example. As White teachers, we can work to see the nuances and mechanisms of harm without imagining ourselves able to surmount, transcend, or overcome that harm. Although we cannot erase the harms of Whiteness, we can – eventually -- as Thompson (2003) says, engage in the foundational work of “building the tools we need to build anti-racist tools” (p. 9).

Similarly, a focus on harm reduction and discourse allows us frame to “not knowing” as a strategic process that demands exploration in and of itself. While working to see or “know” Whiteness is essential, so too is an exploration of how White people did not *already* “know” or see: What have we, as White people, done – and what do we continue to do – that keeps us from “knowing” that which we “need not to know”? Toward the end of our work together, as we reflected on our collaboration, I remember Kim turned to me and asked, “How did I keep myself from seeing all of this? How didn’t I see all these before? It must have been a lot of work not to see”.

Beginning with Harm: Educating White Teachers

Engaging with harm reduction, discourse, and Whiteness as White teachers – or pre-service teachers – demands conditions that are uncommon in public schools, teacher professional development, and teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Haddix, 2012; Zeichner, 2006; Zeichner, Payne & Brayko, 2015): Explicit acknowledgement of the ongoing harm of White supremacy in schools via White teachers – and the expectation that White teachers engage in the violent and yet necessary work of exploring our own inescapable complicity in and responsibility for that harm.

Mainstream teacher education and teacher professional development programs are, broadly speaking, constructed to serve White teachers (Godley, Sweetland, Minnici, & Carpenter, 2006; Haddix, 2012; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). The insights, strengths, needs, subjectivities, and experiences of teachers of Color have been and continue to be largely excluded from teacher education (Haddix, 2012; Pailliotet, 1997) – despite claims that teacher education programs want to support and recruit teachers of Color. Teacher education and professional development must center the needs, subjectivities, experiences, strengths, and insights of teachers of Color. Purporting to believe in the importance of teachers of Color – while creating teacher education programs that satisfy the comforts of White teachers – does little to create equitable or just schooling systems.

Despite this almost-exclusive focus on the needs of White teachers (Godley, Sweetland, Minnici, & Carpenter, 2006; Haddix, 2012; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005) -- and claims to push those White teachers toward a critical or “social justice” consciousness (Zeichner, 2006) – teacher education and professional development programs often begin with ideological premises that are inadequate to the necessary work of engaging the harms of Whiteness and thus making White

teachers uncomfortable. Similar to so much research on Whiteness and White teachers, such programs typically offer White teachers the possibility of transcending Whiteness – rather than framing Whiteness as a fundamental and unavoidable harm. If White teachers engage in particular teaching or reflective practices, the argument goes, then students of Color will not be harmed by their teachers’ Whiteness (Daniels & Varghese, in revision).

In the spirit of harm reduction, we need to (re)consider how to educate White teachers to *do less harm* in classrooms – and thus reimagine the ideological premises of teacher education and professional development for White teacher candidates and White teachers. Beginning with a premise of harm – with a focus on the necessarily harmful effects of Whiteness that transcend intent and “truth” – opens opportunities for an engagement with discourse and an uncomfortable consideration of what is possible when White teachers teach students of Color.

Conclusion

Harm reduction reminds us — and allows us to see — that fighting for justice or equity does not mean we are outside of the discourses that produce injustice or inequity in the first place. Rather, harm reduction helps us to see ourselves as simultaneously implicated and agentic: able to work for change even as we are also part of the harm we seek to mitigate. My intention in writing this dissertation has not been to tell White teachers where to teach or how to teach students of Color. Rather, I have worked to raise questions about the consequences of the choice — that so many White teachers make — to teach in schools that serve students of Color. In doing so, I have used harm reduction to frame that choice as one that is harmful — even if White teachers also have the agency to mitigate some of that harm.

When Amy and Kim began talking about leaving their teaching positions — and teaching at schools that served White students and communities — I thought and talked with them a great deal about their decisions. Neither teacher understood her decision as a “solution” to the harms of Whiteness or White supremacy: Both understood that the choice to teach in White communities would present new questions and critical challenges.

For instance, Amy and Kim wondered how they would trust themselves to push and provoke White communities — rather than relax or remain complacent and further complicit in the workings of Whiteness within White communities. In other words, Amy and Kim understood that they would remain circumscribed and constituted by Whiteness regardless of their teaching contexts. Nonetheless, Amy and Kim saw the harmful effects of Whiteness in their current teaching contexts, and acknowledged the ways in which their Whiteness afforded them unique access and membership in White schools and communities — and thus offered opportunities to push for change in communities with tremendous concentrations of power.

During the final weeks of this study — just as Amy and Kim were struggling to decide where they wanted to teach next — a teacher education colleague asked me to meet with one of his current teacher education students. Jane was a White woman who would soon be graduating from my colleague’s social justice-oriented teacher education program. I met Jane at a local cafe on a sunny Saturday afternoon where we sat outside and drank lemonade.

Jane told me that she was urgently looking for recommendations for “real social justice White teachers” who taught in schools that served students of Color. Jane told me that she had yet to witness a White teacher who was “actually a good teacher and helped students of Color” and that she desperately wanted an opportunity to observe such a classroom. Jane wondered if I could recommend such a White teacher.

I smiled at Jane’s request. “What counts as a ‘good’ White teacher?” I asked. “What is it exactly that you want to see?”

Jane looked at me. “I want to see a White teacher who isn’t racist and who isn’t hurting her students of Color. I want to see a White teacher who is doing good.”

I took a deep breath before I responded. I thought about Amy, Kim, Kylie, and Emma. Jane was not the first — nor was she the last — White teacher or pre-service teacher to ask me this question. “I don’t know of a classroom like that,” I said. “And I’ve been in a lot of White teachers’ classrooms. I’ve been a White teacher. I have seen White teachers who are thoughtful and skilled and hard-working and insightful. But I haven’t seen a White teacher who doesn’t also have the effect of hurting students of Color.”

Jane looked a bit like I had punched her in the stomach. “So there’s no way?” she asked, her voice rising and a little bit desperate. “You’re saying I can’t do good as a White teacher? I shouldn’t be a teacher?”

I remember being quiet and letting Jane's questions hang in the air for a moment. "I'm not saying you can't do good. I'm saying you can't do only good. I'm not saying you shouldn't be a teacher. I'm saying you should think about why being a social justice teacher automatically means teaching students of Color. I'm saying you might think about who you are able to teach, as a White woman."

Jane swallowed her lemonade. "So you're saying I shouldn't teach students of Color? That's not the way to be a social justice teacher as a White person?"

"I don't know," I said. "The only thing I know is you have to ask yourself the question: Am I doing more harm than good? In other words, is that the job for me, given who I am? You have to ask that question."

I don't know what Jane ended up doing. But I do hope she kept asking that question.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A-1

Sample Coded Transcript & Code Descriptions

Transcript	Collaborative Coding	Individual Coding
<p>Amy: So Jose, Jose, it affects people's grade! <u>Cause I'm not gonna accept work that's wrinkled.</u> It does actually affect people.</p>	<p><i>Expectations</i></p>	<p><u>Undialogized</u></p>
<p>Jose: Oh.</p>		
<p>Amy: I need you to start-</p>		
<p>Jose: Well, that's on you for not accepting it, I mean-</p>		
<p>Amy: <u>It's actually on you</u> for wrinkling it-</p>	<p><i>Refusing role</i></p>	<p><u>Modality -- truth</u></p>
<p>Jose: It just material nothing. Just because the paper was ripped doesn't mean he shouldn't receive credit for it. He put work into it.</p>		
<p>Amy: <u>Actually it, it does. It shows that I want high quality work and that's what I expect.</u> Antonio, next time someone takes your work, you gotta say something about</p>	<p><i>Expectations</i></p>	<p><u>Legitimation</u></p>
<p><i>Way to be</i></p>		

it.

Antonio: Will I get credit?

Amy: No. You have to redo it. It's kind of on Jose. Like, you guys need to figure out. This kind of behavior has to stop. I'm gonna have some high expectations. How *Expectations* can Jose make this right? You wrote it out, what do you think could be a good solution to this problem?

Legitimation

Jose: You just accept it.

Amy: No, cause this is your problem that you created, Jose. *So you're gonna have Way to be to figure out the solution.* Right now Antonio doesn't look very happy cause his grade's being affected. So figure out how you can solve it-

Jose: I just said a solution!

Amy: What's the solution?

Jose: That you just accept the work! Is that really that hard-

Amy: No, that's not a solution. How are you gonna make it right? Cause right now Antonio's paper is scrunched up and

that's not right.

Evaluation -- wrong

Evaluation – wrong

Jose: I could apologize.

Amy: I'm gonna- the apology I don't

think is gonna cut it cause he's still

affected. You don't just get to say you're *Way to be*

Legitimation

sorry after you do something that bugs

somebody. That's not what fixes-

Jose: So okay, I need you to tell me

though what do you want me to do, like-

Amy: You're sorry you made that choice

but what's your choice on how to fix it?

Antonio: Why don't I just redo it?

Amy: No.

Jose: Why not?

Amy: Because you [Jose] messed it up.

Jose: You keep telling us to make an

idea-

Amy: Okay, I'm gonna-

Jose: And then when we make our ideas

you shut 'em down. What the hell is that?

Could you just tell us what you want us to

do? Or not shut down my idea?

Amy: Mmmm, I'm actually just not

Teacher emotions

Teacher emotions

happy with how this is being handled.

Social Actor - erased

Social Actor-erased/passivated

Sample Collaboratively-Generated Codes for Collaborative Analysis

Code Description

Expectations

Teachers' statements regarding their desires/demands/expectations for what student should do or say and/or how students should act.

Refusing role

Teachers' statements in which they either deny, refuse and/or reject their own role/participation/responsibility in a situation.

Evaluation-wrong

Teachers' statements that evaluate a student's choice/behavior/action/statement/etc. and frame it as wrong (for any number of reasons).

Way to be

Teachers' statements that indicate how students *should* be (either because of a moral/ethical assumption or because of an assumption about students' desired outcomes for the behavior).

Teacher emotions

Teachers' statements to students about their emotional reactions to students or to interactions with students

Social actor-erased

Teachers' statements in which the person doing the action (desirable or not) is erased or obfuscated. Often done using passive voice.

Sample Codes for Individual Analysis

Code Description

Undialogized

Statements that explicitly do not leave room for difference, do not represent or respond to other voices/perspectives. In opposition to dialogized statements.

Modality-truth

Statements that indicate a teacher's commitment/perspective regarding what is true and/or necessary.

Evaluation-wrong

Statements that indicate a teacher's commitment/perspective regarding what is desirable/undesirable.

Legitimation

Statements that provide legitimacy (e.g. explanations or justifications) for how things are/are done. Legitimation make take place via appeals to morality, authority, logic, etc.

Teacher emotions

Statements that communicate or justify teachers' emotions or emotional reactions.

Social actor-erased/passivated

Statements that represent the actors (included/excluded, activated/passivated, named/classified, specific/generic).